Friends and Foes... under the microscope. Crippling turf diseases like Fusarium Patch, Red Thread, and Dollar Spot are easy prey to the systemic fungicide Rimidin. Having both a protective and curative action, Rimidin is fast acting, long lasting, reliable and cost effective. Yet Rimidin has been proven safe to those all-important beneficial soil bacteria. Take a closer look.
Italian Grillo mowers are ‘brillo’ for Parkers

Introduced from Italy by Bernard Parker Marketing, a range of rotary mowers from Grillo of Italy. These are particularly suitable for amenity areas where high manoeuvrability is paramount. Two top of the range models, designated ‘The Dragon’ and ‘Bee Fly’ are driven and steered hydrostatically by the front wheels with rear castoring wheels. This gives them zero radius turning, without tearing or scuffing of the turf.

Both of these machines have front mounted cutting decks giving the operator maximum vision of the operation, and a range of size, cutting and discharge options such as mulching and side discharge is offered. The collector on the ‘Dragon’ has a capacity of 1 cubic metre while the ‘Bee Fly’ can be equipped with 300 or 700 litre collectors. The machines are available with hydraulic high lift of 1.8m to enable them to discharge direct into vehicles or trailers. A turbine with case-hardened removable blades and oversize load pipe ensures the cut grass is transferred quickly and cleanly into the collector. ‘The Rolly’ which is a front wheel steered mower with a mid mounted twin (overlapped) blade deck is also hydrostatically driven but conventionally steered with an exceptional lock. It has a 300 litre collector which is filled directly through a large centre duct. A differential lock is available.

For further information Tel: 01305 835530.

New release from AmTec on go-slow

The TRI-Phase is a new range of slow release fertilisers from Amenity Technology. The slow release element of the new products is derived from methylene urea ensuring a consistent, phased release of nitrogen to the plant. The range has been designed to supplement The Andersons range of phased release fertiliser and offers three analyses for the greenkeeper to choose from, with varying amounts of slow release nitrogen.

For further information Tel: 0118 931 1111.

Moore mower for your money

When Frank Moore was Sales Director of Howard Rotavator Company, one of his responsibilities was the marketing a range of American garden tractors.

On retirement from the company, having owned and used these machines himself, he set about putting into practice all his ideas on what an ideal mower should be like.

First, Frank cleared his mind of all existing designs and preconceptions and then he wrote down all the desirable features, that he believed an experienced user would like to have on a riding mower. A number of prototypes were built and the design developed until Frank was satisfied that his ‘key points’ had been achieved. In the process he developed a weight-transfer mechanism, which automatically increases traction on a slope, and this together with the ‘overarm dumping grass box’ which empties grass into a trailer on top of a heap in a few seconds, are two outstanding features included in the patent.

Subsequently other ideas have been incorporated, including the use of a rear Slick tyred roller wheel to provide full width rolling and prevent rutting on soft ground. Also the ability to swing the mulching mower to either side, whilst mowing to avoid trees and shrubs.

Frank Moore says “When I set out to design this mower, it was because no machine existed, able to fulfil the user needs I had identified and still there are none. The Moore Mower is not a ‘Me Too’ machine and I have been told that it can genuinely be regarded as unique”.

Moore Mowers Ltd have been incorporated to manufacture and market the machine.

Bradshaw to distribute Clubcar ATV

John Bradshaw is to distribute the Carryall ATV from Clubcar (USA), one of the most versatile ATVs to be offered to the UK market.

John Bradshaw, Chief Executive of Bradshaws, comments, “This new ATV is not only more flexible than other ATVs but will be supported by the Bradshaw manufacturing organisation.

“This vehicle is much more than rapid personnel transport, its carrying capacity is exceptional and can accommodate detachable spraying and spreading equipment; 800 lbs loads or even a couple of sheep, depending on the configuration chosen.

The new ATV is an 11hp, 351 cc powered two-seat, four-wheeler, with differential lock and nearly 29 cm (11.4 ins) overall ground clearance (17 cm to differential) together with an exceptional 363Kg (800 lbs) rated load capacity on a flatbed measuring 1238 x 1264 mm (49 x 50 ins approx) in area.

Allett Mowers launch Aztec

Allett Mowers has launch, the Aztec Professional Cylinder onto the UK market.

David Allett, Director for Allen Mowers, commented, “Research and development for this machine has been ongoing. We have produced this machine after seeing a requirement in the market for a machine with all of the qualities of the Aztec and we are confident that this machine will meet and exceed all its expectations.”

