



## Your favourite ending

We simply couldn't improve **Rovral® Green** - after all it *is* the UK's number one turf fungicide.

We couldn't make it any more effective against fusarium, red thread, dollar spot or many other turf diseases. Nor could we make it any more friendly towards beneficial Mycorrhiza.

Admittedly, we were a bit stumped.

So we renamed it. **Chipco® Green**.

## With a new beginning



Bayer Environmental Science  
A Business Group of Bayer CropScience  
Durkan House, 214-224 High Street,  
Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 7DP  
Tel: 01992 784260 Fax: 01992 784276  
[www.bayer-escience.co.uk](http://www.bayer-escience.co.uk)



Bayer Environmental Science



Associate Member

CHIPCO® GREEN contains iprodione. ALWAYS READ THE LABEL : USE PESTICIDES SAFELY (MAPP 09938).  
CHIPCO is a registered trademark of Bayer. © Bayer Environmental Science 2003

**chipco**  
Professional Products

# ClubHouse



*"A tremendous show for us - appointments for nearly 100 site visits to measure up for our RubaPath and RubaRange golf surfaces, as well as several enquiries for driving range refurbishment. We will definitely be back next year!"*

Alwena Beresford, On Course Matting



*"We are delighted by the levels of enquiries we had at the show" commented Colin Surman of GolfPlus, "particularly as it was the first time we had exhibited. We were also encouraged by how many clubs were planning to expand their buggy fleets for the coming season, and how they are increasingly seeing golf buggies as a source of profits"*

Heath Harvey, Golf Plus



# ...JOIN US IN 2004



&



**20-22 JANUARY 2004**  
**HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE**



*"An excellent opportunity to increase our business"*  
Geoff Hardisty, Silesia Grill Systems



"I should like to express my absolute satisfaction at the recent BTME show in Harrogate. I thought that the planning and professionalism, shown by staff from BIGGA was without doubt, beyond reproach.

It was by far our company's best BTME show to date. We attracted more regular and prospective clients on to our stand than ever before.

We have also, thanks to the Harrogate show, sourced distributors in four countries, that up until BTME 2003 we did not have representation in. As we continue to grow, so it seems does the BTME show.

It goes without saying that once the many sales leads have been followed up, we can expect the success at Harrogate to continue.

I look forward to Harrogate 2004 with the knowledge that BTME is without doubt the only one stop Greenkeeping exhibition."

David Goldstone, Managing Director, Tower Chemicals



"Advanta Seeds have been presenting their 2 amenity grass ranges, MM range, designer ranges and Headstart. The interest from the user at the show has been incredible. A very worthwhile exhibition. A very satisfied Exhibitor - will be back again in 2004."

Simon Harrison & Jim Fulton, Advanta Seeds



Environment Award 2002

## GREEN LINK

The 'Big Bertha' promo Green Link held during the Show was very well received, creating a lot of interest in the Nutri-Rational foliar fertilisers which were featured.

The draw made by George Brown provided two well known winners, the first to be drawn was BIGGA Past Chairman, Elliot Small of Tulliallan Golf Club - George could not believe he had drawn that one out! The other was Devon and Cornwall Section Secretary, Steve Evans, of Yelverton Golf Club. Both received a Callaway 'Big Bertha' C4 Driver.



"May I congratulate you and your team on another successful show! We were very impressed with our own results, taking firm orders to the value of nearly three times that taken at our previous best BTME! The only way to follow that is to do better next year, so here is the booking form!"

David Mears, Highspeed Lubricants



## VITAX

The annual Vitax prize draw for a £150 BIGGA voucher for use on any Association merchandise was made by new Chairman, George Brown, and won by John Sinclair, of Thorpe Hall, GC, Southend.



