



Choosing the Right Compact Backhoe

Cub Cadet Yanmar product manager Roger Gifford offers tips on evaluating size, horsepower, usability, features and design to help you find the right compact backhoe for your needs.

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Boom Design

The digging arm or boom assembly design is another feature you should consider. Currently, there are two options on the market: a straight boom assembly and a curved boom assembly.

Although the straight boom design has proven to be useful and reliable, the more innovative curved-boom design is now available at a price similar to the straight boom.

While the straight boom assembly is reliable, it does create some set-backs to the operator. One major downside is that site lines are often obstructed.

Since the boom often blocks the operator's view, it is difficult to see in both the work area and while reaching over excavated materials. The straight boom is also less effective in tight areas where a backhoe needs to be curled since the straight boom assembly cannot significantly "tuck."

Luckily, all of these design issues were resolved with the introduction of the curved boom style.

Currently, the curved boom or excavator-style assembly is the most beneficial. The curved boom assembly is stronger because it evenly spreads the weight across the entire assembly.

In addition to increased strength, the curved boom offers improved site lines into the work area and allows for increased digging depth when excavating or planting.

Buckets Size

The last thing to consider before testing out the product is the bucket and bucket teeth options. Buckets come with either welded or bolt-on teeth. If you decide on a bucket with welded teeth, be aware that if one were to break off, they require more maintenance than its bolt-on counterpart.

Bolt-on teeth are designed to work in all soil conditions with increased rock-digging durability and easier servicing.

Since all manufacturers offer a wide selection of bucket sizes, consider what you will use the product for to find the right size. Typical bucket sizes range from 8 to 36 inches.

Product Demonstration

Finally, spend a little time behind the controls. If possible, arrange a product demo through your local dealer. A good idea is to pick a job that you expect to use your compact backhoe for and perform it with several different products.

A pretty standard test is to dig and backfill a trench. Make sure to pay close attention to how each product performs and what you like or do not like about that specific model.

Next, evaluate the overall performance of the product. Is the operator's station comfortable? Does the tractor feel too big or too small? Can it perform all tasks? Is it something you feel confident operating? Are the operations smooth and precise or do the controls feel rigid?

Similar to test driving a car, the product demo should make it pretty clear which products you like and which are not right for you.

As you can see, there are a lot of things to consider before making your purchase. By taking the time to understand and weigh all of your options, you can feel confident knowing that the product you select will be one that can handle all major



jobs around any sized farm or property.

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About the author: Roger Gifford is the compact product manager for Cub Cadet Yanmar where he is responsible for product development. Gifford has more than 32 years of experience in the equipment industry.