The machine has a number of key features which make it unique in the Professional Cylinder Mowers market including: The only floating head machine with interchangeable attachments also incorporating a rear roller.

The only pedestrian cylinder mower with a choice of either 20” or 24” attachments The Aztec is constructed to maintain heavy wear and tear, is easy to maintain, use and is very operator friendly. Fitted with either plain or grooved front rollers and available as a 20” or 24” machine it will provide excellent stripping on lawns, pitches and any other area of fine turf.

With a variable height of cut adjustment ranging from 2.4mm to 19mm long grass can be cut down to 2.4mm with ease and quickly as the 10 bladed cylinder will cut 272 cuts per metre and the 6 bladed cylinder will cut 121 cuts per metre. Although fully floating it still has a number of interchangeable attachments one of which is a scarifier attachment that will quickly remove thatch, the daily task of maintaining an undulating area of fine turf can be completed to an excellent standard with ease. A number of additional units are planned.

For further information tel: 01241 873841.
Unfair criticism

Could somebody come down hard on the primadonnas that moaned about Carnoustie last week! My point is that everybody listens to those with money (however vacuous) but the greenkeepers have no voice and are disregarded. Most unfair do you agree? The pros must know that the greenkeepers have no right of reply, but still complain about their course (which is their pride and joy) and try as might, the staff will react to criticism, and treat them as a soft target to be criticised with no come-back. They seem to have learnt well from our MPs in parliament!

Perhaps BIGGA could help by educating the golfing public/media on the subject of course preparation for an Open championship. A lot of work and planning goes into The Open and for it to be criticised by people who only ever play on perfect courses (ie:- American courses) must be galling. Especially as these people are there for only a few short days and couldn't care less about the course during the rest of the year! (or until they come back)

Paul Bertenshaw.
A member of BIGGA since 1979.
Via e-mail

A BIGGA thankyou

I have just graduated from a three year HND in Golf Course Management at Cannington College in Somerset and I was delighted to be awarded with the BIGGA South West and South Wales Trophy, for the 'Best Student, plus best Major Project, and a pass at Distinction.

As a member of your organisation I just wanted to say thank you very much for putting up the award for 'Best Student', as not only was this one of the proudest moments of my life so far, but also of my parents. Although many condemn awards, I have to say that I was very flattered to receive the trophies, and had no idea before my graduation that I had been awarded with these prizes. To this end, I was wondering if you may be able to give my achievement a mention in a future issue of your magazine. It has always been my ambition to have my name printed in your magazine, and it would seal the top of a very proud occasion for both myself and my family. Not to mention the college lecturers and class mates who have all been so helpful in the last three years!

I believe it can only be a positive thing, to publish winners of awards (especially those put up by BIGGA), as it can serve as a catalyst to other aspiring candidates. Certainly this has been the case for me, as I hold great ambition to one day compete for the Toro award for Excellence in Greenkeeping, an ambition I have gained purely from reading about past winners in your magazine.

I would also like to thank all the people involved within BIGGA for supporting colleges and students, certainly throughout my HND you have all been of great help and done all you can to offer advice and information.

Once again thank you for all your support, and I look forward to continuing a long and enjoyable membership within BIGGA throughout my career.

William Bowden
Exmouth, East Devon

Contact us

You can contact The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association in any number of ways:

Post: BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Aire, York, YO61 1UF
Tel: 01347 833800
Fax: 01347 833901
E-mail: reception@bigga.co.uk
Internet: www.bigga.org.uk
Whatever the job, Iseki has the Power of the Team

Iseki have a comprehensive range of compact tractors with the muscle and manoeuvrability to take on any task. From greenhouse to golf course, nurseries, stables, parks and gardens, Iseki products offer economy, efficiency and long life, plus a variety of accessory options designed for the job in hand. Iseki products are available from the Textron UK dealer network offering; the Power of the Team for sales, demonstrations, service and spares. For more information on ISEKI products phone 0500 026208.
Ken Barber puts thatch under the microscope and comes up with some ideas to minimise its effects.

Thatch accumulation is one of the most common turf related problems experienced by today’s Course Managers, yet this is not something new. However, because of the ever increasing demands placed on golf courses throughout the year, effective thatch management is essential. Without this, there is a point whereby the long term quality of greens suffer, especially if committees within a club demand that management programmes such as hollow coring or top-dressing greens are carried out early spring or late autumn when the benefits are minimal.

