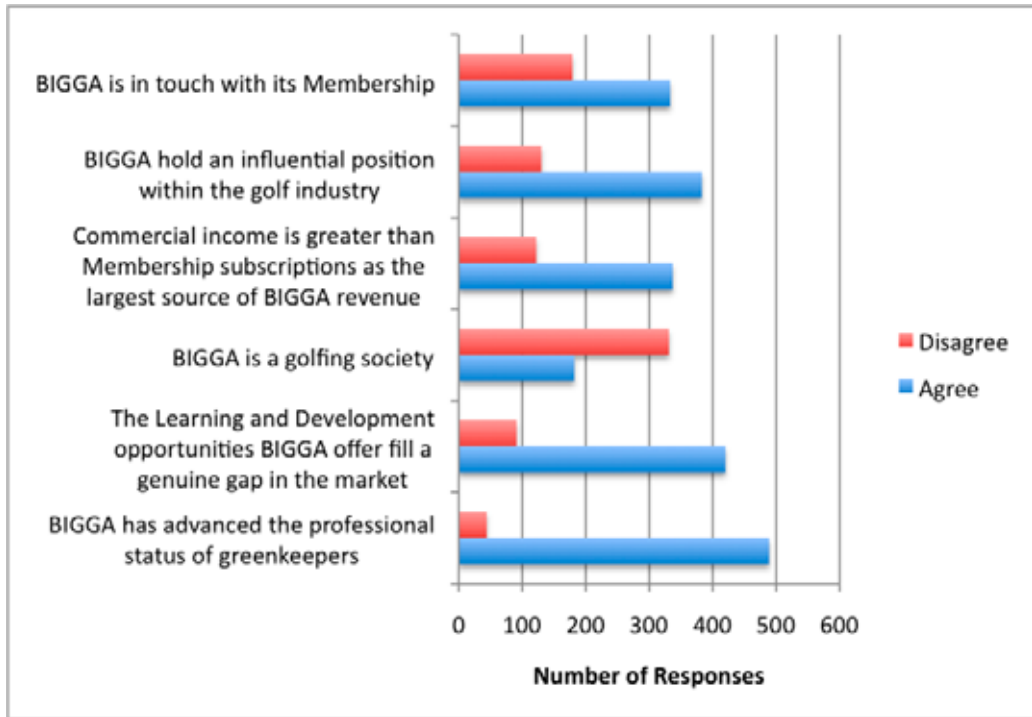


Do you agree with the following statements?

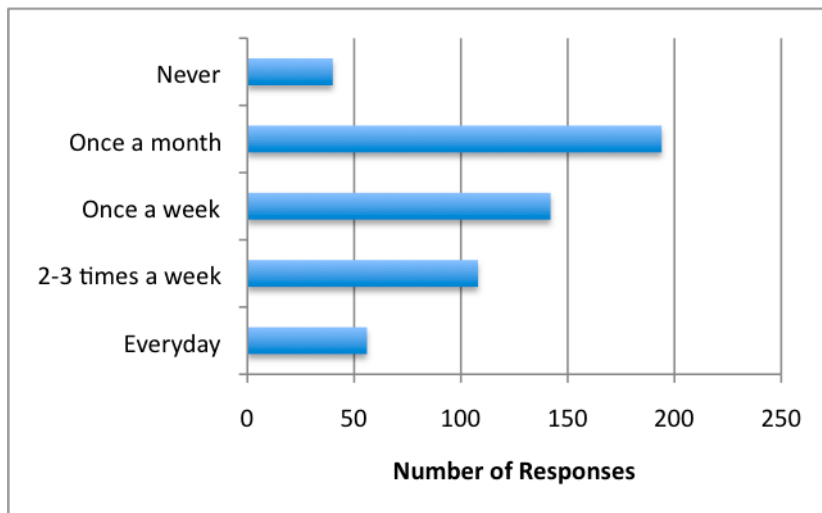
Most agree that BIGGA has advanced the professional status of greenkeepers, while many praise the Learning and Development opportunities.

