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Always read the label. Use pesticides safely. Daconil Turf contains chlorothalonil. Greenshield contains chlorothalonil and carbendazim. Intrepid contains dicamba, dichlorprop and MCPA. Tritox contains MCPA, mecoprop-P and dicamba as sodium and potassium salts. Turfclear contains carbendazim. Maraud contains chlorpyrifos.
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Ad Ref 102

The Scotts Company is the leader in research, manufacturing and marketing of products for professional turf care, ornamental horticulture, field and vegetable production and domestic use. From bases in the U.S.A. and Europe, Scotts sells its products in more than 50 countries worldwide.

Marathon man's race for charity



Gay Hill Assistant, Andrew Kite, is currently in training for one of the country's biggest sporting events and his efforts should go a long way to assisting with rare Metabolic disease.

Andrew, 35, is running in the London Marathon on behalf of the RTMDC charity and the money raised will be given on behalf of the golf club.

"Andrew has run marathons before but never the London Marathon and he is delighted to be doing so on behalf of the charity," said Andrew's Course Manager, former BIGGA Chairman, Dean Cleaver.

Metabolic Diseases are rare, inherited and incurable, although some can be treated by diet, drugs and organ transplant.

The film *Lorenzo's Oil* was based on a Metabolic disease while, just before Christmas, it also claimed the life of Rhys, the brave little boy whose parents fought to have him treated after the Local Health Board had initially turned him down.

Anyone wishing to sponsor Andrew in the marathon should contact him or Dean at Gay Hill Golf Club Tel: 0121 430 8544.

Sharp new idea from Bernhard

A new machine from Atterton & Ellis, part of the Bernhard Group, created quite a stir on their stand at the recent BTME exhibition at Harrogate.

The RAPID THINNER has been

introduced to allow machinery operators to quickly and easily restore the manufacturer's original relief to cutting cylinder blades. Explaining the concept, Bernhard's Managing Director, Stephen Bernhard said "We

have proved through exhaustive trials, particularly in the United States, that grass quality can be dramatically improved, and stress on mowing machinery reduced if cylinders and bottom blades are regularly sharpened."

"Mowers perform best, and grass is healthier, if the cylinders are performing a scything action when cutting, rather than the more brutal scissor-action which occurs when cylinders and bottom blades are back-lapped and in constant contact between the two components."

The RAPID THINNER is a high-speed device that attaches magnetically to the bottom blade. A specially developed air grinder is then guided across each blade, ensuring that the correct blade relief - as intended by the manufacturer - is returned to the blades, quickly and easily.

The new machine is an ideal companion to Bernhard's RAPID FACER 1000, a magnetic attachment for high-speed re-facing of the front edge of bottom blades. Machinery operators can save money by buying the individual grinding heads of both the RAPID THINNER and RAPID FACER 1000 to fit the same attachment frame.

In recent years, Bernhard's have pioneered the concept of better grass quality and reduced costs through regular cylinder and bottom blade grinding.

The company are manufacturers of the best selling EXPRESS DUAL reel grinders and ANGLEMASTER bottom blade grinders, used now by most of the USA's top 100.



Allen Power take command of new 4x4

Allen Power Equipment has launched a four wheel drive version of their Commander out front rotary ride on mower.

Drive is via hydraulic motors to each wheel and the 4 x 4 performance is ideal for bank work where the ability to stop and start on slopes with the improved traction reduces scuffing and wheelslip as well as improving the safety aspect for the operator.

The new mower is designed for ease of access for maintenance and servicing and a high forward speed for travelling between mowing sites coupled with a large capacity stainless steel fuel tank improves output.

Powered by a 18 hp twin Briggs & Stratton Vanguard engine the new Commander has a 44in. (1122mm) three blade mulching cutting deck which cuts outside the width of the wheels and a height of cut from 12.5mm - 100mm adjustable from the operators seat.

With rear steering and rear engine the operator is free from exhaust fumes and manoeuvrability is second to none.

This new initiative in safe mowing retails at just £5995 + VAT



New Vitax range advances after BTME

Vitax launched a new range of fertilisers named Vitax Advance at BTME. This new range, specially formulated for UK conditions, contains controlled release fertilisers that give a 4-5 months release pattern, and immediately available micro-prills to give a quick response early in the season. Three formulations are

available, including two for Spring and Summer use to allow the Greenkeeper to decide whether his regime requires phosphate or not, and a high potash Autumn analysis. The use of Polyon "Reactive Layer Coating" materials from the USA as the controlled release part of this new range, brings a high tech

fertiliser which uniquely releases nutrients through osmosis. This gradual diffusion of turf nutrients through a polymer coating is controlled by soil temperature alone. In times of heavy rain, this would prevent surges of growth, common to most fertilisers, and the leaching of valuable nutrients in surface water.

