

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