On the other hand, most members disagreed that BIGGA is a golfing society.



How often do you visit the BIGGA Website

Most members currently visit www.bigga.org once a month.



How useful do you find the following areas of the website?

The Bulletin Board is a huge favourite among visitors to the website, with a large chunk of members valuing the Recruitment page.

All other areas are regarded as useful.

| 23. How useful do you find the following areas of the website? | | | | | Response Count |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | Very Useful | Useful | Not Useful | Don't Use It | |
| Bulletin Board | 42.9% (219) | 43.2% (221) | 2.7% (14) | 11.2% (57) | 511 |
| Members' Poll | 10.3% (52) | 48.9% (248) | 21.1% (107) | 19.7% (100) | 507 |
| Members' Area | 27.2% (138) | 55.7% (283) | 4.5% (23) | 12.6% (64) | 508 |
| Shop | 4.1% (21) | 37.1% (188) | 27.2% (138) | 31.0% (160) | 507 |
| Education | 24.2% (122) | 56.0% (283) | 6.1% (31) | 13.7% (69) | 505 |
| Directory | 9.3% (47) | 54.5% (274) | 13.5% (68) | 22.7% (114) | 503 |
| Jobs | 32.9% (169) | 52.2% (268) | 4.3% (22) | 10.5% (54) | 513 |
| Events | 18.6% (94) | 61.0% (308) | 6.5% (33) | 13.9% (70) | 505 |
| Exhibitions | 18.3% (93) | 58.5% (298) | 8.6% (44) | 14.5% (74) | 509 |
| What else do you use the BIGGA website for? | | | | | 57 |
| | | | | answered question | 520 |
| | | | | skipped question | 81 |



Golden Key Profile



BUCKING THE TREND



Scott MacCallum meets up with Andrew Robinson, Managing Director of BIGGA Golden Key Company, Rigby Taylor

Waking up in a cold sweat is a state which must be approaching epidemic proportions among businessmen worldwide, but you can be fairly sure that Andrew Robinson, Managing Director of Rigby Taylor isn't one of those afflicted.

Bolton-based Rigby Taylor is a company very much bucking the trend in these troubled times and is, in fact, aiming for 10% growth in 2009. And it's not just blind optimism with three new reps having been appointed in the last three months and with them having just taken delivery of three new trucks with off loading facilities built in to improve service levels it's all pointing to a positive outlook.

"We've grown our sales on average 10-12% every year over the last four years and we are working hard to give value for money during these tough times. Asda and Tesco aren't struggling at the moment as they deal in necessities and giving value for money. We see ourselves as a one stop shop offering essential products from our Mascot range which include Fertilisers, Chemicals, Grass Seeds, Line Marking, Specialities, Top Dressings and Golf Course Equipment to the golf industry,"

said Andrew, who works extremely closely with Chairman, Bernard Hedley.

So how has Rigby Taylor been able to buck the trend? Well, Andrew attributes much of the company's recent success to being a supplier to Manchester United, and the path the relationship with the Premiership, European and World Champions has taken them down.

"Through Manchester United we got involved with Envirowise, a Government funded organisation, which is all about minimising waste and reducing the carbon footprint. We had been a supplier to Manchester United for 17 years but four years ago the club decided that as part of its "Reds Go Green" Environmental Management System it would introduce some of its main high profile suppliers to the Manchester United - Envirowise supply chain programme," explained Andrew.

He admitted that initially he had been a little sceptical about how Rigby Taylor would benefit from becoming involved, and went along to the first meeting inclined to think that it would be no more than a series of boxes to tick to retain Manchester United as a customer. However, when he was told that significant savings could be made he began to see the real value of taking part.

"Envirowise said that any decent company could save a minimum of 1% of turnover, but that it could be as much as 4%. With Rigby Taylor turning over £20 million I could see the level of savings it could bring us."

Working very closely with Keith McIntosh, Manchester United's Environmental Manager, and Envirowise, Rigby Taylor's management team set about looking at every aspect of their business with a view to improving their carbon footprint and their service to customers.

