

Grass seed shortage is on the cards, warns supplier

There could be a shortage of some types of amenity grass seed and a firmer price pattern during the next few months, warns Derek Whelbourn, wholesale director of Johnsons Seeds.

The situation, he claims, has arisen through a combination of factors. "The weather has meant that

this year's spring trade has been later, causing trading over a longer period," he says. "This has helped to clear what initially was an apparent surplus and now replacement stocks of seed are urgently needed for filling empty spaces in merchants' premises."

Additional factors which have contributed to the stock shortage are: considerable exports of seed from Europe to the USA; and lower seed production acreage in Europe and the UK than in previous years.

"The combination of factors has occurred at a time of the year when replacement stocks are not easily available," said Mr Whelbourn. "New crop seed will not be available until the autumn trading is well under way, meaning that the balance of the spring trade and the coming autumn trade will have to be supplied out of current stock. During the late spring and early summer it is almost certain there will be a shortage of certain types of grass seed, leading to an inevitable hardening of prices."

New courses to open near Gatwick Airport

Two new golf courses are being built near Gatwick Airport. The 18-hole Duxhurst Estate course, on a mature parkland site south of Reigate, is to be laid out as a 6,250-yard par 71 course with comprehensive practice and teaching facilities.

Architect Howard Swan says it will feature modest remodelling of the natural terrain and have some water features on the lower parts of the land. Work began mid-May with full play scheduled for late spring '96.

The Horne Park Golf Academy at nearby Horley, also designed by Swan, is a 2,700-yard nine-hole par 34 course with range, chipping and bunker areas. Continental Landscapes are constructing the academy and ISS are supplying the Toro irrigation equipment. Horne Park is likely to open its doors later this year, with the course in play mid-'95.

Castle Combe bought

Castle Combe Golf Club in Wiltshire has been bought by the son of a local hotelier. Danny Pecorelli, whose father Guiseppi owns the nearby Manor House Hotel, is believed to have paid £2.5million for the course which cost £8million to build in 1991. Pecorelli plans to run the Peter Alliss/Clive Clark-designed course in the same way as his other club - Mannings Heath in West Sussex where a second 18 holes is under construction.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Arcot Hall Golf Club's Ian Duncan, 32, is off to Germany to take over the head greenkeeper's job at Sennelager (British Army) Golf Club.

■ McNab Sports Supplies of Kinross have appointed Neil Mitchell as area representative to cover golf clubs in Fife,



Tayside, Grampian and Highland regions. Neil previously worked for Perth and Kinross District Council as a greenkeeper, looking after golf courses, bowling greens and cricket squares. In 1989 he was awarded the title of Young Groundsman of the Year. Tel: 0577 864198.

■ The Whitbread Group of Hotels, whose golf courses include Forest of Arden, St Pierre, Dalmahoy, Meon Valley, and Tewkesbury Park, has been renamed the Country Club Hotel Group.

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