The hard facts are - if thatch is not correctly managed, clubs can expect to play on temporary greens at some point during the winter, and not just because they are covered in frost, but because they retain excessive moisture and are more suited to growing rice than turf! Thatch is more often the result of poor turf management than a problem that must be managed. If thatch levels are allowed to get out of control, putting surfaces can quickly deteriorate. Members then demand to know why they have to play on temporary greens most or part of the winter. Then at the first signs of summer, the greens turn brown, usually as a result of dry-patch, and the irrigation is turned on to keep them alive. This ineffectual form of management only increases expenditure and will certainly not decrease thatch.

Methods of controlling thatch will vary from one Head Greenkeeper to the next and this is not just dependent on the structure of the greens. However, it is important to have a clear understanding of the basic components of thatch - what causes it, the effects on turf health and vigour as well as methods of control.

What is thatch? Thatch is the accumulation of organic residuals, consisting of, and intermingled with, dead, living or partly decomposed roots, stems and shoots, which develop between the soil surface and the actively growing green vegetation. Thatch only becomes a problem when its density causes grass plants to grow on top of the thatch layer rather than on the soil surface.

What is mat? Thatch intermingled with mineral matter, usually as a result of topdressing. Around six millimetres of mat is advantageous as it promotes weed free, drought tolerant, free draining turf, which provides a cushion against the daily wear and tear caused by golf and maintenance traffic.

What causes excessive thatch? Thatch increases when the rate of shoot production exceeds the rate of decomposition. There are several influential factors which will contribute or accelerate an increase in thatch levels and consequently management practices will vary from club to club, depending on resources, cultural practices and, ultimately, the knowledge and experience of the Head Greenkeeper. One or several of these factors may be linked i.e. soil characteristics, grass species, soil pH, fertility input, irrigation practices, even microbial populations.

The characteristics of a soil will, no doubt, have some influence. For example high percent sand greens, by
their very nature have low CEC (cation exchange capacity), and more often than not, low microbial popula-
tions essential in thatch decomposition. However, the bene-
fits may compensate for the negatives with this method of construction, which is being favoured more and
more throughout Europe. The operating costs of high percentage sand
greens may be a little higher, but if built correctly and sound manage-
ment practices are implemented, those costs can be redeemed through
a full contented membership and maximising premium green-fee rates as
the greens are free draining and playable throughout the winter.

Soil greens retain nutrients longer, generally have higher CEC and
microbial counts, but are still vulnerable to thatch accumulation, although this is more likely as a result of
compaction, reduced oxygen supply to the roots, or excessive fertility input.

The type of grass species and culti-
vars will effect a management regime,
based upon the growth habit and aggressiveness of the desirable grass species. Bents, in particular the creeping
bents, have a vigorous growth habit and the new varieties of creeping
bents such as A-4 or G-6 are reputed to be so aggressive they out-
compete annual meadow grass.

At the other end of the scale there are the less aggressive growing species, such as the fine fescues, which can produce significant thatch layers due to little root development. Their recovery rate is slow and therefore any mechanical de-thatching operation should be less severe than with other grasses.

The soil pH can have an adverse effect on thatch development and as the pH decreases thatch is likely to increase - this is primarily due to acid soils having a negative effect on

High application of nitrogenous fertilisers will promote excessive thatch through the production of lush, su-
culent shoot growth. The application of fertilisers containing the ammonia
um form of nitrogen, for example, sulphate of ammonium, are likely to
increase acidity, while nitrate contain-
ing fertilisers such as potassium nitrate may cause the soil to become
more alkaline.

Excessive irrigation practices can cause soils to become waterlogged, resulting in reduced oxygen levels and as the greens are free draining and playable throughout the winter.

Thatch will harbour many types of disease pathogens, thatch provides the
perfect moist environment, but some say that most turf grass pathogens are air-born and therefore thatch cannot
inhibit the spread of disease. Hence, evidence proves that excessive thatch reduces turf grass health and vigour and therefore must surely increase disease incidence.

Biological control is linked to main-
taining a healthy environment in
order for micro-organisms to decom-
pose thatch. It is important to remember that thatch accumulates over a period of time and the more vigorous species such as bent grass may produce excessive thatch in just two or three growing seasons. So from the early days of establishment, it is important to understand the growth habit of the grasses you are manag-
ing, as this will dictate the kind of management regime you implement. If you inherit a thatch related prob-
lem, then it is advisable not to attempt eradicating the problem in one season, but to programme a series of operations over a period of one or two years providing that any operation is carried out when environmental con-
ditions favour thatch removal i.e.