And the results that have been achieved are astonishing and Andrew has been invited to speak at Envirowise seminars as one of the programmes real success stories.

Rigby Taylor has saved £205,000 on deliveries over three and a half years alone, which equates to 66,000 road miles and 1.5 million pallet miles.

Much of that has come from identifying the fact that transporting water-based products was an expensive exercise and, working with their own suppliers, they have developed better quality concentrates and powdered products.

Through these meetings a revolutionary new white lining product was developed



Andrew with Tony Holt (right) Director of Linemark (UK) Ltd and inventor of revolutionary Impact linemarking paint

“We had been a supplier to Manchester United for 17 years but the club decided to introduce some of its main high profile suppliers to the Envirowise supply chain programme”

Andrew Robinson

FEATURE

which has subsequently taken that particular market sector by storm.

“Previously a white lining product would arrive as a three litre concentrate to which the customer would add 12 litres of water. With that 15 litre mix you’d spray one football pitch. Our supplier came up with Impact, which is a three litre pack which doesn’t need any water adding to it. That three litres does one football pitch, so there is no messy mixing required. It really is incredible science – almost magic!

“It means that a council with 20 football pitches doesn’t have to turn up with 20 packs and 240 litres of water and mix on site. We have a 10 litre bag-in-a-box which means the operator can do three pitches before swapping the bag and going off to do the next three. It saves so much time and is much more efficient.”

Indeed a council with 100 pitches will save 30,000 litres of water a year and Andrew says that some councils have gone from having to use a transit van with 1,000 litres of water on board to a much smaller van.

Another area where significant savings have been made is in liquid seaweed.

“A 10 litre pack will spray 18 greens, but we’ve got one of our suppliers to produce a two kilo pack of powdered seaweed which is 100% pure and to which the greenkeeper adds water. So instead of us transporting pallets of liquid we’ve got this one small pack instead of something five times larger and heavier.”

Rigby Taylor has also liaised with suppliers to make sure that wherever it is practical deliveries are made direct to the customer rather than via their own warehouses, while bespoke solutions to golf

clubs have also proven to be a great success.

“If a Course Manager is using more than one product instead of supplying him with 20 litres of this and 20 litres of that we make them a 200 litre drum and a pump which comes pre-mixed. Often mixing products increases the benefits of both and once the club has ordered its fifth drum we will come and collect the other four from them, this saves the club money on disposal of empties.”

Rigby Taylor is celebrating its 90th birthday this year having been formed by Mr Herbert Rigby and Mr Robert Taylor in 1919 to sell degreasing solvents to cotton and textile mills. A fertilisers division was formed a short time later as the company moved into the area of business for which it has become known since then.

A management buyout in the early 80s, led by Bernard Hedley, and an expansion from being a northern focussed company to one which serviced the entire country was the making of Rigby Taylor. The development of the Mascot range, in 1981, was another significant milestone.

Since then Rigby Taylor has become one of the best known names in the industry and well placed to survive the ups and downs of the current economic situation.

Among these have been the high cost of fertilisers, brought about from a major mining collapse in China, which reduced the stocks of potash, and the strong Euro which has upped the cost of dealing with those in the Euro-zone but Andrew has worked hard with suppliers to ensure good value, not to mention quality, for customers.

“Along with our Product Manager I set the challenge to our suppliers of reducing our chemical costs without reducing the quality of the product and they rose to that magnificently.

“All our outfield granuals now include recycled Organic material which has a natural NPK so we’ve gone from a chemical analysis to one which is partly chemical and partly organic. This has extended the release of the product so it’s not as quick release as it was, but a much more gentle release which reduces the clippings.

“So it’s not costing the client any more money for a better product than before,” explained Andrew.

Rigby Taylor has a sales team numbering 50, the largest in the country and they pride themselves on forming close relationships with their customers and helping them wherever possible to produce what is right for the club and right for the golf course.

