Amenity grass mixtures can have a hard time meeting today's tough standards. Not so with the Designer Range. Our mixtures are formulated to provide the best in fine turf surfaces.

All our fine turf and ornamental mixtures contain varieties highly rated by the STRI for their outstanding turf qualities including Center, Cindy and Sefton. For mixtures where a degree of wear tolerance is required, Elka and Elegana are the finest leaved perennial ryegrasses on the market.

So if you want the best surface available then get back on course by investing in a mixture from the Designer Range.

Contact us today for a copy of our comprehensive, full colour catalogue and the name of your nearest Stockist.
There's just one last chance to pre-register for BTME: you could win a prize! See the post-paid card in this issue.
A year in the life of...

It is traditional at this time of year both to review the past 12 months and look forward in anticipation to a new year. For BIGGA 1994 was unquestionably a year of growth and development and financially this will be reflected in the Board of Management's Report and Accounts to be presented to the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

In membership terms we now have over 5,500 members – an impressive figure but still some way off realising the full potential for BIGGA membership. Whilst for 1995 we must initially target 6,000, we need to look beyond that figure and particularly galvanise current members into bringing others into the fold. The old adage of strength in numbers must be recognised current members into bringing others into the fold. The old adage of strength in numbers must be recognised.

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BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

Sisis joins growing list of Education and Development Fund supporters

Sisis is the latest company to back BIGGA's Education and Development Fund. This brings to four the number of new companies already in Golden or Silver Key membership for 1995.

Commenting on Sisis' decision to take up Silver Key membership, BIGGA's executive director, Neil Thomas, commented: "BIGGA members are very much aware of the support Sisis has traditionally given to our Regions and Sections. The company's decision to additionally take out Silver Key membership is greatly appreciated and the backing of such a well-respected company gives added strength to the Education and Development Fund".

Sisis' membership brings to 15 the number of companies in either Golden or Silver Key membership.
BTME success assured as rival show attempts to gain ground

The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition (BTME) is set to break all records. A record 146 exhibitors will be at the Harrogate International Centre this month. A record number of visitors are expected following BIGGA's biggest promotion campaign, which included page advertisements in all the major turf magazines and direct-mailing more than 6,500 people in the golf industry. And a record number of international visitors have already signalled their intent to come to Europe's premier turf management show.

By early December BIGGA's offices at Aldwark Manor had received 23% more pre-registration cards than at the same time last year and 14% of them came from overseas. And this commitment from international visitors was before BIGGA sent out invitations to over 2,500 golf clubs and golf-related businesses on the Continent.

Bookings have also been flooding in for the National Education Conference - with a record attendance anticipated for the event, held in conjunction with BTME for the first time.

Bigger and better

"Every year the show gets bigger and better, and this year's success couldn't come at a better time for the Association," said Bill Lynch, BIGGA's marketing manager, referring to the launch of a rival show by P&O events.

The Landscape and Turf professional '96 show is scheduled for Olympia, London, a week before the '96 BTME. Whether it will actually happen is still the subject of much debate.

P&O have fuelled much of the confusion themselves by writing to potential exhibitors claiming that ten "industry leaders" have been "securing space to ensure their presence" at the proposed show.

After telephoning these industry leaders, we found that none had in fact secured space by putting down a deposit, although deposits were apparently required by December 22. Companies such as Kubota, John Deere, Hardi, Jacobsen and Hayters said they had reserved space in case the new show did go ahead.

"I'm waiting to see what happens. I'll know more by the end of January (after BTME)," said Colin Gregory, managing director of Hardi.

"We're keeping our options open - we're still hoping there will be just one show," said Brian Hurtley, vice president/director of Kubota UK.

European showcase

John Deere's managing director Alec McKee is also keen for one show that will become a European showcase for British and other manufacturers. "It's going to be a crying shame if we in the UK, where golf courses started, lose our leading position," he said.

The Agricultural Engineers Association had originally approached P&O Events with the idea of an "umbrella" show because its members felt there were too many shows. With the Institute of Groundsmanship and BIGGA declining to come on board with P&O, all the AEA has achieved is the introduction of a possible new show - but with the profits going outside the industry.

Asked what they will do in January '96, many of the industry leaders echoed Alec McKee's words: "God knows, we can't afford to be at both shows." However, he added: "We want to be where our customers are."

Judging by the response to BTME '95, it looks as if a large percentage of those will be in Harrogate in 1996.

"It takes a long time to get to this stage," said Lynch. "It would be a brave managing director who would walk away from a successful show, a show he had helped make successful, for an unknown event. Especially an event based on research which involved only 406 individuals and 292 companies, most of whom, in any case, said their preferred location was the Midlands, not London."

