

TANA GRASS

C. GOODALL,

Plantagenet Seeds Ltd.

The gratifying world-wide interest in Tana Grass shown since its introduction just over two years ago, is now being accompanied by a sober appraisal of it under a number of widely differing climates and circumstances in various countries. In the United Kingdom it may now be viewed on recreational and residential sites including a completed nine hole golf course and a recently laid bowling green. Tana Grass may also be seen at the Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley, alongside grass maintained to the highest standards.

The reaction of many commentators who have visited us—according to their articles—has been one of some scepticism of claims they had heard, followed by conviction from the evidence presented to them. We intend therefore to proliferate demonstration areas so that these will eventually be in easy reach of all potentially interested bodies, of whom we hope there are some in the readership of this magazine! In the meantime I hope you will find this article informative and that it will serve as an avenue of communication for those wishing to obtain further information.

Tana Grass enters at the point where all the hard groundwork of construction or renovation has reached a point where the normal question posed would be of whether to seed or turf the area prepared. All this preliminary work remains unaffected and the better it is done the better, of course, will be the long term results.

Ease of laying is followed by speed of establishment, slashing the amount

of maintenance work before the green or tee is ready for play. The carpet-like texture of Tana literally folds over all contours. It evens out minor obstructions and thus greatly reduces the amount of top dressing required to achieve a smooth surface. The rapid root strike provides growth to continue with practically no check and within a week to ten days the sward is firmly anchored in, a process that starts in a matter of days from laying. This accelerates the whole programme of maintenance prior to the green or tee being ready for play. The established canopy of grasses resists intrusion from unwanted grasses such as *Poa Annua*.

Watering essential

The treatment of Tana is basically the same as for any other grass surface. Maintenance in the early days is however very important. Watering should be carried out at least once a day for a week to ten days during which Tana should not be allowed to dry out. Prior to laying, the application of a complete basal fertilizer dressing, preferably including slow release nitrogen, is recommended. A worm dressing should also be applied as birds, particularly blackbirds, can prove a nuisance in the early days if worms are to be found. After laying, a light dressing of fertilizer should be applied, most conveniently as a foliar feed. Thereafter repeated light dressings should be given according to normal practice. A fungicide could be applied with the foliar feed or separately, and we advise preventive fungicide dressings to maintain healthy growth. Cutting may commence within two to three weeks of laying, and should be progressively lowered from 1" to the appropriate height some weeks before being brought into play. Top dressings of peat/soil/sand composts should also be applied early in its establishment with repeated light doses until the



Rolling out the turf at Ganstead Golf Club

surface is considered to be satisfactory.

A pure sward of true colour and texture is the distinctive quality and hallmark of Tana Grass, which gives us great pleasure and this we hope will be shared by others. The process now resides in a patent which for the U.K. is No. 1313121 and is covered by the Trade Mark 'Tana' Registration No. 979144.

It is generally agreed when weighing up the pros and cons, that seed scores in providing the ideal mixture of varieties, but that it is slow to establish a strong turf and is attendant with the frustration of seeing thousands of weeds flourishing in the perfect seed bed. Turf, on the other hand, accelerates establishment of the sward, but is rarely of acceptable standard. Moreover, with the roots shorn off in its lifting, turf has to re-

juvenate and much time and care is needed while it settles in and grows fresh roots. So what of Tana!

Water-borne

Tana Grass is the product of a new discovery which brought 'growth flotation' to the science of hydroponics, and the grass is in fact grown on water in a series of shallow lagoons. A rich carpet of grass is produced in record time by making full use of water and sunlight—the two prime energy sources of growth. A mixture of compost materials are spread on the lagoons, these level off to give a constant thickness. Polyurethane foam covers these materials and acts as a platform for the seed which is sown on top. Any mixture of grasses can be sown. The readily available moisture results in rapid and even germination and soon the roots strike through the carrier sheet into the

growth materials below, binding them together into a carpet. So a completely weed-free turf is produced with roots intact and containing only the grass varieties sown. The water is drained off and the carpet of grass is rolled up ready for despatch. The measure of the impact of this new culture lies of course in the performance.

Lightness

Tana's first contribution is to take a lot of the uncertainty and hard work out of producing a first class playable sward. Tana units are light—less than a third of the weight of conventional turf. They are also much larger, coming in just over one yard wide by up to six yard long pieces. Being of uniform thickness, no boxing is required. Care of course should be taken with laying, but this only involves correct alignment as the units are unrolled, and the use of an adjacent wooden platform on which to stand. They should be lightly tamped down but preferably not rolled until the roots have anchored. To gain full advantage of fresh growth and active root growth the Tana units should be laid within two days of being lifted and transported from the production site. The speed and ease of laying enables you to measure jobs for completion in a very short time, so there should be few hold-ups for breaks in the weather once work is under way.

"If you suffer from bad compaction contact Gordon West (Auckland, N.Z.) who by elaborating on a Ted Lowen (Waikerie) system, shattered his clay pan and rattled Middlemore Hospital's windows.

Five holes 17' deep and 15' apart tamped with 5½ plugs of gelly each, not only relieved compaction but gave "porina" a bad case of shell shock".

**From the N.Z.G.G.A.
Newsletter No. 3**

LETTERS

Mr. D. DIX
"Greenkeeper Association"
Addington Court Golf Club
Featherbed Lane
Croydon—Surrey/England

Sehr geehrter Herr Dix !
Über Herrn Tom Bovingdon, Golf—
Professional im Kaufhaus Harrods in
London haben wir Ihre Adresse
erhalten.

In unserem Club ist die Stelle eines
GREENKEEPER frei. Wir haben
bereits einen englischen Clubsekretär
und wären gegebenenfalls bereit einen
versierten Greenkeeper einzustellen.

Bitte teilen Sie uns Namen und
Anschrift, sowie Gehaltsansprüche
evtl. Interessenten mit.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung
Wolfgang Taegener
Spielführer

This means that there is a vacancy
for Head Greenkeeper at Berlin-
Wannsee where there is already an
English Secretary. Those interested
apply direct to W. Taegener Esq.,
Captain, Golf and Land-Club Berlin-
Wannsee 1 BERLIN 39 Am Stölpcha
Weg, West Germany.

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