The outstanding playing conditions at Woodhall Spa Golf Club in Lincolnshire, which is the home of England Golf, attract golfers all year round. But the sandy soils and dry conditions ensure the Hotchkin course remains playable when others are closed.

Maintaining turf cover and quality on the greens over the winter is imperative for Course Manager, Sam Rhodes, to satisfy the early season demand. Over recent years he has adopted a proactive approach with his fungicide programme, seeking to prevent infection breaking out before damage occurs on the playing surface.

“We wanted to look at preventing disease damage. “However, we were adamant that we didn’t want to go down a routine prophylactic treatment of spraying a fungicide every five or six weeks. “We are keen to minimise the use of any inputs, from an ecological and economic standpoint.

“The solution has been to introduce a proactive approach that inte...
Temperature controlled fungicide selection

Soil temperatures that dictate turf growth rates give an essential guide to appropriate fungicide selection to avoid damaging disease attacks through autumn and winter conditions, and protect playing surface quality, advises Syngenta Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson.

Over recent seasons, late autumn and early winter has seen prolonged warm temperatures, or more specifically higher soil temperatures, with continued growth.

When turf is actively growing a systemic fungicide is essential; contact or local penetrant fungicides applied at this time will quickly grow up the leaf and be cut off – leaving new growth at the base of the leaf exposed to infection within hours of application.

As temperatures cool, but whilst turf is still actively growing, a cool systemic will provide fast moving protection, to prevent loss of turf quality.

As growing conditions slow further, the contact+ Medallion TL will be more appropriate to reduce the pathogen presence in the thatch and protect the leaf through the cold weather, when the grass plant is dormant.

“With the changing weather patterns you really can’t apply fungicides by the calendar anymore, which makes weather-based prediction even more important.”

Sam believes they now understand better what they are aiming to achieve with each application, and selecting the most appropriate option that best matches the situation.

That means he will pick a systemic when turf is actively growing, a cool weather systemic as it starts to slow in the autumn, and then only switch to a contact when growth has effectively stopped.

He uses soil temperature information as a guide to turf growth and selecting the appropriate fungicide.

“At the changing weather patterns you really can’t apply fungicides by the calendar anymore, which makes weather-based prediction even more important.”

As part of this, Sam now also uses the local five-day disease forecasts on the GreensCast website as a key tool to pre-empt and prevent damaging disease attacks.

He stresses that it certainly doesn’t replace his local knowledge and experience of the course, but is a valuable adjunct in supporting his decision making.

“This approach has really made us think about every application, and how we can integrate them with better cultural controls to help improve results.”

Assessing any impending disease risk, Sam will look at what fungicide was last applied and when, how much growth there has been, if the turf is under any particular stress and any other factors that might make the greens more or less susceptible to specific disease infection.

“If we feel there is still sufficient protection in the plant or if it is all looking particularly healthy, for example, the risk assessment helps give us the confidence to leave it a few more days, or possibly apply an iron treatment.

“But where we can see the risk is high, we can be assured that we are taking the right action with a fungicide application.”

Sam recalled that last winter Syngenta predicted a high risk of Microdochium Patch (Fusarium) and the looming prospect of cold weather.

He fortuitously took the decision to apply Medallion TL prior to the snow, and when it finally cleared after several weeks the greens surfaces were completely clean.

“We didn’t know the snow cover was going to be so long, but having seen the high risk of snow it did prompt us to get the protection on early.

“We were also confident the protection would stay in place with zero growth beneath the snow.

“With the combination of improved cultural controls and more targeted fungicides, even the most susceptible greens have stayed completely clean, which has received favourable comments from players.”

Seeing and experiencing the results means the Woodhall Spa members and club management have been convinced that it is the right approach, which Sam believes will make further activities easier to implement.

“We are extremely proud of the ecological credentials of the course, but are also assured that the quality of the greens and the course is essential to attract members and visitors.

“With the proactive and integrated approach to managing the playing surfaces we are only using treatments where they are required, and we are able to justify every application we make.

“Even with the extremely challenging weather conditions we are increasingly experiencing, we have found that we are able to maintain better turf quality.

“And by using the fungicide treatments more effectively, we have actually made fewer applications over the course of the season.

“We certainly feel much more in control and ready for what might happen.”
the aim to maintain clean surfaces right through the winter.

