"It's no good asking a seed company about turf management"

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Over the last fifteen years, greenkeepers and groundsmen have come to rely on good old Super Mosstox.

Always effective and reliable, Super Mosstox just gets straight on with the job of controlling moss - on fine turf or hard surface areas.

And it's just as good today as it's always been. So when moss makes an unwelcome comeback, just remember faithful old Fido. It won't let you down.
Terry Ryan, Sales and Marketing Director of Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd, charts a course to the top ten questions every turf grower must answer. Straight in at number ten...

The hit parade

British greenkeepers and Course Managers have always been an inventive and adaptable group. These days their broad based skills are being enhanced with improved training. This has lead to the development of the professional greenkeeper/manager who is capable of tackling an increasing number of projects on the course.

It is now customary for Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers to have responsibility for controlling budgets which represent large amounts of expenditure for their individual clubs. Whether it's Wentworth or Worksop the principle is the same and the pressure is on to deliver value for money and a golf course that can take year round play in its stride.
Amenity solutions at your fingertips

High quality seed mixtures, allied to the full spectrum of fertilisers and chemicals, provide the building blocks for a top quality turf. Sound technical advice from experienced professionals and an approach that looks at the cause rather than the effect, are combined to make Green Pride a refreshing new supplier to the amenity trade.

To convey my idea of what constitutes value for money I invite you to invest five minutes and play a little game. You might learn something that will stand you in good stead for the rest of your career. I do this as a part of paper the names of ten famous companies. They can be from any industry from retailing to airlines. You decide. My only condition is that they must be famous and highly respected. Who is on your list? I put down Marks & Spencer, Virgin, BMW, Kentucky Fried Chicken (well I do spend a lot of time on the road), Tetleys (surprise, surprise), Shell, Ford, Sainsbury's, Kodak and Sony. Now ask yourself this...what stands out about these companies, what is it that they all have in common? Despite their very different backgrounds and industries, they have a common distinguishing feature. Of course they are all instantly recognisable, respected by their customers and they are profitable. So it's more than fame and fortune that links them.

If you are stumped the answer appears at the end of this article. I have regularly been asked by greenkeepers what is the best way to identify good quality turf for use on greens and tees. Like most greenkeeping professionals the questioners usually have a copy of the current STR1 turfgrass seed guide close at hand. This is because they recognise that it is an invaluable aid that makes an excellent starting point.

Having made these points it would be an unwise greenkeeper who did not actively seek out turf with seed types which are highly rated by the STR1. My point is that if you decide to use turf you will not be buying seed alone. Whether to use seed or turf on a golf course depends on many variables such as application, the time available, the budget, and the best way to achieve your objectives. As we all know top quality turf at the right price will get your green or tee back into play far sooner than seed. However poor quality turf that fails to perform is a highly visible and costly mistake. So you should certainly be price conscious but don't ever buy turf on price alone.

At first it may seem that there is no contest between seed and turf when it comes to price. In our industry no two situations are the same but you won't be surprised to learn that I strongly believe that cultivated turf has a strong case when it comes to cost. Getting a tee or green into play months (perhaps a year) sooner is a genuine and demonstrable benefit to any club competing for golfers' green fees and especially to one where competitions and society days are a regular source of income. This may be obvious to you and me, but how often is this point actually discussed in committee?

As well as needing many months less time to come into play, turf also needs less water to get established than seed. Immediately after installation the water requirements of both options are much the same. However, in most cases (other than drought) turf only needs light watering for the subsequent three weeks or so. This is because grass blades shade bare soil from the sun thereby minimising evaporation which is considerable in warm (let alone hot) weather. This shading effect leaves much more of the water for its intended use. Cultivated turf can also win whatever the time of year because if it offers the option of year round...
installation, even on frozen ground (however this is not recommended when the ground is frozen to a depth of 50 millimetres or more).

It’s also worth bearing in mind that cultivated turf is capable of accepting heavy rain without erosion or damage. This could be very important to those golf courses with a large number of raised tees. With up to 90% of the weight of a grass plant in its roots, turf is an efficient erosion prevention material. It seems odd to spend money on expensive root zone material and incur labour costs then take the risk of it being washed away by heavy rain. Especially when there are members waiting to play and societies wanting to part with cash.

Uniformity in the finished sward is also important. Turf has a head start here because you can visit the turf farm and see for yourself what the finished seed mixtures will look like. Most cultivated turf producers should be able to provide you with turf that has 99 to 100% uniformity. If you are considering spending hundreds, even thousands of pounds on turf, make it a golden rule to visit the turf farm, this is because just like wine makers turf growers are subject to the forces of nature and not every year is a vintage year. Samples are fine as a general indicator but there is no substitute for walking on a full field or two to evaluate what it is that you will actually be buying and living with for very many years. If you choose turf make sure of value for money and a result that will get you noticed by the greens committee and club members for all the right reasons.

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Keeping in touch with news and comment from the Sections

West of Scotland
Well hello again, and after a few months of nothing, I'm back. Sorry about the absence but there wasn't a lot happening out there. There are a few things to bring to your attention this month though.

