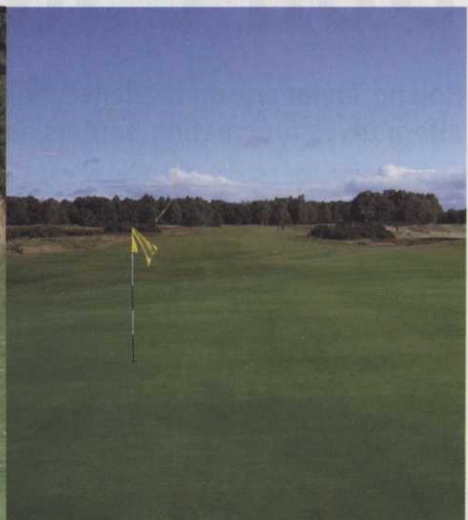




Chris Lomas, the defending champion, found it more difficult this time around.



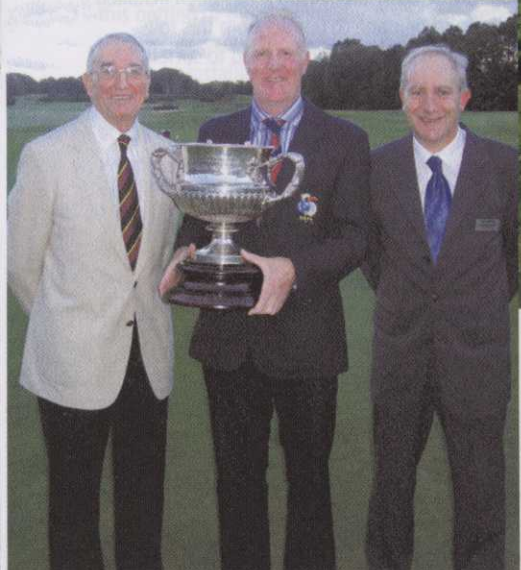
Played left handed the course was even more difficult.



The two Peters, Boyd and Larter, hard at work.



Graeme MacDonald found gold at the end of this particular rainbow.



Above: A player watches the result of his tricky up and down.
Left: Winner Graeme MacDonald with the trophy presented by Club Captain Brian Mason (left) and Jim Whitton from sponsor Ransomes Jacobsen.



The South East Region collected the team prize.

Don't Sit on the Fence

Roland Taylor sits on the fence, hedges his bets, and looks at the alternatives for creating barriers and boundaries.

Fencing is likely to be a low priority on the list of course management tasks for most clubs and the subject only gets attention when it really becomes necessary. It is however, an important means to protecting property and land. Fencing and other types of barriers primarily have two roles, to keep intruders, including livestock, out or keep the latter in. However, there is a third aspect that is worth taking into account. For some clubs, especially those set in parkland, it can provide an overall aesthetic quality to the landscape, especially when in the vicinity of the clubhouse or hotel.

Security Fencing

When considering fencing the first thing that comes to mind is security and with the considerable investment that clubs now have in equipment this is a top priority.

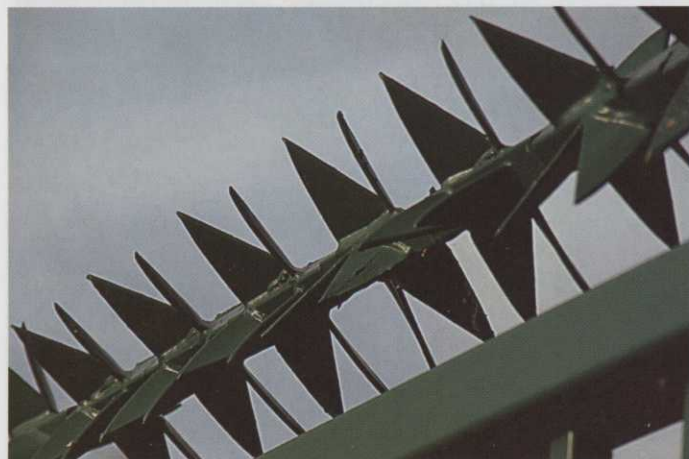
There is a wide choice of security fencing available and careful consideration should be given to what are the aims and priorities and whether planning permission is required. The height of any fencing should be appropriate to the risk and the location of the site. As a general guide security fencing for industrial estates needs to be at least 2.4 metres high.

