Sprayer test to pinpoint accurate application

A national sprayer testing scheme is set to be introduced across the amenity and landscape sectors within the next three years. Whilst the testing process will impose a further cost on the industry, the benefit of more accurate application through a well-maintained sprayer and avoiding further problems will be quickly recouped from the expense on the industry, according to Syngenta Application Specialist, Tom Robinson.

When the Agricultural Engineers Association instigated the Sprayer Test Scheme for farm sprayers in 1997, a quarter of the sprayers tested failed during the first two-year round of inspections. Of those, a third (33%) failed with worn sprayer nozzles, which made accurate application impossible to maintain.

“New nozzles are capable of delivering very high levels of accuracy, but they are a wearing part like any other piece of machinery,” according to Tom. “They do need to be replaced when worn, to maintain the desired high levels of accuracy and consistency.”

“Furthermore, changing the nozzles now enables operators to take advantage of the latest developments in nozzle technology for turf applications, he added.

“A new set of Syngenta XC Turf Nozzles cost less that 15% of the value of a typical fungicide and fertiliser tank mix, so the expense would be quickly recouped from more accurate application alone – along with other significant improvements in application techniques and reduced spray drift to achieve enhanced results.

“We are frequently asked how often a set of nozzles should be changed – but the answer depends largely on how much they are used and what is applied. If they were only used for fungicides and growth regulators across a golf course, for example, the nozzles would last an age; but some fertilisers and particularly trace elements can be far more abrasive and lead to high levels of wear if applied regularly.”

Syngenta best advice is to regularly check the consistency of nozzle output across the full spray boom, using a measuring cylinder and record the output from each individual nozzle for 30 seconds; work out the average and if any nozzle deviates from this figure by more than 5%, the whole set is unacceptable worn and all the nozzles should be replaced.

Nozzles that are working consistently can easily be calibrated to apply the required water volume. Tom added that, in the early days of sprayer testing, worn hoses were identified on 20% of sprayers that failed the test, with leaks on 18% of sprayers. A dripping spray hose, or worse still a leaking hydraulic oil pipe, could have catastrophic effects on the turf if it finally burst on a green – with further costly implications for environmental clean-up.

“On 20% of failed sprayers the sight gauge was also unreadable, which makes accurate filling difficult and impossible to assess accuracy during spraying,” said Tom. “If you have calibrated to the SUD, then stop after three and check you have used around 40 litres, and again after six holes etc., to pick up any inconsistency at the earliest opportunity,” he advised.

Other common problems that lead to sprayer test failures included faulty pressure gauges and missing control labels.

Duncan Russell, National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS) manager at the Agricultural Engineers Association added that the introduction of the sprayer test scheme has seen an important improvement in the overall standard of spray application equipment, along with a rise in the professionalism of operators in maintaining machines to give more efficient results. Well maintained and tested machinery also retained better second-hand values.

“At a time when costs and budgets are under pressure, the financial losses that could be easily avoided by regular maintenance and simple calibration testing are considerable,” he said. “Even at low levels of inaccuracy the cost of sprayer test would be quickly recouped, along with fulfilling demands of club managers, players and regulatory authorities for greater justification and accountability.”

The new rules, implemented as part of the EU Sustainable Use Directive, apply to all boom sprayers over three meters used in agriculture, landscape and amenity. All sprayers should be tested by 26 November 2016 and every five years until 2020, then every three years until 2023 and every two years until 2026, and every five years until 2030, then every three years until 2033, followed by every two years until 2036.

There is an exception for knapsack and hand-held sprayers, which do not require testing under the SUD.
News

East - Birthday wishes to Jenny Nislon (#98), the section hope you enjoyed Bradenham - and George Stavert (#86).

West - I attended the Norrie Whytock tournament held at Auchterarder on 15 August with Douglas Mackintosh, Alastair Reid, and Peter Boyd, and believe it or not we won, no thanks to my efforts though. I would like to thank my team mates for their good golf on the day and the last minute replacement of Peter who gave a valuable contribution, well done boys. Congratulations to Archie Durn and his staff for once again producing a lovely golf course it is a joy to play even the way I did.

