

Welcome



A Glimpse into the Future

News that the increased number of bugs and pests in our gardens at the moment is being put down to the mild wet summer and the lack of pesticides available to get rid of them, perhaps gives us a glimpse into the future for the fine turf industry.

There is a proposal with the European Parliament that the use of all pesticides be restricted, if not banned, in all areas to which the public have access. The Amenity Forum, Chaired by John Allbutt, has been lobbying MEP's hoping to influence the voting in late October on this issue that if implemented would have a drastic affect on us all.

Now we all know the amount of active ingredient being used on golf courses has reduced significantly in recent years thanks to the developments from within the chemical industry and the responsible approach taken by Course Managers, but a total ban would have a huge impact on fine turf management.

Greenkeepers will always strive to maintain golf courses to the highest standards possible given whatever the circumstances they are presented, but taking away all their chemical tools will have an impact. I would urge you to keep your club updated on the situation and, if possible, write, underlining the club's concerns, to your local MEP, and indeed, Westminster MP.

If a total ban does come in, it must be hoped that golfers, as well as turf managers, take the consequences on board and accept that the superb surfaces at their club will be blighted by disease occasionally and that their Course Manager will be powerless to come up with a quick fix. We don't want a string of disciplinary meetings based on "The state of the course" coming from club members, who are oblivious to the outside world and who believe miracles are what you are paid to produce.

For further information visit www.amenity.org.uk

Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, retired at the end of September after nearly 14 years with the Association. Ken has been a great guy to work alongside – his knowledge and experience stretching far beyond the remit of his own job - and we have certainly benefited from his presence. There are innumerable BIGGA members who have had sensible career-enhancing advice from Ken.

I'm actually typing this very carefully as there is no-one more critical than Ken when it comes to spotting grammatical errors in newspapers and magazines, or, with the spoken word, on television and radio. Those who know him will perhaps be surprised to learn this, but when Ken has a bee in his bonnet he bears an uncanny resemblance to Victor Meldrew. But it is we on the staff, not Ken, who "Don't believe it" that he'll no longer be regaling us with his many tales, usually involving aircraft, in the years to come. We wish him and Sandra a long, happy and enjoyable retirement.

GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY

A Midland Region Golf Management Trophy day, sponsored for the 10th successive year by Scotts UK Professional, was held at Worksop Golf Club.

Teams from 21 golf clubs enjoyed a shotgun start on a very challenging course superbly prepared by Course Manager, Tim Gittins, and his staff, and everyone was made to feel very welcome by all staff and members at Worksop Golf Club.

The winning team was from Gay Hill Golf Club with 78 points, led by Course Manager, Paul Woodham. The home team was 2nd with 76 points on countback from Peterborough Milton Golf Club. Nearest the Pin on the 18th was won by Alan Burrows, from Chilwell Manor Golf Club, and Longest Drive on the 6th was won by Ade Porter, Course Manager at Greetham Valley Golf Club.



The picture shows the Gay Hill team and Nia Frost, Scotts Technical Sales Manager, presenting the trophy to Course Manager Paul Woodham. The Midland Region of BIGGA thanks Scotts once again for their sponsorship.

PRICES SET TO RISE

A combination of factors will inevitably force the price of grass seed to rise say DLF Trifolium Ltd. "In recent years we are seeing fewer grass seed crops grown, says Derek Smith, Amenity Sales Manager for DLF. "No longer is there any subsidy on grass seed production so growers are looking at the most profitable crops to grow i.e. wheat. In addition to this factor is a higher demand for bio-ethanol crops such as oil seed rape and wheat in Europe."

"Already we are experiencing difficulty in contracting for 2008 grass seed production due to these competitive crops," said Derek.

The recent wet harvest in the main production areas of Western Europe has reduced seed yield by 20% for 2007 harvest thus compounding the problem further.