The question then is what system to use? Welded mesh and steel palisades are considered the best. The palisade style is the most common as it is strong and easy to erect. There are various tops available, with triple pointed ones being the most common, especially where high security is the key issue. For safety reasons these should not be used on fencing below 1.8 metres.

Welded mesh panels are an alternative. They have the advantage of giving great surveillance, but should be made from a mesh small enough not to allow finger or tow holds. Another choice is solid steel panels.

All security fencing needs to be mounted on steel posts set in reinforced concrete. As an extra deterrent the top of the fencing can be fitted with barbed or razor wire. Another alternative is revolving spikes.

These consist of a series of metal spikes that, when touched, revolve, thus eliminating the possibility of someone gaining a foothold and in the



Rotating spikes on top of fencing make it virtually impossible to climb over.



A hedge that has been correctly laid forms an impenetrable barrier and when the new growth appears is an attractive feature.

process suffering considerable discomfort and possible injury. They act as a formidable barrier and deterrent.

If thieves are persistently visiting the premises, then electric fencing might be a consideration. It is legal, providing it is installed by a specialist, but should be only used in extreme cases. Both technical and legal advice must be sought before going ahead.

When considering fencing the most likely type to spring to mind is chain link. From a security aspect this is a non-starter but is very useful as a boundary marker. Chain link is constructed from steel wire woven into a mesh, which can be bought in various grades and sizes. There is a choice of either galvanised or PVC coated. Like security fencing it should be mounted on concrete or steel posts. These can be cranked at the top to take barbed wire.

All security fencing and chain link is unattractive but this can be overcome with a little forethought. Obviously the reason it has been installed is to deter intruders, so nothing should be done to detract from this role. However, some soft vegetative climbing shrubs could be used to soften the image and, if thorny varieties are included, will also add to the protective screen. However they need to be sited so as not to act as cover for an intruder.

Wooden Fencing

Nationwide the most popular fencing found in the countryside is post and rail. This system, while pretty mundane, can, if built correctly, add attractiveness to the landscape, especially in parkland, with a backdrop of trees. Alternatively, if the fence is painted white it can add to and set off an entrance to a course.

When it comes to erecting post and rail fencing there are a number of key issues that need to be considered so that it looks good when completed. One of the most important aspects is the post alignment, which must be straight. This is time consuming but the end result is rewarding. Once the proposed line of post has been established and markers sited it is time to put in the post. There are two ways of doing this either, by digging holes or by driving them in. The later is fast and the posts firmer. This system is favoured

by fencing contractors who generally use specialist equipment. It is possible to drive the posts into the ground with a sledgehammer, but there is considerable risk of damaging the tops.

The fencing contractor contacted had a Bryce Suma Powershift ram, which was modified to his own specifications. The machine aligned each post to ensure the flat surfaces were identical, so that there was no twist when the rails were applied. Each post was driven exactly three foot straight into the ground, taking into account terrain and contours.

If holes are going to be dug then there are plenty of earth augers on the market that make the job faster than the older method of using spade, pickaxe and crowbar. Earth augers come with a variety of attachments to either fit a tractor and skidster or as one or two manned self-contained machines.

Once a series of posts are in place it is then time to fit the rails. For post and nailed fencing, where there is no chance of people climbing on them, the general rule is to fit rails that are 1.8m long, 38mm thick and 87mm deep, these conform to a British Standard (BS 1722-7 1999).

Where the fence is going to be used to support rabbit netting a lighter version of rails such as 30mm wide and 75mm deep are more suitable. Standard patterns are usually available off the shelf but you can have them made to specific requirements at a cost. Post and rails must be treated and with today's methods this ensures long life.

To fit the rails to the posts the contractor we spoke to used special galvanised ring shanked nails, which were driven in place with a compressor gun. He averaged 100 metres of fencing per day.

An alternative method of fitting rails is to set them into mortises in the post. While this produces a stronger attachment to the rails it is more costly and time consuming to erect.