West - Stuart Clayton was on the phone recently and although not out on the road yet, he has informed me he will be going round everybody just to say hello. Stuart has been through a lot in recent months since his car accident, he apologised to me and others but I think his health comes first, so from all the section I would like to pass on our best wishes and I hope he makes a full recovery soon.

West - I mentioned David Carson recently regarding his knee operation and saw him recently walking with no problems, nice to see him out and about. Gents, please get in touch if you have any other information to let the other members around the country know, I can be reached on 07790823914 or on e-mail at stuart.taylor@gasgowgolf.co.uk so don’t be sly.

Ayrshire - Congratulations to George Morrison and his partner Maggie who have tied the knot. Best wishes from all the Section.

Movers and Shakers

Central - Three new members are welcome to the section; Gary McLeans from Leven Links, Remi Passioniste from Dundervilne GC and Samuel Zeng who is at Elwood College. We hope you are able to attend events.

East - One new section member is Sam McCallar (Murrayfield GC).

Events Coming Up

Central - The Section are staging a one day irrigation course at Elwood Golf Course on Wed 25 September in conjunction with the Toor Company and Lely UK with Adrian Mottmore of B NAME_2 ornum Associates and Calum Oliphant of Applied Irrigation delivering the course.

It will be a mixture of showcasing the latest technology and designs and practical demonstrations of repairing and adjusting sprinkler/irrigation/bootsheets. Attendance is free but numbers are restricted to 40 so you must register with gmcneil@standrews.org.uk. There will also be a limit on how many people can attend from the one Club or organisation.

The AGM will be at Elwood GC on 29 October.

East - Our Autumn Golf/Education day will be held at Haddington GC on 17 September, please contact our secretary to confirm your attendance.

The 27th Annual General Meeting will be held at Ravelston GC on Tuesday 5 November, more details to follow next month.

West - The Autumn outing is at Eastwood GC on 19 September – it will be interesting to see the new layout, and the AGM will be held at Haggas Castle in October; I will confirm the date next month.

Ayrshire - Bernard Grinders Seminar at West Kilbride Golf Club, 10 September between 12-4pm. We’ve very keen to get a good attendance for this so please attend if you can. Any questions please call Jim or Derek.

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

Movers & Shakers

North Wales - Don Rowlands, Deputy Head at Chester GC, has decided to step down from the role after 25 years faithful service. Paul Stanbury will take over the vacated role, congratulations Paul and best wishes go to both of you.

Results

Northern - Invitation Day: 1 Paul Davies & S Oliver 42 pts, 2 Rob Turner & D Hughes-40pts 3 Joe Walsh & K Miller 40pts. Nearest pin: K Miller & Tony Gerrard.

Northern - The North Wales v North West cricket match took place at Ashley CC on 24 July and North Wales won, a big thank you to Ashley CC for the facilities and everyone who took part, it was a very entertaining evening. I am afraid the North Wales v South Wales match at Borth and Tylsyd GC on 26 July was cancelled due to under subscription.

Thanks to Sponsors

Northern - An enormous thank you goes to Rigby Taylor and Mike Brear for their fantastic support of our Invitational day at Wetherby GC and their continued support of our section. Big thanks to Wetherby for looking after us and giving co-us courtesy of the course, the staff were excellent and everyone was well looked after. Thanks to Darren and his team for their hard work setting up a outstanding course. Also thanks to Golf and Turf Machinery for their sponsorship of our match against the Sheffield section.

Sheffield - We would like to thank Mansfield Sand for sponsoring our spring comp. Also thanks to golf and turf machinery/Parris Harris for sponsoring the Sheffield v Northern match.

Welcome new members


Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...
North Western

Welcome new members


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Welcome new members

Based on feedback from the recent GI Section Match, held at Wetherby GC on Wednesday 9 October, Timings will be posted on our Facebook and Twitter pages, you will also be notified via our new text service!

