

■ Conference was a big success ■ Standard of speakers 'excellent'

35 • also to the staff at the college who looked after us so well, and to the BIGGA team who once again presented a very professional image, with the whole event running so smoothly.

The event lived up to my every expectation and how refreshing it was to hear of Bernard Findley's experiences and what he has learned from them. To me this was without doubt the most interesting forty minutes of the whole weekend. Before this we had Mr Jim Arthur preaching to us about the common sense attitude to greenkeeping, which parts of the industry would have us believe to be highly scientific. He also warned us of the realistic threat of certain elements of the game taking our jobs. If ever there was a rallying call for the profession to push ahead through education, this was certainly it.

Yes, I left Cirencester refreshed and enthused, confident in the fact that the profession is moving in the right direction and proud to be a member of the Association. Long may the Association give us the opportunity of attending such informative and value for money events.

Many thanks.

PAUL SEAGO

Head Greenkeeper, Royal West Norfolk GC

■ I must put pen to paper to write and congratulate everyone involved for a most enjoyable and successful three days at the National Education Conference at Cirencester. One can only imagine all the hard work that was put in by everyone at headquarters.

The standard of speakers was excellent – both from home and abroad – with three people who I feel must be mentioned by name and beginning with Bernard Finlay for his excellent paper on his experiences at Portstewart GC – it was good to see one of our own up there – well done Bernard! Secondly, Mr Patrick O'Brien, Director, SE Region, Green Section USGA, – what can I say? Only that I will remember (and giggle over) his presentation for many years to come. Finally, Mr Jim Arthur, who I do not agree with on many things but at least one knows which direction Jim is coming: head-on with both guns blazing (and usually in my direction!).

ROBERT GILBERT

Head Greenkeeper, The Wisley GC, Surrey

■ An article in the April issue of Greenkeeper International by Hugh Tilley, entitled 'Fertilisers', appeared with the following statement: 'Manganese, zinc, copper and iodine are all important at trace levels, and these and many

other compounds, vitamins and amino acids are found in seaweed. Thus the inclusion of seaweed meal or extraction in fertilisers and foliar feeds is a useful addition.'

This statement is incorrect. Iodine is not an essential trace element for plants, nor are vitamins used by plants in any shape or form.

I would also like to state that the STRI does not recommend the addition of calcium and boron in fertilisers for turfgrasses, as there is no scientific evidence for the addition of these elements creating any benefit to turfgrass generally.

DR PETER HAYES Director, Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley

• *Greenkeeper International invited journalist Hugh Tilley to comment. This is his reply:*

My information was obtained from several major manufacturers, backed by my own years as a professional grower of (agricultural) grasses. Theirs is the statement that iodine and vitamins (et alia) are essential for healthy plant growth.

The feature did not suggest that the STRI recommended calcium or boron, simply that there was an 'indication' (from a member of their own staff) that there could be a benefit, even a need, for these on sand based constructions and on areas of acidic sand.

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