

Deadlines for three of BIGGA's major competitions are looming. BIGGA's Education & Training Manager, Ken Richardson counts them down, and also previews a new competition...

Education update

This month sees the deadlines for entry to three of BIGGA's major competitions. The TORO Award for Greenkeeping Excellence and Student Greenkeeper of the Year Competitions, which have an entry deadline of May 28, and the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone Ground Care and The Grass Roots Trading Company, which has an entry deadline of May 3.

Make sure that your entry is sent to BIGGA HQ by the closing date.

The TORO Award for Greenkeeping Excellence

The search to find the 1999 winner for the TORO Award for Greenkeeping Excellence is hotting up. You still have time to nominate your choice, however, as entries need to be at BIGGA HQ by May 28, you need to make sure that your nomination is in the post today.

Does your Head Greenkeeper deserve to be recognised for his efforts? Does your club want to win a TORO 3000 series triplex mower? Do you want to visit the GCSAA show in New Orleans and the TORO factories in Minneapolis and California in February 2000 for free? If the answer to any of the above is "yes" then fill in and return an official entry form or telephone Ken or Sami on 01347 833800. Remember, this competition is open to all Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers. Initial judging, to select up to eight finalists will take place during June/July, by a panel of experienced, retired Head Greenkeepers, led by Walter Woods. The National Final will be held at BIGGA HOUSE on 24/25 October.

TORO Student of the Year

Entries for the TORO Student of the Year competition need to be at Aldwark Manor by May 28. Regional judging will take place during the week commencing July 26 when a panel of three judges will select up to eight national finalists. The National Final will be held in Harrogate on October 24/25 alongside the The TORO Award for Greenkeeping Excellence Final.

Make sure that your college or training provider submits an entry for this prestigious competition and you could win the TORO Scholarship for 1999, attending the University of Massachusetts for a six weeks turf management course as well as visiting the TORO factories in Minneapolis and California.

The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

This year, 1999, sees, the Grass Roots Trading Company, joining Amazone Ground Care and BIGGA in sponsoring the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition. Golf clubs throughout Great Britain are beginning to see the benefits of entering, which at the very least can give your club a detailed environmental survey and action plan. However, if you win then your club could receive the £5,000 first prize and the added bonus of being recognised as the top environmentally managed golf course. Complete your application form today and send it to BIGGA HQ or contact Ken or Sami for further details.

The Learning Experience 2000

Planning is continuing for the Learning Experience 2000, which once again will be sponsored by

Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products. With less than 270 days to the Learning Experience week, time is running short but there is still chance for you to have an input. Contact Sami or Ken at BIGGA HOUSE with your ideas.

The Y2k Problem

What is it? Does it affect me? What will it do? Watch out for more details next month.

The BIGGA Essay Competition 1999

Thanks to a suggestion by our Vice Chairman, Elliot Small, we are reintroducing an essay competition for greenkeepers. Full details of the competition will be published soon but briefly:

The overall theme will be "The Past, The Present and The Future" ie to link with BTME 2000. The original essays from a competition run for Greenkeepers between 1912 and 1915 will enable us to compare the past with the present thoughts on greenkeeping issues and to look to the future.

There will be three categories: Head Greenkeepers/ Course Managers and deputies; Assistants and Students aged 25 and over and Assistants and Students aged under 25.

The entrants would be required to write an essay of between 2000 and 2500 words long ie. five to six type written pages.

The Essay would be marked to an agreed criteria by selected BIGGA representatives.

The subject matter would be on the lines of 'Greenkeeping Management Techniques for the 21st Century'.

The last day for entry would be 29 October 1999.

The winners would be announced in the January 2000 edition of Greenkeeper International.

Presentations and readings of essay extracts would be made at BTME2000.

Winners of each category would receive £500 with two runners up in each category receiving £100.

A brochure would be published in 2000 of all the winning essays, together with a number of the essays from 1912 to 1915.

Get thinking and get sharpening your pencils ready to submit your entry in the Autumn.

Refund of Fees Scheme

The maximum refund that can be claimed in any one year has been increased to £250 from 29 March 1999. To be eligible, you must:

- Be a member of BIGGA and have been a member for at least two years
- Have paid your own fees and be able to provide proof of payment.
- Have completed a course or component part of a course and be able to provide proof of completion.
- Not have had the course subsidised by BIGGA.
- Attend a relevant course to your job as a greenkeeper.

If you wish to claim then contact BIGGA HQ for an application form.