Kubota's walk-behind rotary mower

Kubota is introducing three new self-propelled walk-behind rotary mowers for the 1999 grass-cutting season.

Designed and built to commercial quality standards, the Kubota W521 TC, W521 HTC and W621 HTC models are all four-wheeled machines with a 53cm (21in) cutting width and a choice of two lever-selected forward speeds. A blade brake clutch is a standard safety feature on all three models.

Both the W521 TC and W521 HTC mowers are powered by 5hp Kubota petrol engines while the W621 HTC has a 6hp petrol power unit. The HTC suffix on the latter two models is used to designate a rugged, professional quality mower, suitable for everyday grass-cutting duties in the hands of local authorities, contractors, ground staff and those responsible for maintaining parks, estates and the largest gardens. Although making no compromise on build quality, the Kubota W521 TC model is a lighter-weight, lower-priced machine suited to both commercial and domestic mowing applications.

All three mowers have a six-position cutting height adjustment from 16mm to 76mm (0.63in - 3in), altered manually by a hand lever on each wheel. A standard feature across the range is a light and easily emptied bag-type grass catcher with rear-emptying and a capacity of 75 litres. The three new Kubota walk-behind rotary mowers are priced at £670, £800 and £899 respectively.



MM brand is core product for Mommersteeg

Mommersteeg's MM brand of grass seed mixtures is to be a core product of Advanta Seeds' amenity portfolio, following the formal merger of Mommersteeg, Sharpes International, Advanta and Sinclair McGill, into one trading company.

The MM range, in particular the winter sports mixtures MM60 and MM25, and the golf course mixtures MM22 and MM12, are well known and trusted by groundsmen

and greenkeepers across the UK.

"We recognise how strong the MM brand is in this country, and will invest in its future development and marketing to the top quality end of the sports and amenity markets," says Advanta Seeds' UK Commercial Manager John Akers.

"With direct access to Advanta's breeding programme and the recently expanded production and research facilities in Lincolnshire,

the MM brand can only go from strength to strength."

Advanta was created from the merger of Mommersteeg's parent company Van der Have with the seed interest of Zeneca two years ago. It breeds and produces the full range of agricultural arable and forage crops, as well as being a significant player in amenity market world-wide. It has 35 operating companies in 20 countries.

New Pro-Tee divot box

The Shropshire-based golf course equipment manufacturer, Links Leisure, has extended its PRO-TEE range of accessories with the introduction of a brand new divot box.

The new divot box is the latest addition to a range of specially designed products which already includes accessories such as all-weather mats and practice nets, plus an array of course furniture such as golf signs, tee markers, litter bins and the like.

Marketed under the trade name The PRO-TEE COLLECTION, the range has become increasingly popular with operators who realise the need to provide on-course facilities such as directional signs, hole information, etc., but, at the same time, want to include a corporate identity element for their own particular golf course.

After reporting that it had recently doubled its sales of signs both in this country and overseas, Links Leisure believes that the success of the PRO-TEE range is due in no small way to the fact that each product - whether it be an elaborate sign incorporating a club name, logo, and hole detail, or the humble tee marker, litter bin, or divot box - is tailor-made in detail, style, and colour to meet the individual requirements of each golf course and that many of the products can also be used for sponsorship or advertising.

Robert's new venture

Robert Cowley, formerly Contracts Manager with Watermation, has set up Chedworth Trading Company, an irrigation company which can design, cost and buy any type of sprinkler required as well as having maintenance engineers who can provide servicing.

In addition the company can supply golf course fittings and furniture including flags, netting, range balls and is an agent for Club Car.

For further information contact Robert Cowley Tel: 01285 720259.

Contact us

You can contact The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association in any number of ways:

Post: BIGGA HOUSE,
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It can prevent wars, family strife and the collapse of a business. It's as old as language itself, yet we still struggle to make full use of its power. It's a major part of our daily lives, but we often have difficulty doing it with our next door neighbour. Bruce Stanley listens to the art of communication...

Speak *easy*



Inform golf club members about new machinery purchases, what they will be used for and how they will improve standards

Communication. What is it? An action which most people understand, but very few properly utilise.

Take the golf club environment. Anyone having any involvement with a golf club knows that regular communication is essential between the staff, officials, members, visitors and the owners, managers or shareholders. Yet how often have greenkeepers been asked the same question time and time again about the reason for a specific maintenance programme which could have been answered by means of a timely bulletin pinned to a notice board in the clubhouse bar, locker room or pro's shop?

No matter whether you are responsible for raking the bunkers, planning next year's competition programme, stocking the bar, chasing subscriptions or giving golf lessons to beginners, there is a fundamental need to communicate continuously with other people. The result will be a sustained improvement in the efficient running of the club and the understanding and education of all involved with it.

It is a fact that most golf clubs are very good at informing members and visitors about future competitive and social events. Yet how many give their greenkeeping staff the opportunity to tell players

about current or forthcoming maintenance programmes and how they might affect play?

One simple solution is a special notice board headed Course Maintenance or Greenkeeper's Report, devoted to relaying news on seasonal work and developments taking place on the golf course. Alternatively, those clubs that publish a regular newsletter could consider giving the head greenkeeper space for a course maintenance report. Invite feedback, suggestions and questions and you will be taking a big step towards improving communications at the club.

Such actions can all make a huge difference to golfers' understanding of what is going on, when and where it is taking place and why it is necessary.

If the club does not have a regular members' bulletin or space for a dedicated notice board, then a neatly-typed information sheet, photocopied and placed in the bar or by the visitors' book in the pro's shop, will go a long way to dispelling the mystique that surrounds the greenkeeping profession in the mind of the layman.

It is very important that any published information is put together with the full co-operation and input of the course manager, the head greenkeeper, the chairman of greens and any other club officials sharing responsibility for



A regular greenkeepers' bulletin can be used to highlight seasonal maintenance programmes, explaining why they are necessary and what their effects will be

course maintenance matters. It can be helpful on any bulletin or report to list the names and positions of the staff responsible for looking after the course, including any external advisers. They deserve credit when it is due, but should also be prepared to answer criticism when it arises, as it always will.

The look of any publication is most important. Few people have access to sophisticated desk-top publishing (DTP) facilities of the type used to produce award-winning magazines such as *Greenkeeper International*, but one can still do a very good job on a computer loaded with word-processing software, outputting to a colour printer.

If you do not have ready access to a computer, enlist the help of the club's secretarial staff and ensure that if a regular report is promised, that the words are delivered on time.

Keep the text concise and to the point. There is no need to write pages and pages. In many cases, a series of bullet point headings - as in the style of the box within this article - will suffice. Provide sufficient detail to tell the reader what they need to know without slipping into technicalities. If the subject particularly interests someone,

then they can always seek out further information.

A word processor allows a range of type sizes and styles to be used which will attract and hold the reader's attention. The introduction of headlines and sub-headings will also add interest to a page, for example, when listing the various work programmes being carried out on different parts of the course. However, make sure that the type size is legible to someone standing maybe two foot away at a notice board.

Never be afraid to ask for assistance. If the club produces its own newsletter, seek help or advice from the person who puts it together. Alternatively, look for ideas in the trade magazines that land each month on your desk. You could always phone the editor or designer of *Greenkeeper International* who will be able to provide ideas on style and appearance.

Content should not be too difficult thanks to the wide ranging work programmes taking place on a golf course throughout the year.

- List the members of the greenkeeping team and their specific responsibilities on the course. Provide updates on training or further education.
- Describe any special maintenance programmes planned over the coming months, why they are necessary and how they might affect play.
- Provide updates on course developments such as new bunkers, reshaped fairways, additional tees, tree planting, new pathways, etc
- Give advance warning of any seasonal changes that may be introduced on the course, highlighting special measures affecting any specific area.
- Describe any new machinery purchase, why it has been bought, how much it cost and what it will help achieve on the golf course.
- Detail the environmental attributes of the course, highlighting features such as wildlife habitats and rare or unusual plants, birds, insects and trees.
- Reinforce the importance of replacing divots and repairing pitch marks by detailing the cost of employing staff to do the job.
- Explain why seasonal tasks which cause the most aggravation to golfers are needed and what the alternatives might be. Start with hollow coring, top dressing and liquid fertilising of greens.
- Give a run-down of the typical daily and weekly course maintenance routines, and why staff have to be out on the course during the day.
- Forewarn golfers about seasonal variations to the condition or position of greens, tees, trolley paths and the route between tees and greens. It is far better to alert golfers to changes in advance of them taking place.
- Remind golfers of the various safety aspects which need to be observed during play, especially when staff are out on the course.