Richard Barker with Sir Michael Bonallack, OBE and Huw Morgan MG



# For those that know! <sup>use</sup>

# Advanta

Amenity Grass Seed

## RYEGRASS TEES **MM** 50

- 100% Ryegrass blend
- Fast establishment and recovery
- Fine leaved and clean cut
- High disease resistance
- Hard wearing and good colour

## TEES & FAIRWAYS **MM** 22

- Hard wearing mixture
- Fine texture turf
- Quick to establish
- Needs irrigation and fertilisers for best results
- Early mowing recommended to allow fescues to establish

50% Perennial Ryegrass, 20% Slender Creeping Red Fescue, 25% Strong Creeping Red Fescue, 5% Browntop Bent

## TEES & FAIRWAYS **MM** 13 WITHOUT SSMG

- Use when SSMG is difficult to establish
- Fine dense compact turf
- Good drought resistance
- Low fertiliser requirements
- High disease resistance

30% Chewings Fescue, 25% Slender Creeping Red Fescue, 35% Strong Creeping Red Fescue, 10% Browntop Bent



Tel: 01529 304511 Fax: 01529 413179  
email: amenity@advantaseeds.co.uk web: www.advantaseeds.co.uk



# CUSTOM MADE



The new MultiRack Platform™ (MRP), standard on the new MF AgTV 400 and 500 Automatic models, means you can tailor your machine to the job in hand. No more attaching equipment with old bungee cords and tie-down straps. The unique MRP system has open-channel receiver racks front and rear. This allows you to slide in a wide variety of versatile, precision engineered accessories that can be securely attached to the rails with just a pin. Now you can custom-make your MF AgTV to match whatever tasks that need doing. Ask your nearest MF dealer now for details of these new models and the large range of attachments available, the possibilities are endless.



THREE POINT  
POWER

www.masseyferguson.com

**EXTRAORDINARY ENGINEERING. EXTRAORDINARY PRODUCTS.  
EXTRAORDINARY SUPPORT.**



MASSEY FERGUSON

Massey Ferguson is a worldwide brand of AGCO Corporation

AGCO Ltd, Tel Hotline: 01628 488441 Email:uksales@uk.agcocorp.com

# NEW PRODUCTS

## MCCORMICK

Has added a second, more powerful, mini compact tractor to its grounds care range. Joining the existing 21 hp McCormick G25, which is being used by private and commercial grounds care operators alike, the McCormick G30R has the distinction of a reversible seat and controls.

The tractor has a rigid chassis and short wheelbase with smaller wheels and tyres at the front to give a tight turning circle. It can be run in two-wheel drive for low steering effort and minimal front tyre scrub on delicate surfaces.

Power is from a three-cylinder Perkins engine developing 23.5hp, with hydrostatic drive providing infinitely variable speed control up to 2.5mph in creep range, up to 5.6mph in the first range, and up to 12mph in the second range.

With rear implement lift, two-speed mechanical power take-off and remote hydraulic couplings, the tractor can handle a wide range of purpose-designed implements. These include ploughs and cultivators; stone buriers; hydraulic diggers; rotary and flail grass mowers; mini balers; blades and blowers for clearing snow; front-end loaders and a rear-mounted forklift; sprayers and fertiliser broadcasters.

Grounds care tractor drivers wanting more comfort and protection from the elements can now have a cab fitted to McCormick G30R and GX/GXH series models.

Providing spacious accommodation despite the compact size of the tractors, both cab designs feature large doors and plenty of headroom to make it easy for the tallest drivers to get on and off easily, and large windows for clear all-round visibility.

They also have top-specification work lights front and rear for early starts and late finishes during the winter months, and are homologated to comply fully with noise level requirements for both private and municipal operations.

For further information Tel: 01302 366631 Fax: 01302 762636



## RANSOMES JACOBSEN

The new SLF-1880 is the lightest of all the Ransomes Jacobsen fairway mowers and is ideal for undulating fairways. Its failure to make any impression will please Course Managers and golfers alike, as it produces manicured and extremely playable fairways that are visually attractive as well.

Greens mower precision and fairway mower productivity come together in the Jacobsen SLF-1880, the lightest 5-gang fairway mower on the market. This new mower meets the growing demand for finer, tournament-level fairways and does it more efficiently than less-productive triplex greens mowers. Weighing 996 kg, the SLF-1880 delivers a 2.03 metre, greens quality cut, while minimising turf compaction.

A new reel-lift system works with patented, articulating 18-inch Jacobsen Classic reels to follow precisely ground contours and deliver a smooth, uniform finish on undulating fairways, approaches and surrounds.

The SLF-1880 features a powerful, high-torque, 26hp Kubota diesel engine and the welded, tubular-steel frame ensures rugged durability. Biodegradable hydraulic fluid protects turf and is friendly to the environment.

The Jacobsen E-Walk, the first all-electric pedestrian greens mower made its world debut at the Show.

