

ROUGH

Where is thy sting?

by Ian Dair

I think greenkeepers do a fine job. I have to think so for two reasons. I'm a great golfer (great in the sense of frequent) and there's nothing like playing on a course that's obviously well cared for. And I have a son who is a greenkeeper so I have to watch what I say. But, but – I can hear the readers of *Greenkeeper International* drawing in breath – wait for it? Here's another golf club member who knows nothing about the science of agronomy or the art of keeping 100 plus acres playable in all weathers, about to sound off with some ignorant opinions. Now, give me a chance, lads and lassies, I'm on your side. But, but – again, I can imagine you greenkeepers raising your mattsacks in a defensive/aggressive stance. Yes, I know, any complaints should go to the Chairman of Green and it's bound to be the fault of the interfering busybodies who call themselves the Greens Committee and they're only on that because they're retired and don't have a garden so they need to exercise power over something, or they've noted that the Club Captain often comes from their ranks.

I have to agree. I don't know my agronomy. However, I like to think I know my golf. It used to be a difficult game. You had to hit the ball straight because there were those areas to the right and left of the fairway called "rough". If you were lucky enough to find your ball in the grass/bushes/heather or anything else that grew naturally beyond the manicured fairway, you had to hack it out with something with a heavy iron head and a lot of loft. Golfers with a tendency to slice or to hook i.e. 99% of any club's membership, would spend many happy hours exploring the rough, increasing their affinity with nature or pondering on the mysteries of philosophy or plate tectonics. Or, if they had a good score going, praying that the next sweep of the long grass would uncover that shiny ball with a name and number roughly corresponding to what they'd hit off the tee.

It's different now. I don't mean that club golfers, with the new drivers that always go straight and the new balls that never veer off line, have become so good that the rough doesn't come into play. If anything, the wonderful new equipment enables the average player to hit it even further into the rough. But who cares any more? The ball makers should be worrying. Nobody loses a ball in the rough. Smack it in there and you can see it, sitting up, giving a juicy lie, better than the dry fairway, reach for the three wood, crash it towards the green and if it's still in the rough you'll get your wedge under it nicely and pop it on.

I know, I know. The rough needs rain and there's been little of that. And everyone hates slow play so the orders go out – cut the rough if it dares to grow more than the height of a ball. After all, say the Greens Committee, it's the same for everyone. No, it isn't. The absence of real rough changes the game. If you can hit the ball anywhere it takes away the strategy if you don't have to think before you strike. No rough to speak of brings everyone down to the same level in a game where straight used to be good and crooked meant, possibly, several lost balls and, certainly, a higher score. When did anyone last play a recovery shot from the rough?

Who am I going to blame? We'll leave the weather gods out of it since they don't read this magazine. I don't know if Greens Chairmen do – they should. You greenkeepers can slip a copy under the Committee room door. And you can do your bit by suggesting to the powers that be that proper rough is a good thing. It is more natural and is a home for wildlife. It must be cheaper to let the rough grow instead of whizzing round on the mower whenever a few green shoots appear. It puts back into the game the need for judgment and, when even the good golfer nods, the well thought out recovery shot. All reasons for welcoming the rough back into golf.

Cast aside your cares



Levington Turfclear® the double action worm control and fungicide for clean and healthy turf. Banishes casting worms and Fusarium Patch from all playing surfaces in one cost-saving operation.

- Contains the most effective worm-cast control agent available.
- Systemic fungicidal action without risk of damage to fine turf.
- Unaffected by rain or irrigation.
- Original flowable formulation now available in 800ml and 5L packs to suit all needs.
- Turfclear WDG provides convenient, pre-measured, water soluble sachets of water-dispersible granules to increase user safety and ensure accurate dosing.

ALTOGETHER AN UNBEATABLE COMBINATION



If you would like to know more please call our Technical Services Manager on 01473 203143 or contact your local Area Sales Manager:

South - Chris Briggs

Tel: 0378 603103 (mobile) or 01273 675966

Midlands and Wales - Roger Moore

Tel: 0378 603052 (mobile) or 01832 710076

N. England, Scotland & N.I. - Richard Walton

Tel: 0378 603091 (mobile)

Always read the label : Use pesticides safely.

TURFCLEAR contains carbendazim. TURFCLEAR and THE LEVINGTON DIFFERENCE are registered Trade Marks of Levington Horticulture Ltd. © Levington Horticulture Ltd 1997

AD REF 102