“We recognised that with the potential of the new fungicides, we needed to be smarter in the way that we used them to get the best results.”

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**COURSE MANAGEMENT**

**Temperature controlled fungicide selection**

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**Checklist for autumn and winter fungicide selection**

- Track soil temperatures and clipping yield to check turf growth
- Employ STM practices to reduce risk of disease build-up
- Use a cool weather systemic fungicide whilst turf is still growing
- Switch to contact+ protection with slow or zero turf growth
- Manage nutrition to keep turf healthy, but avoid soft growth
- Also GreenCast local disease forecasts to pro-actively prevent infection
The 24th BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition is officially open for registration at www.btme.org.uk—and this year it features a distinct Ryder Cup flavour.

In the wake of Europe’s astonishing triumph at the Medinah Country Club, Curtis Tyrrell MG—the Club’s Director of Golf Course Operations—is a guest speaker at one of the ‘Continue to Learn’ seminars.

He’ll be joined by Jim McKenzie, who conquered atrocious conditions at Celtic Manor two years ago to help the Europeans emerge victorious, and Steve Chappell who is now looking forward to welcoming the party to Gleneagles in 2014.

Where else will you be able to get the lowdown on the past, present and future Ryder Cups?

BTME 2013, incorporating Continue to Learn, will also host the third annual Turf Managers’ Conference featuring Dr Thom Nikolai, one of the world’s eminent turf professors, looking at green speed. There will also be dozens of educational seminars and workshops featuring everything from soil analysis to IT.

Turf professionals and buyers cannot afford to miss this annual chance to browse, buy and seek crucial advice from many of the world’s top manufacturers and service providers. We’ve already filled 90% of the available stand space—so don’t delay if you’re still looking to book a slot.

The event kicks off on Sunday 20 January with our Continue to learn seminars and workshops, and the full exhibition opens on Tuesday 22 January until Thursday 24 January.

Make sure you register today at www.btme.org.uk to beat the queues!

The BTME website includes bags of information about the big week including how to book a stand, accommodation, travel tips, lists of exhibitors and a product guide.

Book your place at the ultimate turf management event today. We’ll leave the final word to BIGGA Chief Executive Jim Croxton…

“Quite simply a well planned visit to BTME makes you a better turf manager. In this competitive age, it’s an opportunity not to be missed.”

Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO
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This is all before you consider the superb networking opportunities available – the event could potentially boost your career or business.

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Pellenc manufacturer a choice of options which are available through Etesia UK.

The Airion is a hand-held blower currently available. This means that the ProForce has the superior productivity needed to make fast work of those huge autumn maintenance jobs, such as clearing paths and other hard-landscaped areas of leaves, and blowing grass clippings, aeration cores or other organic debris off fairways or greens.

Along with a smaller working width came a reduction in weight to only 1,200kg, so that only a mid-range compact tractor of 28 HP is required.

The new design is the result of many years of experience to meet the requirements of councils, contractors, greensmen and greenkeepers in a challenging environment.

A 55mm diameter hand held winder hose makes the SS suitable for versatile use all year round to clean hard to get areas such as bunkers, shrubbery or refuse bins.

Email: tim@thegrassgroup.com / www.thegrassgroup.co.uk

New Backpack Blowers

Available now from specialist STIHL dealers, three new backpack blowers have joined the STIHL range and simply drive away debris with their hurricane air speed.

The utility vehicle-mounted Pro-Force Debris Blower is designed to clear and in the autumn they really make fast work of those big autumn maintenance jobs, such as clearing paths and other hard-landscaped areas of leaves, and blowing grass clippings, aeration cores or other organic debris off fairways or greens.

The Trilo S3 vacuum sweeper, from The Grass Group, is the latest product to emerge from a programme of producing equipment for use with sub 30Hp tractors.

To find out more about the Solo range, call distributor Lely UK on 01480 226800 or email: tim@thegrassgroup.com

A key feature is the hand-held wireless remote control, which allows the operator to start and stop the engine, adjust the engine throttle up and down to match air power to the job at hand, and rotate the nozzle 360 degrees – all from the driving seat of a Toro Workman MT Series or similar utility vehicle.

Etesia UK is the UK distributor for Etesia, which is a French manufacturer of groundcare machines. Etesia machines are totally eliminated.