This new walk-behind has been granted a US patent and features independent, weather-sealed 48v brushless DC motors with integral control electronics. Power is supplied from a quick-release snap-in/snap-out sealed battery tray containing four 12v lead-acid batteries, wired in series providing mowing speeds of 1.21-5.47 km/h. An easy-to-read charge level meter provides a constant battery condition indicator.

This new electric greens mower is ideal for golf courses close to or adjoining residential areas. Electric power provides a consistent and exceptional quality of cut and the absence of a hydraulic system and petrol engine results in pollution-free operation with low noise levels. It costs just a few pence a day to operate and with over 70% of its parts in common with Jacobsen's Greens King pedestrian mower, the E-Walk combines quiet operation, economy and performance.

Without doubt legislation, pressure groups and technology will ensure that our profession looks more closely at alternative fuels, something that we at Ransomes Jacobsen have already embraced. Many of the turf utility vehicles and golf cars can be adapted to run on LPG. Our LPG-powered Ransomes Highway triplex mower is a first in the municipal turf sector and the Jacobsen E-Plex II, our ride-on electric greens mower is unique to the golf sector.

For further information Tel: 01473 270000 Fax: 01473 276300



The new SLF-1880 is a super lightweight fairway mower producing excellent results on undulating fairways



## TORO

New for 2003 are Toro's significantly upgraded heavy-duty Workman 3300 and 4300 utility vehicles. The latest models have been improved to give operators more power, greater comfort and increased flexibility of use.

A more powerful and reliable Briggs Daihatsu 26.5hp diesel engine - 2003 EPA/CARB compliant for emissions and noise levels - has replaced the vehicles' old Mitsubishi 23hp power unit. The 3300 and 4300 versions are two- and four-wheel drive respectively.

Additionally, a high-flow hydraulic kit is now available so that some of the most up-to-date hydraulically-driven attachments can now be fitted to the heavy-duty Workman. The kit is available with an oil cooler and fan, 15-litre reservoir, 30.2-litre/min pump and quick-release couplings to the rear of the machine.

All current attachments are compatible with the new models.

Three new irrigation products being announced by Toro are designed to make it easier and quicker for greenkeepers to water the course.

Toro's Gemini-Trident PC-based controller now comes as standard with a VIP 811 (Visual Irrigation Program) graphics package that shows the location of every sprinkler on the course. The software enables users to operate and manage systems even easier than before, as they can now see virtually every aspect of their irrigation system displayed on a computer.

For further information Tel: 01480 226806 Fax: 01480 226801

## EARTHQUAKE TURFCARE

A new, updated version of the 1.5m EarthQuake decompactor was being launched by EarthQuake Turfcare at the Show.

Known as the Shockwave the latest model provides turf maintenance professionals with a faster, more effective means of removing soil compaction from the surface down to an increased maximum depth of 260mm on golf courses, sports pitches, recreation areas, parks and many other leisure, amenity and sports turf areas.

In common with its larger 2.1m stablemate, a key feature of the new 1.5m EarthQuake Shockwave is its ability to remove compaction fast without surface disturbance, enabling play and other activities to continue without interruption, maximising the use of and income from the facility.

This ability to work effectively without surface "heave" is achieved by the use of powered rotating knives to remove soil compaction rather than the more commonly-used reciprocating tines which are more likely to lift and tear the turf. Mounted sequentially across the full width of the machine, the EarthQuake Shockwave's 18 curved knives taper from a width of 12mm down to a knife edge. The result is a clean cut through the turf followed by a high level of sustained lateral soil movement which shatters and relieves compaction to depth across the full working width with minimal surface disturbance.

Ruggedly built to handle the toughest working conditions, the 1.5m EarthQuake Shockwave has a working width of 1,542mm (603/4 in) and is suitable for use with four-wheel drive tractors in the 35hp to 50hp class. Mounted on a compact tractor at the lower end of this power band, the

machine is able to work comfortably, without marking, on finer turf surfaces such as golf and bowling greens/ ornamental lawns and grass tennis courts.

Important features on the new machine include an updated gearbox and oil-immersed chain drive to the main shaft, single point adjustment of working depth, tapered rear skids to allow scalp-free treatment of MacKenzie-type greens and a five per cent increase in blade torque to enable more effective operation in highly-compacted soils. Side footbars and a hinged rear guard provide greater operator safety.

