

Greenkeeper International takes a look at the very latest products and services available from the fine turf industry

Etesia launch new mulching mower

Etesia has launched its answer to the ever-increasing demand to recycle organic matter - the Biocut, a rotary mulching mower. The 53cm pedestrian machine has an aerodynamically designed cutting deck with specially profiled cutterbar, which lifts the grass before cutting it. The clippings are retained within the deck where they are chopped into fine particles. These are then deposited into the turf where they can quickly decompose. As the grass leaves consist of a high percentage of water plus nutrients, especially nitrogen, moisture and fertiliser are returned to the sward. The Biocut has a working width of 53cm and is powered by the latest 6hp Briggs & Stratton Intek Edge 60 engine. There are three forward speeds - 2.7kph, 4.5 kph and 8.5 kph. A central adjustment gives variable cutting height positions from 25mm to 95mm and the handlebars are fully adjustable and can be folded down for transportation or storage. The die-cast aluminium cutting deck is designed to withstand commercial use and will not rust or distort. If the grass is long and wet, the mulching cover can be removed, thus turning the Biocut into a highly efficient rear-ejection mower.

**For further information
 Tel: 01926 403323**

Vibratory rollers

A new version of the True-Surface Lightweight Vibratory Roller attachments has been launched. The new "Universal" design of roller unit fits all popular makes of greens triple mower. The one same set of units can be simply converted to fit from one brand to another by changing only the fitting kit (shown here on a John Deere



machine). This has the potential to save clubs a vast amount of money when they next change their model of greensmower. True-Surface rollers are used by golf courses world wide for a vast range of greens maintenance operations including helping to produce faster, truer greens without lowering heights of cut, restoring surfaces after aeration and topdressing, and rolling instead of mowing on the day after spraying greens.

**For further information call
 GreenTek, European distributors
 of the products on: 0113 267 7000**

New trials claim greener grass

This month sees the commercial launch of what scientists are calling 'a quantum leap in turfgrass breeding'. British Seed Houses' turfgrass breeding programme at the Institute of Grassland & Environmental Research has developed a new ryegrass-based seed mixture proven to stay green all year round.

According to IGER plant breeders, the new Grade A26 So-Green mixture - based on the first ever 'stay green' perennial ryegrass - will offer opportunities to keep turfgrass looking good, even under summer drought and other stress conditions.

The new mixture is a product of over 12 years of development and like many of the most significant scientific breakthroughs, has its origins in a chance natural discovery.

"In 1969, one of the IGER scientists noticed that leaves on a single grass plant in a field trial in Aberystwyth kept their green colour during autumn and winter, instead of turning the expected yellow colour like leaves on surrounding plants," explained IGER turfgrass breeder Danny Thorogood.

"Later it was found that leaves on plants bred from the original 'stay green' plant also retained their green colour during drought," he said.

The green colour in grass leaves is chlorophyll that intercepts light and converts it to sugars - the process of photosynthesis. Normal ageing or severely stressed leaves switch on a series of genes that trigger the production of enzymes that break down the chlorophyll. This process removes any greenness and the grass leaves turn yellow.

But, as Danny pointed out, 'stay green' grass is different.

"In 'stay green' grass, a gene controlling an enzyme involved in one of the earlier stages of chlorophyll breakdown is not active. This means the normal process of green pigment breakdown is prevented, even though photosynthesis is inactivated. This



Above: The trial site at IGER provided the latest find

Right: Danny Thorogood

results in the retention of a photosynthetically inactive green pigment in the leaves," he explained.

"Over 12 years of conventional plant breeding and backcrossing has now produced a distinct, uniform and stable 'stay green' perennial ryegrass called AberNile. AberNile combines the 'stay green' benefit with all the other characteristics required in an amenity perennial ryegrass, such as high shoot density and an ability to withstand high levels of wear," said Danny.

Trials at IGER and the STRI have now demonstrated that mixing 60% AberNile with 35% slender creeping red fescue and 5% Avalon velvet bent can deliver the best all season, greener grass.

According to Andy Newell from STRI, the 'stay green' is certainly a significant turfgrass development:

"Our trials have shown that 'stay green' grasses differ from traditional grasses in respect of increased greenness and reduced yellowness. There's



no doubt that they can increase the perceived visual quality of grass mixtures," said Andy.

The trial findings have resulted in the BTME 2002 commercial launch of Grade A26 So-Green a proven, innovative new seed mixture offering any turfgrass professional seeking to improve the year-round visual appeal of amenity grassed areas beautiful turf that literally stays green, all year round. Seed is available now for spring 2002 sowing.

Further details from British Seed Houses Tel: 01522 868714

Scotts launch new organic based fertilisers

Scotts are launching a new range of organic based turf fertilisers formulated to give turf managers the benefits of both organic and inorganic fertiliser. New Greenmaster Organic fertilisers combine inorganic and organic nutrient sources with natural bio-stimulants, ensuring accurate, reliable provision of essential nutrients while also enhancing the soil micro-flora.

The organic fraction of Greenmaster Organics is derived from chicken manure and, in addition to providing a proportion of the nutrient charge in slow release form, will help improve soil

structure, stimulate soil organisms, encourage thatch breakdown and enhance micro flora responsible for fighting turf diseases. By combining this material with a mineral-based fertiliser, NPK and trace elements the product formulation can be tailored for today's needs. Greenmaster Organics are also designed for ease of application, comprising a dust free, homogeneous granule giving a fast, accurate spread and a uniform turf growth and colour response. The product is low in odour and guaranteed free of weeds and other contaminants.

