

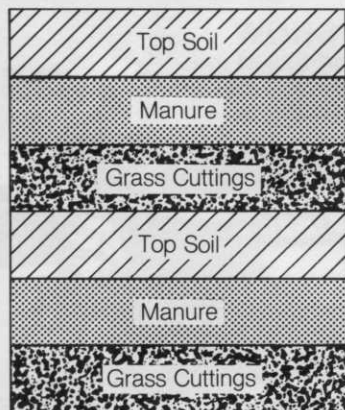
John Lowry's recipe for Quality Compost

Talk to John Lowery, the Course Manager at Ringway Golf Club, a runway or two from Manchester Airport and it will not be long before the conversation turns to his favourite subject - compost making.

John has been producing his own compost for many years and like the amateur wine buff it is a continuous process, whilst using the matured stuff, there are several other heaps fermenting away. The period is about the same time too, three to four years for a vintage brew.

The quantity used over a season at Ringway is 30-40 tons and a greenkeeper will need a fair area of suitable space to make up at least three separate heaps. The ingredients are simply good quality topsoil, grass cuttings and farmyard manure, laid in 12 inch layers and topped by 15 inches of top soil.

But let John describe how he builds the heaps between 5-6 feet high, but with settlement reduces quickly to around 4 feet as the rotting process accelerates.



"My grass cuttings are collected from heaps which I site in various hidden areas around the course. Copses and behind hedges are ideal sites, but you must also have access for collection. All grass boxes are emptied on them whether it is the GM3 from greens or 180 on tees. We never tip weed from bunker work, just clean cuttings. I did try leaves in the early days, but sometimes you could break down a heap after 4 years and leaves, like beech, ash and oak would still be intact! I have found a good local farmer who stores fresh manure for me and delivers it the following year, so by the delivery time the rotting down is well under way. He recently put up the price by £10 per 20 ton load and when I enquired about the price rise, he said feed had gone up and it was costing more to produce "the end" product!

I find the manure layer on top of the cuttings accelerates the rotting down process and the top soil gives body to the whole thing.

We now have a mature heap to put under cover - What do we require? A drying shed - nothing too elaborate. It is amazing what can be achieved with clear plastic sheeting, and 3'x2' framework supported by 8 posts, open all round or just at each end. The important point is a free circulation of air. My shed is an old corrugated barn bought for £50 and erected by a couple of members and myself over odd weekends. These sheds can also provide extra working areas during wet weather.

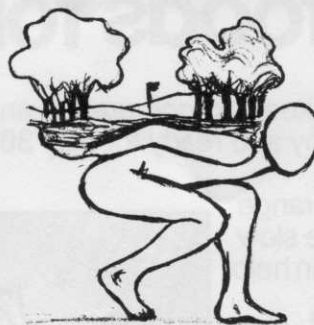
I use the Royer belt-type crusher to break down the material prior to riddling. For riddling I have the En-Tout-Cas rotary with Villiers engine. There is no waste from compost as all the coarse riddlings left over make super tee and shrub planting material with a very high food content. It also makes a good open rough layer on drain trenches prior to relaying the turf, allowing water through and providing a good rooting base. Better than sand and most top soils, considering the average bag of planting compost costs between £2-3. Another saving!

Labour is our next consideration. I found by utilising my labour, on wet days, instead of sitting in the shed or carrying out futile tasks we could produce 10 cwt. of compost. We all have those "in-between job" spells - times not to be idle - it all adds up and it saves your club money.

The most important aspect of making your own compost is you control the quality - like life you reap what you sow. A rough estimate of making your own material, I would say costs around £3 to £4,000 for the crusher, riddle and a cheap storage shed. Remember you have many years of cheap compost for that first capital outlay".

Quality compost for greens and tees, dependent on the transport charges and the availability costs around £20.00-£25.00 a ton. According to the figures calculated by John Lowery a considerable saving can be shown with the home-made variety. Including greenkeepers' time, purchase of manure, top soil, fuel and running costs of the machinery we can produce proven quality compost for £7.75 a ton, with a result saving to his club of about £400 a year. What is more it is there when he wants it and he is certain he could not buy better.