Priced at £9/500, the new 1.5m EarthQuake Shockwave will be available for demonstrations nation-wide from February onwards.

For further information Tel: 01889 271509 Fax: 01889 271528



## ALLEN POWER

Introduced a range of four pedestrian cylinder mowers manufactured for them by Ransomes Jacobsen to an exclusive specification

The 20in and 24in cut units will be supplied through the Allen dealer network both at home and abroad.

The Super Fine models deliver 138 cuts per yard and are therefore ideal for use on fine turf areas such as cricket squares, bowling and golf greens, and the Super Stripe units will appeal to private users as well as the professional groundsman.

The models offered are Super Stripe 51, a 20in unit features a six bladed 5in cylinder and is powered by a Honda GC135 4hp 119cc engine. 'Motivair' servo controls to primary drive and cutting cylinder for smooth comfortable operation with a sturdy reliable manual clutch via chain providing the drive to a split twin ridged cast iron rear roller.

Super Stripe 61 as with the 51 but with 24in five bladed cylinder.

Super Fine 51, a 20in ten bladed 5in cylinder is powered by a 4hp GC 135 119cc Honda engine. Solid front roller and quick release pneumatic transportation wheels are featured with an automotive type manual clutch to chain drive powering the split aluminium rear roller. A grass collection box is an optional extra on Super Fine 61, as before but with 24in cut.

For further information Tel: 01235 515400 Fax: 01235 515401



## SCOTTS

launched a brand new fungicide at the Show containing a new active ingredient that offers unparalleled control of Fusarium disease. Heritage belongs to a new class of environmentally sound fungicides which have been developed from naturally occurring chemicals found in saprophytic woodland fungi. In UK development trials and in commercial use throughout the USA, Canada and Japan, the product has proved superior to other available treatments on every level.

Heritage disrupts the mitochondrial respiration of target fungi and prevents the pathogen from transferring energy, leading to the death of the fungal cells.

This mode of action renders Heritage an ideal pest control option in the context of resistance management programmes.

Application of Heritage offers a long lasting prevention and early cure of turf disease, and efficacy is further enhanced by the products systemic mobility within the grass plant. Heritage is absorbed through leaf blade, crown, root and stem, and moves throughout the plant, via the xylem vessels, to provide total protection. The product will even move into fresh blade growth as it develops, and has a translaminar movement through the leaf blades.

Regular mowing of sports and amenity turf poses less of a threat to the control offered by Heritage compared to conventional products, as the active ingredient lost as sap exudes through the cut blade can be reabsorbed again through the roots.

This 'recyclable' characteristic, combined with the high performance of the product, means that Heritage has one of the lowest use-rate ranges on the turfgrass market - vital in today's environmentally aware industry. In addition, the low hazard rating to birds, beneficial insects, non-target organisms, and the operator makes Heritage an ideal choice for Integrated Pest Management Programmes.

For further information Tel: 01473 830492 Fax: 01473 830386

# NEW PRODUCTS

## TERRAIN AERATION SERVICES

Herald oil-digesting bugs as the answer to oil and diesel spillages around the golf course.

Using their Airforce machine, which penetrates to a depth of one metre and employs compressed air to create underground fissures, the company offer a new service, which injects oil-digesting bugs into contaminated soil. Travelling at the end of the final air blast and carried by dried milled seaweed, the bugs, which need air to breathe, rise upwards into the fissures, settle at different levels and begin to digest the problem.

As Airforce moves on to a new section, more bugs are spread onto the surface of the original area. These bugs migrate downwards through the newly created fissures, towards those already feeding. Once the area is decontaminated, the creatures die.

Lynda Green, a Director with T.A.S. said that working to their usual staggered grid pattern at two metre spacings, the company can ensure total coverage of treated areas to a depth of one metre.

"This service is economical and eco-friendly with no mess," she says. "At the moment the only other alternative is the dig-and-dump method which entails using a specially registered land-fill site. Even then, the turf manager is left with an unsightly hole in the ground."

For further information Tel: 01449 673783



## BRITISH SOCIETY OF PLANT BREEDERS LTD



'Turfgrass Seed', which objectively assesses the performance of major new and established amenity grass cultivars under rigorous trial conditions, is recognised as an invaluable reference.