Where strained wired fencing is being used the most important factor is the straining posts, as these take all the loading. The posts between these strainers only support the wire at the correct height.

A facility for re-tensioning the wire should always be part of the design. As a general rule of thumb straining posts for a wire fence need to be approximately 11.7 metres high and at least 7.5cm in diameter and set at a depth of at least 60cm in the ground.

Terrain is very rarely flat so the hummocks and dips have to be taken into account if the fence line is to remain straight. Likewise soil conditions vary considerably, so if bedrock is encountered the depth of the post will be affected and it may be necessary for them to be set in concrete.

Rabbits cause considerable damage and where they are highly active some control fencing can be advantageous. Hexagon mesh is recommended by the Forestry Commission and there is a British Standard (BS 10223) for this netting. If this is being purchased it is important to check that the distance between the widest parallels is no more than 3cm.

When installing it, it must be bent in the direction the rabbits are coming from and held down by wire or covered with turf sods. The height of the actual fence, once the bottom has been covered over, should be at least 900



A ram is the fastest way to accurately sink posts at a consistent depth with level face for the rails.

mm. Wire supports are suggested to ensure that there is no sagging. Any slack in the fence will defeat the objective of the exercise. Rabbit fencing needs to be regularly checked to ensure it continues to be effective.

Hedges

While hedges are generally cut only once a year their effectiveness as strong barriers can be improved considerably by being laid. This can also add to their attractiveness. Hedge laying is a craft dating back to the 1700's.

Its aim is to create an ongoing barrier, which is difficult for both humans and animals to penetrate. There are a number of hedge styles throughout the country and each of these are designed to meet a range of criteria including plants, altitude, wind and snow.

The governing body is the National Hedge Laying Society and they provide a list of contractors as well as offering training days throughout the country for beginners who wish to take up the craft.

With more clubs considering environmental issues and conservation areas a well-laid hedge might be worth considering for some selected sites.

Details can be obtained from Bruce May (Sec NHLS), "Way Post", Vines Cross, East Sussex. TN21 9EG Tel: 01959565678. Information on registered contractors, countrywide, is available on www.hedgelaying.org.

There is a possibility that a grant maybe available for some types of fencing so it is well worth contacting your local Department of Environment Food and Rural affairs (DEFRA) centre to check out this possibility.

Recycled Materials

Traditionally wood has been used to make products such as boardwalks and fencing. However there are alternatives to this material that will eradicate the disadvantages associated with wood, including ongoing maintenance, treatment and lifespan.

Recycled plastic is becoming a useful substitute for wood fencing. Recycled plastic fencing includes post and rail, birdmouth and picket and patch. This particular material can offer many benefits compared to wood. Recycled plastic is both extremely durable and also vandal resistant.

Due to the surface texture, the product is more resistant to graffiti and more resilient to other forms of vandalism. Plastic is also less flammable and UV resistant, meaning little or no colour loss or sunlight damage occurring with the material.

When it comes to fencing some clubs will have the advantage of being part of a large estate with its own forestry or estate management department who take care of these requirements. Most clubs will not have this luxury, so either they have to do the work in-house or employ a contractor. In the later case it is worth shopping around as like any industry there are good and bad operators.

Third party recommendations and viewing their work will, in general, be sufficient to gauge good workmanship.

If it has to be done in-house then hiring the right equipment will help to eliminate hassle and speed-up the operation considerably. There are plenty of companies out there who can supply this type of machinery on hire.

Well-built fences will give years of trouble free maintenance so it is important to get it right from the start.



This one man earth auger takes the hard work of making post holes.



The tops of security fencing posts come in a range of style, this one is called the trident.

ONE MIXTURE DOESN'T ALWAYS FIT ALL!

Lex van de Weerd looks at the factors to consider when choosing grass seed for a new golf project.



Sowing grass seed on a new golf course is done only at the final 'finishing off' stage of the project. Before this happens, many considerations have to be made in order to decide on the right seed mixtures. Whoever makes this decision – the architect, the course constructor, the grass breeder or the seed supplier – has to look closely at factors which are relevant for good grass growth on the new course.

