



**BIGGA**  
**ESSAY**  
COMPETITION

**Stefan Antolik, Course Manager of Cooden Beach Golf Club was the winner of the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper and Deputies Category in this year's BIGGA Essay Competition. Read on as he re-enacts his winning entry ...**

# POA: FRIEND OR

**List of characters in order of appearance : Poa, Rich, Bent, Young Poa**

For generations I have lived around here. My great-grandfather lived down there in that low spot where the water always runs off. Of course, they did not live very long in those days, but now we have adapted to the conditions here we can live for years. And that's all thanks to those kind greenkeepers who are forced to over-feed and water us even when we don't need it. But who can blame them - they just want an easy life.

As for the people who walk all over us in those studded shoes, the other day I heard one of them say he was wearing soft spikes. Well I will tell you, they are not very soft when they are on your tender nodes and ligules. Still, they do make it easy for us whenever they complain that we are getting too dry and they cannot stop their balls on us. We know that we can get a good drink then without even having to wilt for it.

Hey Rich, you're new around here. So let me tell you about this place, I think they call it a golf course, and this is a green.

What! We're the green? Well that will be something to tell our offspring.

Hold on! You mustn't spread your wild seeds too quickly or the greenkeeper will come down hard on us with all sorts of equipment, I have heard stories that some greenkeepers even try to poison us if they see too much of our seed.

Well that can't be fair.

I know, but that is the way it is. Yeah, the greenkeeper here uses machines which come across the surface taking some of us away in metal tubes.

What, like the Underground?

If you are lucky and it misses, you just about have time to say goodbye to your old friends before they are taken away forever. I have no idea what happens to them. Someone once said they thought it was heaven, but I think that is a lot of old compost!

What happens next?

It's horrible! They come at us again this time with spinning metal blades which rip your sheath and seed-heads off.

Why?

I'm not sure but there is more to come. They bring in foreigners - lots of them?

What are they?

I don't know.

**A few weeks later ...**

Hey Rich, can you hear something? Yeah! It's beginning! Keep your head down.

Well, I survived that. Are you alright?

I think so, but I can't feel part of my roots. CORE! Look at all those poor swards. Goodbye and good luck!

It's not over yet. Here come the spinning blades. Keep your head down! Well I only lost a few seeds that time. Here come the foreigners now. There seems to be thousands of them this time and some have landed next to me. Well, it's not very big is it? This is new! Close your eyes, they are covering us up.

Help! I can't see the sun! Aah... there it is. That feels good - nice and cosy and water as well. What could be better?

**Two weeks later ...**

Good morning sir.

Who said that?

It's me, down here.

Who are you?

I am Bent.

Bent? we don't want any of your sort around here. Hey Rich, there is a newcomer here and he is Bent.

Yeah. I have some more over here. I can't remember anything like this happening before. We will just have to wait and see. Hey, keep your stolons to yourself. You're getting a bit fresh for someone so immature.

I can't help it. It's the way I am. We grow up fast you know. My friends and I have been put here to sort you out. Nothing personal old pal.

Well, I think we might have something to say about that you young upstart! Rich! Did you hear any of that?

Yes I did. What are we going to do about it?

Poa puts his thinking cap on and tries to remember an old wartime story his dad once told him, about survival and the battle they had against something called fescue.

There seem to be differences in strategy. This time the greenkeeper has given us all a good watering and a much needed feed. Dad told me that in his battle he had to survive without food and water for weeks on end and the starvation only stopped when golfers complained that they could not play any more and gave the greenkeeper and his mate, Jim, the big E. Well, I don't think this is going to be as easy as

that this time because the greenkeeper and the golfers have come out to inspect us all. Ouch!

What does he think he is doing, pulling my leaves off and saying that this is what he wants to get rid of? Thank you Chairman - I agree the golfers do still have to play upon us and how dare he call me a weed to be eradicated! What have I done to upset so many people? Naturally I am only trying to do my best - and spread a few wild seeds. Well I don't know, it's all a bit over my head really ...

**Time goes by ...**

Bent is getting a bit big for his boots hey Rich!

Yeah, and so are his mates! They are trying to squeeze me to death over here.

**Then along comes some help ...**

Listen! I can hear the spinning blades - wow! Did you see that? Bent got it right between the nodes and cut off some of his stolons. That must have been painful.

That will slow him down for a while and it's getting warmer so he'll feel a bit sick for a while.

Well we got that wrong didn't we Rich? He must be some sort of masochist! He loves all this rough stuff and he said that it is good for him as he can multiply without having to seed.

Not a lot of fun. This could be the beginning of the end for our kind.

Don't give up that easily Rich - we still have a few tricks we can use. We mustn't let them see that they

