

The life of Mr G Pennncross

Anna Joelsson Softing, head greenkeeper at Chalmers GC, Sweden, with a little story about the life of a creeping bentgrass seed.

It all began when I, a little seed, was born. I was a "test-tube" seed and was made in a huge clean and hi-tech laboratory in Pennsylvania, USA. They gave me the name Greg Pennncross and I got four stars (out of five) in the quality seed ranking list.

Flown over the Atlantic sea

My childhood was traumatic, just the fact that you are totally unaware of your origin can be confusing to a little seed. My upbringing was also demanding due to the fact that everyone wanted me to mature without delay so that they could keep the generous government and com-

pany contributions. At an early age I was considered mature enough to move away from my surrogate family which was growing on the turf. Without any warning came a big machine, which smelt horrible from diesel, and ran over my family turf. All over the neighbourhood seeds were being seperated from their families. Between hard and cold metal rollers I and millions of my seedfriends were thrown into a huge sack without mercy. After that they put us on a big white Concorde, (disappointingly economy class), and we were flown to a little country called Sweden and a even smaller peasant village called Landvetter and taken to a big and famous golf club called Chalmers GC. We had just arrived when we were thrown into a dark and humid room with other species of grass-seeds.

But just because I had a rough

start in life, doesn't mean I'm racist. Hell no, they are also seeds although they aren't as green and pretty as me.

The life on a golf green ain't easy

In this little room time passed slowly and I was kept alive only with the little food storage I had under my seed shell. But suddenly one gloomy afternoon someone came and carried us out into the open, put us on to a jumpy and small vehicle and drove away with "full speed ahead". You had to hold on tightly! The storage packing was torn open with haste and I saw the light of day again.

Pale white working hands picked me up and raised me to the blue and white sky so impatiently that I almost fell off and the owner of the pale hands said to me: "Be a good sport, grow, get strong and make a family." She fed me well so that I would enjoy my life here. But the life on a golf green is not easy. My feet are always cold and the air is always filled with huge and horrible golf balls which can exterminate whole families if you've run out of luck. And still, this isn't the whole story – daily, heavy and overweight people step right on me with shoes full of spikes big as Indian totempoles.

Other terrible things

Every morning Anna (one of the older families on the golf green told me her name) comes along with her big Ransomes greens-mower and cuts my top off. You also have to cope with steelblades which cut down beside you, you better watch your feet! And if that isn't enough they throw sand right on you and bury you so deep that you sometimes have trouble breathing. After that they usually drag a steel net over my shoulders to even the sand or as I say just for the fun of it, the wicked people!

Cheering and swearing

But life wasn't all pain and misery – daily these golfers checked me over and with admiration in their voices said: "Look at him, girls, he's so good looking and green, much more handsome than the guy that was here last year". The golf balls that rolled over my backside also gave a thrilling feeling and then I heard cheering and occasionally a bad word.

The most beautiful grass in the world

In this environment I grew big and strong and time passed on. It became even colder and inhospitable. Anna gave me less and less to eat, the golf balls and the nailshoes stopped showing up and my top was cut less frequently, stopping completely in late October. And suddenly the weather changed and it got *really* unbelievably cold and it started to snow and this continued for what seemed forever. Anna came and checked on me occasionally but she never brought any food. Now I had come to the stage in both mind and life that I just didn't care anymore. And one day after heavy rain the temperature dropped and the water froze to ice. I began having trouble breathing, and felt more and more weak for every hour that passed. When I had come to the point where I had given up I felt the pressure over my chest easing. The ice began to melt and the temperature rose. Anna came with some refreshments and one day she came with a sack that I recognised. New seeds were spread out and right beside my right side a blond and well developed little seed landed, she was called Emerald Pennlink.

It's spring once again – the golfers return, life is great – and the rest I'll leave to your imagination.



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Can you lend Paul a hand?

Want to get close to Laura Davies and other top women golfers? Paul Hobden, course manager at Chart Hills Golf Club, Kent, wants volunteers to help him and his team rake bunkers and prepare the course for the Ford Ladies Classic, May 16-19. If you are free and can help out, call Paul on 01580 292222.