New HPV Vacuum

At SalTEX 2012, Little Wonder launched the new HPV vacuum for the Golf and Amenity Professional.

This latest version of the HPV has superior suction and airflow thanks to its 17 inch, 5 blade reverse-swept impeller and unique scrolled housing design.

In terms of debris management, this vacuum will collect almost any item including leaves, litter, plastic bottles plus sand and grit.

This top loading vacuum is ideal for golf course club and hotel grounds, car parks, sports facilities, parks and grounds maintenance.

Self-Propelled Debris Management

Little Wonder are at the forefront of debris management and have also introduced a new line up of models across their Optima range of blowers.

The models are available with 270cc or 390cc Honda engines or 400cc Subaru engine.

With the new Remote Chute Deflector Control located at your fingertips, you can control the patented split air-stream discharge with ease.

This removes leaves and debris with unmatched air power more easily and without stopping.

The introduction of the new self-propelled Blowers with a choice of Honda engines provides a new level of performance in the walk-behind blower market.

Contact Schiller Groundscare (Little Wonder) on 0800 840 0888 or email: info@littlewonder.uk.com

Solo Backpack Blowers

Distributed by Lely UK, the Solo range of Backpack Blowers is ideal for both small and medium-sized debris-clearance jobs around the golf course.

Thanks to its high airflow rate of approximately 1,400m3/h, the Solo 467 Backpack Blower keeps emissions low but output high to make this one of the most effective and environmentally-friendly models on the market.

The new, more powerful 66.5cc engine with magnesium crankcase provides the professional performance you’d expect from the high-quality Solo outdoor equipment range.

The clever design also reduces vibrations to the hands and back, while an ergonomic padded backrest makes for an ultra-comforty working experience.

Another great choice is the 440 hand-held model, which benefits from a 760/630m3/h airflow rate together with a light weight of just 4.1kg that makes it the ideal choice for quick clean-ups around the course.

The 440 and 441 also benefit from Solo’s unique anti-vibration technology for a comfortable working experience.

With its product portfolio also spanning brushcutters, hand held and knapsack sprayers, chain-saws, hedge-trimmers and accessories, the German-manufactured Solo range is the perfect choice for golf course greenkeepers seeking high-performance equipment that is built to last.

To find out more about the Solo range, call distributor Lely UK’s Roger Lupton on 01480 226800 or email roger.lupton@leyl.com

Proforce Debris Blower

Perfect for big clean-up jobs around the golf course, the Toro ProForce Debris Blower delivers unrivalled air power, durability and ease of use for fast and efficient removal of grass clippings, leaves, aeration cores, sand, gravel, rubbish and other debris.

The utility vehicle-mounted Pro-Force combines a 20.5kW (27hp) Kohler engine with a highly efficient turbine-style fan design to provide greater air-volume-flow than any single nozzle turbine-type debris blower currently available.

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contact Etesia UK on 01295 680129 or visit www.etesia.co.uk
Pellenc manufacturer a choice of options which are available through Etesia UK.

The Aion is a hand-held blower intended for cleaning roads, parks and gardens as well as areas around a clubhouse.

Weighing only 2.6 kg and with a noise level of just 43 dB (A) it is claimed to be the lightest and quietest professional blower on the market.

It is very comfortable to hold owing to the soft touch new generation hand grip and is optimally balanced for natural tilting towards the ground.

Low Emission Levels

Comparing the direct emissions of CO₂ of the Aion with a petrol blower, the difference is enormous. A petrol-engine blower has a direct emission of over 4 tonnes of CO₂ per year while the Aion only emits 47 kg.

The Aion prevents almost 99% of the direct emissions of a petrol engine.

If Pellenc batteries are recharged with the recently launched Solarisener solar charger, direct CO₂ emissions are totally eliminated.

Contact Etesia UK on 01295 880125 or visit www.etesia.co.uk

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To find out more about the Solo range, call distributor Lely UK’s Roger Lupton on 01480 226800 or email toro.info.uk@ley.com

A Blower for Hard Work

The Trilo S3 vacuum sweeper, from The Grass Group, is the latest product to emerge from a programme of producing equipment for use with sub 30hp tractor.

The Golf and Amenity Professional can clear leaves, organic debris off fairways or greens.