Northern - Autumn tournament at Woodside Hall GC, Huddersfield on 29 October, Entry closes off 1.45, Northern Regional Conference: Phoenix Golf Club, Rotherham on 7 November £10 for members, £20 visitors.

Sheffield - We would like to remind members if they would like to go on the trip to St George’s Park to get their forms in quick as places are running out. Our next comp is at Hillesborough GC on 25 September.

North Wales - The autumn tournament takes place at Royal St David’s golf club, Harlech on 18 September, also keep in mind that the Christmas tournament is at Royal Liverpool GC, Hoylake on 25 November. There is a seminar in the pipeline provisionally booked on 7 November at Denbigh College further details soon.

News

North East - Massive congratulations to Martin McCrickett of Chester le Street GC, who recently won the Durham county matchplay championship at Cusset GC, which according to Martin was in ‘great nick’ (credit to Dave Jobey and his team). Martin has now won both codes of Durham championship events having won the stroke play in 2011 – all the lessons I gave him as a kid have obviously paid off!

North West - Congratulations to George Morrison and his partner Maggie who have tied the knot. Best wishes from all the section.

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Events Coming Up

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Central - Three new members are welcome to the section; Gary McIntyre from Leven Links, Remi Passiatare from Dudelford GC and Samuel Zeng who is at Elmhurst College. We hope you are able to attend events.

East - One new section member is Sam McCallum (Murrayfield GC).

Northern - We had to settle for a draw against the Sheffield boys in our match up to a massive downpour stopping play halfway round - so the Sheffield chaps retained the cup! Many thanks to Howley Hall for their support.

Northern - Please could all members wishing to contact me try and ring after 2pm. If urgent please text and I will ring you back but if it’s to book your place for the golf day a text would be brilliant too - thank you.

Northern - We received news of 4 new members joining the section, welcome to all.

North Wales - Three new members are welcome to the section; Gary Ramsey from Leven Links, Remi Passiatare from Dunfermline GC and Samuel Zeng who is at Elmhurst College. We hope you are able to attend events.

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The AGM will be at Elmhurst GC on 29 October.

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Movers & Shakners

Mid Anglia - Congratulations to Steve Cherry who after a brief flirtation with groundsmanship is now back in greenkeeping so good to have you back amongst us.

Results

BB&O - Summer golf day: 1.36pts John Quinn, 2 3.44pts Adam King, 3 3.33pts Patrick Whelan. NP - Rob Catlin, NP - Simon Mallick, LD - Matt Smith NPtu - Brian Witney.

East Midland - Summer Tournament: Category 1 1 Nick Miles, Net 77, 2 Ken Harding Net 76, 3 Mark Blacknest Net 77. Category 2 1 Asi English Net 69, 2 Greg Skinner Net 79, 3 a Mitchell Net 80. Trade prize: K Haslam.

Mid Anglia - Summer Golf Day held at Brookmans Park GC on 6 August. Our thanks go to Trevor Smith and his team for providing us with the course to beautiful condition. Results: 1 48 pts N Pratte and I Worsley, 2 45 pts R Groves and L Owen, 3 45 pts D Watt and N Roberts. The nearest the pin prizes went to R Goddard at the 9th and Rob Catlin at the 11th.

Thanks to Sponsors

Mid Anglia - Autumn Golf Day Sponsors Avoncrop Amenity, Antech Amenity, Vassago Amenity, Farmura, Headland Amenity, ALSI, Tuckwells and Rigby Taylor Ltd. Also thanks to our Golfer of the Year sponsor Banks Amenity.

BB&O - The longest drivers and nearest the pin were sponsored by Swan Golf Designs and Countrywide. Without the continued support of our sponsors these days could not happen and in particular a thank you must go to Gary and Gareth Acteson from Rigby Taylor.

East Midland - Our thanks to Everris for this month’s calendar page. Please consider Emma Kibby of Everris for your fertiliser and maintenance products. Tel: 07784 111960 or email emma.kibby@everris.com.

Mid Anglia - Autumn Comp to be kindly sponsored by Farolys in conjunction with John Deere with a tremendous offering of prizes.

