

TOPICAL TURF TIPS

The Golf Course problem page, gives expert advice to management problems

QUESTION

We have a number of "rights of way" across our golf course, used mainly by ramblers, joggers and dog walkers. It would not be so bad if they kept to the path, but so many seem to think they have a right to wander all over the course. The dog owners in particular view an open fairway as the moment to let the animal off the leash.

Is there any action we can take?

ANSWER

Not a lot. The law of trespass is hardly enforceable as it has to be proved that damage is caused, such as destroying growing crops. This would be virtually impossible to sustain in a court of law relating to walking on grass.

It would be possible to take out an injunction on a persistent offender such as a jogger who regularly runs off the path through golfers on a Sunday morning, but it is expensive and it only applies to the person you take action against. If his mates take up the cudgels against the club, you are back where you started.

To minimise the problem, mark the paths with tape or arrows set in the turf, mow out a path strip where it crosses a fairway and site some appropriate notices at entrance points. It is a matter of learning to live with the neighbours.

QUESTION

Following a very dry summer, earthworms have emerged in huge

numbers on parts of the fairway and this is particularly noticeable where we have cut out some temporary greens on approaches and aprons. Total chemical control is very expensive, is there any other method we can use to stop worm casting?

ANSWER

A question published in the October issue referred to worms in a query relating to the use of chlordane. This product can still be used on golf greens for the next two years, but is banned for large scale areas such as fairways.

Experimental work at the Sports Turf Research Institute has shown that an application of sulphate of iron at a rate of between 4 and 8 g/sq.m has inhibited earthworm casting for 2 to 3 weeks. Worms do not like an acidified turf and the sulphate of iron has shown it is a way to keep them away from the surface.

Not only are worm castings unsightly, but they are the ideal medium as a seed bed for weeds. Not to take action now could produce other problems later in the year.

QUESTION

As the course manager for a municipal golf course could I query the answer you gave in September regarding the "grandfather clause" relating to the spraying of chemicals. I sent the staff on a chemical spraying course this year only to find that it had been conducted by people who

were not certified to give the instruction. This resulted in a certificate of attendance only and not a certificate of competence. As they were all born before 31st December 1964, can they continue back-pack and tractor mounted spraying?

ANSWER

We stick by the original answer that those over 25 can spray, but they must be supervised by a certificate holder. That is within sight and sound and under the certificate holder's personal supervision.

An attendance at a course, even one deemed to be given by those not certified to teach, is better than no course at all. The Pesticide Legislation Act, like so many government guidelines is open to differing interpretations. The crunch comes if one of your uncertified staff has an accident, either to himself, another, or the environment. Unless you are fire-proof and can prove it, the results can be expensive or maybe even criminal.

Ignorance of the law is not a defence. As for being innocent until proved guilty - forget it. Our advice is ensure that you fully understand your obligations under the Act and have complied with all the recommendations.

Address your queries to:- The Editor, The Golf Course, 129a High Street, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex. CO12 3AX

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