“Our reps work on a six weekly visit schedule and can advise on what is a probably 4,000 different lines. We recently took on Pin Seeker as a supplier which has meant us breaking into signage and golf course furniture while another new addition has been Rainbow, which produces pathway materials,” explained Andrew, who spends his time between the three sites at Newbridge, Guildford and the head office at Bolton, he also enjoys his visits out to see Customers and finding out their needs.

When it comes to EU pesticide legislation Andrew admits that they are watching developments with interest but points to the recent addition to the Rigby Taylor portfolio as part of the strategy.

“Rigby Taylor won’t rely on any one particular market sector. If there was a pesticide ban it would be painful but it wouldn’t kill us. We try to be as diverse as we can.”

He is very keen that golf clubs help the overall situation by only using product that is licensed for amenity use.

“The clubs who are using agricultural products at the moment are not doing us any favours as the better the amenity sector behaves the more chance the UK will be left to manage our own affairs without the need of European legislation.”

With 2019 in its sights you can be sure that Rigby Taylor will be working hard to ensure that the current successes stretch way beyond its 100th birthday.

HOW CLOSE ARE YOU CUTTING YOUR GREENS TODAY?



By Andy Cole

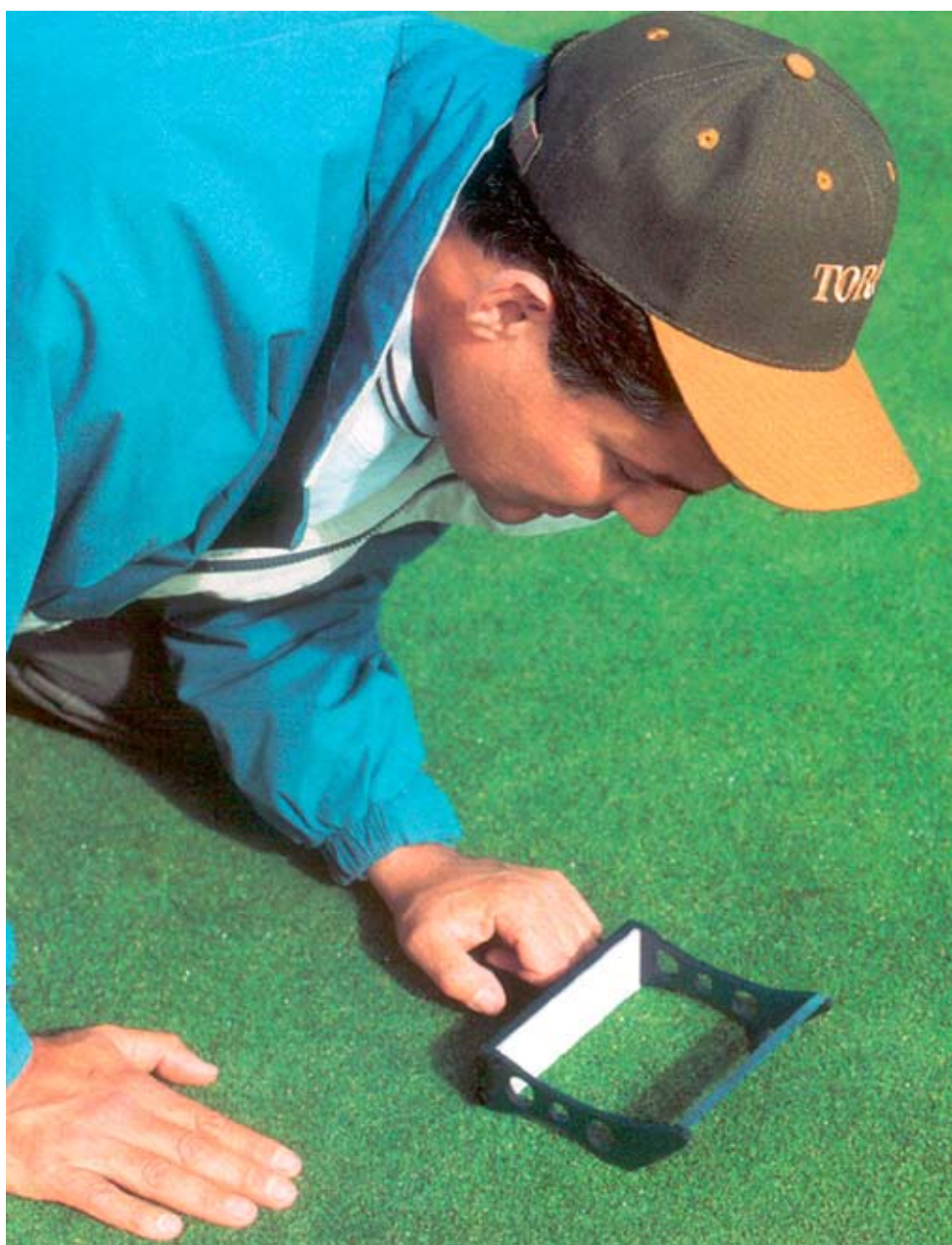
Mowing is fundamental to good turf management but how much attention is paid to the detail of this operation as well as understanding the effect it has on the short, medium and long-term quality of the putting surface? Golfers consistently want greens cut shorter in pursuit of pace but do they understand the effect that actual height of cut has on species composition and sustainability?

