

COMPACT KAWASAKIS MAKE BIG IMPACT AT BUSHEL STOP



As the saying goes, good things come in small packages. And for the family that owns several Florida mulch and landscaping supply companies along Florida's east coast, those small packages are Kawasaki compact wheel loaders. To be precise: six 45ZV-2s and counting.

Started by current president Brian Lulfs' father in 1979, The Bushel Stop began as a wholesale sawdust supplier working out of a corner of Brian's granddad's feed store. Over time they added mulch, and in 1982 Brian's parents opened the first Bushel Stop

in Pompano Beach. Even more product was added as landscapers became interested in seeing the place become a one-stop shop for anything they might need. Now with six stores under its belt, Bushel Stop carries all the soils, mulches, sand, sod, rocks, and plants a landscaper might need. Product is available to the general public as well.

"Mom and Dad started it, and my four sisters and I have grown it," explains Brian. "In 1989, they purchased Atlas Peat, a customer of Bushel Stop. In addition to peat, we've added to Atlas a mulch division as well as

a bagging operation with four bagging lines. We grind our own mulch in order to provide better service, better quality of materials, and timely delivery. We even produce different colored mulches. About 90 percent of the mulch market is for dyed product. Red is an especially popular color around here.

"We also provide potting soils to all the nurseries. We blend together the soil, fertilizer, and insecticides. We have two machines that just blend soil all day long. We visit our customers to see what their needs might be, so we can recommend

the appropriate custom blend. We also bag for our own retail operations. We sell direct to several garden centers and deliver full loads directly to landscapers. As a result, we do our own trucking. We have everything from tractor-trailer flatbeds, to smaller trucks, dump trucks, and walking-floor trailers that handle the really big loads of mulch.”

Although operations were running smoothly, a few years ago Brian realized they were facing a ticking time bomb. As a guy who grew up around heavy machinery and enjoyed operating it, he was acutely aware of the problems they were about



Brian Lulfs, President Bushel Stop/Atlas Peat

to encounter. The company had been using TCM loaders for over 20 years. But when the line was discontinued and his fleet began aging, he realized it was time to revisit all the manufacturers to find replacements. He demoed several likely candidates, but none really seemed to meet the challenge.

“They couldn’t reach all the way over to the opposite side of the dump trucks. So we had to reach from both sides, and they still couldn’t reach the middle. So we had to turn the trucks around. That was a big problem. Another problem was that since our company trucks use a barn-door back, the Z-Bar would hit the bottom of the truck there in the back so we couldn’t load the pallets.”

Then he tried the new Kawasaki compact wheel loaders. What a difference!

“We found Kawasaki could handle all of those tasks. In fact, it was the only one we found that hit all the major points we needed.

“We’re really happy with our Kawasakis. They do exactly what we need them to do, and I wouldn’t change a thing. I’m really satisfied with them.”

Bushel Stop/Atlas Peat is serviced by GS Equipment, Pompano Beach, Florida.



SKID STEERS VS. COMPACT WHEEL LOADERS

On the surface, it would appear that both kinds of equipment should work equally well doing the same jobsite tasks, as each is quite versatile and handles a wide variety of attachments. However, that’s not the case. There are clear strengths to each.

SKID STEER STRENGTHS

- Lighter for easier transport
- Work in tighter areas
- Higher flotation
- Very good forward visibility
- More maneuverable
- Lower initial price

COMPACT WHEEL LOADER STRENGTHS

- More tipping load/stability
- Better for digging and carrying materials
- Greater reach
- Good overall visibility
- Travels faster
- Greater comfort level/larger cab
- High ground clearance
- Smoother controllable power
- More fuel efficient
- Longer tire life
- Longer design life
- Comparable cost-per-hour due to longer life
- Better resale value
- Better for load-and-carry, truck/hopper loading, excavating
- Operator side entry vs. climbing over boom to enter from the front

So if you are in the market for either a skid steer or compact wheel loader, determine the applications for which you need it the most, pick what features are important to you, decide how long a life you need it to have, then choose accordingly.