BIGGA and IoG set up initiative to promote BTME and SALTEx

BIGGA and the Institute of Groundsmanship (IoG) are forming a cooperative marketing alliance to promote their respective trade shows - BTME (BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition) and SALTEx (Sports, Amenity & Landscaping Trades Exhibition).

According to BIGGA chairman John Millen and IoG chairman Ian Beaney, the two events are complementary. A joint statement issued by them to the trade states: "BTME is a springtime, indoor, golf-related event with a strong educational focus. SALTEx is an outdoor autumn event with strong demonstration features and a broad profile."

The two shows share many common exhibitors and the new cooperative plans may include aiding companies that participate at both events. Both organisations feel that the two events, at separate ends of the year and in different parts of the country, offer a logical and effective combined exhibition programme that serves the needs of the UK industry and the broader European market.

Details of the joint activities are still being worked out, but could include joint educational programmes, incentive pricing for companies exhibiting at both shows and cross promotion to further improve attendance for both shows, especially international visitors.

According to Millen: "It's a duty of professional organisations like BIGGA and the IoG to make some sense of the crowded exhibition calendar in the outdoor sports and amenity markets. Suppliers must be sure of real value for money and that members of both organisations will benefit from two strong shows."

Ian Beaney feels that the new alliance "has the good old fashioned virtue of common sense. Suppliers and users don't want professional bodies slugging it out for cash. They want professional events that work and organisers that respect the value of their business."

One of the first companies to respond to this initiative is Amenity Technology which exhibits at both events. Managing director Carl Crome said: "The idea of having the BTME in Harrogate in January coupled with SALTEx in Windsor in September is perfect, covering the north and south of the country. There is no need to have an additional show in London. Also, I don't see why people outside the industry should benefit. Any profits that are obtained by the show organisers should be put back into the industry for the education of greenkeepers and groundsmen - as BIGGA and the IoG do."

BTME will be held from January 25-27 at the Harrogate International Centre with the 1996 dates set for January 24-26. SALTEx '95 will be held at the Royal Windsor Racecourse from September 5-7.
It's one small step away

Touch down soon at the indoor show of the year

We're now only days away from the BIGGA Turf Maintenance Exhibition 1995. You will have had to have been on another planet to miss the build-up over the last few months. But if you're still not sure whether or not to attend, turn to Pages 25-50 of this magazine and be convinced. BTME '95 is for YOU. Be there!

Education space filling up fast • Exhibition space SOLD OUT

BIGGA National Education Conference: January 23–24, 1995
BTME and Educational Seminar Programme: January 25–27, 1995

TO PRE-REGISTER, COMPLETE AND RETURN THE CARD FACING PAGE 70 OR CALL THE BTME HOTLINE ON 0347 838581

Pre-registering enters you in a free competition with prizes worth £200. It also ensures quick and easy entry into the event. Your badge and full information will be sent to you. TO PRE-REGISTER YOU MUST POST THE CARD BY JANUARY 17!

Ask for more details

For comprehensive information of all that's going on, telephone 0547 838581 and ask to speak to Ken Richardson, BIGGA's education officer. He'll answer all your questions and send you a copy of "The Learning Experience".
Event organisers are the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF. You can also request a copy of "The Learning Experience" by fax: 0547 838864.
Manager appointed as preparation work starts at college golf course

Students take the initiative

Students from the world's first HND in golf course management - run at Cannington College in Somerset - have taken the initiative and started marketing themselves before they hit the job market in April.

The students, who will graduate after three years' full-time training, are the first to complete the HND, initiated by BIGGA over three years ago.

But when they contacted golf clubs to introduce themselves, they discovered that few really understood the new HND course and qualification.

Said student George Simpson: "Because this is a new qualification, the golf industry does not yet know how it fits into the usual framework of jobs. We would like to see the qualification explained to potential employers."

Fellow student Graham Martin added: "While this HND is a highly specialised course in golf course management, we don't expect to enter the industry at a very high level. We acknowledge that we need to gain experience before taking on senior positions."

Three of the students have previous greenkeeping experience and are taking the HND to further their careers. In total, 15 students are due to graduate in April, following a training which includes two work placements totalling 10 months' work experience. Graham and another student, Chris Jack, worked in the Forest of Arden during the Murphy's English Open, while George worked at Gleneagles during the Scottish Open.

The HND course covers all aspects of golf course management including architecture, construction, greenkeeping, course management, consultancy and agronomy.
Gypronit: an exciting new mini-granular turf fertiliser supplying good levels of sulphur.