The height of cut of a greens mower is set on the "bench" using a variety of tools and gadgets to assist the greenkeeper in creating the length of grass required to provide a smooth and consistent putting surface. A steel mower gauge, was and still is, used in many quarters as the standard tool to set the height between the rear and front rollers and the cutting edge of the bottom blade. Indeed, three old pennies were sometimes used to set the gauge to provide a bench setting of 3/16in. Depending on who set up the greens mower, the bench setting would be a "tight" or "loose" 3/16in, which could account for some variation in the actual height of cut presented on the greens.

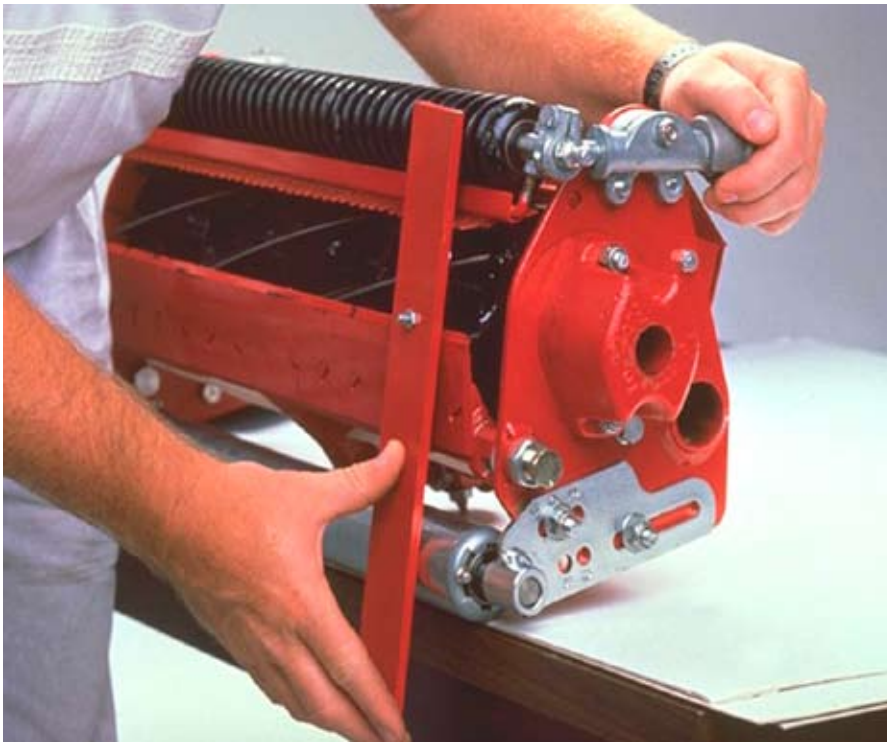
The modern approach to "bench setting" a greens mower employs the use of an Accu-Gauge



Prism gauge (supplied by John Deere)



Worms eye view of the leaf blade. Lets you view the "actual height of cut"
Turf Evaluator (supplied by TORO Irrigation)



An example of "bench setting"



Hand cutting versus triple mowing – an ongoing debate

setting bar, where the fixed nut has been replaced with a needle attached directly to a dial, allowing the greenkeeper to set the machine to fractions of a millimetre.