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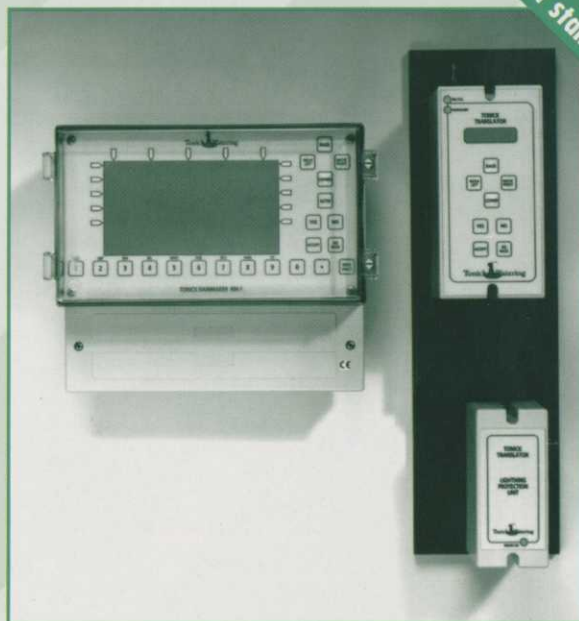
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The movement to convert golf courses to non-metal spike environments is gathering speed rapidly in Europe. Bill McGuinness keeps track of the progress...

Puncture repair

As often happens with a contentious issue involving a commercially-motivated element, the pros and cons of the opposing positions have been debated vigorously during the last two to three years, but the growing number of European golf courses converting to non-metal environments appears to be heading for the "critical mass" that will accelerate into an accepted industry trend.

The non-metal movement has a number of well-publicised positive benefits relating to the health and general well-being of golf courses, but two negative aspects have until now slowed the pace of acceptance here in Europe - the traction and the durability of the plastic spikes normally chosen to replace metal, with particular emphasis on the traction performance in wet European course conditions.

The traction issue is often framed in terms of the legal liability the golf club might face should it ban metal spikes. A third, often unspoken opposing position, is more one of principle - the idea of being told what you cannot wear on your feet if you are to play at the golf club you've finally been allowed to join after five years on the waiting list.

Listening to the debate only three years ago, when virtually no courses in Europe had banned metal spikes, a bet against the movement's success in Europe would have seemed a safe one. "Fine for the U.S., but for one thing our grasses are different and for another, plastic cleats don't work in wet conditions."

But such a "safe bet" would ignore the weight of the benefits which await courses which do take the decision to create a non-metal environment. Whatever your position on the issue, the facts are that without metal spikes the greens are much smoother all day, there is less grass plant damage, and