At the recent Scottish Outing over West Kilbride, the West Section tried in vain to retain their team trophy and with the results was evident, their performances were distinctly below par. Ayrshire came out easy winners, so maybe next year. Jim Paton and his staff produced a very fine course, plenty of rough and hazards, this was a real test for our greenskeepers. A game's night will have passed by now. Best Wishes from the West of Scotland.

North West
Yet another three new members to the Section this month. We welcome Michael Carson, Caird Park; Ian Coopper, Tain, and George Clifft from Royal Dornoch. That is all five of my staff as members now, so anyone with non-members at their course get working on them as I did, they don't know what they are missing unless you tell them.

The two lucky winners of the Park's annual, this year Stroke, Hogg, Fortrose, and Ross MacLeod, Tain. They win an expenses paid trip to BTME 1999 next January. All they had to do was attend more BIGGA events this month. My next priority in September is to extend courtesy of the course to the members of West Kilbride for extending courtesy of the course to the greenkeeping fellowship. Special mention must go to Peter Boyd for his hard work on the day completing the cards, starting and looking in. Well done Peter.

A new piece of news as well, my playing partner on the day was Elliot Small and we had an excellent game. I then discovered his new role due to the resignation of George Brown as Vice Chairman of BIGGA because of work commitments. Elliot is now the new Vice Chairman. Congratulations and I hope everything goes well for him. This year sees the retirement of another prominent member of the Association in Jim Nielson; Murrayfield Golf Club. Jim is at present the Chairman of the Scottish Region and has been Past Chairman and Secretary of the East Section. I hope he enjoys his retirement and his golf. Best Wishes from the West Section.

Now for Section business. The outing at Cathcart may well have passed by the time this reaches you - if not it is September 10 and entries should be high as this is a new venue. I'm sure Robert Hogarth and his staff will be working all hours to have the course in trim, but it depends on the weather over the next few days. I hope it is out-of-bounds to which I fell foul. Thanks are extended to him for his efforts and the clubhouse staff for attending to our needs. Thanks also to the members of West Kilbride for extending courtesy of the course to the greenkeeping fellowship. Special mention must go to Peter Boyd for his hard work on the day completing the cards, starting and looking in. Well done Peter.

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McMillan, Course Manager - Wildwood Golf Club, A Golf Course from Seed to Play; John Farringdon, Bailey's of Norfolk - Soil Analyst, Soil Analysis in relation to production of compatible turf dressing; John Westeurope, Groundsman Manager - Farming & Agricultural Finance Ltd; Budgeting for New Machinery; John Mullins, Supatuf - Regional Sales Manager, Water Management; Steve Lucas, European Product Manager - Fulcum, Bacteria in the soil; Jon Allbutt, Health & Safety Expert, Risk Assessment - Where did we go wrong?; Tracey Maddison, BIGGA Membership Services Officer, Membership Services Explained.

Peter Latter

BB&O
The summer golf day at the Oxfordshire sponsored by Avoncrop Amenity Products proved very successful despite our continued bad luck with the weather. Although David was kind enough to allow us to play from the normal tees of the day, Brian was not so forgiving because they were almost crying with laughter as I attempted to finish the 10th. Having almost holed my second shot from the fairway a solid par looked odds on, however, four putts later a 6 was the outcome. I actually three putted from inside a foot! Despite my own misfortune there were some great scores posted and the eventual winner shot 77 gross which was fantastic golf in the testing conditions: 1. Paul Young, 37pts, 2. David Gower, 36pts (last seen riding a horse & wearing a sombrero); 3. John Scoones, 31pts, 4. Justin Lee (speaks fluent Mexican); 5. Jim Payne, L.D Paul Young, NP 13th Peter Critchley (superb golf shot over the water), NP 18th Bob Woodward, Wooden Spoon, Matthew Pullen (Pins withheld, to save blushes), Best Trade, Tim Webb. Many thanks to the Oxfordshire for their hospitality shown on the day. The course was fantastic as always which is great credit to David Gower and his team. The food was second to none, thanks to Penny for organising the menu, it really was first class.

Finally, many thanks to Colin White from Avoncrop Amenity for providing all the fabulous prizes, not only to the winners but every competitor was given a Keepsake to take away, that was a nice touch indeed. Next event is at Harleford (Marlow) on October 1.

Lindsay Anderson

Midland
The summer tournament proved to be a great success, held at the Wrekin Golf Club which was a very demanding course with, in some cases, amazing undulating countryside and views over Shropshire to match. The course was in great shape and many thanks go to all the greenkeeping staff. The evening meal was a real feast and I could safely say it was the best meal the Midland Section has received in a very long time. Again many thanks to all the members of staff.

The results are as follows - 1. (Gross) Mike Hughes. 1. (Nett) Vince Lee; 2. Rod Hunter; 3. John Hooper; 4. Mike Gash, John Mullins, of Supatuf, won the nearest the pin - he was the only person to get the ball on the green!