East Midland - The committee would like to thank Mansfield Sand for sponsoring our Summer Competition and also to our suppliers for supporting prizes for Nearest The Pin (Black) and Longest Drive (Lee North). The event also attracted Trade members from Banks Amenity, Fairwells, John Deere, Atkins and also Tracey Maddison from BROGA.

East Anglia - A massive thanks to Vassago Amenity, Antech Amenity, Headland Amenity, Farmura, Tuckwells Machinery and Rigby Taylor for your continued support. Banks Amenity also sponsor our Golffer of the Year Trophy.

Welcome New Members


Events Coming Up

Mid Anglia - Autumn Golf Day at Belchamstead GC on 16 October. Get your entries in ASAP. AGM to follow.

East Midland - Our AGM/Autumn competition will be held at Luttrells Wood GC on 31 October. The AGM offers the opportunity for members to put themselves forward for committee selection or form a executives if and only if they don’t feel they are any learning themselves. It can be chainirng or spraying courses etc plus funding then please get in touch with our RA Sandra Raper sandra@bigga.co.uk

East Midland - November 6, Midland Region Education Seminar at Forest Hill Golf Club. More details next month.

News

BB&O - Summer golf event took place at Caversham Heath Golf Club. A great turn out saw 52 people take part, and was kindly sponsored by Rigby Taylor. A big thank you to Course Manager John Scoones and his team for providing us with the course in beautiful condition.

Midland - Apologies to Dave Healy, who was kind enough to send me something to report two months ago. Moor Hall GC has been blessed with the services of Gennine Phillips and on the 20 June he celebrated working there for 40 years. I trust that a platinum watch was presented to him at the 11th.

BB&O - The Rigby Taylor Pairs Knockout continues - good luck to all teams left in the competition. If anyone is interested in or needs any training be it chainirng or spraying courses etc plus funding then please get in touch with our RA Sandra Raper sandra@bigga.co.uk

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**Midland**

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**Events Coming Up**

**Mid Anglia** - Autumn Golf Day at Belchamstead GC on 16 October. Get your entries in ASAP. AGM to follow.

**East Midland** - Our AGM/Autumn competition will be held at Lutterworth GC on 31 October. AGM offers the opportunity for members to put themselves forward for committee selection or form a cup committee and do the necessary recording of the present incumbents...food for thought.

**East Midland** - November 6, Midland Region Education Seminar at Forest Hill Golf Club. More details next month.

**News**

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**Thanks to Sponsors**

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**Welcome New Members**


**South East**

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

**Events Coming Up**

**East Anglia** - 9 October, event at Bury St Edmunds (I didn’t even know he was dead), 4 December, Thorpeness turkey trot. Merry Christmas in case I forget.

**Suffolk** - The next event is on 20 September at Beaumont Park GC. Please contact Pete Smith for more information and entry details on 07780 031013.

**Kent** - 19 September, Autumn event at Bexley Golf Club. Please advise us of your attendance ASAP.

**Surrey** - Coming up are The Cresta Cup at Wilmington Park GC on 24 September and the final for the Surrey Bowl is on 1 October at Foshalls GC.

**Surrey** - Merstham Wood College has been booked for early evening educational seminars, which are scheduled to take place on 17 October and November 28.

**News**

**East Anglia** - Stowmarket in June was lovely thanks to Matt Gill and his team - 50 souls turned up. Pries were presented by Dick Taylor, Stowmarket Captain. Larry Pearman won the tee seat mainly because he hadn’t won it before! Results below.

**Suffolk** - 1 August saw 28 members turn out for our section’s summer competition at the glorious heathland course of Piltdown. Many thanks to John and all of his team for the condition in which this pretty course was presented. Thanks again to the section’s annual sponsor for enabling another enjoyable day, and also Pete Smith for all his organisation for the event. I would be grateful if you could contact me with any of interest for future articles - thanks.

