

# Sowing the seeds



Jayne Leyland recently joined Rigby Taylor as Seed Research and Development Manager. Jim Cook took the opportunity to be the first to throw a few questions her way

## What attracted you to Rigby Taylor?

It is a very exciting opportunity to take trialling systems and development of mixtures to another level.

## What will the trials involve?

The trials will be sowing out grasses and then treating them with identified management programmes and products to find solutions to whatever the constraints of that site or maintenance regime is. Each trial will be different according to the location.

## Where is the first trial you will be involved with since joining Rigby Taylor?

It will be at Furness Golf Club, in Cumbria, and is an environmental stress trial. This is the first sowing of this particular programme.

## How are new seeds bred?

Mainly through crossings of existing cultivars with new grasses which are gathered in the wild by the plant breeders. These are then cross-bred to search for the best characteristics.

You start off with maybe 15,000 crossings and going through the process to end up with just one new variety. This process takes between 12 and 15 years. You're always looking forward to improve in terms of characteristics.

## What makes a good quality grass seed?

Several things. The characteristics of individual cultivars, the synergy of the mixture, the quality of purity and germination of seed mixture and most importantly choosing the right mixture for the intended purpose. There are some amazing developments now

in grasses and with Rigby Taylor there is the ESP treatment on the seed. What is very important to many greenkeepers is speed of establishment, so you need good quality seed with high viability and fast establishment capability.

## What should a greenkeeper think about when buying grass seed?

They should think about individual characteristics that they might require, for example specific disease tolerance or cold weather or drought tolerance.

What is as important as individual cultivar characteristics is actually how the seed mixture has been formulated and put together, so there isn't too much competition between the cultivars in there and one doesn't dominate the other.

So the actual mixture synergy is extremely important.

## Is there a correct way to store grass seed?

It should be stored in a cool, dry place and also be in a secure container to avoid attack from vermin.

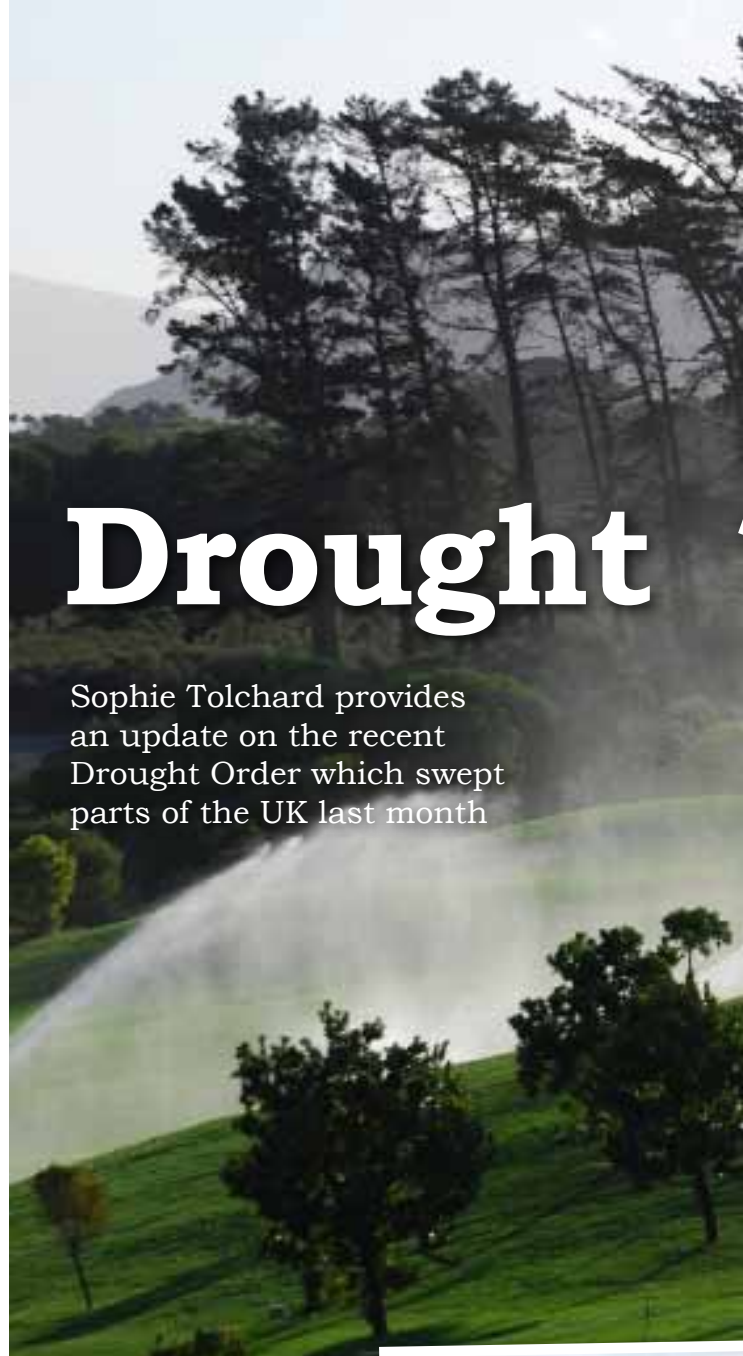
## What is the future with regards grass seed?

The future is a combination of new cultivars which are coming through breeding programmes with improved characteristics. New sub-species or species which have got significantly different characteristics from cultivars within that same species.

Also adaptations of species with unique characteristics, for example, temperature tolerance or creeping growth habit. It's a combination of the breeding programmes producing the right material and then the good work of greenkeepers being able to have the product in their armoury to get the maximum out of it.

# Drought

Sophie Tolchard provides an update on the recent Drought Order which swept parts of the UK last month



## On 5 April a Temporary Use Ban (Hosepipe Ban) came into force in parts of the country covered by seven water companies in the south of England and East Anglia.

When two and a half times the normal amount of rain fell in April and frequent showers continued throughout May, many were left wondering why we are still in a drought.

After the driest two years since records began, groundwater, which feeds the flows of rivers throughout the year and is our most important source of water, remains exceptionally low.

On 29 April, Thames Water announced that it was to exempt golf clubs under its jurisdiction from two major aspects of the hosepipe ban. Golf clubs that have water supplied by Thames Water can now use permanent sprinkler systems underneath their greens.

"The announcement, which is



The initial cost of a reservoir can be recouped over a period of time and they provide an additional protective measure against drought orders  
Courtesy of MJ Abbott Limited