



MORE BUZZ OVER OPERATION POLLINATOR

Golf courses provide an essential haven for some of the UK's most endangered insect species, and potentially hold the key to restoring populations of essential pollinating insects.

A new study, to provide a scientific approach to pollinator conservation efforts on golf courses, has revealed some fascinating finds - including the extremely rare bumblebee, *Bombus ruderatus*, on Operation Pollinator habitat at Rutland County Golf Club in Leicestershire.

The extensive study, by leading independent entomologist and ecologist, Mike Edwards, on some of the golf courses involved in the Syngenta Operation Pollinator initiative across the UK, has catalogued the diversity of insect species present, and the habitat potential to increase both the numbers and range of insect species.

Commenting on the study's results, Mr Edwards highlighted that whilst some individual golf clubs already have areas of outstanding interest for wildlife, there remains a large number where the potential to make a real contribution had yet to be realised.

"Many of the older clubs have areas that reflect the sort of countryside that was present before modern agricultural production became established.

All too often, however, these areas have sadly been un-managed and of limited ecological value," he said. "Providing expertise and support in restoring such flower-rich grasslands with the Syngenta Operation Pollinator initiative can make a major contribution to the conservation of our flora and fauna."

The discovery of *Bombus ruderatus* on Rutland County Golf Club was an especially exciting discovery, since the species was considered on the verge of extinction just a few years ago - with no records of the bumblebee in the area since 1994. However, Mr Edwards recalled that, when Operation Pollinator habitat had been created on farmland over the past decade, *B. ruderatus* was again rediscovered from the point of extinction, and is successfully on the way back to recovering its former distribution.

Rutland County Golf Club Head Greenkeeper Jamie Goddard believes the colour and wildlife in the club's new Operation Pollinator wildflower areas will enhance the whole experience of playing the course for golfers, as well as providing a valuable habitat for essential pollinating insects.

"The fact that we already have the incredible find of the rare *Bombus ruderatus* on the course highlights the ecological value of golf courses. Now we can actively

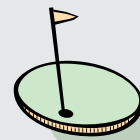
manage areas to make them even more attractive for bumblebees and other pollinators, alongside a great course for players, makes it even more exciting."

One of the key aspects of successfully restoring or establishing wildflowers in areas of golf course rough is the removal of competitive coarse grasses that dominate thick, dense rough, according to Syngenta Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson. Autumn applications of the selective herbicide, Rescue, offer an ideal opportunity to clean up and thin out invasive grass species such as ryegrass.

Rescue should be applied whilst the coarse grasses are actively growing, to aid uptake of the systemic herbicide. Dr Watson added: "Extensive research and user trials have shown high levels of kill can be achieved with well-timed autumn applications."

"The added advantage of autumn application is that the plants are naturally senescing, which limits the visual impact of treatments."

Rescue is approved for use at the rate of 1.0 l/ha in the autumn, with optimum results achieved using the Syngenta XC Foliar Nozzle to minimise the effect of undulations or variable vegetation height and to achieve all round coverage of the leaf; applying in a water volume of 250-300 l/ha.



CGCS

SALARY INCREASE

Based on the Annual RPI figure for August 2013 the Committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS) have recommended an increase of 2.6% in the level of recommended Salary Scale for Greenkeepers. The Committee are fully aware that 2013 has been another difficult year for club finances, but believe it is essential to at least maintain parity with the Government RPI figure in order to retain current staff and attract new recruits.

The CGCS recommended rates of pay package are guidelines only and the Committee is aware that they are for negotiation only and that some staff will earn substantially more, while others will earn less, depending on the golf club.

The CGCS wants to emphasise that these scales are for 'packages' and should be treated as such, whilst taking into account individual and team performance and any increase in responsibility and/or qualification.

The CGCS, once again, wishes to remind clubs that they must be aware of any changes to pension or employment legislation.

Regional variations will be published and downloadable in PDF format from the BIGGA and GCMA websites from late October onwards.