

UNDER THE SURFACE



A unique research program, investigating the benefits of using the Verti-Drain on sports turf, could not have been completed without the long-term support of Redexim Charterhouse. Redexim initiated a three-year study on the subject - one on which little scientific data had previously been available.

Dr Alan Gange and Dr Don McGregor, of Royal Holloway College, investigated the effect of deep tine aeration, using the Verti-Drain on microbial communities in sports turf. Their summary of findings were presented at the College to an invited audience of turf professionals.

"Compaction is perhaps the most common cause of turf health problems, yet is among the most serious. A golf course may have to withstand as many as 100,000 rounds of play per year," said Dr Gange. "A football pitch might experience 250,000 studded boot imprints per year, equating to 4,200 imprints per square metre in a season."

Left untreated compacted and poorly draining soil would suffer from reduced oxygen content and lower levels of water and beneficial microbes, including helpful bacteria and fungi. This would adversely affect root growth and the health of the grass plants, and could lead to anaerobic 'black layer' conditions. By letting air back into the soil, deep aeration (using the Verti-Drain) encouraged microbial activity, invigorated the roots and increased disease resistance. This would then cause

less fertiliser to be required and the tolerance of drought would be enhanced.

Dr McGregor explained how the project had involved detailed aeration trials using a Verti-Drain on two clay-based football pitches at Royal Holloway and on sand-based greens at Liphook Golf Course in Hampshire.

The assistance from Redexim Charterhouse, enabled the researchers to use cutting-edge technology in the form of modern phospho

lipid fatty acid analysis (PLFA) equipment. This quantified the effects of Verti-Drain aeration on microbial communities. Tests were also carried out for soil strength and carbon dioxide levels.

Dr McGregor said that there had been a clear reduction in compaction on those areas that had been treated with the Verti-Drain. He also found that there was a marked improvement in levels of beneficial bacteria on areas aerated using the Verti-Drain during every season of the year.

Dr's Gange and McGregor, have helped Redexim Charterhouse produce a 'best practice' guide derived from their research, explaining the correlation between Verti-Drain aeration and soil health. Entitled 'Beneath The Surface', the guide is targeted at all turf professionals and available free from Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd.

"We are very grateful to Redexim Charterhouse for their invaluable interest and support," said Dr Alan Gange. "They have supplied essential equipment and technical backup needed for the trial procedures."

Philip Threadgold, Managing Director of Charterhouse Turf Machinery, the UK distributor of the Verti-Drain, believes the research has taken a major step forward. "This is a terrific piece of work that quantifies the huge benefits that use of the Verti-Drain brings. It will be invaluable to greenkeepers and groundsmen at all levels. We are proud to have played a part in this research."

NEW LDCA WEBSITE HITS ANOTHER LEVEL

The Land Drainage Contractors Association (LDCA), aims to increase awareness of its services through the launch of a new user-friendly website.

From July 1, the site will be packed with useful information relating to land drainage, sports turf drainage and water management, which will be even easier for visitors to access.

"Our aim is to provide sports providers and local authorities with key information," said Bruce Brockway, Secretary of the LDCA.

"Rather than just providing a list of members, if a club wants to undertake drainage of a golf course or football pitch, or slitting, or sand banding, they can source the information by category of work, or

the region of the country they want the company to work in."

The first three items coming on stream are: increased classifications for contractors, manufacturers and suppliers, together with their contact details; technical specification standards required for lottery funding, with appropriate paid-for documentation which is downloadable from the website; and a regularly updated news-page for those who want to keep in touch with developments, within the drainage industry.

For further information please visit: www.ldca.org or email secretary@ldca.org, alternatively phone 01327 263264.

BSH APPOINTS NEW TECHNICAL ADVISOR FOR SCOTLAND AND THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND

British Seed Houses have a new addition to their team of technical advisors. Alistair Eccles, has been appointed to cover Scotland and the North East of England.

Alistair has worked within the agrochemical industry for 18 years, spending the last decade as an agronomist. He is BASIS registered and lives in Perth.

"Alistair's previous experience and technical ability adds another dimension to the advice available from our dedicated sales team," said Amenity Development Director, Simon Taylor.

Alistair can be contacted on 07887 578802 or by email at alistair.eccles@britishseedhouses.com.

CHANGES ARE AFOOT



Hayter, makers of Golf-grass cutting equipment, have announced changes to their sales team.

John Quinton has been appointed Territory Manager, for Wales and the South West of England. Robin

Boyes, who as UK Sales Manager had also been covering Wales and the south west area, will now take on the responsibility of national accounts. These changes are with immediate effect.

Born in Zimbabwe, John Quinton came to study agricultural engineering at Harper Adams University College, shortly after leaving school. After completion of his studies, he worked in the UK as a design engineer but went back to Zimbabwe to work on the family farm. Upon returning to England he joined Glendale before ultimately joining Hayter.

"We are delighted that John is joining us. With his engineering background and comprehensive knowledge of the industry he will be able to lend considerable support to his dealers to promote the Hayter range of products," said David Sturges, Sales and Marketing Director.

"His appointment will allow Robin Boyes to take on national accounts and to spend more time working with our UK dealers to develop their Hayter business," he added.