**Kent** - Congratulations to Russ Bain of Chislehurst GC. He and his wife Kelly have welcomed baby Ruben who arrived on 14 August. Congratulations too to Lydd GC Course Manager and Kent FC revolver Darrel Burton who has managed to qualify again for the Trilby Tour. Be prepared to see him on TV playing his trade in a silky hat.

**Essex** - Recent golf day, a big thank you to Tony Stubbing the owner of Channels Golf Club plus Ray Clark and his team for the fantastic condition of the course and a golf day to remember, the revised set-up is a true test of golf. Results below.

**Essex** - The next golf day is at Braintree Golf Club on Tuesday 24 September (Please note the revised date). Lunch will be served before we play with, prizing straight after play finishes. Times to be advised.

**Entries to Anton Kirwan** at “Play Golf Colchester” Bakers Lane, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4AU or antz2016@btinternet.com by Friday 20 September.

**Essex** - Ben Scrivener is still waiting to hear from those seeking further education. For more information please contact Ben at gingersnunkly@hotmail.com

**Movers & Shakers**

**Surrey** - The Wimlott & Weston duo are launching their CookBook and TV series after successfully providing the catering recently at The Sunningdale GC McMillan Tankard.

**Results**

**Mid Anglia** - Stowmarket: 0-9 Nick Buck 38, Graham Hurzen 31, 10-18: Adrian Hollins 37, Mark Broughton 30; 0-10: David Driver 34, Adam Mulley 32.

**Suffolk** - Summer Comp: Winner of Division 1 Richard Webster 39pts, 2 David Pearson with a poor 31 points. Division 3 Kane Smith with just 28 points.

**Surrey** - The 33rd McMillan Tankard Comp: 1 Craig Ayton 40 pts with 25 scored on the front nine, described as a dream round and the best golf he has ever played. 2 Grant Steventon 17pts, 3 Broady 36 pts. Jack and Rita McMillan presented the prizes on a day fuelled with friendship and camaraderie and off the green.


**Thanks to sponsors**

**Mid Anglia** - Main sponsors at Stowmarket were Toro, others were Aldina, Rigby Taylor, Collier Turf Care, Headland, Tomlinson, Eversis and Lely UK.

**Surrey** - A superb and interesting course walk and presentation by Murray Long on healthland management proved very popular. Thank you to Sunningdale GC and those who gave up their time to organise this event.

**Welcome New Members**

South West - SW Section v South Coast Section at Chipping Sodbury on 15 August, many thanks to John Kennaugh and his team for all of their efforts in preparing a fantastic golf course.

South West - A thoroughly convincing victory of 4.5 to 1.5 was had by the South West Section over South Wales Section at Chipping Sodbury on 15 August, many thanks to John Kennaugh and his team for all of their efforts in preparing a fantastic golf course.

South West - Once again the South West Section will be sponsoring a place to attend BTME in January 2014 to include accommodation, transport and education. Please contact any of the committee members to express your interest in this fantastic opportunity.

Thanks to Sponsors

South Wales - We've recently received the sad news that Chris Jenkins, Course Manager of Tenby Golf Club and lifelong supporter of the bowling club network in Pembrokeshire, had suddenly died. Our thoughts from everyone in our section go out to all his family and friends.

South Wales - I am now a grandfather at the ripe old age of 34 only a step one thankfully!

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Welcome new members


Welcome new overseas member

Ryun Holden - Limpachtal Golf Club

The Mad Mower Boys are back...and this time it’s the hard road to Harrogate!
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More details coming soon...

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South Wales – Our AGM at Machynys Peninsula GC on Wednesday 16 October

South West - SW Section v South Coast Section at North Wilts GC on 26 September, South West Section AGM at Filton GC on 16 October and South West Section Christmas Tournament at Ogbourne Downs GC on 19 December, enquiries to Wayne Vincent. There are a few spaces still to be filled on Excavator Safety Training Update to be held towards the end of the year, a must-do for all licenced operators in order to maintain their certification, please contact Paul Worster for details and keep an eye on the BIGGA Bulletin boards for more details.

