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A look at what's inside the magazine this month

MAY 2011

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A continental approach

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in Germany to meet a much sought after GM
already caught a big improvement at the said 2024

A fistful of five *Injurious Weeds*

Dr Terry Mabbett offers sound information
and advice on dealing with the famous five
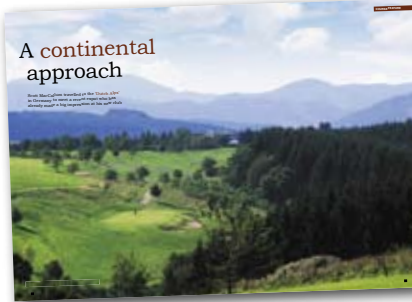
Energy crops are plants grown to provide fuel for heating and electricity generation and are able to deliver high yields from relatively small areas.

These crops could fit into the footprint of an existing golf course, providing a sustainable, low carbon and low cost energy source and diversifying the habitat available for wildlife.

Much of the cost of establishing energy crops could be offset through grant funding under the Energy Crops Scheme and the recently launched Renewable Heating Incentive could turn energy crops into cash crops for golf clubs.

The Energy Crops Scheme

The Energy Crops Scheme is a Government funded scheme, available through Natural England, which provides funding for establishing energy crops. The funding literature and website is mainly aimed at farm owners but Natural England does provide funding to other land users and have provided funding to golf clubs under the scheme. The Energy Crops Scheme is open to new applicants until 2013.

Grant funding covers the cost of establishing either miscanthus or short rotation coppice (SRC), either 50% funding for 'actual' costs i.e. the cost of materials and contractors and/or 'on-farm' costs, i.e. use of a golf club's own labour and machinery. Funding can cover ground preparation, fencing, purchase of planting stock, planting, weed control and first year cutback of trees.

A few points to bear in mind:
• The grant is available in England only and land must be registered with the Rural Land Registry in order to receive funding (land not currently registered can be registered).
• The overall area of land available for planting must be over three hectares and individual planting blocks must be at least 0.5 hectare in size. Planting can be phased over three years.
• There must be a buffer zone of unplanted land alongside public rights of way, residential housing and utilities infrastructure. These areas of open ground may also be included within the grant funding.
• Applications are subject to an environmental assessment, including a site visit, and golf clubs would need to sign a five-year agreement with Natural England.
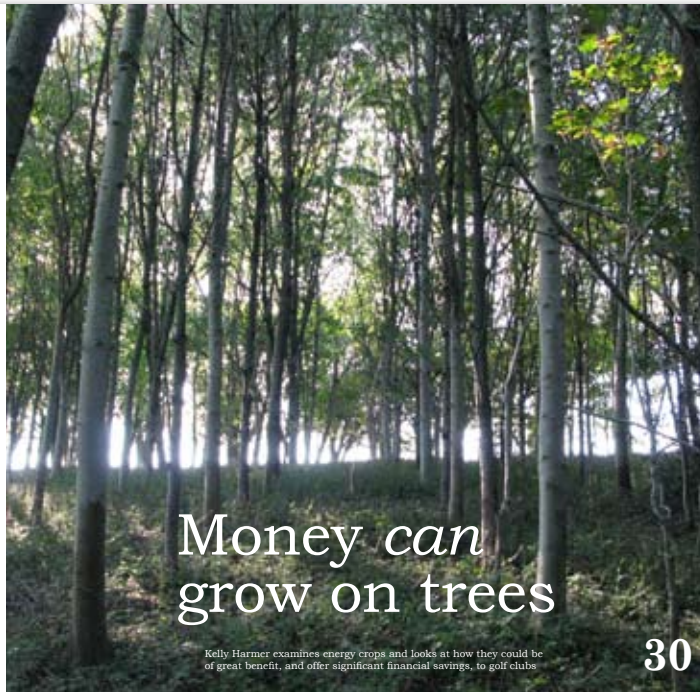
Money *can* grow on trees

Kelly Harmer examines energy crops and looks at how they could be of great benefit, and offer significant financial savings, to golf clubs

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The Renewable Heat Incentive

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is a new payment scheme announced by the Government in March 2011.

Under the RHI, golf clubs could earn an income of up to 7.6 pence for every kWh of heat produced by renewable methods, including the burning of sustainably sourced wood fuel and miscanthus.

This income is index linked (i.e. will increase with inflation) and is guaranteed for 20 years.

The money payable through the RHI should help to offset the establishment costs of growing energy crops in the first few years of the scheme and making buying wood fuel competitive with fossil fuels in terms of cost.

Biomass under the RHI:

• The RHI is available in England, Scotland and Wales.
• Often will administer the RHI scheme and will deal with applications, accreditation of installations, incentive payments and monitoring compliance.
• Payments vary depending on the size of biomass boilers and are tiered so that the first units of energy generated each year will receive higher payments than subsequent units.
• Boilers and installers must be certified under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS).
• Any business which installed a biomass boiler after July 15, 2009 will be eligible for the RHI. Boilers installed before this date will not be eligible.

Short rotation coppice

The crop

Short rotation coppice (SRC) is an established traditional method of harvesting biomass energy over short timescales.

All broadleaf native tree species will coppice well but willow and poplar have the highest biomass yields.

Willow, poplar, ash, silver birch, and sweet chestnut species are all eligible for grant funding under the Energy Crops Scheme.

Trees in SRC are densely planted at around 15,000 cuttings per hectare and are planted using specialist machinery that cuts the tree rods, inserts them into the soil and firms the soil in one pass. Rods are planted in spring and trees can reach four metres in height in the first year of growth.

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REGULARS

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Inside...

A CONTINENTAL APPROACH
Germany is the destination as we profile GC Schmallenberg

MONEY CAN GROW ON TREES
The potential of energy crops is examined by Kelly Harmer

The Injurious Five

Creeping Thistle is one of the five *Injurious Weeds* tackled by Dr Mabbett

BIGGA

The official monthly magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited