to increasingly severe summer drought conditions] because selective herbicides are never applied during extended periods of dry weather when the grass is not actively growing. But on the other side of the global warming ‘coin’ are predicted wetter winters with the classical December-February UK winter period squeezed at both ends by extended autumns and earlier springs.

These are the seasons when weed pressure, originating during hot dry summers, will be felt. You only had to look at the lush green turf in September 2010 to see how the situation had changed in a matter of weeks. Turf grass growth had recovered but weeds like white clover and yarrow didn’t need to recover and simply took over with huge patches across even professional sports turf. And if herbicides are no longer available for prompt application in September when the rain resumes there will be no way of shifting such fast moving and well established weed growth that will persist through to spring.

The industry is preoccupied with new grass species and varieties to withstand hotter and drier summer conditions but largely ignores the inherent capacity of many native and naturalised broad leaf turf weeds to effectively withstand severe drought conditions. We are so conditioned to our inherently wet climate that we never dream to imagine that native and naturalised broad leaf weeds are drought tolerant.

What’s more those plant characteristics like finely-divided leaves with thick cuticles and underground vegetative organs, which confer general drought tolerance, are often the very same characteristics that make drought tolerant species difficult to kill with herbicides. In a nutshell plant leaf shape and surface structure that makes it harder for water to escape from the plant make it equally hard for herbicide to get in.

Yarrow

Yarrow is the classic drought tolerant weed of UK turf with finely-divided leaves protected by a thick cuticle and waxy bloom and providing the ideal bulwark against excessive loss of water by transpiration during hot dry conditions. These are the self-same plant characteristics that make yarrow one of the most herbicide resistant weeds in UK turf. Yarrow thrives in under moisturised low fertility soils and will continue to grow when the grass cannot. The turf root zone may be brimming with nutrients but if the fine fibrous root system of turf grasses cannot extract water from the soil to compensate for transpiration then it (the soil) is at all times and purposes functionally infertile.

Leguminous turf weeds

A select group of leguminous plants including white clover, bird’s foot trefoil (Lotus corniculatus), yellow sucking clover (Trifolium dubium) and black medick (Medicago lupulina) are dedicated weeds of UK turf with two essential and related things in common. All have the capacity to access their own supplies of nitrate courtesy nitrogen fixing bacteria (Rhizobium species) that conduct a symbiotic relationship with the leguminous plant from their position in the root nodules. In addition all these leguminous weeds are inherently drought tolerant.

Nitrogen is an essential major nutrient for growth which most plants including grasses can only source from soil during drought conditions. These are the same plant characteristics that make yarrow one of the most herbicide resistant weeds in UK turf. Yarrow thrives in under moisturised low fertility soils and will continue to grow when the grass cannot. The turf root zone may be brimming with nutrients but if the fine fibrous root system of turf grasses cannot extract water from the soil to compensate for transpiration then it (the soil) is at all times and purposes functionally infertile.

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Individual leguminous turf weeds may possess other characters that confer drought resistance

But parsley piert and dove’s foot cranebill in particular with their fondness for sandy free-draining soils would be expected to have a high degree of drought tolerance. Furthermore the inherent soil structure of golf greens and tees with their distinctly sandy free-draining bases are clearly potential prime sites for these weeds whether or not water stress in summer is a problem. The clear advantage given to such weeds during June and July was evident by September with parsley piert spreading on golf tees as its common name implies like parsley fit for a salad. That apart even those weeds like self heal which most frequently occurs as a problem weed of persistently damp and poorly drained turf, and creeping cinquefoil typically found in wet neglected acid turf, were doing well enough at the height of heat and drought in July 2010. They were flowering and setting seed to take full advantage of the late summer and autumn rains that would follow just a few weeks later. Even weeds like slender speedwell, known to prefer damp conditions did not appear to have suf-
Feviur Feature

Dandelion was already having a good year (Greenkeeper International, July 2010) and the summer drought just added to this relative advantage over turf grass, so that by September dandelions were much more prominent and frequent in fine turf than usually seen at this time of year. And especially on golf tees where dandelion seeds germinated and brightly ox-tongue were clearly taking advantage especially when the tees were alongside potentially large seed banks like railway embankments.

Neither ragwort nor bristly ox-tongue is regarded as weed of turf root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root.

Small leaved weeds may go unnoticed in the grass but there’s nowhere to hide for turf weeds from the family Asteraceae (Composite) irrespective of whether the sward is actively-growing or static. Anumber of factors contrive to make dandelion (Taraxacum officinale), cat’s ear (Hypochaeris radicata) and to a lesser extent smooth hawk’s-beard (Crepis capillaris) and mouse-ear hawkweed (Hieracium pilosella) formidable turf weeds.

The common factor which enables this group of closely related species to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root. Packed with polysaccharide to withstand severe drought is a tap root.

Fears for the future

The drought tolerance of dandelion and other members of the Asteraceae (Composites) like cat’s ear are evident from their success as turf weeds in South Australia where there are four consecutive excessively hot summer months with virtually no rain. Should global warming arrive and develop at the speed and on the scale predicted five years ago for the UK then turf weeds will present a huge problem for golf courses. Not in mid to late summer, when the grass is dried out and herbicide application is not an option anyway, but certainly during the rest of the year starting in autumn, when the rain returns and still-growing weeds have a head start over turf grasses. And at the very time when on-going EU pesticide legislation seems hell bent on removing chemical herbicides from the marketplace, leaving greenkeepers with few if any proactive practical options for turf weed control.
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Why Join BIGGA?

- Industry specific, education and training
- Greenkeeper International – BIGGA’s official magazine
- Careers advice and guidance
- Regional and national events

Join the Association for Sports Turf Professionals

Are you employed in the maintenance of sports turf at a sports facility? Do you want to be taken seriously as a sports turf professional? Do you want access to a wide range of bespoke education courses? Do you want to be part of a large network of like-minded people where shared knowledge is a key ingredient? Do you want to be part of a progressive association that actively works to enhance the professional reputation of sports turf professionals?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions then Membership of BIGGA is for you.

Look to your future by joining BIGGA today...
Tel: 01347 833800 select option 1, email: membership@bigga.co.uk visit www.bigga.org.uk

Promoting best practice in sports turf management

Another example of drought resistant turf weeds in July.
Every one a winner

Richard Stuttard, of the STRI, reveals the winners of this year’s Golf Environment Awards and explains why they were successful.

**STRI’s Golf Environment Awards have once again brought to the forefront of the golf industry ten of the most environmentally proactive golf clubs in the UK.**

In addition to this the awards attracted a significant number of first time entrants to the programme indicating that awareness of environmental and ecological best practice is continuing to spread throughout the industry.

In 2010 our overall winner is Portmore Golf Park situated close to Barnstaple in North Devon. This 27 hole facility constructed in the 1990’s has had ecological and environmental considerations built into its ethos since inception. The Club particularly with regard to ecological and environmental

**considerations. On the nature conservation side the course is a rich mix of diverse mature woodland, extensive well managed deep rough, grassland and visually and ecologically superb water features. The Club has a true appreciation of the need to develop ecological corridors through the golf course and have as a result created appealing vistas from all parts of the golf course. On the playing surfaces an eight year programme of intensive management has seen previously annual meadow grass dominated greens become almost entirely fescue. No pesticides or fungicides have been used on the course for over 14 years and only organic fertilisers are applied. Colin and his son, Josh, are strong advocates of the use of Compost Tea and have developed considerable skills in its development and application.

Waste reduction and management has also been a priority at Portmore, particularly over the last five years. In that time the Club has achieved a two thirds reduction in landfill waste - a considerable environmental achievement.

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The remaining eight prize winners in this year’s awards are all worthy recipients, each with their own individual distinguishing characteristics. Our Regional Prize winners, Loch Lomond Golf Club, Silloth on Solway Golf Club, Aberdovey Golf Club and Alderburgh Golf Club each offer very different but very special golfing experiences. Loch Lomond Golf Club sits within a truly breathtaking setting which has been further enhanced by the work of the golf course maintenance team. As managers of such an important site there is a clear sense of responsibility from the whole team and this is reflected in the quality of ecological work undertaken. The Club have also paid significant attention to environmental matters with large scale water management projects undertaken and waste management being a particular specialism. The Club are on course to achieve their highly commendable goal of sending zero waste to landfill by 2012 – a not inconsiderable achievement.

Our Northern Regional winner, Silloth on Solway Golf Club, received their award for the large scale ecological management work that has been undertaken over the last 10 years and continued in earnest in 2010. The transformation of the Club in the last 10 years has been truly staggering with this former gorse choked coastal course being gradually reverted to its original more open character. Following large scale gorse removal the Club have continued to enhance the bio-diversity of the course by exposing wetlands, developing heather and sand dune management and establishing and maintaining good quality open and fine leaved rough grasslands. Additionally this year the Club have significantly improved their impact on local water resources installing a bore hole to obtain irrigation water and investing in a new highly efficient and accurate irrigation system, thereby ensuring minimal inputs to the turf. Aberdovey Golf Club has retained their 2009 Welsh Regional title following the continuation of its extensive ecological and environmental management programme. In 2010 the Club have focused on sand dune restoration and stabilisation, scrub clearance and grassland management and have also paid particular attention to further naturalising the golf course with deep coastal grass-
The Club (Portmore Golf Park) has achieved the perfect balance between presenting a top quality golfing experience with a low environmental and financial cost.

The foresight and enthusiasm of owner, Colin Webber, has resulted in the creation of a successful and sustainable business model for the Club particularly with regard to ecological and environmental considerations. On the nature conservation side the course is a rich mix of diverse mature woodland, extensive well-managed deep rough grassland and visually and ecologically superb water features. The Club has a true appreciation of the need to develop ecological corridors through the golf course and in 1990’s has had ecological and environmental considerations built into its ethos since inception. The Club has achieved the perfect balance between presenting a top quality golfing experience with a low environmental and financial cost.

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The Golf Environment Awards continue to promote the wide range of environmentally positive initiatives that are being undertaken throughout the golf industry.
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Purchasing policies and sustainable sourcing are also key elements addressed by the club and as a result Machrihanish Dunes are very much leading the way in terms of waste management within the golf industry.

Our Water Management Award has been given to Marston Golf Club in South Wales. For many years several areas of the course have been prone to flooding/water logging and the Club has put a considerable amount of effort in recent times to combating these issues.

In 2010 one of the few remaining issues was a green prone to regular water logging due to surface water run off from an adjacent hillside.

To deal with this the Club took on an ambitious project to completely redesign the topography of the green and green surround.

This project, designed and undertaken in-house was to raise the previously low set green and create a swale at the low point of the green surrounded by divert water around the playing area and direct it off site.

The project was a huge success with the water logging issue completely solved and the re-designed hole looking and playing superbly.

And finally we move onto our Turfgrass Management Award. This award is presented to Clubs which have adopted a sustainable approach to Turfgrass management.

This year the award has gone to Royal St David's Golf Club in Harlech, North Wales. Course Manager, Roger Kerry, and his team have put in considerable effort toward changing the composition of the formerly bent/fescue dominated swards to bent/fescue dominated playing surfaces which improved green quality, playability and are drastically available for play for the vast majority of the year.

The Golf Environment Awards continue to promote the wide range of environmentally positive initiatives that are being undertaken throughout the golf industry and it is hoped that those clubs who are yet to address environmental sensitivities at their club will gain inspiration from the fine example set by this year’s winners.
Behind the scenes at an exhibition

Jim Cook finds out exactly what it takes to pull together the ultimate turf management exhibition in Europe

For anyone who, like me, has attended Harrogate Week religiously in previous years, soaked up knowledge during seminars and workshops, learnt from exhibitions, built contacts in the industry and met some great friends, the thought of how it all happens and how it is put together may have slipped under the radar.

From cups of coffee and risk assessments, to delegate packs and schedules, every detail of the week must be planned meticulously to ensure the visitor has the most beneficial and enjoyable time possible.

To gain an insight into how this is all done and what goes on behind the scenes in hosting such an immense event I visited the BIGGA office and spoke with the team responsible.