The planned trip to the Massey Ferguson went ahead and 19 green-
keepers went along and I am told a very good day was had by all. A big thanks to Mitchell's who sponsored the food at lunch time especially to John Fawkes and John Proffit. I will take this opportunity to remind you that anyone who wishes to play in the Christmas tournament on the 10th December must get their entries in by November 9. You may think this premature but there is always a full entry very early for this tournament.

It is with great sadness that I have to inform all the members of the Midland Section and anyone who knew Trafford Stonebridge of his sad death on Saturday August 8. Trafford passed away in his sleep after a fight against cancer. Trafford will be remembered as a great man with a massive sense of humour to match. He was serving Chairman of the Section and had given many years of service to the Midland Section and to Maxstoke Park where he has left behind many dear friends. Everyone who knew him will find this news a great loss and on behalf of the Midland Section I would like to send our sympathy to his family and friends at this time. Thank you Trafford for all the amusement and commitment you have given greenkeepers of the Midland Region.

Finally, I will introduce some more new members - Michael Milinczuk, Stephen Marsden, Michael James, Trevor Smith, Terence Finney, Shaun Sutton, Sally Doherty and Christopher Stilgoe.

Jonathan Wood
Keeping in touch with news and comment from the Sections

Devon & Cornwall

With the summer drawing to a close, our thoughts turn to our Autumn and Winter meeting programme which starts with the Roffey’s meeting at Saunton Golf Club on Wednesday, October 14. The morning’s golf competition will be a singles Stableford for the D.O. Hunt Trophy. For our non-playing members there will be the usual course walk which will leave the club house at approximately 10.30am. Lunch will be from 1pm followed by our afternoon educational talk with the golf presentation and a short Company presentation by Roffeys, our day’s sponsor, concluding the day.

As in previous years the Section will hold raffles at its October, December & March meetings with the first prize at our October raffle being a pair of Hi-Tee golf shoes. Please note the changes to our meeting programme listed below; 1. Golfing members to receive starting times before meeting with a draw for partners being introduced to avoid same old groups playing together. This will be done for all meetings including foursome competitions etc. 2. Company & Golf presentation to conclude the day; 3. A levy of £2 will be added to each entry received after the closing date; 4. Some members have problems paying before meetings, they will be able to continue to pay on the day without being levied as long as the entry has been received before the closing date.

Any member who doesn’t attend after entering will be invoiced if no payment is received.

Regional educational dates; November 25, Regional Seminar to be held at Cannington College. For more details contact Paula Humphries on 01363 82777.

December 8-9, Golf Course Design to be held at Borrington Hall Hotel, Plymouth. For more details contact Ken Richardson, BIGGA HQ on 01347 838581. January 19-22, Region’s trip to BTME at Harrogate. For more details contact Paula Humphries on 01363 82777. You should have received our new fixture card which has once again been kindly sponsored by P J Flegg. The fixture card has dates of all our forthcoming events. If you haven’t received yours yet please let me know.

Richard Whyman.

South Coast

Our Summer Tournament was held at Bramshaw on Thursday, July 23. The results were as follows; 1. Phil Wentworth and I. Hoppe; 2. John York and Joe Cooper; 3. Bill Davis and Steve Pellat. Thanks must go to Bramshaw Golf Club for allowing us the courtesy of the course and granting us the use of all their facilities. The course was in excellent condition thanks to Adrian Wiltshire, the Course Manager. Also thanks to Clive Lowell the Head Greenkeeper of the Manor House. His team did a superb job in preparing the course for us. Our main sponsors for the day were John Deere, New Forest Garden Machinery. They were represented by Nick Clarke. They presented us with an excellent prize table. To our sponsors we thank you for your support. Last but not least, a big thank you to Trevor Smith our tournament organiser. He did a great job in organising the event.

At the prize giving a presentation was made to Gordon Paine. Gordon has recently retired as Head Greenkeeper at Maidenhead Golf Club. Gordon has been a keen supporter of the South Coast Section for a great number of years. I think I can safely say he was one of the Founder members. We have received a letter from Gordon thanking all members of the South Coast Section for the Tankard that was presented to him. On behalf of the South Coast Section I would like to wish Gordon a long and happy retirement.

Another reminder for the Regional Seminar to be held at Cannington on Wednesday November 25.

The main speaker will be Frank Newbury, who will be speaking on Communications, in particular “Making Committees Work For You.” He will also be conducting a Workshop. All applications and enquiries to; Paula Humphries, Truants Cottage, Zeal Monachorum, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6DF, Tel: 01363 82777. Paula would also like applications and deposits for BTME as soon as possible. As I said in last month’s report, “If we can get the support we will run a coach from the South Coast Section.”

Our Autumn Tournament will be held at Tidworth Garrison Golf Club on Thursday October 15. It will consist of an 18 hole Stableford. The price for the day will be £15 per head. This will include an evening meal. All applications along with current handicaps, cheques for £15, name and address and telephone number to our Tournament 40 Greenkeeper International September 1998

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