Gypronit is equally suitable for fine turf and outfield application on all soil types. In trials, Gypronit refined and encouraged the dominance of finer grasses within the sward.

Research has shown that sulphur can be used to discourage Poa annua, suppress earthworm activity and harden the turf against fungal diseases.

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If you thought growing grass was a complicated business, think how hard it is for the people breeding the seeds. They have to think what greenkeepers will want in 15 years' time...

In an ideal world there would be one type of grass - super grass. This grass would suit every application and climate. It would cope with close mowing. It would be resistant to all diseases. It would be as at home on front lawns and football pitches as golf greens. And it would taste nice (at least to cows and sheep).

But grass is used for so many different purposes that breeders have given up searching for one super grass and are constantly trying to improve grasses for specific purposes.

This search is carried out throughout the world... and it could lead a breeder to your golf course. Old British golf courses are a great source of excellent grasses because they’re used to close mowing and heavy traffic.

Barenbrug’s Barkoel (Koeleria macrantha), launched last year after extensive trials in Scandinavia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, the USA and the UK, is one example of this.

“The original breeding stock for Barkoel was located by chance on an old British golf course,” says Michel Mulder, Barenbrug UK’s managing director. “Despite drought conditions and infertile soil, certain very attractive green grassplants were found to be thriving whilst others suffered.

“This highly successful species was crested hair-grass, a grassplant common to many dry and sandy areas. A major programme of breeding and development followed, finally resulting in the uniform and stable variety of Barkoel, which was registered on the STRI list in 1994.”

Between the first find and the launch, 21 years elapsed. Normally the process of developing a new variety takes 10-15 years and the quickest it’s been done is about eight years.

Barenbrug’s breeders make a collection of new material each year. The crested hairgrass was collected in 1973 from a course which Barenbrug want to keep secret. “When you collect on old golf courses you can collect material which is already used under good conditions,” points out Gerard van’t Klooster, head breeder at the Dutch company’s main research centre. “The collection was made for more normal amenity grass species like red fescue and bent grasses, but the Koeleria looked very good and was also taken away.”

Back in Holland the grassplant was split in three and planted in a turf trial the next year. Its performance was “very good”, so the breeder decided to harvest seed from the best plants. He split the good clones again and planted these in small plots in a field. The trial plots are separated by rye, which prevents cross-fertilisation.

Harvesting the seed from grasses takes at least a year – you have to plant in the late spring to have a harvest the next summer.

The year after the harvest the new selection was used in another turf trial and the performance was monitored for three years.

Before a new variety can be released on the market, the breeders have to make sure that the fifth generation is the same as the first. The tests, which included using a wear machine and close mowing, showed that Barkoel was excellent under short mowing without irrigation and without fertiliser. Mr Mulder says: “It provides an extremely dense turf, and very fine leaves which maintain an attractive green colour under the worst conditions. It has outstanding drought tolerance and remarkable disease resistance and can withstand very close mowing (under 2cm).”

In 1987 Barenbrug applied for Plant Variety Protection in the USA and in 1990 they made...
The search for a Super Grass

the application in Holland. On May 4 1994 Barenbrug was granted the plant breeder’s rights (a bit like a patent) for Barkoel, the first time these have been granted for a variety in that species.

Intensive testing has shown that Barkoel is best suited for fairways and semi-rough when used with other species, such as red fescue and browntop bents. It has also been tested on greens at the STRI’s base at Bingley and at the Bristol and Clifton Golf Club, where former head greenkeeper Huw Parry says “it came up well”.

But as companies like Barenbrug produce more and more turfgrass cultivars – and they have 610 varieties in their ‘Fort Knox’ in Holland – the already difficult task of choosing the correct cultivar for a particular project becomes harder. One tip, though, that most seed companies agree on is: don’t buy on price alone; in the long run it will pay to buy good quality seed. Poor varieties offer no persistence under continuous wear, will require constant mowing, and be more susceptible to disease.

When you know how long it takes to breed a new variety and what goes into it, and you realise that after years of cross-fertilisation, testing and multiplying only a very small percentage of new grass varieties reach the stage of marketing, you wonder how they can produce a 25kg bag of greens mix for £150.

Choosing seed mixture for a new course

The cost of grass seed for a new course never amounts to more than one or two per cent of the total cost of construction, and yet often the seed is judged purely on price rather than quality.

When considering what type of mixture to sow, probably the most important factor is the choice of cultivar and the percentage of each variety needed to achieve the best results. The buyer has to identify the quality of turf he is looking for and then obtain a good balance of varieties that blend together to give a hard-wearing and close-knit sward.

Jonathan Franks of British Seed Houses advises new golf courses to consider all the...