



Sowing the seeds for the future

sceptical. He argues that despite the potential of gene technology the range of options available to plant breeders are still bound by the fundamental precepts of plant ecology.

"If grasses are modified by inserting appropriate genes, and traits such as drought tolerance, are fully expressed how will such an organism survive when it is faced with significant deficits or moisture/nutrients but is constantly subjected to the wear and tear and ultra close mowing expected by today's golfers?"

"Grasses which are more efficient at extracting and utilising nutrients than their contemporaries – especially nitrogen – are already undergoing trials. But such advances, despite their benefits are dwarfed by the climatic changes which are likely to be much greater than the capacity of GMOs to produce the higher levels of performance demanded."

So, where does that leave the greenkeeper needing to make commercial purchasing decisions but with an eye to the long-term health and performance of the course's playing surfaces?

As far as Drs Thorogood and Newell are concerned, the crux of the matter is that, in the words of Dr. Thorogood, "Farsighted companies with direct involvement with the greenkeeper on the one hand and the research scientists and breeders on the other, are in the ideal position to bring together the geneticists and greenkeepers to discuss what is possible and what is needed in the grass seed mixtures for the millennium."

Dr Newell's main concern is that greenkeepers beware of cheap grasses because they can become very expensive.

"Greenkeepers may save money on seed but pay out for extra maintenance, extra watering and extra fertiliser. If grass has to be replaced due to poor performance, this could be extremely expensive."

From Geoff Taylor's perspective, the crucial thing is that the products of plant breeders need to be integrated effectively with the technological development of mowers and other machines, along with chemicals.

"A holistic approach is the only one likely to succeed where superior management skills can maximise the full range of resources available."

Drawing breath before BTME 98

Yet another year has flown by with the New Year only three weeks away and Harrogate only six weeks away. Nineteen ninety seven started with the Learning Experience, commencing with the National Education Conference and the welcome return of two workshops. Workshop 1 on Golf Course Design, Construction and Maintenance was extremely popular again, so much so that we had to stop taking applications in early December. We, therefore decided to this workshop around the Regions, which has proved to be a great success. This workshop will be held at Harrogate again in January and, if you are quick, there are still a few places left. Workshop 2, Surveying and Levelling was, again, very successful and will be running in January. **New for 1998 will be a workshop on Irrigation and its popularity is such that it is completely full.** The National Education Conference will again be held in the Majestic Hotel, with speakers from all parts of the industry sure to offer something for everyone. The Seminar Programme returns to the Royal Hall for 1998. The Seminar Programme begins at 10am with a seminar presented by the Institute of Agricultural Engineers.

Unfortunately, Mr Jaime Ortiz Patino will not be able to attend on Wednesday 21 January, however he will be speaking on Thursday 22 January at 1 pm. This seminar is a must for anyone wanting to hear how Valderrama was prepared for the 1997 Ryder Cup. All three workshops, the National Education Conference and Seminars will, once again, attract Master Greenkeeper credits and BASIS Continuing Professional Development points. Please ask for details at the Conference Office or at Seminar Registration in Hall G.

Thanks to the contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund, including those companies listed at the front of this magazine, we have been able to continue to provide a range of courses around the Regions at very low prices. This year has seen courses on Essential Management Skills, Recruitment and Selection, Health and Safety and Leadership, allowing more than 180 greenkeepers to gain impor-



Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

tant knowledge which they can use in the future to provide better managed, efficient, cost effective, safe golf courses.

TORO sponsored both the Student of the Year and the Excellence in Greenkeeping Award for the first time in 1997. This enabled us to hold a joint final in October, when Steven Nixon from Wortley Golf Club and Ian McMillan from Hankley Common Golf Club were selected as the winners. Congratulations to them both. Ian was doubly successful as Hankley Common also won the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazon Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity, with Hankley winning £5000 to add to the prize of a Toro triple greens mower and Ian's trip to the USA. Full details of all 1998 competition will be available at BTME.

The next field guide, 'Grass Identification' is being distributed and will be available at BTME. Further field guides on 'Trees and Shrubs', 'Control of Mammals' and 'Basic Machinery Maintenance' will become available during 1998.

New for 1998 will be the BIGGA Refund of Education Fees Scheme. Watch out for full details of how and when to apply in the January edition of *Greenkeeper International* and on the BIGGA stand at BTME.

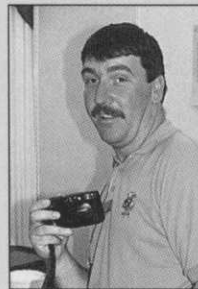
This year has been very hectic for Sami and me. We get immense satisfaction from seeing greenkeepers improve their knowledge, skills and confidence and we see education and training as the way to improve the status of greenkeepers and the greenkeeping profession. Remember, training courses, competitions and other training opportunities are staged for your benefit. Why not make a New Year's resolution to become more involved, attend courses and improve your status.

Sami and I hope that you all have a very happy Christmas and an educational New Year.

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Profile

Usually the spotlight falls on the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper at a Club. Now it is the turn of those whose work often goes unheralded to star...



Name: **Steven Evans**
Club: **St Enedoc GC**
Position: **Deputy Head Greenkeeper**
Age: **37(ish)**

1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?
Eighteen years

2. What education are you currently undertaking?
D32/D33 Just completed.

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?
Retvetting Bunkers

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?
Pesticide/Fungicide Spraying

5. What job other than greenkeeping might you have ended up doing?
Collier

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?
Peter Gillard, Greenkeeping Lecturer at Pencoed College In Wales

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?
Encourage educational opportunities for all greenkeepers

8. What are your hobbies?
Playing pool, cricket and golf

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?
Belonging to a professional organisation, valued friendships on a personal and professional level.

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?
Greenkeeping and failing that maybe a professional photographer for BIGGA!