In practice, the best recommendation can be obtained from breeders who have the most knowledge about grasses. Sometimes, the choice for the best adapted mixtures are easy and standard mixtures can be used, but on many projects the conditions are so unusual or deviant that tailor-made solutions are necessary.

So which factors play an important role in choosing the right seed?

Location

Every new golf course is unique because of its design and location. The latter can influence on the choice of grass. Will it be a links course (flooding or salinity problems to be expected)? What will be the altitude (mountains or flat land)? On which soil type will the course be built? This is important mainly for the fairways and roughs because greens and tees are usually constructed artificially. As the performance of grass species (diseases, thatch build up, availability of nutrients) is influenced by the soil pH, it is important to know this.

For instance, nutrient availability for the plants will become difficult at pH levels > 7.5. This affects P (Phosphorous), Fe (Iron), Mg (Magnesium), Cu (Copper) and Zn (Zinc). Because of deficiencies of these elements in the plants, grass growth is disturbed resulting in slow growth, slow recovery after damage and discolouring of the plants.

Climate

Within grass species, many differences exist among varieties regarding heat stress tolerance, drought resistance, frost tolerance and disease resistance. Therefore, it is necessary to understand in advance the climatic (local) conditions very well. Although greens and tees are often irrigated, it is still important to know the annual precipitation, which is important for roughs, non-irrigated fairways and driving ranges. In areas with severe winters, not only the lowest average temperature is important, but also the snow and the duration of snow cover. This will pose problems for Fusarium.

Water

All golf courses use water, but how they use it differs from course to course or from location to location. Water can come from different sources (drinking water, ponds, ground water wells or sewage water). Quality can vary a lot, except for drinking water. The pH value of the water can have a major influence on good grass growth because it will have an effect on the soil pH. In general, most turf grass pathogens are able to grow at any pH encountered by turf. A low pH (<5.5) gives a worse nitrification, a blocking of P, Mg deficiency. Along with difficulties for plants in taking up elements, other negative factors influenced by high soil pH are:

- Limitation of soil microbial processes (breakdown of Nitrogen).



- More summer patch problems on *Poa pratensis*, *Festuca rubra* and *Poa annua*.
- More problems with *Fusarium*.

A pH between 6-7 is considered the best for nutrient uptake and microbial activity.

In dry areas (hot climates) many golf courses are using, or are forced to use, sewage water. This kind of water usually contains a lot of salts which cause problems to grass.

It is possible to select for salt tolerance – not only from species but varieties too. Some new courses are restricted to using drinking water and if there are no alternatives it is important to choose drought tolerant grasses (e.g. *Koeleria macrantha*, Tall fescue or Bermudagrass) to minimise the usage of drinking water and therefore the cost.

Management

Too often, new golf courses are seeded with grasses without considering the following points in advance:

What is the aim of the club? Will it be private or public (maybe pay and play)? The latter often means more rounds per year, and more wear tolerance is needed. On such courses the choice of perennial ryegrass on tees and fairways is more common than on private courses.

What is the expected quality of the greenkeeping staff? Too often inexperienced greenkeepers are confronted with grasses on their courses which they don't have the know-how to manage.

Monoculture greens (100 per cent creeping bent or 100 per cent Bermudagrass) require more skill from the greenkeeping staff than bent-fescue greens. This problem might be less valid for the UK, where the education level is high, but in many new golf countries (Eastern Europe) it is a real problem.

What is the management budget? Sometimes people want to choose the new generation creeping bentgrass varieties (L93, Penn A4, etc.), but the head greenkeeper lacks sufficient budget to maintain these grasses.

Despite the excellent sward density and close mowing tolerance of these 'new' bents, they need much more verti-cutting due to more thatch, and they also need mowing more frequently. Moreover, adapted mowing machines are necessary, which are often more expensive. This all requires an increased maintenance budget.

Are there any environmental restrictions? If the course is going to be confronted with restrictions for the use of water, fertilizers or chemicals, it is necessary to adjust the grass concept for the course.

Characteristics such as drought resistance, low-maintenance performance and sod density will become essential. Monocultures on

greens should be avoided in favour of bent fescue mixtures. Also, perennial ryegrass is doubtful in such situations.