Along with a smaller working width came a reduction in weight to only 1200kg, so that only a mid-range oractic tractor of 28 HP is required.

The new design is the result of many years of experience to meet the requirements of councils, contractors, greensmen and private owners.

With a diameter of hand held w reminder nozzle 360 degrees – all from the driving seat of a Toro Workman MX Series or similar utility vehicle.

This feature increases productivity as, unlike some competitor models, the user doesn’t have to walk to the engine to physically start or stop the machine.

For more information on the Toro ProForce debris blower, visit www.toro.com or call distributor Lely UK on 01480 226800 or email toro.info.uk@ley.com

BR 430 - The hard-working professional

At the recent new range the BR 430 is built to be extra tough. Its accident-proof equipment plus features like an enlarged fuel tank and advanced anti-vibration system make this Tired STIHL range and simply drive away debris with their hurricane air speed.

Usually the domain of professional users, the new backpack models will put their great power and performance to work for more hands with prices and power ratings to suit everyone from the domestic gardener to the hard-working contractor.

Outside this area are handy year-round assistants both in winter, spring and summer there will inevitably be litter or debris to clear and in the autumn they really come into their own.

New Backpack Blowers

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The industry has been asking for more information on the STIHL range and simply drive away debris with their hurricane air speed.

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How to get the best out of your maintenance equipment

James de Haviland reports on how having a little knowledge can save you money

In many cases, the routine service and daily maintenance demands of modern equipment has been reduced, but that does not also mean a quick wash is all it takes to keep a given item of equipment running efficiently. A little mechanical knowledge and sympathy can go a long way to keep a given item of equipment running efficiently.

A modern ride-on mower may still ‘look’ pretty similar to kit that was in action a decade or more ago but increasingly electronics are in integral part of the design. These can make operation easier as switches replace various levers, but it can also mean you need to have access to a different set of skills to find any faults and remedy them. It is here where having some mechanical skills can really pay dividends. It is all too easy to take the wrong action when a given type of equipment develops a fault.

The first is to simply call someone to fix the issue. Good call if the problem takes specialist skills to diagnose and fix, less so if a squirt of WD40 to displace some moisture is all that is needed.

The flip side is the error of trying to carry out an in-house repair and to subsequently do more damage. Trained fitters typically dislike arriving to find a machine has been taken apart to solve a problem that cannot subsequently be checked as the machine is reduced to a pile of bits. The key is having enough mechanical knowledge to understand what may help but know when it is best to leave well alone and call in help. There are other issues too. Few realise, for example, that hydraulic circuits can be under tremendous pressures. A tiny leak, when pressurised, can produce a jet of hydraulic fluid that may not be visible but still has the power to penetrate clothing and ‘inject’ oil into anyone unfortunate enough to probe with an investigating hand.

Those that understand this will never work on a mower with a leak until they are sure there is no pressure in the system. Those unaware of the potential dangers could end up with a nasty injury. So, a little knowledge can save money and help avoid accidents.

But how do you know who has the right level of knowledge and who should be instructed to stick to a pressure washer and a grease gun? The short answer is training. Those with various ‘paper’ qualifications may be able to prove they are safe to be let loose on basic mechanical work but a newcomer claiming mechanical skills may need to offer some proof of competence. Getting it wrong can cause equipment issues and, more importantly, even result in injury.

Warranties and equipment care

Modern equipment should demand less in terms of routine care and not necessarily tax the servicing skills of club personnel who have been working on various types of equipment for years. On the other hand, manufacturers and suppliers are increasingly linking in a maintenance package to various sales initiatives.

For both manufacturers and dealers it makes sound business sense to ensure a given item of kit is serviced to OEM schedules using OEM replacement parts. Of equal importance, there is a need to ensure equipment is serviced during its warranty period. It is difficult for warranty claims to be handled sympathetically when there is no record of the machine having been serviced in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations. This is of increasing significance with equipment with a long original or extended warranty. In all cases, it pays to talk through how a given item of new equipment will be looked after to ensure you get the best back up. If the dealer / manufacturer offers any training courses as part of a deal try and ensure they are taken up and by as many staff as possible. Operator training is increasingly valuable and should go well beyond the basic machine installation you may get when a new bit of kit is delivered. Knowing where an elusive grease point is can make a great deal of difference.