

Letters

Send your letters to Greenkeeper International, BIGGA, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Aine, York YO6 2NF or fax them on 0347 838864

Video is great, but...

May I congratulate BIGGA on the production of their first education video, which I think will be of great value to all greenkeepers. However, it should be pointed out that a few points are incorrect.

To begin, the video shows a green being sprayed with a boom sprayer, the operator spraying whilst turning. All spraying should be done in straight lines, in order to avoid over-dosing on the inside of the turning circle and under-dosing on the outside. In fact, if very tight turns are made, the inside of the boom can actually be travelling backwards! I know this can sometimes be difficult because of the shape of greens, but that is the very reason for using walking booms and hand lances.

Secondly, standing still and waving a hand lance over an area whilst using a knapsack sprayer is hardly accurate, making pointless all those calibrations regarding walking speed. For spot treatments with a knapsack the operator should walk over the target holding the lance steadily and at the correct height, as though spraying the whole area, then simply turning the lance on as the target is transgressed.

I was particularly concerned regarding disposal of unwanted spray material, the video showing the drain valve on the sprayer being opened, the chemical 'glugging' out onto the ground. Granted, the point is made that this is a designated area for the disposal of unwanted spray material, but surely anyone in their right mind would rinse out first, including the first washings, so that there is no risk of a large volume of liquid running off into streams and watercourses, which on hard ground could quite possibly happen.

Apart from the above, I feel the video is too long and might be better condensed to thirty minutes. Also the mentioning of one particular product seven times could perhaps be reduced to just once or twice.

Chris Mitchell, Course Manager, Royal Ashdown Forest GC, Forest Row, East Sussex
Jon Allbutt replies:

I agree with the points in Chris's letter. However, this was a technically demanding video to make and Richard Fry did a good job, especially when you consider that he is not a spraying expert. I was in attendance on the first day of filming, but only to sort out protective clothing, calibration etc.

By the way, Chris missed the incorrect pouring of chemicals into the induction hopper, and I'm sure if I watched it again and again I would find more to criticise. Yes, it is too long, but don't ask me which bits to cut out, it is all interesting.

The video sets a high standard and will be invaluable to young greenkeepers, managers, college teachers, instructors and, yes, older greenkeepers too. They will find something to make them think as well.

Students say thanks

I am writing to thank everybody at BIGGA HQ and to say how honoured I am to have been chosen the winner of the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year competition. It was a great experience.

My employers are delighted with my win. There has been quite a lot of local and national press attention and I have never had so many handshakes - I feel like I have won a gold medal at the Olympics!

The trip to the US starts on January 10. I have been told that the GCSAA trade show in Dallas is one that I won't forget quickly!

Once again, thank you for looking after us all at Aldwark Manor and for a great night out in Harrogate. I am very much looking forward to my trip to America and also keeping in contact with you all.

Bridie Redican, Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year

■ May I take this opportunity to thank staff at BIGGA headquarters and the Aldwark Manor Golf Hotel, plus of course Toro Irrigation, Lely (UK) Ltd and the PGA European Tour, for providing two most excellent days when I competed for the Student Greenkeeper of the Year award. I would also like to thank my fellow student participants, especially for their great friendliness toward me. Though not an award winner myself, I know the accolades went to three most worthy winners, all of whom will serve BIGGA most proudly.

Antony Bindley, Braunstone, Leicester

■ May I begin by thanking you personally for the many splendid articles that have appeared in Greenkeeper International, they are much appreciated.

This has been a tremendous year for me, especially as I have been associated with the PGA European Tour Team. Through the letters column, may I thank Bruce Jamieson and his staff and everyone who made 1993 a year that I will never forget.

I would also ask you to give my thanks to Jimmy Kidd and his staff, who made my stay at Gleneagles such a memorable one.

Paul Brannan, 15 James Nisbet Street, Glasgow

Editor's note: Paul was one of three winners in the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year award last year. His prize? Attending two PGA Tour events, plus the PGA European Tour conference at Penina, Portugal.

One little word

Reference my article in 'Bones of Contentment' in November, before I am inundated with comments that 3/16 of an inch is perfectly acceptable, I heartily agree. The word 'below' has been omitted in the paragraph toward the end, which should read... "cutting greens below 3/16 of an inch". Although just one small word, this dramatically alters the meaning of the sentence.

Tom McKechnie, Carnoustie Golf Links, Angus, Scotland

'Inspiring' trade show

A recent holiday trip to the USA gave me the opportunity to visit the 1993 Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Trade Show, held at the Tampa Convention Center. After a short drive from Orlando I arrived in Tampa and soon found the convention center. I was welcomed by the Florida turfgrass officials and after speedily registering I proceeded to the first lecture.

The quality of speakers was first class and I especially enjoyed listening to Dr Bob Carrow, who presented a fine paper on Hydroject vs Solid Tine vs Hollow Tine aeration in fine turf. Following the workshop I was invited to their annual meeting and awards luncheon, this again proving

to be most interesting and informative. The amount of money generated from sections around the State, from which turfgrass research and their Association will certainly benefit, was encouraging. The trade show itself was inspiring and I made many friends in such a brief period. Next year's convention will be held in Fort Lauderdale, 17-21 September, and hopefully I can arrange my holidays accordingly. It was certainly money well spent!

Tony Dunstan, Mill Hill Golf Club, London

Accidents in waiting

I am a greenkeeper currently employed at Costessey Park GC, Norfolk. During convalescence following a heart attack I've visited a number of golf courses, to enjoy some rest and relaxation in beautiful surroundings. However, all is not rosy in this Eastern Paradise and, in some cases, accidents are just waiting to happen. Examples abound:

- Operators using machines without ear protection when the noise output far exceeds minimum levels.
- Use of equipment that presents a high health risk, whilst less risky equipment (though available) remains idle.
- Use of 'new' equipment that does not conform to current regulations.

It may be that Greenkeeper International can draw upon the services of experts at workshops given through BTME to outline the shortcomings and anomalies found. However, many greenkeepers and employers cannot afford the time to attend such workshops and rely upon written word prior to action.

My comments may draw adverse comments from greenkeepers and employers in this area, but I will stand by my claim and issue a challenge to readers to answer these questions honestly; any cheating is only against themselves.

- 1) In carrying out a risk assessment, is it necessary for an employer to record any significant findings?
- 2) Should someone, identified by name, be responsible for health and safety on the course?
- 3) Do you have transport standing by whenever a competent, correctly dressed, individual is using a chain saw, just in case?
- 4) What is commonly regarded as the first level of noise output, and how can one determine if a machine exceeds this in a normal working environment?

Did anyone get all of them right? Does any golf club comply with all these regulations? Should people care? In answering yes to the last question, readers should remember that these are but a small selection from H&S regulations. They affect everyone and are enforceable by law.

Answers:

Q1. Regulation 3 (4) Management of Health and Safety at Work: Where the employer employs five or more employees he shall record the significant findings of the assessment and any group of his employees identified by it as being especially at risk. Are there more than five employees at your location? Have you seen the written findings of the assessment? Which employees at your location are identified as being at risk?

Q2. Regulation 6 (1) Ditto: Every employer shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), appoint one or more competent persons to assist him in undertaking the measures he needs to take to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed upon him by or under the relevant statutory provisions. Paras (6) and (7) refer to self employed