

NEW HSE REGULATIONS NOW IN FORCE

THE Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued a reminder to employers that new regulations on health and safety for employees, came into force in October. To comply with these regulations, employers are required to display a poster or distribute leaflets informing their employees in general terms about the requirements of health and safety law. A poster and leaflet, approved by HSE for this purpose, are available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO).

The regulations also require employers to inform employees of the local addresses of the enforcing authority (usually either HSE or the local authority) and of HSE's Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS).

MICROBES HARNESSSED TO REDUCE THATCH AND COMPACTION

OVER the past three years a series of sports turf trials have been conducted on a natural plant extract, which acts as a metabolic stimulant on most bacteria. BOOST was developed from an agricultural soil treatment which was known to increase the activity of soil micro-organisms leading to a "micro-tilling" effect which resulted in an improved soil structure, better

root development and consequent increase in crop yield.

Thatch accumulates in turf because the dead stems and roots of the grasses decay relatively slowly and result in a fibrous mat which becomes saturated and leads to wet, unresponsive greens.

At the same time this cuts off air circulation to the underlying soil, which in turn becomes compacted and prevents root penetration. Under these conditions the only kind of bacterial decomposition taking place is anaerobic hence the typically "putrid" smell of cores taken from such greens.

Regular mechanical treatment to aerate the soil and promote aerobic activity is the accepted remedy. This however is not popular with players.

Because of its ability to significantly speed up both aerobic and anaerobic activity trials were carried out on a neglected tennis court at Rease Heath Agricultural College. These compared a control area with one treated with a granular seaweed derivative and one treated with BOOST.

First applied in the Autumn it is soon noted that the area treated with the seaweed derivative was softer and contained a sticky gel.

The following Spring a further treatment was applied and STRI penetrometer tests carried out. These showed reduced compaction in both treated areas, but with the BOOST areas markedly better than

the seaweed derivative areas (17.5% improvement vs 4.5%).

The following Autumn wedges were dug which showed little or no new root growth or root penetration in the control area. In both the BOOST and seaweed derivative areas the soil structure was far better and good healthy root development had taken place well down into the soil.

At the same time it was obvious that there had been a degree of thatch reduction in the seaweed derivative area, but on the BOOST area the thatch reduction was far greater.

At Beaconsfield where BOOST was applied in the Autumn of last year the treated greens were much drier and firmer in the Spring following a wet winter. Similar effects were noted at The Berkshire and The London Kosaido. At Bangor BOOST was used in the Spring together with mechanical treatments. Deep root penetration and improved soil structure were evident by mid Summer. Prior to this there was little or no strong root structure in the soil.

BOOST is showing signs as a useful new tool for the Greenkeeper, able to reduce the amount of disruptive mechanical treatment required and contributing significantly to the playing quality of the greens.

Further information can be obtained from D & M Hudson, Environmental Products, 15 Hawthorn Gardens, Talke, Stoke On Trent. Tel. 0782 771462

WESSEX

Sweeper Collectors

Collect leaves, grass clippings and litter from turf or hard surfaces.



The Wessex Sweeper is PTO Driven, has a big hopper which can be tipped from the tractor seat, and is designed to sweep clean even on undulating ground.

4ft & 6ft versions for tractors from 15hp



Optional gulley brush attachment

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