

Eagerly awaited

Practical Greenkeeping by Jim Arthur B.Sc. (Agric.), with foreword by Michael Bonallack OBE, Secretary R&A.

Practical Greenkeeping by Jim Arthur is probably the most eagerly awaited book in its particular field published in recent years as it is the compilation of the thoughts, views and advice of one of the true doyens of agronomy.

Jim Arthur's career spans six decades and he has given guidance and advice to over 550 golf courses throughout the UK and Europe while acting as consultant agronomist to the Championship Committee of the R&A for 18 years.

Among those contributing chapters in their specialist fields are Donald Steel, on golf course architecture; plant pathologist Neil Baldwin; sport drainage expert Barry Cooper; constructor Brian Pierson; health and safety consultant Jon Allbutt and Jim's son, Richard Arthur, on soils and geology.

Practical Greenkeeping is published by The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and is available priced £29.95.

A personal view of the book by Dr Bill Adams, Head of the Soil Science Unit at the University of Wales...

It was a pleasure to read the 270 or so pages of this book because I believe it has provided Jim with the opportunity to draw together, in a more comprehensive manner than I have gathered from his articles, his experiences and opinions on golf greenkeeping.

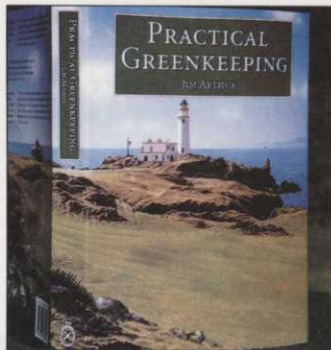
No-one has had such a long and influential experience as an advisor on turf culture for golf in the UK over a period of unprecedented expansion in participation in the game and the technology involved in its provision.

All who have a serious interest in golf turf need to read this book to appreciate the main features of advice which have influenced golf turf culture in the UK over the last half century.

There are 17 chapters. Apart from the first and last two, they deal with the various aspects of course construction and maintenance. So, for example, chapters deal with drainage, topdressing, mowing, irrigation, control of pests etc. The chapters are self contained and topics do not follow an obvious progression. Several chapters end with a series of conclusions but this style was not adopted throughout. Neil Baldwin contributed the chapter on turfgrass diseases.

An underlying theme is that golf should hold true to its traditions both in course design and turf culture. The first two chapters deal with the early development of the game and course design and both are interesting and informative. These chapters and the rest of the book include excellent photographs and illustrations.

Chapters dealing with turf maintenance practice contain indisputable good advice but one often feels preached at rather than agreeing with a conclusion on evidence



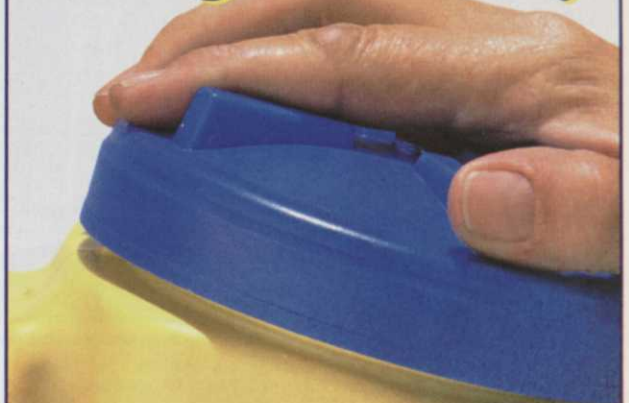
presented. This limits its value as a textbook because above all students, including young greenkeepers, need to reason "why" and not be satisfied with "what", "how" and "when".

The text contains only a small amount of quantitative technical data and there are few citations of literature to support statements of apparent fact. However, the style is consistent and conforms to Jim's philosophy that greenkeeping is "more of an art than a science".

A strong anti *Poa annua* theme is sustained and repeated fairly regularly throughout the book and a similar treatment is given to phosphatic fertilisers. The cultural control of annual meadowgrass has long been a key component of Jim's philosophy and advice but the extent to which greenkeepers can afford to impose the turf stress required is questionable in a context of ever increasing usage.

The penultimate chapter on conservation highlights a heritage golf courses have because of what they are and where they are. Not only do they occupy some of the wildest areas of coast but they are often the key green spaces among a sub-urban sprawl. The traditional design of courses supported throughout this book provides for variation based on natural features which relate to the local landscape and its vegetation. Long may the tradition continue.

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25