

# Acid theory: controversial topic needs exploring

I am pleased that Jim Arthur and I are in agreement that many old greens do not need the addition of phosphorus for healthy growth of turf (*You say*, June issue). There are two reasons for this.

The first is, as we agree, that many already have very high phosphorus levels in the soil.

Secondly, where old greens are healthy but have extremely low "available" soil phosphorus levels it may be that they can sustain growth because the grasses and other plants growing in them have mycorrhizal fungi growing symbiotically with their roots to help them absorb phosphorus from the soil. The simple chemical extractants used in laboratories cannot simulate the beneficial effect of these fungi so it appears that the grasses need less phosphorus than they are actually getting. On new greens with low phosphorus levels these kind of microscopic relationships have not developed and fertiliser containing phosphorus should be added if analyses so indicate.

On the subject of the acid theory, how can Jim Arthur say that the ideal pH is the one you have got when the acid theory which he seems to be espousing involves the artificial lowering of soil pH by the use of acidic materials?

The acid theory has always been a very controversial topic and has damaged many greens over the years I suggest that, to get a balanced view of the theory, the "students and starters" which Mr Arthur wants to protect from modern thinking on nutrition go to their college libraries and read some of the old literature on the subject. I suggest "Turf" by Lewis, published by Faber in 1948 and "Lawns and Sports Greens" by A.J. MacSelf for starters.

Robert Laycock

## A fair day's pay

Congratulations to BIGGA who in the last seven years have created a new image and profes-

sional status of our greenkeeping workforce. These initiatives have given us better guidelines for working conditions, recommended salary/wage scales and further education programmes. This professional approach will manifest itself at club level with well trained dependable staff being available when needed.

In your recent article in *Greenkeeper International* you explained that the published salary/wage scales were "recommendations" and not mandatory. This statement will assist Green Chairmen when dealing with their individual club wage negotiations. Salaries can now be paid which will be commensurate with staff qualifications and their workload.

The Association of Golf Club Secretaries (North West) recent survey revealed a wide variation in salary/wage scales, hourly rates, overtime rate, staffing levels and hours worked. The findings of these clubs through the North West were so varied it was evidence that no positive guidelines had previously been available and an ad hoc system had prevailed.

Often neighbouring clubs would compare their course and staffing levels and make pay awards accordingly. Pay awards and conditions for house staff does not often promote such lengthy discussions. Green budgets have been reduced to ensure staff remain who provide food and drink. That I suggest is not the main function of a golf club.

The initiatives of Ken Richardson, BIGGA Education Officer, and the Greenkeepers Training Committee will in the long term benefit clubs.

The educational qualifications can be drawn up and included in all green staff terms and conditions of employment.

Further education will benefit both the profession and golf clubs and will provide us with staff who can advise us on all

specialist matters which currently most clubs have to seek from "Advisory Services" at considerable expense. We will soon be able to pay a "Fair Day's Pay for a Fair Day's Work".

TM Yates

Hon Secretary, Dunscur Golf Club

## Well-aimed boot

All of us are aware that in certain circumstances we would benefit from a friendly push, or indeed a good kick up the backside. This awareness however often comes after the event and is in most cases regrettably too late. I would therefore like to thank Neil Thomas for his far reaching 'boot' in the July edition of *Greenkeeper International*.

Reflecting on the various stages of BIGGA's development can possibly help to show the way to a more integrated international or at least European membership.

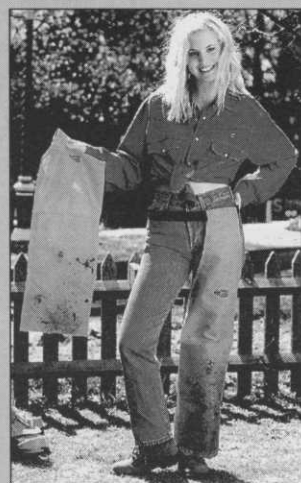
In short, numerous localised groupings run by volunteer organisers progressing to a regional association ultimately reaching a national level with one central base. The local and regional organisers playing a major role not only in the initial stages but also in the continual development and recruitment of members.

And so I feel that BIGGA should be looking for European members who have the time and commitment and are prepared to organise local Greenkeepers with a view to eventual BIGGA integration. Six 'local organisers' could certainly support a monthly column and if Neil Thomas keeps his boots well polished he may even persuade twelve.

David Abercrombie  
Hattstatt, France

PS: I have great respect for the traditions of the game and of the job title *greenkeeper* as opposed to any other variation.

## NEW PRODUCTS



■ Central Spares have come up with a novel way of preventing trousers becoming ruined when working a nylon line trimmer. Made from waterproof acrylic coated nylon with a foam padded insert on the shins to new lightweight leggings are easily worn over trousers or shorts and will keep operators clean and dry and at the same time offer protection from flying stones and other debris. A lightweight jacket is also available. For further information call 01202 882000.

■ Richard Long Engineering has launched a new gang flail mower, the G-F5000 to complement its range of existing mowers, topdressers and flail/carrier collectors. The G-F 5000 trailed flail mower has a working width of 4.75 metres and a transport width of 2.4 metres. It's equipped with fully independent floating cutter heads and mounted on two twin wheeled axles situated in line with the two rear flail head which ensures that ground contours are followed even in severe conditions. The G-F 5000 sells for £13,450. Details: 01773 520301.

■ Snip "n" Grip, a versatile adjustable banding system from Terry of Redditch has been designed for use in both outdoor and indoor environments and is suitable for both temporary and permanent repairs. Supplied in lengths of two, 20 and 40 metres and fastened by a continuous worm-drive fastener, the Snip "n" Grip system is ideal for fence repair, bundling or strapping applications. For further information: 01527 64261.