Miscellaneous

The lay-out of rough varies a lot on courses. Sometimes the natural vegetation will be used and sometimes the architect wants to sow the roughs. For these areas, several solutions are possible. Mainly low maintenance species are required.

Are there any special requirements from the architect? Sometimes architects like to see colour differences in order to distinguish different parts on a hole. This will have consequences for the choice of varieties in a mixture, which at the same time should also be adapted to the area of use.

The sowing period of the course can influence the choice of species. Particularly in tough climates (e.g. mediterranean areas, Scandinavia) it is not always possible to sow every species in the summer or autumn.

Under pressure, a golf course constructor is often forced to sow during a less suitable period of the year which sometimes results in poor establishment of the grass, or even the disappearance of a species. In such cases it is better to use another mixture composition which is more adapted to the sowing conditions.

Will shade cause problems in the future? If a new course is planned in parkland, or will be surrounded by forest, problems might occur. Although architects have learned to better anticipate expected shade problems from trees, it is not always possible to avoid this.

Therefore grass species and varieties should be selected with good shade tolerance. In the last year new species, such as *Deschampsia* and Tall fescue, have been introduced successfully on golf courses.

It is clear that grass plays a major role in the success of a new golf course. Despite a beautiful design, the image of a new project can be ruined by making bad grass choices at the beginning.

Taking into consideration the cost of seed compared with the total investment of a new golf course, it is incomprehensible that in many cases the project management chooses the cheapest offer without looking seriously at the quality of the mixtures.

Although it is possible to sow the whole course with the same mixture, in many cases a long-lasting, beautiful course is only achievable with a variety of mixtures carefully chosen to suit the conditions. One mixture doesn't always fit all!

Lex van de Weerd is Barenbrug's International Product Manager.



Where did my nitrogen fertiliser go?

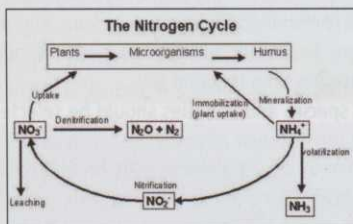
by Brian Horgan, Ph.D. University of Minnesota

Maintaining a healthy turf-playing surface with high wear tolerance, aesthetic quality and an acceptable rate of growth requires efficient use of fertilisers. When added nitrogen (N) is applied, turfgrass managers expect a response from the turf. Most turfgrass managers apply fertiliser and expect the response from the added N to last a defined period of time. Most turfgrass managers consider fertilisers a major line-item expense in their budgets. But, can you imagine 20-45% of your applied fertiliser-N not being available for plant uptake because it was lost?

The goal of any fertiliser application is to provide nutrients that are needed to sustain a healthy plant. Knowing that not all of the nutrients are used immediately by the plant, the second goal of any fertiliser application is for the nutrients to remain in the soil so that they are available to the plant when needed. However, this is not always the case.

The N cycle is complex and in recent years, researchers have focused on potential N loss mechanisms not only because of the economics, but because of the environmental implications.

These loss mechanisms include: NO_3^- leaching which can contaminate drinking water, N volatilisation as NH_3 , and N denitrified as N_2O or N_2 of which the former is a greenhouse gas that has been implicated in stratospheric ozone destruction.



LEACHING

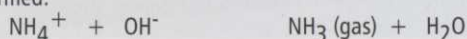
Nitrate is negatively charged and so is the soil. This is why soils have an ability to bind cations (positively charged ions), often referred to as the cation exchange capacity (CEC). Therefore, the negatively charged NO_3^- and the negatively charged soil repel each other and the nitrate is free to move with soil water.

Leaching of nitrates (NO_3^-) and contamination of groundwater have been studied carefully and are discussed in reviews by Petrovic (1990) and Walker and Branham (1992). The data discussed in these reviews suggest very little NO_3^- leaching occurs from an established turf, as the turf has the ability to take-up large amounts because of an extensive fibrous root system.

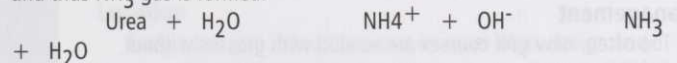
However, during establishment of turf on soils that have relatively high percolation rates, leaching can occur and efforts should be made to frequently apply small amounts of N-fertiliser or slow release N sources until root mass is sufficient to reduce downward NO_3^- movement.