The height of cut used for the Ryder Cup at the Belfry in 2002 was 2.72mm! By removing the emphasis on feel, the greens machine can be set more accurately and any greenkeeper using the gauge should be able to set the machine exactly the same.

However, this element of machine set-up is only one part of the mowing process which has to be considered by the greenkeeper.

The "actual" height of cut, i.e. the length of the grass left after mowing, is often quite different to the bench setting, though many still refer to the bench setting as the height of cut.

The actual height of cut can be affected by a variety of different factors including the relative softness of the turf; weight of different machines; triple machine versus hand machine etc.

Greens units can also be set up with the bottom blade in a neutral position or relaxed position, where in the latter instance the bottom blade pushes the grass before it is picked up by the cutting cylinder. This achieves a slightly longer cut compared to the bench setting.

Conversely, an aggressive position will achieve a slightly closer cut compared to the bench setting where the cylinder picks up the grass before it hits the bottom blade...who said greenkeepers were just grass cutters!

The actual height of cut can be measured with the aid of a genuine Prism Gauge available through John Deere or the Toro Turf Evaluator which allows a horizontal view of the grass via a mirror.

Care must be taken to ensure the gauge is

used as a guide and confirmation of how the grass is being cut. It can nevertheless be used to good effect to achieve the same height of cut when alternating between hand and triple machines.

It is generally felt that a more flexible approach to mowing heights is required across the country. This could influence the texture of the turf thereby helping to generate smoother greens with slightly greater pace.

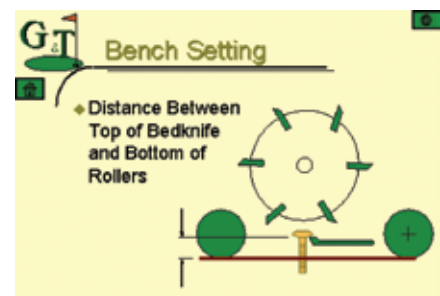
The general principle is to adopt as low a mowing height as the turf will comfortably tolerate, without putting the turf under undue stress. These heights will of course vary through the year due to differing weather conditions, or be influenced by specific competitions and timing of other maintenance practices.

In essence, we need to move away from being tied to the numbers (dictated in agronomic textbooks) and use your own judgment and skill as greenkeepers to balance the needs of the golfer with our agronomic aim of increasing the finer fescue and bent content of the greens.

Without doubt height of cut is a factor in achieving a desired level of pace and uniformity but should not be regarded as the overriding factor

The effects of fertiliser, water, thatch, etc. all play a part in green speed and it is essential that you avoid creating lush growth through over-feeding and over-watering. Such lush conditions create the need for additional verticutting and grooming in an attempt to create the smooth and consistent surfaces desired – you are then actually fighting against your own inputs!

In my experience, one of the main difficulties for greenkeepers is differentiating between the bench setting and actual height of cut. Where pace is lacking, invariably the actual height of cut is found to be longer than the bench set and yet the



(supplied by John Deere with thanks)

first point of reference is the fact that the greens mower has been set to cut at 4mm.

It does not matter how the height of cut is measured on the machine, if it is not cutting at the height that you are trying to achieve, you will never get the best out of your greens.

Always check both the bench set, which should be your first point of reference, and then check the actual height of cut on the green.

Of equal importance is the quality of the finish, making sure the blades are sharp and the machine on-cut.

Through the summer grass cutting will take up the majority of your time on the golf course. Make sure that all your cutting units are set correctly and for the long-term sustainability of the course and the encouragement and retention of the finer grass species...make sure you know how close you are actually cutting.