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also assists with the movement of pesticides, nutrients and water through to the soil layer - how many times have you seen healthy white roots growing in tine holes or slits? Because hollow coring is disruptive to putting surfaces and subsequently upsetting to golfers, we tend to restrict this operation to one or two occasions per year. However, although not quite as effective, there are other forms of aeration which can also be beneficial in thatch reduction. These include the use of solid, chisel and slit tines, designed more to relieve compaction and permit air and water movement than physically remove thatch. Slit tines (thin bladed knives) can be used on a regular basis, not only for the benefits already mentioned, but also pruning tillers, yet causing minimal surface disruption.

Consideration for the long term quality and condition of the golf course must always come first, and this means course maintenance programmes should not be dictated by club competitions - ideally the reverse should happen. Hollow coring greens at the end of March or October will be far less beneficial in reducing thatch and recovery time will be slow, rather than when actively growing in April, May or September (this will naturally vary according to the part of the country you are working).

If well informed and given the choice, it is likely that members would rather have two weeks of disruption during the growing season than two months or so of playing competitions on temporary greens during the winter. Communication to members/visitors via the club diary and noticeboard that, subject to weather, the greens are to be hollow tined during the first week of May and the last week of September (earlier in the north of the country) then competitions and society bookings can be planned accordingly - "To be pre-warned, is to be prepared."

Top-dressing greens, either as a separate programme or in conjunction with a coring programme, will dilute thatch and assist in producing an environment more conducive to plant growth. The number of occasions greens are top-dressed is dependent on the growth habit of your particular grasses. Assuming that the underlying soils are of the desired specification, it is important that the top-dressing material is compatible (similar size and composition) with the root zone to avoid layering.

Irrigation management is reliant on the ability of water movement from the surface through to the root zone effectively and for moisture to be retained in the macro and micro-pore spaces. Irrigate when there is least wind, preferably early morning. The aim should be to wet the soils without exceeding infiltration and percolation rates. Research shows that roots do not "go in search of water." However, roots only grow in moist soil and continually grow into new areas that have not yet dried out. So, in practice, this means that if only the upper layers of the root zone remain moist, roots will be confined to these areas. If, by probing into the soil, it is revealed that the soil is dry a few centimetres below the surface, this will largely be due to root uptake and the root system will continue to shrink as it removes the moisture. By assessing the moisture content within the first 15 - 20 centimetres of the soil profile using a soil probe, will ensure adequate moisture for healthy root development.

Fertility regimes will vary from course to course and will be dependent on the Head Greenkeeper’s ideals and philosophies. However, it is important to avoid excessive applications of nitrogen and monitor nutrient availability and pH reading via soil tests.

Controlling thatch is essential to maintaining healthy turf and problems relating to thatch accumulation can be avoided if sound management programmes are implemented - REMEMBER - Be pro-active rather than re-active and "don’t let the thatch grow beneath your feet."

Ken Barber, Turfgrass Consultant
Tel/Fax +44 (0) 1825 732031
BIGGA HOUSE and Local Training Courses are filling up fast! BIGGA's Education & Training Manager, Ken Richardson gives details of the last few available places.

The BIGGA Golf Course Environment Competition in Association with Amazone Ground Care and Grass Roots Trading Company

Bob Taylor, from STRI, and Dr Keith Duff, from English Nature, are reaching the final stages of judging for this Competition. The Regional Winners and the National Winner will be informed as soon as possible.

The Learning Experience 2000 sponsored by Textron Turfcare and Speciality Products

The Programme and booking form for the Learning Experience 2000 are included with this magazine. The National Education Conference, which is structured differently for 2000, will run alongside five Workshops followed by the BTME Seminars. We will also be running a course for Chairman of Green and Golf Club Secretaries, jointly, with the STRI, on Running Golf Courses in the 21st Century. Places are selling out fast with many delegates booking their place before the brochure was printed. To be sure of your place at Harrogate in January 2000, ensure that you complete and return your booking form as soon as possible. For further information on the Learning Experience or for advice on completing your booking form, please contact Sami on 01347 833800 to check current availability.

