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Globe-trotting ATOS

One minute Logan Botanic Garden's ATOS 240 tractor could be in South America, before passing through South Africa and southern California, before finishing in Australasia, all regions that are completely at odds with the fact that Logan is in the south west of Scotland and at a similar latitude to that of Moscow and Alaska!

Logan Botanic Garden is one of four gardens owned by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and this year celebrates 50 years of being owned by the RBGE. Originally created in the early 1900s, Logan's sheltered location close to Stranraer benefits from the warming influence of the Gulf Stream giving it a unique climate and allowing plants to grow outside from across the southern hemisphere. The 6.0ha garden includes a 1.2ha walled garden, and there is a further 4.0ha of woodland that's not open to the public.

"This is primarily a scientific research and conservation collection and a unique living library of genetic material," explains Garden Supervisor, Colin Belton. "Here we can grow southern hemisphere plants outside, that in Edinburgh would have to be in a glass house."

A new addition to the garden two years ago was a 97hp ATOS 240 fitted with an FL60C loader, which has revolutionised handling work around the garden. "The ATOS replaced a 10-year-old 65hp tractor that was worn out and underpowered for what we wanted," says Colin. "As we are part of the Scottish Government, we have to follow the procurement guidelines. We basically were looking for a medium sized tractor that's manoeuvrable enough to work around the main and walled garden, but powerful enough for haulage work. We initially looked at three different makes, narrowed that down to two taking into consideration things like suitability, build quality and power, and then finally chose the ATOS due mainly to cost and quality, but also dealer support."

With its 1.25 tonne capacity loader, the main role for the ATOS is handling work around the yard and garden. But its extra power is put to good use powering the garden's wood chipper. Its 40kph road speed and greater comfort is beneficial when delivering logs over a 20-mile radius or for hauling 5 tonne loads of stone for paths from Glenluce quarry 15 miles away.

"The ATOS is a lot more powerful and comfortable than our old tractor," says Gordon Murdoch, one of the main drivers of the tractor. "Most materials are delivered in 1-tonne bags which it handles safely and with ease, the self-levelling linkage makes a great difference and one less thing to worry about when working in a restricted area."

"The cab is extremely comfortable and we have never had air conditioning before, which makes all the difference when spending long periods in the cab. There is a lot of glass, so the visibility's good and it has a tight lock, so is very manoeuvrable. But it's also things like having the push-out hitch that makes hitching on a trailer simple, rather than needing to lean right out of the back window to see the hitch."



Garden Supervisor Colin Belton and main driver Gordon Murdoch.



GORDONS



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CLAAS ATOS 240

CLAAS