Events Coming Up

South Coast - Next golf fixture is at Meon Valley Golf and Country Club on 9 October. We haven’t played there for many years so please come and support the event, entries as usual to Kevan Glass at Keepers Cottage, Brockenhurst Manor GC, Sway Rd, Brockenhurst, Hants, SO42 7SG, or glassy2003@hotmail.com.

South Coast - Match against the South West is at North Wilts GC on 26 September, I need a team of 10 so if you want to play please let me know on greenkeeper@gmail.com as soon as possible.

South Coast - The Toro Irrigation Roadshow Seminar is to be held at Sherbourne GC on 23 October. This is a full day educational programme on the importance of your irrigation system, finishing with a workshop on repairs and trouble shooting. Included in the day is coffee and a bacon roll on arrival and a 2 course lunch for the incredible price of £10. The section committee will be assisting in organising the day so entries to Alex McCombie, for more info southcoastsecretary@gmail.com. This will be open to other sections so be quick with your entry. More info next month.

South West - SW Section v South Coast Section at North Wilts GC on 26 September, South West Section AGM at Filton GC on 16 October and South West Section Christmas Tournament at Ogbourne Downs GC on 19 December, enquiries to Wayne Vincent. There are a few spaces still to be filled on Excavator Safety Training Update to be held towards the end of the year, a must-do for all licenced operators in order to maintain their certification, please contact Paul Worster for details and keep an eye on the BIGGA Bulletin boards for more details.

News

South Wales – We’ve recently received the sad news that Chris Jenkins, Course Manager of Tenby Golf Club and lifelong supporter of the bowling club network in Pembrokeshire, had suddenly died. Our thoughts from everyone in our section go out to all his family and friends.

South Wales - I am now a grandson at the ripe old age of 34 only a step one thankfully!

South Wales - Our golfing team unfortunately went down 4.5-1.5 recently a big thank to JK and his team at Chipping Sodbury Golf Club for their hospitality and of course the superb golf course set up.

South West - A thoroughly convincing victory of 4.5 to 1.5 was had by the South West Section over South Wales Section at Chipping Sodbury on 15 August, many thanks to John Kermaghan and his team for all of their efforts in preparing a fantastic golf course.

South West - Once again the South West Section will be sponsoring a place to attend HTME in January 2014 to include accommodation, transport and education. Please contact any of the committee members to express your interest in this fantastic opportunity.

Thanks to Sponsors

South West - Many thanks to our section patrons Ecosol, Irritech, Headland Amenity, Greensman and Farmura for their much valued support of section events and training contributions.

Welcome new members


Welcome new overseas member

Ryun Holden - Limpachtal Golf Club

South West - Next meeting is our AGM at Machynys Peninsula GC on Wednesday 16 October

South West & Wales

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

Around The Green

There’s a Progressive multi-deck mower to suit all types of municipal grounds care, playing fields, parka, polo fields, sports fields, turf production and the like. Our superior quality cut comes from high lift blades that creates a strong vacuum to lift the grass for a clean, even cut. So if you want to cut it, contact us today.

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THE MAD MOWER BOYS ARE BACK...AND THIS TIME IT’S THE HARD ROAD TO HARROGATE!
In this first month, Martin Ward, Managing Director of Symbio, explains the basics of good greenkeeping practices and how the company is intent on helping these managers and greenkeepers understand what happens below the surface. There is also a series of workshops planned...

The good news is that there are four natural ecological tools that greenkeepers can employ to manage disease. All require a healthy population of bacteria and fungi around the root system. When the microbial population is in place:

1) The beneficial microbes form a protective barrier around the roots and leaf lesions.
2) Some produce natural antibiotics to kill pathogens.
3) Pathogens become a food source for the beneficial microbes.
4) Some microbes and biofertilisers encourage the plant to produce hormones called phytoalexins that help it fight off disease.

Fertiliser requirements are also reduced, microbes are made from carbon, nitrogen, and phosphate so less fertiliser is required for consistent surfaces and you do not need to starve greens to reintroduce bent and fescue.