Education courses Full or nearly full

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The Scottish Golf Course Advisory Group Golf Bag Project

The Scottish Golf Course Advisory Group has been working hard over a number of years to improve the environmental quality of Scottish Golf Courses. This important objective has been supported by the introduction of "Golf Bags" to more than 30 sites throughout Scotland. The Golf Bags do not contain clubs, balls or clothing, rather, they contain a wealth of information on environmental management and environmentally aware golf course design, including books, videos, leaflets and case studies.

Each Golf Bag is looked after by a Bag Manager who is responsible for the dispatch and return of all items in the bag. Golf Clubs may borrow items from the bag or may buy items if they wish to hold onto them permanently. Golf Bags contain information on birds, bird boxes, nests, bracken, walls, hedges, dunes, heathland, moorland, lowlands, woodlands and waterways, to name but a few; giving information that greenkeepers, club ofﬁcials, golf club members, architects and constructors could all find useful.

In his foreword to the Golf Bag Handbook, Colin Montgomery says that a golf course that has been sensitively designed and managed in a way that works with nature is normally more interesting and challenging. The information provided in the Golf Bag proves that golf and the environment can work together providing a respite from outside pressures and ensuring that golf courses and the areas that surround them will be available for our descendants to enjoy.

The Golf Bag is an excellent idea giving a mass of easy to follow information on golf course ecological management. It would be pleasing to see such Golf Bags available to all golf clubs in Britain and throughout Europe.

More information on the Golf Bags, including the location of your nearest Golf Bag Manager and general advice on all aspects of conservation on golf courses can be obtained from the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Advisor, Scottish Natural Heritage, 2 Anderson Place, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP, 0131 5549797.
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As Autumn approaches you may be looking to kit yourself out with new work wear. Before you look any further check out the exciting range of clothing and footwear from the BIGGA Collection from Stylo Matchmakers.

Stylo, who are also a Golden Key Supporter of the Association, have developed a range of BIGGA work wear which is competitively priced and designed to fit anyone working in the greenkeeping profession. All the clothing available is made to the highest specification in durable materials - offering working comfort as well as practicality. All items subtly feature the BIGGA logo.

While all the garments and footwear available represent exceptionally good value for money - they have also been designed to be stylish and practical for general leisure as well as work use.

Did you see the special offers?
Both the July and August editions of Greenkeeper International carried special offers on the current 1999 range. In July, if you bought a Hurricane Waterproof Jacket, you received a FREE workshirt, worth £14.95, which is made from 100% brushed cotton and is ideal to wear in all weather conditions. Also, there was a special value deal, pay only £25, when you purchased a pair of poly/cotton trousers AND a sweatshirt, and save over £6. The weather conditions. Also, there was a special offer of buy one and get one free, which is made from 100% wool, £9.95.

And a sweatshirt, and save over £6. The weather conditions.

Are you paying too much for your mortgage?
"As we are all aware, interest rates are extremely low at the moment, having reached levels not seen since the middle 60's. How long they will remain this low is anybody's guess. Many commentators are suggesting that they will actually go lower, aligning more with European rates.

This is bad news for individuals relying on their investment income for financial protection is also greater. While this may mean that someone suffering a heart attack will live longer than previously, the number of new sufferers has not reduced. So the need for financial protection is also greater.

One of the key points that you should bear in mind. You should look at any fees that may be payable, such as valuation fees and legal costs. Many lenders will make a significant contribution to these, perhaps even covering them for themselves. However, at a giveaway price of just £29.95 it won't break the bank. Available in Medium, Large and Extra Large sizes.

For a copy of the full brochure contact the Membership Department at HQ on 01347 833800 and we will only be too happy to send you one.

Next month: Our international membership column visits the USA

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"As we are all aware, interest rates are extremely low at the moment, having reached levels not seen since the middle 60's. How long they will remain this low is anybody's guess. Many commentators are suggesting that they will actually go lower, aligning more with European rates.

This is bad news for individuals relying on their investment income for financial protection is also greater. While this may mean that someone suffering a heart attack will live longer than previously, the number of new sufferers has not reduced. So the need for financial protection is also greater.

One of the key points that you should bear in mind. You should look at any fees that may be payable, such as valuation fees and legal costs. Many lenders will make a significant contribution to these, perhaps even covering them for themselves. However, at a giveaway price of just £29.95 it won't break the bank. Available in Medium, Large and Extra Large sizes.

For a copy of the full brochure contact the Membership Department at HQ on 01347 833800 and we will only be too happy to send you one.

Next month: Our international membership column visits the USA

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