Pauline Thompson, the Exhibition Officer, is first on site during the week and the last to leave. She has the task of selling exhibition space to contractors, the Harrogate International Centre and various accommodation venues, to review how things went and build a template for the following year.

Throughout the year, Pauline negotiates with various contractors and companies, manages content for the website, writes copy and sifts through photographs from the previous show. She also processes applications from the sales team, researches best prices on such things as lanyards, carrier bags and pens, looks after the health and safety side of things and has the sizeable task of getting information out to exhibitors about the build.

“It’s an extremely tight build time-wise and because of the location it’s like a jigsaw puzzle. Contractors help me but I guide and drive it. We all work fantastically well as a team.”

The day after the show finishes, Pauline begins planning for the next one by holding debriefs with contractors, the Harrogate International Centre and various accommodation venues, to review how things went and build a template for the following year.

“I work all year round for this one event. “When I know the build is complete on the Monday night I can take a deep breath, then the show opens and it’s lovely to hear people say thanks it’s been great and I’ve enjoyed the show.”

This year the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate will be the most comprehensive it has ever been. The pair organising it, Sami Collins and Rachael Duffy (shown above) start planning 14-16 months in advance for sessions running over the full five days. They organise featured sessions, which this year include Jim McKenzie, of Celtic Manor, and Chris Kennedy, of Wentworth, and allocate the rest of the seminars over the week. After sorting out all the accommodation and contractual requirements for the speakers, they write the brochure for the beginning of August and have the programme completed by June.

Sami explained the administration behind parts of the week. “We make up all the delegate packs, all the speaker packs and do all the vouchers for lunches, coffee and catering. All the little things where people say, ‘We’ll go for a coffee break now’ we’ve had to print out hundreds of coffee vouchers and made sure we have the right number in for each class” Sami Collins

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Sami and Rachael arrive on site at 8am Sunday morning, start preparing rooms for speakers and by 9:30am start registering delegates, giving out badges and handing out delegate packs.

“Once all the delegates are in, calm starts to descend for a little while at least while we start thinking about what needs doing next and we start writing a reminder list for the next year. What could have been better; let’s keep that in mind; what we need to address, getting certificates out to people and then the show starts all over again.”

Harrogate show provides a large part of the income for BIGGA and the task of selling exhibition space falls at the feet of the sales team.
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Rachael is also co-ordinating the Personal Development Zone adjacent to the BIGGA stand.

After the show there is no rest as it is back to work the next day.

“Friday morning we’re back in the office, unpacking boxes and sorting out everything that’s happened, what we need to address, getting certificates out to people and then the show starts all over again.”

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Harrogate show provides a large part of the income for BIGGA and the task of selling exhibition space falls at the feet of the sales team,
Sue McDonough and Jill Rodham. They organise who goes where in the exhibition hall based on individual requirements of space and cost. Sue said they book clients in as early as possible in the year and then help them with a number of things including sponsorship and how to get the best out of the show.

“The people who are coming to exhibit will talk about the show as a project so they’ll know they’ve come in January and show their product, but also know that it’s an opportu- 

ty to see all their clients, meet and sell. It’s their one shot in the year to get all these visitors in one place to show off their product.”

This year the team has brought in a new Enviro-Zone.

“What I also do is go around other shows looking for ideas to make Harrogate better and this was one that Jill and I came up with. It’s something that we can grow and expand on and hopefully end up with a half, or a full half of environmental stands.”

“I think next year we will because we will have an idea of what worked and what didn’t from this year and we’ll be able to move it forward,” said Jill.

Sue explained her and Jill’s role at the show.

“When we get to Harrogate it’s a case of us walking around and making sure that everybody is happy and also meeting new customers. It’s to do with building relationships and we see these three days to get to know people. It’s a very social and exciting job.”

Anything media-related to the Harrogate Week is handled by Scott MacCallum.

His work also begins imme-

diately after the previous show, when he starts putting the press centre schedule together and companies can book slots for press conferences in the media centre under Hall B.

Towards the end of the year he starts putting out press releases to all the media outlets, using e-zines to tell what will be new at the show.