The latest edition, being published by the British Society of Plant Breeders Ltd (BSPB) and the STRI at BTME has a new format with more practically orientated information.

'Turfgrass Seed' reports comprehensive test results evaluating the suitability of cultivars for three key usage areas. These include: Use in winter sports pitches, such as soccer and rugby fields, and municipal parks (intensive wear trials); use in lawns, summer sports pitches, turf and general landscaping (lawn landscape trials); and use

under intensive management regimes for golf and bowling greens, tennis courts or ornamental lawns (close mown trials).

To make the information as relevant as possible to the end user, each cultivar is assessed under several important criteria. These comprise visual merit (an overall measure of suitability), shoot density, live ground cover (important for winter sports turf), slow re-growth, fineness of leaf, cleanness of cutting, colour and freedom from disease.

Users can identify the properties that are important in their individual situations and choose cultivars scoring well for those characteristics.

This information can also help groundsmen, greenkeepers and specifiers in their discussions with seedsmen, and in understanding the composition of grass seed mixtures.

British Society of Plant Breeders Ltd Tel: 01353 653200 Fax: 01353 661156

## JOHN DEERE

A new 750 litre low profile sprayer is now available from John Deere for use with the company's established 24hp Pro Gator utility vehicle. This is the first time John Deere has offered a machine for the amenity sprayer market in the UK and Ireland.

Adapted for the European market, the HD200 utilises the whole of the Pro Gator's load space to provide a very low centre of gravity for stable, efficient spraying on all amenity turf areas, especially on slopes. The design also provides the operator with good visibility over the back of the tank to the sprayer boom.

A choice of 5.5m or three-way folding 4.6/6.4m fixed spray booms is available, complete with safety breakaway system. The boom operates at up to 50cm above ground level and at ground speeds of up to 10mph.

Individual boom sections can be selected as required, and boom height can be adjusted manually if necessary. Electric raising and lowering of the boom is an option.

In addition to the main tank, the sprayer features a 75 litre rinse tank, plus clean water foam marker and chemical tanks. Chemicals are mixed using a jet agitator and the tank contents can be fully emptied using a special sump system.

John Deere has added two new models to the 4010 Series compact tractor range launched in January 2002. Officially launched at this year's Show, the new four wheel drive 4610 and 4710 large chassis compact tractors are available with a choice of advanced Hydro and PowerReverser transmissions - making the 4710 the highest horsepower tractor available from John Deere with a hydrostatic transmission.

These transmissions are based on proven technology used in the company's larger agricultural and construction equipment, and feature simple fingertip push button controls, more efficient diagnostic servicing and reliable, heavy duty construction.

Featuring high capacity hydraulics, both tractors are powerful enough for multi-implement operation, including front loaders, mid-mounted and trailed mowers, tillers, aerators and trailers, for example.

The 4610 and 4710, with gross horsepower ratings of 44 and 48hp respectively, replace the previous 4600 and 4700 models. The new hydrostatic transmission features the same innovative electronic controls and performance benefits as the smaller 4310 and 4410 mid chassis models, and is designed to provide greater productivity and easier operation by enabling tractor output to be matched more precisely to different applications.

John Deere's Pro Gator utility vehicle was originally launched in the UK and Ireland in 1999. It can be used as a general materials transporter or with specialist turf maintenance equipment, utilising the vehicle's hydraulic services and optional pto for a wide range of applications in the golf and turf and commercial groundscares' markets.

This four wheel, two seater vehicle has a choice of two or optional four wheel drive, a five forward, one reverse speed synchronised transmission with full front and rear suspension, hydraulic drum brakes on all four wheels plus differential lock, hydrostatic power steering and a maximum speed of nearly 20mph.

For further information Tel: 01949 860491 Fax: 01949 860490

## CAMPEY TURF CARE

The new Koro deep verti-cutting rotor attachment launched at the Show, offers turf professionals the opportunity to combat thatch problems by mechanical means, rather than chemicals.

The Koro deep verti-cutting rotor fits onto the Campey Koro Field Topmaker machine in place of the standard rotary blades that completely remove top layers of soil for quick ground renovation.

Offered in 1.2m and 2m widths, the verti-cutting rotor incorporates a series of 1.5mm or 3mm thick blades, available in hardened or tungsten-tipped versions, at 40mm spacings. These blades cut through and remove the fibrous thatch material, encouraging water, air and nutrient permeation.