About the Author

Andy Cole is STRI Turfgrass
Agronomist for the Midlands

New Products



NEW PRODUCTS



GROUNDS MAINTENANCE RANGE LAUNCHED

Spaldings has extended its grounds maintenance portfolio to include a new range of professional tools from Spear and Jackson. The innovative new tool selection is taken from the established Spear and Jackson catalogue and features products from the 'County', 'Elements' and 'E-Series' range.

The shaft of each tool is weatherproofed for enhanced durability and is carefully crafted from hardwearing woods such as Ash before being coated in a resilient lacquer. The integral ergonomic handle is forward tilted for maximum comfort at the ideal digging angle, ensuring that unnecessary effort and strain is avoided.

www.spaldings.co.uk

ABSOLUTE READER

Esoteric Golf Technology of Sweden has introduced the Absolute Reader putting aid for the 2008 / 2009 season.

This product was first shown at different tour events in 2007, and was very well received and highly anticipated by the European Tour Players and coaches. It is an innovative new product that created a lot of buzz at the PGA Merchandise show.

When practising green reading, you have to be sure that the ball starts on the line that you are aiming at. The Absolute Reader is a green-reading tool where the ball will always come out straight, no matter how you hit it. By hitting the ball with your putter, you get the feel for the proper speed of a certain break.

www.esotericgolf.com



NEW WEBSITE

The new website for Echo power provides the latest information and specification for the full range of Echo brushcutters, chainsaws, hedgetrimmers and power blowers, as well as the Bear Cat range of Chippers, Chipper Shredders, Trim-mowers and Stump Grinder.

There is a product registration facility, as well as a list of frequently asked questions with comprehensive answers, and some useful seasonal gardening tips on the use of Echo products.

[01844 278800](tel:01844278800)
www.echo-tools.co.uk

NEW STEERABLE SELF-PROPELLED AERATOR

Classen has launched a new 'steerable' pedestrian aerator, aimed specifically at small landscaping/garden maintenance firms and the rental/hire market.

The new model permits aerating to continue while making turns around bushes, trees or an irregular lawn edge. The two models, TA25D and TA17D, will cover 8,839 sq.m/hr and 5,893 sq.m/hr respectively and a coring depth of up to 7cm.

The split drive system also provides excellent control when aerating on slopes and gives a level of control during turns that cannot be matched by other similar sized aerators. The powered left/right control allows easing turning around obstructions and provides increased control on slopes and side hills.

www.jsmd.co.uk



NEW PEDESTRIAN ROTARY

Etesia has launched the PRO51X. This 51cm rotary is the latest heavy-duty model produced by this European company and they have now made it available in the UK in time for the 2009 grass cutting season.

Powered by a 4-stroke air-cooled OHV Honda 5.5hp GXV160 engine, this self-propelled lawnmower has variable speed giving the operator total control in all ground conditions.

www.etesia.com



NEW RANGE OF GENUINE OILS

Yanmar has developed a new range of genuine oils that are suitable for all its industrial engine applications.

There are four products in total including diesel engine oil, transmission oil, synthetic diesel engine oil, and engine coolant. The packaging design has also been improved with new ergonomically shaped 1litre bottles with a textured easy to grip surface that reduces the chances of dropping the bottle.

[01869 363692](tel:01869363692)



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No plugs or cores are removed, so there is no clean up involved. The soil is loosened by the vibrating action of the tines or fingers, the harder the conditions the more effective the results, however little disturbance is caused to grassed areas.

www.jsmd.co.uk



YET ANOTHER NEW YES! GOLF PUTTER

The third new model putter offering for 2009 from Yes! Golf is *Jennie*.

Jennie came about as the result of the remarkable success of her cousin, *Sandy*, which was released in Europe in June 2008. The heel-shafted, *Jennie* will suit the player who likes a little more toe hang than usual, in order to help with bringing the head back to square at impact during a moderate swing arc. Two, ball-width bosses on the back cavity frame both the ball and the single sight line in the back cavity to encourage accurate alignment of the ball, the centre of the face and the intended target.

www.yesgolf.co.uk



NEW CUTTING HEIGHT ADJUSTER

Allett has introduced a fast, convenient and precise cutting height adjuster for its Shaver, Tournament and C-Range fine-turf pedestrian mowers.

