

YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!

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Letters ▶▶

Seasonal Planning

I've read a lot recently, saying that you don't have to starve your greens of fertiliser to grow fine turf. I wholly agree with this but feel that if you can get fescue to link with its mycorrhiza, you'll need little or no fertiliser and, done properly, your grass will thrive - not starve.

Mycorrhiza won't establish sufficiently if you've got high phosphate levels or if weedkillers are drying it out. However, if you have the right conditions for mycorrhiza, my methods to maximise the link with fescue are as follows:

Start your efforts in the spring.

In spring:

1. Apply wetting agent.
2. Cut as seldom and as high as possible (above 6mm).
3. Spray sulphate of iron after heavy rain.
4. Delay cutting for as long as possible after this application.
5. Lower height of cut gradually and increase frequency in response to grass growth.

In summer:

1. Spray sulphate of iron after heavy rain in June.
2. Again, miss out mowing for as long as possible after this application.
3. Cut as often as needed but no lower than 5mm.
4. Verticut between June and August as required.
5. If needed use nitrogen fertilisers from the end of May until the end of August.

In autumn:

1. From September, start to raise the height of cut and reduce mowing frequency.
2. If you've suffered a dry summer, re-apply wetting agent.
3. Spray sulphate of iron after heavy rain, remembering to put off mowing for as long as possible.
4. Adopt your winter cutting height and cut as seldom as possible.

Notes:

- I spray sulphate of iron about three to five times a year.
- I use long term wetting agents.
- Top dressing, heatherjacket control and hand weeding, are carried out in addition to the above.

This plan is based on the ideas that mycorrhiza: grow actively in spring and autumn and should not be disturbed then; provides nutrients to grasses during their growing season; uses carbon (carbohydrate) which grasses store in their roots; are moisture dependant and encourage grass root growth.

Sulphate of iron boosts photosynthesis and carbon production; spare carbon is stored in the roots; mowing uses up the plants carbon; fescue doesn't use applied nitrogen until late May and after the end of August; nitrogen applied before the end of May will boost competing grasses; fescue can tolerate aggressive mowing and verticutting when growing actively between June and August - but only then.

I've based what I'm doing on long established greenkeeping principles and seem to be achieving good results. I'd be happy to hear from anyone working along similar lines or anyone who has any thoughts on the subject.

Yours faithfully,
David Woodbyrne
Dumfries

Thank You

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of the BIGGA Support Team at this year's Open Championship.

It was a wonderful experience and it was a privilege to be able to work with such a brilliant team.

I met some great people and it is a memory I will treasure.

Yours sincerely,
Shane Wells

Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich

The Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich competition took place in July and Belleisle GC never looked better. I can't say what Kevin Thomson and his dedicated staff did but it was equivalent to waving a magic wand over the course.

The weather wasn't the usual sun baked Costa Ayrshire, still, the swallows were skimming the fairways while the light drizzle kept the golfers cool. It was obvious that the sun was just peaking from behind silver linings, awaiting the lovely afternoon to come.

It was a very successful competition enjoyed by young and old. I can't say that my own golf was up to any standard, I did however manage to secure a few points for my team in the Stableford. Harry's wife Jessie presented the presentation of the quaich and second and third prizes, to the winners. The winners of the quaich were: S Mitchell, D Gemmell, N Hannon and J Brooks. The quaich remains with Harry's family - each winner received a miniature replica to keep, together with a prize of some description.

All the Diamond family were busying themselves with handing out free raffle tickets and seeing that everyone was supplied with a free drink of their choice. Two of Harry's brothers - Neil and Campbell were there to assist when called upon, together with all the Diamond grandchildren. It was a pleasure to see the girls growing up into young ladies and still attending at their grandpa's memorial quaich.

The competition is so well organised that it seems to run itself but I know that a lot of effort, both by the family and the club, goes into the setting up of the competition each year. Finance is always a problem, the family would like to send a special message of thanks to all the sponsors and others who contributed towards making the competition the success it was. They also send a big thank you to all the golfers who took part in the quaich and wish them a great golfing year, keeping fit to play in the Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich in 2007.

Kindest regards,
Cecil George