TECHNICAL 1



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Preparing a Greenkeepers' Job Description

It is now common practice in industry for those in positions of management to be provided with a job description.

This document is normally drawn up after considerable discussion between the job holder and his immediate superior, ensuring a complete understanding between both parties regarding the broad responsibilities of the manager's role and what is expected from him.

Few greenkeepers have a similar document, which is surprising when one considers most Committee Chairmen hold responsible positions in business and invariably have a job description themselves.

Several clubs have recently enquired whether a standard document exists and as a guide, and it must be emphasised it is only a guide, a format for a job description has been drawn up.

The job description must be individually produced because clubs need to put the emphasis on responsibilities in differing areas.

The job description should not attempt to state every task the greenkeeper is expected to carry out, but group activities under broad headings. To assist in clarifying thoughts when drafting the job description, think of the job relating to Money, Men, Machinery, Materials and Methods. These five M's will cover just about everything needed to control the day-to-day workings of a golf course.

A written agreement between the Head Greenkeeper and his Committee will go some way to creating a better understanding of individual responsibilities.

It must also be said it is not a tablet of stone and will require updating, as and when, the emphasis on working practices need to be changed.

JOB DESCRIPTION..... HEAD GREENKEEPER

RESPONSIBLE TO..... CHAIRMAN OF GREEN COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVE

To maintain the golf course to the standards as specified by the Green Committee, control daily work schedules of green staff, keep machinery and course equipment in full working order and produce programmes with time frames relating to course construction and improvements.

KEY TASKS

To maintain an inventory of course management equipment, keep records of servicing requirements and schedules, order and place repair requirements up to the value of £....., without reference to the Green Chairman.

Plan and effect the day to day maintenance of greens, tees and fairways. Ensure all grass areas are prepared to the height and requirements compatible to the playing capabilities of the course.

Control and manage the work of the green staff by active supervision. Ensure all employees are familiar with the requirements of their job and tasks allocated are carried out to the safety standards laid down by the Health & Safety at Work Act and the Acts relating to Pesticide Legislation.

All trainees will follow an 'On Job' training programme specified by the Greenkeeper Training Committee and released for their college based training as required. Regular assessments of progress will be made, recorded and communicated to the trainee.

A budget will be prepared annually for general maintenance requirements to include repairs and replacement of machinery, fungicides and fertilisers, sand, seed, turf and other items of expected capital expenditure (eg: irrigation, drainage, tree replacement and buildings). Records to be kept of all expenditure relating to the purchase of supplies, repairs and other expenses.

The Head Greenkeeper will attend such meetings as and when requested by the Green Chairman, supply documentation, give advice when required and act according to the instructions of the Committee.

TECHNICAL 2

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TRENCHERS TRENCHERS TRENCHERS TRENCHERS TRENCHERS

Rumania to most of the present generation is an Eastern Bloc country bordering the Black Sea, with strong ties with its neighbour, the Soviet Union.

Although it lies behind the Iron Curtain, the bars are more akin to wire netting as trade and tourism between east and west develops year by year.

Formerly the classical Dacia and Scythia Pontica, as those who spent an industrious education will know, Rumania's additional claim to fame, by addicts of the Saturday night horror movies, is also the Transylvanian home of the monster of all monsters, Count Dracula.

Now Rumania has produced another export to the west, this time a prince of engineering achievement in the shape of the aptly named - Dacia Duster.

These four-wheel drive vehicles are without doubt the most competitively priced utility vehicles available on the U.K. market.

Starting with the four-wheel drive open Pick-up at a basic £4,150 (ex VAT) there are five versions in the range through to the 4x4 Duster GLX, a classy five seater estate car, that will take off across the roughest country and still look impressive outside the statliest of homes. All that for a total price of £6,500 including VAT and Car Tax.

Golf Greenkeeping tested the middle of the range truck, the 4x4 Duster Hard-Top, priced at £4,650 (ex VAT). A week's trial on the road as well as the golf course and I am not ashamed to admit I shed a little tear of regret when the seven days passed all too quickly and it had to go back.

The more I drove this little blue coloured beauty, the better I relished it. Not only that, like a beau escorting his belle, there was the additional pleasure of admiring glances. Whether it was the Dacia's good looks or its undoubted substance, but as a mere car driver, for a whole week, I experienced the delight of 'given way' by other motorists, gratefully acknowledged by a touch to the cap or a flick of the headlamps.

Although the Duster is a rugged hard grafting work-horse, driver and passenger comfort is at a premium. The padded seats, with head rests are as comfortable as your favourite lounge chair, a full set of instruments are easily visible, the rear windscreen is heated and the wipers and four jet washers will cope with any amount of muck thrown up from the road.

If I have a criticism it must be the position of the ignition lock. The one way key is a real fiddle to slot into the lock, particularly because there is so little clearance between the ignition, located on the steering column,



Golf Course Test for the Dacia Duster

and the padded dash board. For security another key is provided for the door locks and the petrol tank but as they are together on a key ring it is not too difficult to trap one's fingers, putting it in or pulling it out.

Wetherby Golf Club's Head Greenkeeper John Scott who also tested the Dacia Duster, agreed and he also suggested a rear window wiper would be a useful addition.

As a general purpose golf course truck, the Dacia Hard-Top is ideal for moving equipment around the course or taking machinery for repair. It is just as 'At Home' on rough terrain or on the road. For normal road use it is driven in two-wheel drive, turn a hand operated screw on the front wheels and the mode becomes four-wheel, ready to be engaged in either high or low ratio by a lever, forward of the gear handle.

A tow ball and electrics are standard as is the 'Roo Bar' on the front, not only to brush away kangaroos that might have escaped from local zoos, but more practically to protect the bonnet from bumps and scrapes.

Out on the course, the Duster went everywhere it was asked, including the steepest gradient we could find. Using the high ratio four-wheel drive it climbed from a standing start, a notoriously wet part of the fairway without the vestige of wheel slip, or a mark on the turf.

The 1400cc Renault engine is quiet and adequate for the job, but Dacia Concessionaires have told me a diesel version will be available towards the end of the year.

In addition to the manufacturers standard 12 month warranty, a second year's cover is included free of charge on all Dacia Dusters with the option of a third year also available. The unlimited mileage covers all major mechanical and electrical components.

All Dacia Dusters are treated with Swedish system Dinol anti-corrosion protection. The five year warranty applies to all treated areas including underside, box sections, sills and doors.

The sole importers of the Dacia range are

Dacia Concessionaires Ltd.
Dilton House, Station Road,
Westbury, Wilts.

TECHNICAL 3

There are currently 65 dealers throughout the UK. Further details can be obtained by contacting

The Editor,
Golf Greenkeeping,
P.O. Box 12, WETHERBY,
West Yorks.

Tel: (0937) 63181

SPECIFICATION		DACIA DUSTER 4 x 4 HARD-TOP	
ENGINE	Type	4 CYL. IN LINE OHV	
	Displacement	1397 cc	
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	Bore and Stroke	76mm x 77mm	
	Compression Ratio	9.5	
	Maximum Power	65 bhp (DIN) at 5250 rpm	
	Maximum Torque	105 Nm at 3000 rpm	
FUEL SYSTEM	Alternator	12v. 3-AMP	
	Battery	45 A	
TRANSMISSION	Carburettor	Single Manual Choke	
	Fuel Tank Capacity	10 Gallons	
STEERING	Clutch Gearbox	Single Dry Plate Mechanical Operation 4 Speed Synchronesh	
	Transfer Box	High & Low Ratio Front Wheel Hubs	
BRAKES	Type	Worm & Roller	
	Front Rear	Disc Power Assisted Drums, Leading & Trailing Shoes Assisted	
SUSPENSION	Front	Independent, Wishbones, Coil Spring, Telescopic Shock Absorbers	
	Rear	Rigid Axle, Semi-Elliptic Leaf, Telescopic Shock Absorbers	
TYRES	Front and Rear	175 x 14	
	DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHT	Overall Length	3777mm
Overall Width		1600mm	
Overall Height		1740mm	
Wheelbase		2400mm	
Front Track		1304mm	
Rear Track		1304mm	
Minimum Ground Clearance		225mm	
Cargo Bed	Length	—	1130mm (3'9")
	Height	—	590mm
Maximum Payload	350 kg (6.87 cwt)		
Kerb Weight	1180 kg		