VOLATILISATION

Ammonia (NH_3) volatilisation from turf is extremely variable and depends on the source of N, application rate, temperature, thatch thickness, irrigation or rainfall following application, soil moisture, and most importantly, soil pH. In soils with pH greater than 7.0, free hydroxyls (OH^-) are present. When combined with NH_4^+ from fertiliser, NH_3 gas is formed.



In particular, if urea is applied to a soil with a pH greater than 7.0 and not watered in with either irrigation water or rainfall, 36% of the fertiliser N can be lost as a NH_3 (Bowman et al., 1987). This is because as urea hydrolyzes (absorbs water), an OH^- is formed in close proximity to the NH_4 and thus NH_3 gas is formed.



Therefore, applying sufficient irrigation following the application of urea will help buffer the production of the OH^- and reduce volatilisation of NH_3 .

One aspect of a turfgrass system that will dramatically affect volatilisation is the presence of thatch. An enzyme called urease is present in large quantities in the thatch which helps convert the NH_4 to NH_3 . In a turf system that contains a larger thatch layer (5 cm), 39% of applied urea was volatilised as opposed to a turf system that contains no thatch, only 5% volatilised (Nelson et al., 1980).

DENITRIFICATION

Recent research has demonstrated that a process called denitrification can be a significant avenue for N loss from a turfgrass system (Horgan et al., 2002). Denitrification is a biologically mediated process that occurs in anaerobic (oxygen limiting) soils. This process does not require complete anaerobicity for N to be lost as a gas. In fact, when turf is watered, through irrigation or from rainfall events, small sites within the soil profile can become oxygen limiting (Sextone et al., 1985) and if nitrate (NO_3^-) is nearby, it will be reduced to N_2O and N_2 gases.

Denitrification is defined as the reduction of $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$ to gaseous N.

NO_3^-	NO_2^-	NO	N_2O
N_2 (nitrate)	(nitrite)	(nitric oxide)	(nitrous oxide)
(dinitrogen)	gas	gas	

Let's briefly examine the processes that affect the gaseous N loss:

1. Soil temperature – warmer soils stimulate denitrifying bacteria
2. Available NO_3^- – from fertilisers or from mineralisation of organic matter
3. Carbon as a source of energy for the denitrifying bacteria – readily available in thatch
4. Some degree of anaerobicity in the rootzone – either from irrigation or rainfall

Highly managed turfgrass represents a system where extensive denitrification could occur as irrigation keeps the soil near field capacity when soil temperatures are high, multiple applications of N fertiliser are common, and large amounts of organic C are present in the thatch and verdure.

Dr. Brian Horgan, Assistant Professor and Turfgrass Extension Specialist at the University of Minnesota, explains the role of nitrogen in soil, its effect and how to minimise its loss.

TORO Count on it.

Reviewing Figures 1 and 2, there are some key points that must be noted:

- Immediately following fertilisation and irrigation (day 1), gaseous N losses occurred.

- Denitrification is a process that can lead to significant amounts of N lost from the system. Figure 1, right, Spring Denitrification Losses from Kentucky Bluegrass, was an experiment conducted in the spring when soil temperatures were low and only 7% of applied fertiliser N was lost from denitrification.

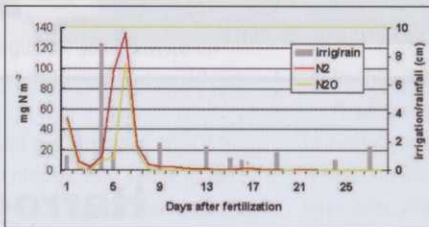
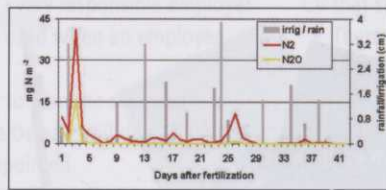
- In contrast, Figure 2 was an experiment conducted when soil temperatures were high and soil microbes were more active, in these conditions, 19% of applied fertiliser N was lost from denitrification.

- N₂O losses are minor compared to N₂ which is reassuring considering the effect of N₂O on atmospheric ozone destruction.