Percolation rates are also a function of the biological activity in the rootzone. Practically all beneficial microbial activity is undertaken by aerobic microbes but it is perfectly possible to manage many golf greens without large rootzone inputs because bacteria, fungi, and beneficial nematodes all maintain friable, fast draining, aerated soil.

Apart from reduced physical disruption the key changes to management practices required by the modern greenkeeper are to introduce the correct microbiology to the rootzone and to keep it alive by the correct use of biofertilisers, aerations, fertilisers and fungicides.

If you want to manage poa annua greens you will need a bacterial dominant rootzone that supports annual plants and feed the biology simple sugars and carbohydrates. Fungi. If you want to grow manage perennial grasses, a balanced fungal/bacterial mix is required that is fed by more complex carbohydrates, seaweed, humic and fulvic acids.

In a new series, the GTC has invited representatives from its Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers to discuss their particular specialism within the sports turf sector.

Contact Details
For further details visit www.the-gtc.co.uk
Email: polly@symbio.co.uk
Tel: 01428 685762

If you want to grow and manage a fairway you will need a fungal dominant rootzone which is generally considered bad and roots, organic nutrients, soil biomass (bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods and worms), humic compounds and organic acids which are essential for healthy plant growth.

Thatch is also the primary food for fungi. Traditionally thatch has had to be physically removed with costly invasive practices, deep scarification and hollow coring, however aeration provided by micro tines into the thatch layer is sufficient if it is to be degraded by fungi and bacteria.

Thatch is converted to plant food and humic compounds which increase cation exchange capacity (CEC) and conserve fertiliser inputs but more importantly, the rootzone develops a fungal biomass which we now know is needed if perennial grass is to be grown instead of poa annua.

This means that less top dressing is required to maintain a fast surface, less fertiliser is required for more consistent surfaces and you do not need to starve greens to reintroduce bent and fescue.

The basics premise is that healthy grass is less susceptible to disease but the stresses put upon greens, toning, fertilisers means that the grass is always susceptible to pathogen attack.

20 years have passed since the first products containing soil microbes became available for turf managers. In the early years they were designed to solve specific problems like black layer, nutrient retention and thatch drainage, based upon easily observed actions of common soil bacteria.

The early results sparked off a wave of research initially by professors interested in microbial reactions on turf with Professor Alan Gane at Royal Holloway College, University of London and the foremost. Latterly colleges offering degrees in turf science have played a practical role guiding students through research into a range of topics for their degree theses.

Dr Andy Owen and his colleagues at Myerscough College, a leading GTC Quality Assured Centre, have played a leading role in this respect.

Specific turf management trends in the UK and the USA has increased our understanding about the myriad of relationships between the grass plant and the chemistry, biology and physical properties of sports turf rootzones. So how does this information affect the daily management practices of the course manager?

The main areas where healthy soil allows management practices to improve to help produce fast, even, low thatch greens are:

- Reduced Physical Aeration (it is still needed but in less disruptive form)
- Reduced Fungicide Use
- Reduced poa annua - improved perennial grass growth
- Reduced fertiliser input

- The main change is the treatment of organic matter. Organic matter complexes of dead grass i.e. thatch which is generally considered bad and roots, organic nutrients, soil biomass (bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods and worms), humic compounds and organic acids which are essential for healthy plant growth.

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- Regular monitoring and occasional verti-draining should be all that is required for all but the most compacted, thatchy greens.

- Disease management is now high on most people's agenda with the cost and gradual reduction in available fungicides.

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Fertiliser requirements are also reduced, microbes are made from complex sugars and carbohydrates. If you want to manage poa annua you need to understand that in order to be degraded by microbes it is required to maintain a fast root system. When the microbial biomassFF
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A significant number of golf clubs have been busy during the past year upgrading their equipment wash facility to ensure they are in compliance with the new environmental legislation. If you are not one of these clubs we strongly recommend you take action now. The Environment Agency provide additional measures to ensure compliance with the new EU Water Framework Directive, backed by a Variable Monetary Penalty (VMP) of up to £250,000 for non-compliance.

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