

# Your Letters...

## How did you get into greenkeeping?

For me it was pure luck.... Or, on a freezing cold day in mid January, the day fate kicked me squarely in the nether regions.

I'd never heard of greenkeeping, let alone considered it any sort of career. The primitive life form that I was at 16, having the cognitive ability of a retarded sheep, has through nurturing, encouragement, not to mention a little hard work and application from myself, produced (I hope) a competent greenkeeper. In between time, I have observed similar scenarios from the perspective of trainer/supervisor, dealing with trainees ranging in ability from those with special needs to an academic on a gap year destined for Cambridge and a Master's Degree in particle physics. It could be argued that neither of these extremes would provide the ideal raw material for creating a good greenkeeper. In practical terms, it's a futile exercise and a misappropriation of time, energy and resources.

In retrospect, my perception of the process involved in the identification, training and development of the next generation of Course Managers has been and still is, like having your teeth pulled... excruciatingly painful and ultimately unsatisfying. I concede that there are those tiny oases in an otherwise barren landscape but they are few and far between and the

journey saps ever last drop of your energy, much to the frustration of her in doors.

However, for the potential rewards I am prepared for the journey, but feel that greater assistance should be available from the wider industry and is an area where we are missing the boat. I feel we need to develop a format of presentation for introducing greenkeeping as a career option in schools and Universities and at career events. This format should be accessible and portable as it would be a valuable tool for Course Managers to encourage and enthuse potential candidates.

I think it would be a little presumptuous to make a sweeping statement like, "the standard of potential trainees is poor", it's more a case of the number of potential trainees becoming less and less. Our local college don't have anyone to offer us and yet, there is a school leaver out there, possibly with a greater cognitive ability than that of a retarded sheep, keen, enthusiastic, looking for direction and inspiration. But lost to the greenkeeping profession because he or she has never heard of, nor considered the idea of, a career in greenkeeping.

It's a shame really, because by my reckoning, there was a half decent greenkeeper there for us.

Name and address withheld

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