- N₂ losses occur even after small rainfall/irrigation events.

- Large N₂ losses are a possibility when large rainfall events occur

immediately following fertilisation. Figure 2, right, shows Summer Denitrification Losses from Kentucky Bluegrass.



WHAT FACTORS CAN BE MODIFIED TO REDUCE N LOSSES?

Aerification is typically done to decrease compaction in a soil and improve gas exchange.

By reducing compaction, the soil is able to drain excess water more rapidly which will directly affect the length of time soil oxygen may be limiting.

This same principal holds true for correcting drainage problems in the soil by installing drain-tile. This will help reduce denitrification losses.

Irrigation is necessary to grow high maintenance turf. However, apply a sensible amount of irrigation water following fertilisation so that oxygen does not become limiting when a large amount of NO₃-N is present.

Also, irrigate when plants show signs of wilt, subscribe to deficit irrigation practices, and use improved varieties of turfgrass that are drought resistant.

The source of N applied can also be a major factor when determining denitrification potentials. If an ammonium (NH₄) based fertiliser is used or a slow release fertiliser, the N must undergo nitrification (conversion of NH₄ to NO₃) before the substrate (NO₃) is present for denitrification or leaching to occur.

Also, if an NH₄ based fertiliser is used, or urea, and soil pH is greater than 7.0; you can reduce the potential volatilisation losses by watering in the fertilizer and managing the thatch layer.

In contrast, if a NO₃-based fertiliser is applied, the substrate is present and if oxygen limiting conditions exists, gaseous losses will occur and the leaching potential increases.

Sandy soils typically have higher percolation rates than finer textured soils. Therefore, we would not expect high rates of denitrification to occur on sandy soils because oxygen would not be a limiting factor.

However, under these conditions, application of NO₃-based fertilisers can be moved out of the root zone through leaching.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Nitrogen losses and potential contamination of the environment can be minimised by subscribing to best management practices. Nitrate (NO₃) is more readily leached during grow-in when plant roots are not established and/or in a sandy soil with high percolation rates and a low cation exchange capacity.

Volatilisation of NH₄ is more likely in soils with a pH greater than 7.0 and/or with turfgrasses that form large thatch layers. Proper selection of fertilisers in high pH soils and managing thatch through topdressing, aerification and proper mowing will reduce NH₃ losses.

Lastly, denitrification of applied fertiliser N can cause N to be limiting for turfgrass growth and development. Consider the soil type, source of fertiliser and ability of the soil to drain excess water when planning a fertility program to minimise denitrification losses.

NITROGEN LOSS GAME

You read the scenario and determine what the potential N loss mechanisms are. Correct answers will earn you a "pat-on-the-back".

Answers are listed below.

- Scenario 1. Sandy soils, high N fertilizer rates, infrequent application of N.

- Scenario 2. High pH soil, granular urea applied, no irrigation present.

- Scenario 3. Nitrate fertilizer applied, only apply N once a year to my golf course rough, silt loam soil, 4 cm of rainfall just after fertilization.

- Scenario 4. Sand profile, newly seeded turf, soluble N applied weekly at very low rates.

- Scenario 5. Poa/bentgrass putting green, native soil, frequent light application of N, high soil temperatures, summer thunderstorms are common.

Answers: (1) NO₃ leaching, (2) NH₃ volatilization, (3) denitrification, (4) plant uptake, (5) denitrification and/or plant uptake.

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How to Apply for that Ideal Job

In the first of a three part series Frank Newberry provides a range of useful techniques to help you get the job you really want.

It has been my experience that greenkeepers are not in the job for the money. A good salary is always going to be important, but many greenkeepers could earn more money elsewhere doing jobs that have no variety and no access to good fresh air.

So let's appraise the job you are in and think about ways it could be made more interesting for you. One place to start might be to get your name on something called a 'succession plan'. Every responsible employer has a written or mental succession plan that is used when an employee leaves their job unexpectedly.

The succession plan enables your employer to plan the succession of jobs, i.e. when the Course Manager leaves, the Deputy will do the job until interviews have taken place and a new one appointed.