"Greenmaster Organic is designed for the environmentally aware turf manager looking for good performance and value for money. It is efficient to use, effective, based on solid science and it works. Essentially, Greenmaster Organic combines the reliability of mineral feeds with the benefits of organics - and none of the drawbacks," said Scotts Technical Manager, Simon Barnaby.

**For further information
 Tel: 01473 830492**

Improve your irrigation water

For the greenkeepers whose courses are built on alkaline soil and who have to irrigate turf with water which has a measurable alkaline content, the yearly battle to keep outbreak of poa annua, broad leaved weeds and fungal diseased - not to mention surface earthworm castings in check, is inevitable.

According to Peter Roberts, Managing Director of the Hydroscape Group, who is launching the Sweetwater Solution Generator, at this year's BTME, this is not necessarily the case.

The SSG, an 'add-on' to existing water resources - storage tanks, ponds, lakes or reservoirs - negates problems caused by alkalinity and related high pH levels, by the addition of soluble sulphur into water used for irrigation purposes, and subsequently absorbed into the soil.

The SSG achieves this by burning sulphur granules in the generator's oxidising chamber. As combustion takes place, sulphur dioxide gas is produced and mixed with water forming a diluted sulphurous acid.

"The process is completely safe. Unlike acid injection, which involves health and safety issues, the SSG is simple to operate. Once sulphur granules are fed into the hopper, the process takes place automatically," said Peter.

Pumped back into the holding source - storage tank, lakes or reservoir, the treated water is applied to

the turf and soil through the irrigation system during normal watering cycles. Depending on the type of system use, application can be made on a selective basis or right across the golf course.

Water treated in this manner offers many benefits: it destroys surface algae on ponds, lakes and reservoirs, reduces alkaline content - in the water - and when absorbed into the soil, breaks down calcium carbonates, salts and other growth impairing elements.

In addition to controlling pH levels in water and soil, the sulphurous acid also prevents the build up of algae in irrigation pump filters, valves and sprinklers heads which, if you have ever been unlucky enough to experience blocked filters and the like, you will know that clearing them can be frustrating, time consuming and expensive exercise.

Full season field tests, carried out on the golf course in the United States, have shown that water treated by an SSG not only controls soil pH at favorable levels, it helps to break down soil structured into porous aggregates.

By opening up the soil, improving water penetration, consumption through irrigation systems has been reduced by 15%. Furthermore, because treated water has improved ground condition to a degree where grasses use nutrients and micronutrients more effectively - and the fact that sulphur



provides a fourth major nutrient - the need to apply fertilisers was reduced by 33%.

Other benefits identified by the use of treated water produced by the SSG included the relief of top soil compaction and notable reduction in the need to use wetting agents.

Available in manual or automatic versions, the SSG - Sweetwater Solution Generator - is easy to install and can be added to existing irrigation system water sources simply and quickly.

For further information
Tel: 01425 476261

Articulated Rotary Mowers from Lastec

Lastec will be showing the world's only practical articulator rotary mowers at BTME 2002

The articulator technique offers a cost effective answer to a worldwide need for a fine finish to turf, cut from 25mm to 150mm over flat, undulating or even steeply banking terrain.

Lastec's market researches led to the articulator's development. Also seen as a solution to many practical lawn maintenance problems, it avoids the need to pick up or vacuum leaves by mulching them away. The system works in long or short, wet or dry grass.

The range includes front, rear mounted and self-propelled articulators with a width cut of from 1.80 to 3.35 metres. A patented belt drive allows decks to articulate independently, without messy power detracting from hydraulic deck drives. This permits a smaller, less expensive tractor. Self-propelled, zero turn models powered by 38hp Kubota diesel engines are available with 208cm or 244cm cutting width decks.

For further information
Tel: 01622 812103

Netlon pave the way with plastic paving

A recently introduced clip-together plastic paving system, designed for installation on top of existing grass surfaces, has been launched by Netlon Turf Systems. Netpave 25 provides a solution for pathways and access routes over existing grassed surfaces and for the creation of overspill car parks on turfed areas.



Fast and easy to lay, the 500 x 500 mm pavers require no substructure or excavation prior to installation and, at only 25 mm deep, virtually disappear into the grass within a two to three month period to provide an aesthetically pleasant but very durable surface. The rapid-fastening system reduces installation time to a minimum and the inherent flexibility of the design means that Netpave 25 can be installed on uneven and sloping ground. Although designed for permanent use, the Netpave can also be used in temporary situations.

At golf courses, Netpave 25 can be used on walkways between tees, as buggy access routes and for general pathways. Where overspill parking may be required for tournament visitors, it can be used to protect verges and other turfed areas. It joins a stable of Netlon turf protection products which, between them, provide the total solution to managing traffic on turf. All products will be on show at BTME.

For further information
Tel: 01254 262431

Powerful backpack blower from Kawasaki

With air velocity of up to 180 mph, the forced air-cooled 2-stroke engine in the Kawasaki's powerful KRB400-B backpack blower, ensures the job of dealing with the perennial problem of scattered leaves is done efficiently and reliably.

"This has been our most successful year so far with the blower. The fact that it has been a long autumn has made customers realise how much they need a product like the KRB400-B to help them," said Robert Rees, National Field Sales Manager, Kawasaki Commercial Products Division.

The powerful engine ensures that the Japanese manufacturer's blower has high air volume at the blower outlet, reaching up to a maximum 180 mph. A joystick has been added to the blower arm enabling the fully adjustable throttle lock control to be operated at the push of a button.

As with all of Kawasaki's power products, the KRB400-B has been designed with user comfort in mind. A large volume air cleaner and sound deadening material has been applied to the fan rotor to reduce noise levels.



For further information
Tel: 01285 654777

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