They also deal with troublesome lateral grass growth that can lead to weak, shallow-rooting turf.

For further information Tel: 01260 224568

**More NEW PRODUCTS launched at Harrogate will appear next month...**



# Trees

## Mycorrhizal Management of Golf Course Trees

**Why given the amount of specialist time, money and considerable effort in creating the 'right' environment does tree transplant failure happen?**

The answer can often be found in the microbial activity under your feet. More than 75% of a tree's survival system is found in its roots, so healthy roots mean healthy trees.

The symbiotic relationships between trees and plants and bacteria and fungi in nutrient exchange in the natural forest habitat have evolved over hundreds of millions of years. This complementary microbial activity is especially helpful in times of reduced soil fertility, drought, temperature extremes and other forms of stress.

### SOILS AND STRESS

Soils especially in the new golf course environment often contain very few of the desirable characteristics of forest soil and often suffer from compaction, salt, drought, low organic matter and undesirable pH,

So it is little wonder that at the time of greatest stress when trees are transplanted from a protected nursery into to a recently built fairway that transplant failure happens.

Whips or small trees that are moved from a benign nursery habitat, lose up to 90% of their root mass and are then placed into soil typically devoid of many of the natural support mechanisms which ensure survival in the forest environment.

Recent advances in environmental biotechnology using natural fungi and bacteria from the forest have produced a range of products to help improve the transplant process and reduce subsequent maintenance costs.

### EXPAND YOUR ROOTS

University studies over the last 30 years have shown that certain fungi form special associations with plant roots. These are mycorrhizal fungi that have developed a natural survival strategy to help 99% of all trees, plants and grasses survive stress and promote healthy growth.

Mycorrhizal fungi create enhanced root structures that greatly increase the absorptive surface area to several hundred times larger than non-mycorrhizal roots. This increases the plants' absorption capacity and enables increased nutrient assimilation and water absorption.

Healthy trees and plants naturally have mycorrhizae associated root systems which provide better tolerance to drought, heavy metals, salt, toxins and pH extremes, i.e. the conditions commonly found in the urban or roadside environment. Healthy trees have increased resistance to microbial and nematode root pathogens.

There are two main types of mycorrhizae - endomycorrhizae and ectomycorrhizae. Endomycorrhizae are the most common, of this type vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae VAM occur on more plant species than any other, particularly agricultural crops, grasses, fruit trees and hardwoods.

Ectomycorrhizae occur on about 10% of the world's flora but are just as important commercially to the urban arboriculturist and landscape architect. This is because they colonise the trees typically used for transplanting including pine, oak, chestnut, beech, birch, willow and poplar.

### NEW PRODUCTS TO HELP THE ARBORIST

Transplant failure happens in spite of a host of precautionary activities to prevent it. Now a variety of ecto and endo mycorrhizae are available,

commercially, to landscape contractors, nurseries and arborists to help prevent transplant failure, or save and promote healthy growth in mature trees under stress.

Mycorrhizae are plant specific so you must ensure that you inoculate with the correct species for your plant or purchase a cocktail of species which will work on most plants.

Plants should be inoculated prior to planting. This can be done in three ways:

1. By inoculating the soil in the nursery.
2. By dipping whips in a root dip on site immediately prior to planting.
3. Pouring the spores around the rootzone when planting 1-2" calliper trees with balled roots.

Mature trees under stress can also be revived by inoculating the root zone with the appropriate mycorrhizae and nutrients.

Inoculating trees and flowerbeds is a very cost-effective way of improving results while reducing costs. Whips can be inoculated for a few pence by dipping into a solution containing the relevant mycorrhizae, biostimulents, and water retaining polymers to ensure everything is in place to help with a healthy start.

Inoculation of container trees or balled trees of 1" or 2.5cm calliper costs less than £2.00 and usually trees only need to be inoculated once in their lifetime.

Typically case studies show transplant failure in inoculated plants, not subject to vandalism, can be reduced by over 50%.

### INNOVATIONS

Mycorrhizal inoculation helps but new technologies provide further assistance to ensure transplant success, and reduce costs, particularly in manpower by simplifying maintenance in the early years.