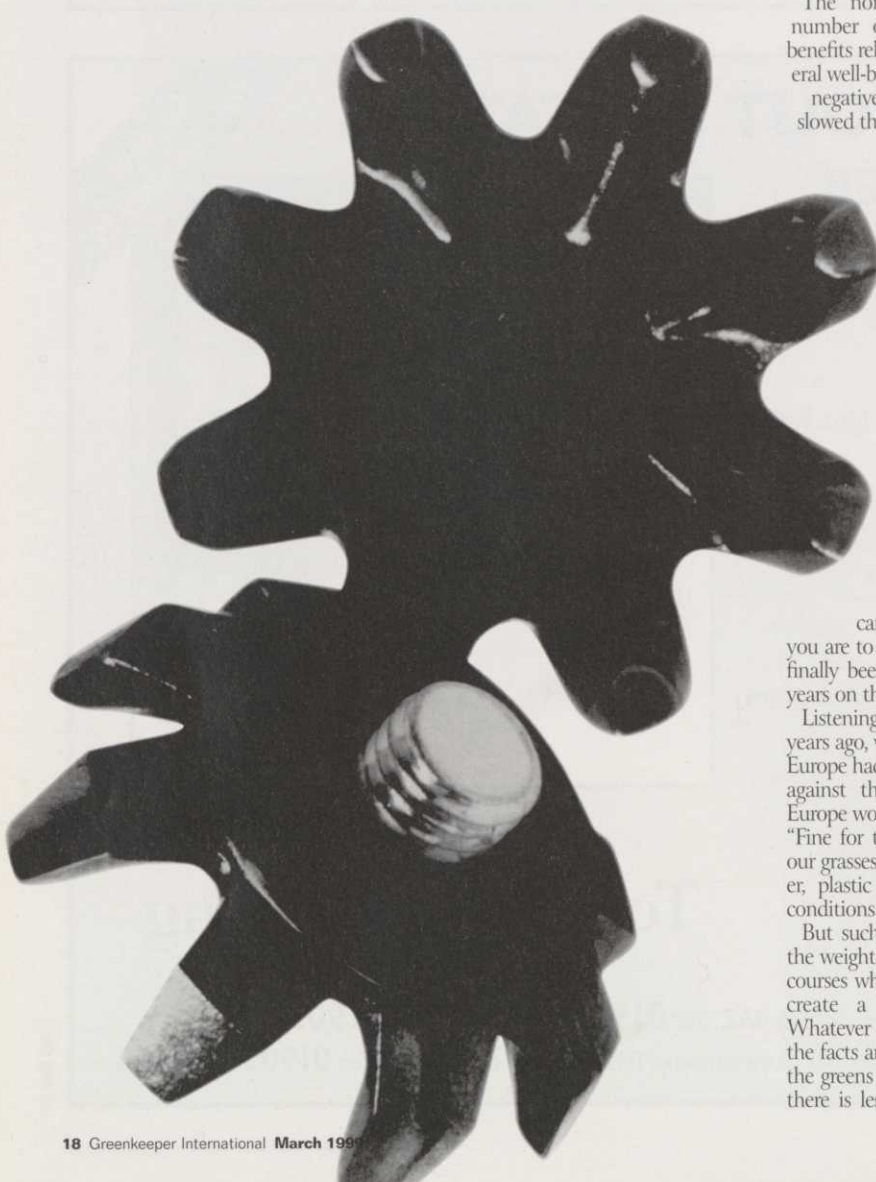
less damage to clubhouse, bridges, and walkways - all commercial issues difficult to ignore totally.

The 'safe bet' would also ignore the determination and product development inventiveness of companies like pioneer Softspikes, Inc., which started the whole U.S. movement in 1994 and obviously has a vested interest in the movement taking hold in Europe as it has in the U.S., where metal spikes are now heading for extinction. (FootJoy no longer produces any golf shoes factory-fitted with metal spikes for the U.S. market.)

Going back to the movement's inception in 1994, the original plastic "cleats" (as they are known in the U.S.) were shaped like frosting swirls, and were designed by an inventor in the U.S. state of Idaho to enable golfers to obtain traction on the often icy surfaces prevailing in this inhospitable winter climate. But in normal golfing weather, on grass, they gave only about 75% of the traction of the standard 6mm metal spikes. However, the fact that they substantially improve putting surfaces and noticeably reduce other types of course and clubhouse damage were sufficient factors to enable them to gain a foothold despite their traction shortcomings. And as luck or fate would have it, it was an unexpected and untouted benefit which kept the movement alive during its beginnings - golfer comfort.

Golfers found that the tired feet, aches and pains which they often experienced after 18 holes were either eliminated or substantially reduced by wearing plastic cleats. Quite simply, golfers that otherwise would have been unwilling to put up with some traction loss from the early plastic spike designs were willing to trade it off for the comfort gains, with the added bonus of getting smoother greens in the bargain.

Seeing the potential for large volumes of plastic spike sales, a number of companies jumped into the market to join Softspikes, and sparked a wave of product development innovations which still hasn't peaked. In early 1998, Softspikes finally cracked the 'better traction than metal' barrier and introduced a spike which was independently shown to have 14% better



traction than the standard 6mm metal spike, even in wet conditions. Admittedly, it was traction-tested on the Bermuda grass relevant to much of the U.S. market, but it was a vast improvement over the then-existing plastic spikes, and created a surge of product acceptance and course conversions.

But in the highly litigious U.S. market, the question of a club's legal liability became a more hotly debated issue than the traction itself. What legal exposure would be incurred by a club banning metal spikes? With opinion initially divided, it became a question of letting the legal issues take their natural course as events unfolded; large numbers of courses evaluated the risks and decided to ban metal spikes. The U.S. course experience speaks for itself. Over 7,500 (almost half of all U.S. courses) have now implemented non-metal policies, and not a single one has reverted back. There have in fact been lawsuits regarding injuries, but not one has been decided in favour of the complainant. In virtually all cases, it has been a situation of golfer carelessness, and in general the same injury would have occurred were the golfer wearing standard metal spikes, or no spikes.

