

The natural alternative finds favour

The versatility and cost efficiency of wood and bark based products makes them ideal for golf course applications, with their unusual mix of extensive landscaping and high pedestrian traffic volumes.

Melcourt Industries of Tetbury is among specialist suppliers of these products, which are now finding increasing favour with greenkeepers as an environment friendly alternative to more conventional materials. All Melcourt products, for example, are wholly organic; with no use of chemicals at any stage of their processing or treatment.

It is essentially for their practical performance, however, that wood-based products are enjoying a growing popularity on Britain's golf courses. Starting with the pathways which connect green with tee, it is easy to see why, since traditional options like concrete, tarmac, and gravel will either damage shoe spikes or cause undue wear, while bare earth pathways erode too quickly and are often impossible during the winter months.

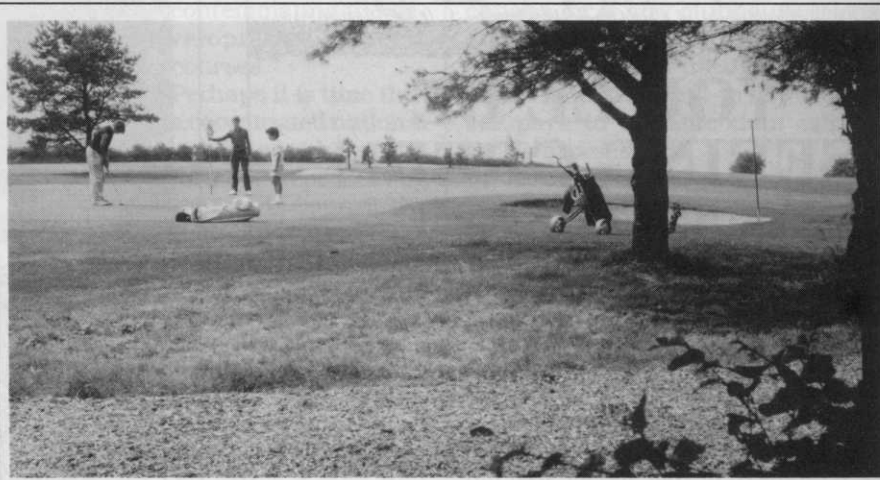
For many, the answer now lays in something like Melcourt's Woodfibre, laid to a depth of around 100mm over an adequate drainage base - perhaps with a geotextile separator for more permanent installations. The material offers excellent drainage characteristic, will not damage spikes or studs, and prevents mud from splashing over trolley wheels or being trampled into the club house. Most importantly, Woodfibre pathways also blend in beautifully with natural surroundings, often adding to the appearance of courses (unlike concrete or tarmac!). They are also easy to lay, with minimal maintenance demands, and they can always be lifted and re-sited should the need arise.

Mulches too

When the material's long working life as a pathway is finally exhausted, it can also double as a cheap but highly effective mulch for flower borders and shrub beds. Not surprisingly, Melcourt also offers a wide range of more specialised mulches, such as Ornamental Bark Mulch for sites where - as the product's name implies - appearance is of the first importance.

For larger scale planting areas, the company produces Forest Biomulch, an economical surface mulch with a high organic content designed both to enrich soil humus and reduce the application of costly chemical-based fertilisers.

Finally, Melcourt also offers a range of top dressings and soil conditioners, which again answer many of the greenkeeper's



problems. These include Adheart, a new soil conditioner which should be dug well in to improve structure, enhance drainage and add humus content without stimulating thatch. By reducing the effects of leaching and promoting nutrient supplies, the conditioner also encourages the microbiological activity essential to healthy greens.

As with all Melcourt products, Adheart

is distributed nationally and is available in both bagged and bulk form, with 'walking floor' trailers for difficult sites or where storage space is at a premium (the trailers will semi-pile their loads if required). For trade prices and more detailed product information, contact the company direct at Three Cups House, Tetbury, Glos. GL8 8JG Tel: 0666 503919/502711.

WINDWHISTLE EXTENSION

Green light for Somerset course

Windwhistle Golf, Squash and Country Club's planning application to add an 18-hole extension to the course has been given the go-ahead by South Somerset District Council's planning committee, according to a report in the Chard and Ilminster News.

The extension, when complete, will mean Windwhistle will become the longest championship course in the West country at 7,047 yards. The medal length will be 6,260 yards with a standard scratch score of 70.

And there is every prospect, with the co-operation of all concerned and reasonable weather, that play will take place on the new course in 1991.

The plan was approved at a recent meeting of the council's west area planning sub-committee, which received a report from the officers which stated: "It is considered that a basis for agreement has been reached which will result in a very attractive golf course which has very positive benefits for wildlife and the landscape and these details should be formally agreed within the framework of a section 52 agreement."

Audrey Buchanan (Chard South East) commented: "I congratulate both the applicants and the officers on their pres-

entation of the plans. It is now a totally satisfactory scheme."

Club and former county president Leonard Fisher, who rescued Windwhistle from extinction after the Second World War, welcomed the news at the weekend.

He said: "The club's proposals, when completed, will provide the most important addition to the West golfing scene since St Mellion, West of the Famar, and St. Pierre, north of the Bristol Channel. "Tournament golf could, in the future, be accommodated at Windwhistle, which would enable South Somerset to play a major part in the European golfing programme."

Mr Fisher said that the new 27-hole complex would reduce wear and tear on the course and allow essential maintenance work to be carried out at the proper time rather than the opportune time. And with the extra space available, a natural informality would be introduced into the tree and shrub planting replacement programme on the existing course. There would also be an increasing provision, freedom and sanctuary for the natural local wildlife and flora - a policy adopted by the club over 35 years ago and pursued ever since.