

■ Your informative reply to Barry Moggridge's letter (March issue) regarding employment in the USA prompts me to pose a similar question regarding employment in Canada.

My work and qualifications are near identical to those of Barry and, like him, I'm travelling abroad in the autumn for a holiday. My destination is Toronto, where I have aspirations of obtaining work in the near future.

After reading your reply I became concerned about the 'green card' issue and whether such restrictions apply to Canada.

Please advise me and if possible give information on jobs available or organisations I may contact.

**PAUL McGRILL** Ashton-in-Makerfield Golf Club

*Discussing Paul's request with the Canadian High Commission, I learned that similar restrictions to those in the USA also apply. A Canadian Country Club employer seeking to recruit emigrant staff must first satisfy the Canadian Employment Centre that stringent efforts have been made to fill a specific post with a native born Canadian and that such efforts have failed. Only when this is proved beyond doubt will the Canadian High Commission in Britain entertain an application, which must then be accompanied by an "Employer Validation Certificate", in effect a form of employer sponsorship. Exceptions are made for the recruitment of specialists in world-wide short supply and include such as nurses, midwives and some doctors. Having a blood relative resident in Canada does also help, though is by no means a guarantee. With the Canadian turfgrass industry applying similar management techniques to those employed in the USA, it seems the odds are stacked against an emigrant applicant.*

■ I feel I must respond to 'Mr Scargill's' letter in the April issue. First, I do not think the committee set-up at Mr Carr's Club has anything to do with attending lectures. Until this year all Northern Section lectures were held in the evening, but this year we tried afternoon lectures and they were poorly attended. Of course we greenkeepers work strange hours, but surely no work is pressing enough to keep a greenkeeper out on his course at 8pm on a January evening!

Second, does anyone, or should anyone, get expenses for attending lectures? I certainly do not and would not expect payment for what is partly a social outing anyway.

Third, concerning travel from remote areas: we've had members travelling from as far afield as Hull and Lincoln, which is a credit to them for making the effort.

As for waiting 13 years for a toilet to be installed, where does the fault lie? It is the responsibility of every employer BY LAW to provide washing and toilet facilities for staff members. If Mr Scargill's toilet flushes I assume mains water is available, so the solution to proper washing – a hot water geyser costing about £50 – is there. Where, I wonder, does Mr Scargill wash after spraying? What would happen if there was a spillage? It is not only the fault of the Club, but also the responsibility of the head greenkeeper to ensure these facilities are provided for his staff. Committees are sometimes blamed for things of which they are unaware and it is incumbent upon head greenkeepers to present in a proper and professional manner the details of their employers obligations.

Mr Scargill, has your Club got a written Safety Policy document, a visible copy of the Factories Act, Contracts of Employment, copies of Insurance Liability, protective clothing, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, an accident book, a spraying log book, COSHH assessments, chemical inventory, safety signs and proper chemical storage? All these MUST be provided, to be seen and used, AT EVERY PLACE OF WORK. If yours is not the case, I suggest a written report to committee may help, or a telephone call to your local Health and Safety Officer.

**BOB LUPTON** Secretary Northern Section

■ The advent of imported bark fumigated with the pesticide methyl bromide

# Letters

is causing increased anxiety amongst both purchasers and suppliers of naturally processed home produced barks. As a major handler of solely British bark from sustainable resource forests which is naturally processed, I feel it is important to draw attention to this controversial issue.

Imports of bark are banned under Britain's plant health organisations. However, it appears that if it is proved to the Forestry Commission's satisfaction that the product does not present a plant health risk to British forests, the Commission has the power to grant licences to import normally prohibited material. So, to ensure there is no such risk, the imported bark is fumigated, before being landed, with methyl bromide gas to kill any insect or fungal infestation.

As I see it, this is an act of environmental vandalism. It is contaminating an otherwise sound natural product with a poison, a halogenated hydrocarbon – the same family in fact as CFCs. Methyl bromide is toxic and leaves residues on organic materials and bark thus treated cannot be accepted as wholly natural. Certainly the Soil Association will not endorse it as such.

In the current climate of environmental awareness untreated British bark must be the preferred product, but how can the buyer know which is treated with pesticides and which is not?

We feel strongly that products should pass an environmental audit to prove them ecologically sound in terms of origin, process and use and guarantee that our bark is free of any chemical additives. It is hoped that those professional companies with sound environmental ethics will make similar statements. Buyers should ask for written guarantees to state that the bark has not been treated or mixed with methyl bromide or any other harmful chemicals.

Imported bark may make economic sense but environmentally, while it is chemically treated, it is simply unacceptable.

**JOHN LATTER** Melcourt Industries, Gloucester

■ The article appearing in your April issue (Keith McKee on 'Nitrogen versus other nutrients') gives rise to a point on which I must take issue. Because fertiliser rates are the subject of argument, and if printed articles, by Keith or others in the fertiliser industry, are not crystal-clear and accurate, how can the poor greenkeeper, struggling with a flood of information, be expected to discount mis-information?

Okay, Keith would say 'Yes, everyone knows I meant P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>'. But he and your excellent magazine (as a source of reliable information) should be as near perfect as possible. The expression of phosphorus and potassium content needs care in the use of the elemental symbols P and K. They can be used by themselves in text as abbreviations for phosphorus and potassium respectively. But when used with numerals, as in '5 kg/ha P' or '6 oz/yd 2 K' they relate (or should relate!) to the quantity of the pure element, as opposed to the oxides P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> (phosphate) and K<sub>2</sub>O (potash) which are the usual forms for expressing fertiliser content. The factors for converting units P to units P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>, etc., are:

$$P \times 2.29 = P_2O_5 : P_2O_5 \times 0.44 = P$$

$$K \times 1.21 = K_2O : K_2O \times 0.83 = K$$

If your magazine was not so good I'd not bother. It's only because of the trust it generates that I want to see reliability on this point!

**JOHN SHILDRICK**

*John Shildrick is Chief Executive of The National Turfgrass Council.*

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