But what these events have done is to make course managements more aware of course conditions about which golfers should be either safeguarded or warned - regardless of whether they are wearing metal spikes, plastic spikes or street shoes. As a point of reference, there are still far more U.S. lawsuits relating to golf balls hitting players, food poisoning, car park injuries, and injuries from course equipment than there are spike related litigations. In short, the question of a club's liability on the non-metal issue has quickly and quietly become simply one more legal/administrative issue which a club has to deal with in the course of normal business.

A point often missed in the legal debate is the fact that a club banning metal spikes is not telling the golfer what he must do (ie wear plastic spikes), but rather what he must not do. He can wear plastic cleats, or trainers, or street shoes, or emulate Sam Snead and play barefoot. But he must not wear metal spikes. (And he must not wear a shirt without a collar, or shorts which are too short, or appear in casual dress in the dining room after 7pm.)

Commercially-minded clubs were also very concerned about "being the first" to ban metal spikes. The perception was that golfers would stay away in droves and green fee revenue would decrease. Here again, the opposite proved true in the U.S. where courses turned the tables and began to actively and successfully promote the improved course conditions. Quite quickly, the issue became moot. Here in Europe, the same trend is developing. "The Business Golfer," a U.K. publication catering to the 15,000 organisers of corporate and society golf days, recently reported that metal-free courses are now becoming favoured venues for events because of the improved course conditions.

Another unexpected and pleasant surprise awaited courses fearing rev-

enue decreases. Clubs found that their bar revenue was increasing. With no need to visit the locker room or car park to change their spikes before entering the spikeless bar (and therefore less time to feel guilty that household projects needed doing), more players headed directly into the bar from the 18th green.

This year has the makings of a watershed for the metal-free movement in Europe, with some prestigious names now getting behind it. While not imposing an outright ban on metal spikes, the St Andrews Links Trust is now actively encouraging all players to shed their metal spikes before playing any of its six courses, and The Belfry has implemented an identical policy for its three courses. Both organisations are fundamentally in favour of an outright metal ban, but were reluctant to take the step without a phasing-in period. Both anticipate converting to firm non-metal policies in 2000.

Adding to the metal-free impetus will certainly be the latest development in plastic spikes from Softspikes (pictured). Called the "Black Widow," it incorporates cantilevered "legs" rather than the rigid points or rings which characterise most of today's plastic spikes. As the golfer walks, the eight legs actually move slightly outward, getting their traction from a sideways "bite" on the surface grass. According to Softspikes European Manager Bill McGuinness, "This pretty much eliminates any indentations or depression-producing action completely. And the traction is much greater than anything we've produced to-date, and is far better than metal spikes."

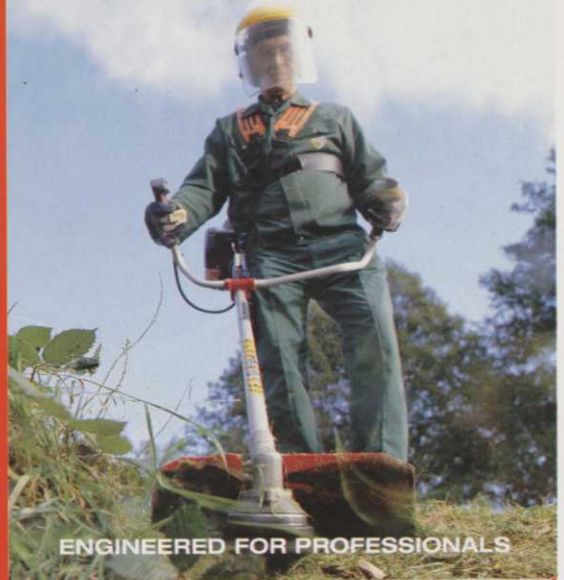
He added, "I recently gave a prototype set to one of the leading U.K. European Tour pros to test. He called me last week from Dubai just to tell me he'd tried them at Chart Hills in the pouring rain before heading for the Dubai tour event, and they were 'awesome,' adding 'You could climb trees with these things!' I don't know about the tree-climbing, but we did try to establish a 'new level' of cleat performance with the Black Widow, and I think we've accomplished it. And we've already had six Tour wins with it in the U.S. while it was still in prototype."

