CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPORTS TURF ENTHUSIASTIS

Young people interested in careers in golf grounds and sports turf management are being invited to take up once-in-a-lifetime internships in the United States, and be paid too!

IEPUK Ltd, in partnership with an American sponsor, Worldwide International Student Exchange (WISE), has launched a national recruitment campaign offering 300 internships at a range of PGA-level golf courses on the East Coast starting from Florida in the south and as far north as New York.

Successful applicants need to be 18-30 years old and will fly out to the US next spring to spend up to 10 months learning everything from the grass roots of golf to 10 months learning everything from the grass roots of golf to the US next spring to spend up to 10 months learning everything from the grass roots of golf to the US next spring to spend up to 10 months learning everything from the grass roots of golf.

Partnerships operate in over 35 countries including Europe, the Far East, North and South America, Canada and Australia.

Director Vanessa Peach said: “We are keen to find young people who are interested in taking up what will be an experience they will never forget and could be their first step towards a fulfilling career. Those who have completed an internship abroad through us always say it is something they look back on as one of their best experiences. It’s up to young people to seize these opportunities when they come up and we’ll support them every step of the way.”

Augusto from the Philippines, participated in the same WISE programme last year and spoke about his time in the US, saying: “The knowledge and experience gained in the exchange program will help me a lot professionally and to be an excellent leader in my future career.”

Although not essential, successful applicants may have enrolled in or recently graduated from a relevant degree programme such as Turf Management or Landscaping, or have been working in the sector. Responsibilities will include managing grounds, cleaning and maintaining golf course equipment and preparation for tournaments. Accommodation is included plus a monthly stipend of $1100 will be paid. A full, clean driver’s license is essential and the use of a shared vehicle comes as part of the package.

Programme and J1 visa criteria need to be met and fees are applicable. Successful applicants will need to pay for their own flights. IEPUK offers full support throughout the application and interview process and during the placement.

To find out more call Emily Baines on 01572 823934, email Emily@iepuk.com or visit www.iepuk.com

Re-alert for Chalara ash dieback disease

Following the initial alert on Chalara ash dieback in the last issue of Greenkeeper International, the disease has since been found at several more different locations around the country.

The initial wider-environment outbreak in Leicestershire was subsequently identified as Birstall Park and Ride near Leicester where 444 trees were uprooted and destroyed. Suspect cases at plant nurseries in Surrey and Yorkshire have now been confirmed, while an additional outbreak in the grounds of South Yorkshire College has also been reported.

However, the most serious outbreak of disease to date is in trees planted during 2009 at Woodland managed by Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) at Knockmount, 2km north of Kinlochwin in Renfrewshire to the west of Glasgow. The 200 hectare site has 200 of mixed broadleaves including 58,000 ash plants that will now be dug up and destroyed.

This is particularly a big blow against any hope of eradicating the disease and could well signal the end of the common ash tree as a British native tree. This is a fast spreading disease and with so many common ash trees in the wider environment the chances of further spread over the next few years are extremely high. There is no reason to suspect that the fungus and disease will behave any differently here to what has already been done in Europe. Up to 90 per cent of Denmark’s common ash trees are infected and almost all are expected to die.

At least five years too late the Forestry Commission has been finalising a rapid pest risk assessment which will enable the necessary immediate evidence to inform immediate-action against this disease. This will be followed by a public consultation exercise on the rapid pest risk assessment. All of this will take the time as well as the time elapsing during its presentation in Brussels for consideration by the EU.

In the meantime the causative fungus (Chalara fraxinea) remains an unregulated pathogen in the EU which means consignments of common ash trees will continue to come into this country from other EU countries like Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Denmark, where the disease is endemic and has even cursory inspection either at the point of exit or entry is required with respect to the disease can rapidly spread through. Healthy looking ash trees with no signs of disease carry latent fungal infections which can explode into disease in many months later once the trees have been planted.

Greenkeepers and especially those in areas where the disease is already known to be present are strongly advised to check their trees, especially those planted in the last few years, for symptoms of Chalara dieback disease which were described in the last issue.

Young guns (go for it)

Firstly, many congratulations to Thomas Flavelle on becoming the 2012 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year.

I was hugely impressed by all the finalists and was particularly taken by their knowledge, passion and enthusiasm as well as being a very sociable group.

Well done to all the finalists. It’s unreal how much winning this award, or even being nominated, can help your career.

It lifts your profile hugely and stands out a mile on your CV.

If you’re not convinced, take a look at the interview with David Norton on page 58.

Just three years after winning the 1990 title, he was Head Greenkeeper at The Belfry.

This says everything about the stature and importance of the award, and he has some excellent tips for greenkeepers taking their first steps in the industry.

It’s a reminder that we educate and inform the younger generation who are the future of this great profession, and after meeting this year’s finalists it’s clear they are going to progress and become superbly skilled greenkeepers.

However, there is still plenty of work to be done in this area.

I received no formal education until my mid-thirties – it just wasn’t available.

You could argue I blagged my way into jobs without any formal training, which was an unsustainable situation. Now, the opportunities are there to be grasped, and I would urge you to get your name down to attend the fantastic educational seminars at BTME.

Speaking of BTME, as I left SALTEX (where the BIGGA seminars were tremendous and extremely well-received) it was clear attentions were now turning to our flagship event in January.

I was particularly taken by the knowledge, passion and enthusiasm of all the finalists.