This approach to staffing can extend down so that a First Assistant succeeds a Deputy, and so on. Getting your name on a list means that your employer has officially stated that you are the successor until the vacancy is filled. This looks good on your CV, but also gives you six weeks or so to demonstrate your worth before the interviews.

Now let's look elsewhere for your ideal job. Take a look at this e-mail I received earlier this year.

'Dear Frank,

I came to see you at BTME with my work colleague for some advice on presenting our CV and about looking for jobs. At the time I had an advert for a "Head Greenkeeper" job.

So I took your advice and completely changed the format of my CV to how you said, and sent it off to 50 clubs. I also phoned and spoke to the guy who was doing the interviews and asked him if I could come down to meet him and have a look around.

I had six positive replies back about my CV, who were all very impressed with it. But most of all I got an interview, for the job I most wanted, which I was successful with and I start as Head Greenkeeper on Monday.

Yours sincerely, Paul'

In Paul's instance he had vacancies to chase but this is not essential. You can, and should, try applying for a job or a vacancy that does not exist. My brother used to go into the reception areas of organisations, pick up reports, accounts and any brochures about the firm.

He'd take them home, study them and then write a letter saying how he had always admired the company and it would be great one day to maybe work for them in some capacity.

He would indicate that he would love a visit and on that visit he would explain how they might save their money by contacting him when they have a suitable vacancy. They need then only advertise the position if they were not happy with him. Now my brother is a likeable fellow, and, of course, he usually gets the job he wants.

Many people maintain a standard CV and then use a cover letter to match the skills they have to those wanted by the employer. However, this approach is now somewhat out of date. Employers do not like to search through documents when they have 80 or more to read.

A customised CV with all the information about your suitability in the first paragraph increases your chances of being interviewed dramatically.

That said you have to write a covering letter, so consider reproducing the suitability paragraph in the letter itself. However, you cannot write a meaningful cover letter or a CV if you do not know what employers are

really looking for. If the advertisement doesn't tell you much then call the employer and ask for a copy of the job description and something called the employee specification.

The job description will tell you what the job is about and the employee specification will tell you what the employer thinks the ideal candidate is like. Armed with that information you can write a letter and CV that should fit the vacancy perfectly.

There is research that says that employers make quick decisions about who they will interview. This decision is usually based on getting a good early impression from a CV or job application.

This makes the first third of the first page of your CV a key area. I recommend candidates put their energy into getting a really positive career profile (suitability statement) at the top of their CV so that employers do not have to search for the information they want. Here is a real life 'before and after' I did for a Deputy Course Manager to guide you:

Profile (before CV advice)

'Reliable, honest, qualified and experienced greenkeeper, capable of preparing and monitoring budgets. Competent in construction work, experienced in use of modern machinery, and knowledgeable in computerised irrigation system and up to date with health & safety law'.

Profile (after CV advice)

"I am an accomplished and experienced Deputy Course Manager with first-rate leadership skills and a proven track record of success. I have a reputation for being positive, cheerful and highly resilient under pressure. I have been able to consistently develop excellent working relationships with fellow employees, members, guests and club committees. I have played a leading role in the planning and implementation of a number of construction projects and I am a skilled computerised irrigation system technician. I have at all times enjoyed being a key player in successful work teams; setting and maintaining high quality standards for daily play on the golf course."

Employers will read your entire CV as long as it is attractive and concise - two sides of A4 as the maximum, perhaps with a note at the bottom of the CV offering further information if required. I also recommend the following layout as logical and easy to read by employers:

- Your name, address, contact numbers and perhaps a flattering photo of you.
- Career Profile (a suitability statement/pen picture of you).
- Specific Work Achievements (linked to the requirements of the job vacancy).
- Career History with dates.
- Educational Qualifications including NVQ's.
- Relevant vocational and technical training.
- Licences, certificates and accreditations etc.
- Hobbies, pastimes and family details.

So good luck with writing your CV. Brin Bendon and I will be on hand at the Careers Fair at BTME 2005 (18 -20 January) if you need help to perfect your CV. If you have one please bring it with you. In the meantime if you want to see sample CV's etc. visit my website www.franknewberry.com and follow the 'Contact' link to the 'Request Information' page.

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