Slow release water retaining gels are very helpful to young plants that have lost part of their root system on transplanting or are subject to desiccation during transit or establishment by the roadside. As the gels expand and contract they also open the soil and help aeration, they also hold many times more water than peat and make up to 90% available to the plant.

For further information please contact:

**Martin Ward**

**Symbio**

**38 Bookham Industrial Park, Bookham, Surrey KT23 3EU**

**Tel: 01372 456 101**

**Fax: 01372 456 099**

**Email [Martin@symbio.co.uk](mailto:Martin@symbio.co.uk)**

# GOLF COURSES IN FRONT LINE DEFENCE OF HEATHLAND HERITAGE

Anyone who doubts the importance of golf courses in the fight to preserve our natural heritage should consider the plight of one plant. Carol Dutton reports.

Heather, home of some of our most vulnerable and endangered species, the Smooth Snake, Slow Worm, Sand Lizard, Wood Lark and Night Jar, in the south, and both the Red and Black Grouse in the north, was, 100 years ago, so prolific on these islands, that we hosted two thirds of the total European resource.

Nowadays, according to Bob Taylor, Senior Ecologist to the STRI, the plant's presence has become severely fragmented, especially in the south.

"Although we have considerably more heather in the North of England and upland areas throughout the UK generally, in the south the species is confined to a few fragmented, and often reducing patches in Dorset, Suffolk, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire. Obviously, our southern heathlands have been under threat during the last century by a variety of factors including, industry, agriculture, housing and quarrying, which have not effected the northern uplands to the same extent."

According to Bob this north/south difference is reflected in the way in which conservation is viewed.

"In the South of England, heathland management is seen as important, whereas in the Northern Uplands, where the biggest threat is from sheep overgrazing, the heather is managed as it has always been, but conservation is not perceived as vital."

Following a recent survey, the STRI estimates that of our 2,800 UK and Irish golf clubs, 440 are heathland courses, and approx 140 of these are situated in the vulnerable south. With an average heather coverage of six point two hectares per course, these southern golf clubs would appear to be responsible for an approximate 868 hectares of heather between them. Although a small percentage of our total national resource, the STRI are keen to point out that considering the rate of the plant's decline, the fact that a golf course is a stable land use, will render the heather on these areas increasingly more important as time goes by.

Interestingly, 80% of the golf clubs included in the survey wanted to extend and increase their heather coverage, although only 55% believed that the plant was declining. Perhaps this is explained by the fact that 63% believed heather to be important to the playing character of the course and 75% believed heather enhanced member's enjoyment of the game.

Bob who has written two important books relating to heather conservation on golf courses, "Studies In Golf Course Management, Number One, Heathland." and "A Practical Guide To Ecological Management On The Golf Course", lists the following reasons for heather decline in order of importance:

1. Trampling, which leads directly to grass encroachment.
2. No management, which leads to tree and other scrub, plus bracken encroachment.
3. The influence of past management. (In the 60s and 70s Parkland golf courses were in vogue, and many Heathland courses were limed, in a bid to get rid of the heather all together!).

Blackmoor Golf Course, the 18- hole Harry Colt designed Open Qualifier, situated on the Surrey/ Hampshire border, is committed to the rejuvenation of its original three to four hectares of heather. Harry Davies, Head Greenkeeper for the last four years cites the following areas of maintenance, which he feels necessary to achieve this goal:

1. The removal of weeds and grass
2. The removal of saplings
3. Bracken control
4. Golf traffic management
5. Tree clearance
6. The collection of leaves
7. Removal of turf from dormant heather seedbeds, coupled with over seeding in known decolonised areas.

"Last year the club committed its self financially, freeing the resources to begin this major project," he said.

"As a starting point we felt that tackling the grass/weed control would be most beneficial. Due to the undulating terrain, the nature of the work, and the specialist equipment needed, we decided to contract the work out. Weed Free, the Berkshire based specialist sprayers were known to be experienced in this field, and we felt we could confidently put this part of the programme into their hands."

Mark Mason, Contracts Manager for Weed Free, spent three days in January and another three days in June conducting semi trials on both the heather and bracken at Blackmoor. An approved pesticide was applied at the recommended rate with knapsack sprayers to the bracken. ATVs were brought into play on areas where the plant had taken advantage of the extra light afforded by the first phase of a substantial tree-felling programme.