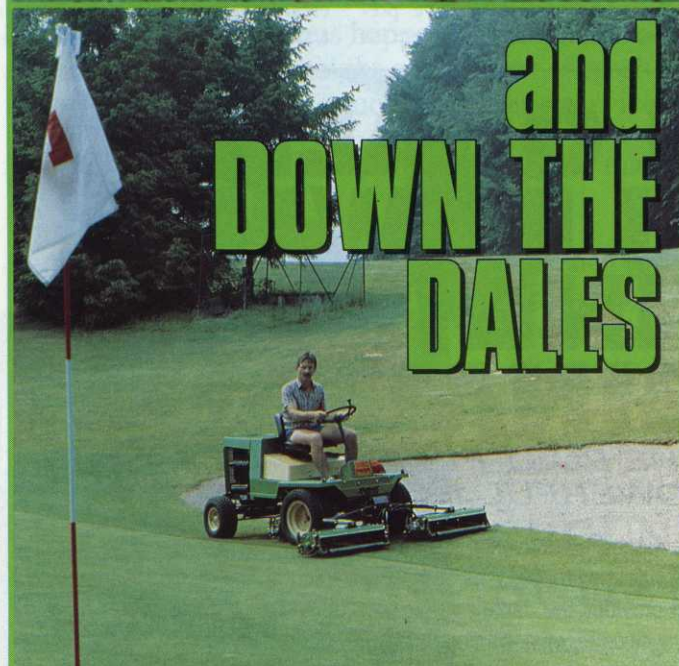


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In search of a perfect cut

and bedknife. If the reel were cylindrically ground, and the bedknife ground carefully, the resulting fits would be acceptable without backlapping.

This does not mean that cylindrical grinding is to be preferred in all cases. With cylindrical grinding it is completely impossible to put a backgrind on the reel. The resulting land width of the reel is the full width of the reel blade. This requires more power to turn the reel against the bedknife than does a narrow land from a single blade ground reel with a backgrind. It is also more difficult to maintain a sharp cutting edge on the reel with full width contact, since more material must be worn away to keep the edge sharp. Because of this, it is more likely that a cylindrically ground reel would require backlap-

ping at some point between grindings than a reel which has backgrind. So there is a place for both types of grinding, but the method will influence the backlap requirements.

Conclusions

There are many factors involved in cutting unit design, and it is not accurate to make a blanket statement that one concept of cutting unit adjustment is always superior to another concept. In certain applications, and with certain executions, one may appear better than the other, while in many applications there really is not a major difference in the ability of either type to work well.

● The author, Fred Wucherpfennig, P.E. is senior principal engineer for the Toro Company.

Disgusting manners of a lesser spotted flatworm

It will be better if you are not reading this over breakfast, for this is the tale of a wee beastly with disgusting table manners. I refer to the nastiest of imports from New Zealand, the *Artioposthia triangulata*, or flatworm, which is now reported to have made itself at home in Scotland and appears set for border reivers.

This little wriggler has the habit of oozing up to its new found playmate: the ordinary native garden earthworm, hugging it and discharging a secretion which gives off a paralysing toxin. Suitably subdued and no doubt expecting romance, the poor old earthworm is then turned to the consistency of soup through the exuded digestive juices of Mr Flat and is slurped up like a can of tomato juice.

The flatworm can grow up to six or seven inches and can liquidise its prey in less than an hour. Whilst it demonstrates a penchant for earthworms, it is no glutton and is reported to survive for months at a time with nothing save the lingering flavour!

The implications of flatworm to the greenkeeping profession are as yet minimal, though scientists fear that its spread could ravage the earthworm population, with resultant harm to wildlife and agriculture.

First identified in Scotland and Northern Ireland around 1965, the mucus-covered flatworm was in all probability introduced through earth clods on plant imports from New Zealand. Major sightings have

been made in garden centres, domestic gardens and some Scottish National Trust properties.

If there is a ray of hope for the English, it is that scientists believe much of England may be too warm and dry for the flatworm, though they express themselves mystified as to why it should not survive in wetter westerly parts. To quote a Manchester University flatworm expert, "It's a matter of luck that we don't have it here yet, and I would imagine it is only a matter of time." One other bright spot is that earthworms do not necessarily disappear after the flatworms begin their banqueting. With over a dozen different species of earthworm in Britain, some seem better able to escape than others.

Just how much damage can the flatworm do to earthworm populations? As a measure (according to scientists in Northern Ireland) in just one field on the outskirts of Belfast, flatworms have slurped their way through almost the complete earthworm community.

This invader is a real threat and must be taken seriously, for as yet there is no known method for control. Any reader spotting a flatworm (as you might expect, flattish though sometimes changeable in shape, brown uppermost with a pale underbelly and usually found on damp soil), either in Scotland or on the English borders, should advise the Biological Recording in Scotland Campaign on 031 312 7765.

DAVID WHITE