



Letters to the editor are always welcome. They should be signed and carry the writer's address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity, label and good taste. Please send letters to: The Editor, Greenkeeper International, 13 Firle Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL

■ Greenkeepers' environmental responsibilities ■ Pricey problems

■ Working into the night to save greens from the drought brings home to the greenkeeper what the environment really is and what changes to it can mean. Greenkeepers have to cope not only with members of committees, who vary in their ignorance and inclination to interfere, but with even less controllable elements like drought, downpour, frost and the many ills that grass is akin to. Taken together, greenkeepers look after more than a quarter of a million acres of Britain's open space. A big responsibility and one that goes beyond answering just to the chairman of green at your Club. Yes, you manage a sizeable piece of the environment, our environment.

Even so, I am prompted to ask – is golf doing enough to be green, in image and reality? You wouldn't think so through reading the non-golfing press, which often puts up golf as an enemy of conservation. You may say that they have got this all wrong, but per-

ception is reality to a lot of people. Golf has got to fight back and to start projecting what it is doing to conserve and enhance our environment.

Greenkeepers are, aren't they? BIGGA have included conservation in their training syllabus. Seventy four Sites of Special Scientific Interest are maintained on courses in England. English Nature (successor to the Nature Conservancy Council as the government body for nature conservation) has issued to every Club in the country a booklet on conserving golf's natural heritage, along with advice on how to prepare a conservation management plan.

Well, I know this and you know this, but who else is aware of the efforts being made? Probably not even your own members, who complain about that scruffy bit of long grass which, for them, is just a black hole for golf balls but which, come spring, will show a glorious display of flowering meadow plants and you don't

intend to cut the grass until the plants have set seed.

The message needs to be got across at all levels. And greening can extend into all sorts of areas beyond the management of rough and fairway, for example in the use of environment-friendly materials and the economical use of heat and light in the club house. The literature on a green policy for business exists (as does a British Standard – BS7750) and the industry that is golf and the individual businesses that are golf Clubs can implement a green policy. This will not only win golf friends – it will be truly helping the environment.

I suggest that the R&A and the Home Unions put together a guidance note on green management of golf towards meeting BS7750, for implementing as circumstances dictate by golf Clubs. Let's also start at home by having a regular feature in Greenkeeper International on greening golf. A good example is worth publishing – so let's hear stories about what individual greenkeepers are doing for the environment. These can be added to by articles about greening in general. Together we'd be contributing to a sustainable future – for our game and our environment.

Governments and governing bodies can and should lead – a message given at the Earth Summit in Rio. But Rio also gave the message back: that individuals and their actions matter too. Ultimately, they matter most.

IAN DAIR

Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs, English Nature

■ In the June issue, Sam Morrison expresses an understandable and quite justifiable complaint when he wrote about his difficulty in acquiring up-to-date prices to assist him in preparing annual budgets.

As distributors, we offer what we feel are the main reasons for his problem.

1 First and foremost, cost. Any company producing a catalogue detailing products offered would be unwise to quote prices alongside them. In recent years these have altered too frequently for the printed matter to remain accurate and the wasting of existing catalogues and the re-printing of new ones becomes impossibly expensive.

2 A price list accompanying a cat-

alogue is a way of helping this situation, being cheaper to reprint, but again several up-dating reprints in a year would be required for it to be as accurate as possible.

3 The products sold by distributors to the Sports and Amenity trade cover a very considerable range from numerous manufacturers and producers who historically have altered their prices at differing times of the year – well known ones in January, April, June, July, September, October and November. That pattern of change presents a considerable problem to the distributor when an attempt is made to produce an up-to-date price list.

The only way Mr Morrison could obtain the information for producing his budget would be to telephone for prices, but even then, for planning a budget a year ahead, the prices are just not available from the manufacturers until much nearer the time of supply.

As a compromise between offering an expensive catalogue and a separate price list, our small company produces a combined product and price guide. The most recent, although up-to-date in March, alas now requires numerous amendments.

J D COLLIER

Collier Turf Care (Distributors) Ltd, Norwich, NR10 4PR

■ I write to express my concern over what seems to be a lack of interest in BTEC's National Diploma in Golf Course and Sportsground Management.

This three year course is demanding and advanced, yet nevertheless all adverts in Greenkeeper International and other trade magazines for available greenkeeping positions make no reference to it. Instead, they require prospective employees to have gained City & Guilds certification and ignore BTEC.

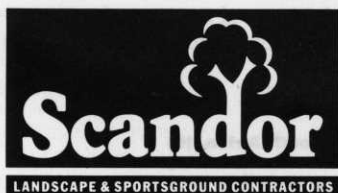
Being a mature student who gave up a good well paid job to gain a position in the golfing industry, I now find myself worrying that the BTEC Diploma is not being recognised and that I have subsequently wasted three years of hard work. Further, in the June issue of Greenkeeper International, the Annual Report makes no mention of BTEC, concentrating instead on the new NVQs and HND/Degree level courses.

Both me and my fellow students

Golf Course Construction

- New Golf Courses
- Alterations
- Drainage
- Irrigation
- Sand Slitting

Our best advertisement is our work



Scandor
Hensting Lane
Fishers Pond
Nr Eastleigh
Hampshire SO5 7HH
Tel: (0703) 692422
Fax: (0703) 601555