Whatever the outcome of any tree-climbing efforts, 1999 looks to be one of major growth in the movement. As McGuinness says, "It's largely committees which decide whether to ban metal spikes, and it can be a vocal issue. But when committee members see the likes of St Andrews Links and The Belfry joining the ranks, with probably another 200 mostly prestigious courses converting this year in the U.K. alone, the many arguments in favour of non-metal policies are going to start carrying far more weight than they have to-date."



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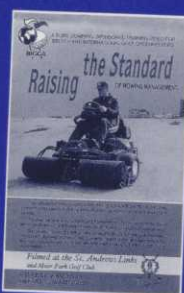
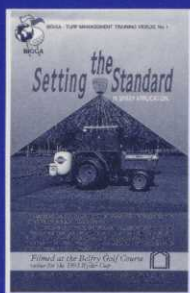
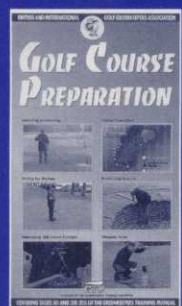
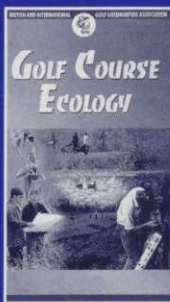
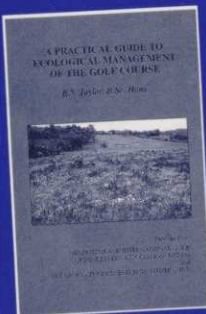
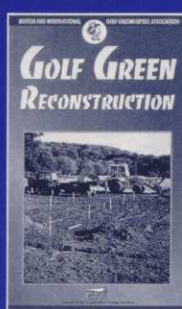
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British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association
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Education Time

Sami is back from her trip to the GCSAA Show and Conference, in Orlando, and I am fully recovered from the bug that laid me low for some three weeks, when I discovered for the first time in more than 30 years of work what a sick note looked like. Although we are busy sending out videos, written transcripts and thank you letters for the Learning Experience 1999, we are starting to plan for the Learning Experience 2000 which will have the title Past, Present and Future. If you have any ideas on what should be included then please let me know. With the continued support of Textron Ground Care and Specialty Products we hope to make the Learning Experience 2000, to steal Scott's words, 'the Best Ever.'

The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

If you wish to emulate the success of Lindrick Golf Club, who won the 1998 Golf Course Environment Competition, you must be thinking about your entry NOW. Amazone Ground Care and Grass Roots Trading Company are joining us again to run the Competition for 1999. The competition is designed to reward those clubs that integrate ecological management with normal golf course management practices to ensure that golf and the environment are compatible. Full details have been sent to all golf clubs and head greenkeepers. However, if you have not received your copy then contact BIGGA HQ and we will send out full details by return of post. Entries must be returned to BIGGA by 3 May 1999. Why not enter and your club could win the first prize of £5000. All clubs visited by the judges will be offered the chance to purchase a copy of the detailed report on their course, which will also include an action plan.

The TORO Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping

With prizes like a TORO Greens master triplex ride on mower and a two week trip to the USA, and prizes for the winner's greenkeeping team and prizes for the runners up, this competition proved to be popular with both greenkeepers and their golf clubs in 1998. John Coleman, from Abbeydale Golf Club in Sheffield, last year's winner, has just returned from the USA where he visited the GCSAA Show and Conference and the TORO factories. This year could be your turn. Nomination forms have been sent out to golf clubs and head greenkeepers but if you need a copy then contact BIGGA HQ. Get your nominations off as soon as possible and we will send out entry forms to all nominees. All entry forms must be returned to BIGGA HQ by 28 May 1999. The National Final will take place, in Harrogate, on 24 and 25 October. Please note that Master Greenkeepers and winners of the ICI/Zeneca/Miracle Premier Greenkeeper Competition are eligible to enter.

The TORO Student of the Year Competition

Now in its tenth year, the search to find the TORO Student of the Year has begun. Competition details and entry forms have been sent to colleges and training providers and all entries should reach BIGGA HQ by 28 May 1999. The main points of the competition are:

1. The winner receives the TORO scholarship to the USA and visits to the TORO factories and to the GCSAA conference and show in New Orleans.

2. The winner's greenkeeping lecturer wins a visit to the GCSAA conference and show in New Orleans.

3. The two runners-up win an all expenses paid visit to the Learning Experience 2000 at Harrogate.