During the week itself Scott juggles a number of roles as Press Officer, BIGGA official and the Editor of Greenkeeper Interna-

tional. He explained how he utilises his time there.

“I’m sometimes hosting press conferences, I’m sometimes doing my PR role, meeting and greeting people; attending press conferences in a journalistic capacity; taking notes, chatting to people and gener-

ally just making sure that the whole thing is running smoothly.”

For a number of members it is the only chance in the year they get to meet up with Scott.

“They wouldn’t get to see me for the other eleven-and-three- 

quarter months of the year, but they’ll pop in to say hello and it’s nice to see a lot of the friendly faces who have got to know over the last fifteen-and-a-half years.”

As soon as the show is over Scott focuses on the important February magazine.

“It’s a great week and I have thoroughly enjoyed every Harri-

gate I’ve ever done. The first time I went there was 1996 and I couldn’t believe the scale of it then and it’s grown so much. It’s an event of which I’m extremely proud to be a part. I know though, that these are difficult times and I really do feel sorry for those companies who are difficult times and I really do feel sorry for those companies who have not received the budget support they need and those that don’t have the financial backing to make the move and engaged with meet-

ings, organising AGMs and going around talking to key industry people.

“We like to think that it is the biggest event of its type in Europe, so it’s important that we get it right and that we plan it meticulously.”

John Pemberton

Membership Administrator, main this stand and ensure it is the best it can be over the three days.

The team head over on the Monday afternoon and set the stand up to be ready for Tuesday morning.

Tracey explained how, as well as giving away freebies such as beanie hats and pens, membership promotion was the most important aspect of the stand.

“We take all our equipment over to produce and process cards. A lot of overseas members take the opportunity to come along and renew their membership. We have about 260 overseas members and a lot have met friends here and come to see them every year.”

The stand is in Hall C, where the escalator runs up to the learning and development section and near the Personal Development Zone manned by Angela Wilson.

Tracey mentioned how she was looking forward to seeing new and regular faces.

“It is a good chance for people to meet us as we are just names throughout the year. I try and meet as many as I can during the week. There are four regional administra-

tors there as well. It’s nice to get out of the office for three days and meet people.”

Design work for the week is done by Tom Campbell. He explained how his main job was in the build up.

“My job is dealing with all the visitor side of Harrogate Week. My major work is done before the show. I design and produce the advertise-

ments which appear in a host of trade magazines, including this one (see next page).”

“I also create the Continue to Learn brochure, the Show Guide and also the Show Planner, which folds out to form a map.”

“For the show itself, I’m doing visual signs as well, those you see at the HIC, when walking through the main entrance etc.”

Tom also designed the mastheads for the website. He spoke of his role at last year’s show.

“I was based in the media centre assisting with any problems with people using computers or anyone had any queries. Other than that I was with the photographer.”

With 16 successful Harrogate shows behind him, John Pemberton is the man responsible for steering the ship in the right direction.

Prividing the week, John man-

ages and pulls it all together.

“It is the biggest showcase for the industry, not only in greenkeeping but all sports and amenity turf to look at new products, meet people and take up the opportunity to take in some education. We have a massive education programme and this is the biggest we’ve ever produced.

The fact that it attracts visitors from overseas spells out within the industry how highly it’s regarded.

At the show, John is constantly on the move and engaged with meet-

ings, organising AGMs and going around talking to key industry people.

“This is my 17th Harrogate and we believe strongly in our product. Every year we produce a very good show that only raises the bar for the following year.

People come from America, Canada, mainland Europe and we’ve had people from Australia, Africa and South East Asia in the past.

This is great for UK members as they can talk to them and find out what life is like in other parts of the world.

It’s a great learning opportunity for a whole variety of reasons. It helps make the world a much smaller place.”

Harrogate Week is the culmina-

tion of a year’s worth of effort from a dedicated group.

The teamwork involved in putting on an event such as this is phenom-

enal and with each section working like a well-oiled machine the end 

product, a show for us all to enjoy and learn from 2011’s care and attention, built from experience, knowledge and expertise.