Known as the Quick Height Adjuster, the device consists of a micrometer dial and threaded rod assembly attached to either end of the mower's front roller.

Each click-turn of the dial moves the front roller up or down by 0.4mm, altering the height of cut by an identical amount depending on the direction in which the dial is turned.

To be fitted as standard to Allett's 20in and 24in Shaver and Tournament mowers and to the C-20 and C-24 cartridge head machines equipped with a 10-bladed cutting cylinder, the Quick Height Adjuster will be included on all new machines delivered this spring.

www.allett.co.uk



INNOVATIVE LIGHT TOWER

Doosan Infracore Portable Power (DIPP) has launched the new V9 light tower offering several innovative features that improve reliability and convenience, reduce fuel consumption and lower operating costs. Like all the Portable Power products marketed under the brand name Ingersoll Rand, the V9 LightSource is built to withstand the rigours of everyday applications in the toughest conditions, providing advantages in plant hire, construction and roadwork projects as well as many other applications.

Among the innovative features of the V9 LightSource is the electrical system which has been designed so that components are electrically self protected when the tower is switched off by the 'emergency stop' button rather than powered down as normal using the key switch.

www.doosanportable.com

A QUICK GUIDE TO...

Course Surveys

Archie Stewart let's you know how to make the most of your survey

1. Define your aims

Golf course surveys can cover many aspects of course management. They can show everything from the legal extents of the course, the area of all the playing surfaces, the differing habitats within the course, to providing the distance measurements and maps for scorecards. When commissioning a survey think about what you want it to show, now and in the future. Financial considerations are uppermost at the moment, it is not necessary to have all the bells and whistles from the outset.

2. Take ownership

Accurate surveys are an essential part of course management so it is important that the management team are involved in all aspects of the survey and that they ensure the survey is used fully. The golf course is the biggest asset the club has so it makes sense it is recorded properly. The information the survey provides should be used by green staff and office staff in the day-to-day running of the club.

3. Communicate

Maps are an ideal method of communication between course management and committees, committees and members, the club and the general public. Up to date maps can be used to show new bunkers or explain work schedules. Maps can be used as signboards to show the location of public footpaths.

4. Look to the past...

Greenkeepers don't work forever, some even retire, so use a survey to record all the details that may be kept in the greenkeeper's head, so the knowledge can be passed on. Recording the position of drains that have been replaced or repaired in the past will save the future ground staff a lot of digging and head scratching.

5...to plan for the future

A course survey is like a snapshot of the course; golf courses change and evolve with time.



The survey should be updated regularly to show changes. The initial cost and benefit of the survey are wasted if it is just kept in a drawer.

6. New developments

When planning new developments record the location of underground services such as irrigation pipes, drains and cables as they are put in. Even if there is no existing accurate survey, GPS can show the as laid location and it can be added as a layer if a survey is done in the future.

7. Accuracy

Many courses will have members with either recreational GPS or golfing GPS units such as Skycaddie, while these will provide a basis for maps and distance they are not accurate enough for a full course survey. Accurate information will bring cost savings, by knowing the correct area for each green, tee and fairway combined with accurate calibration of spreaders and sprayers will ensure correct application of fertiliser and sprays.

8. Adding to the survey

Your course survey should be a living document that records the course now and is able to take that information into the future, so be prepared to invest in it. Ensure that the first base map is

compatible with other systems so that in the future it will be possible to add details such as soil type and soil sampling information, rainfall, any constraints like SSSI, rights of way, listed buildings or sites of archaeological interest.

9. Provide time

Most surveys will come in digital format to be used with computer mapping, so bear in mind that provision of a computer and training will help utilise the benefits of the survey for planning and record keeping.

10. Action

While changing weather patterns will put strain on drainage and irrigation systems and the financial storms batter budgets, investment in a course survey today will provide a good return at all levels of golf course management.

CONTACT DETAILS

Archie Stewart, Landmaps Ltd

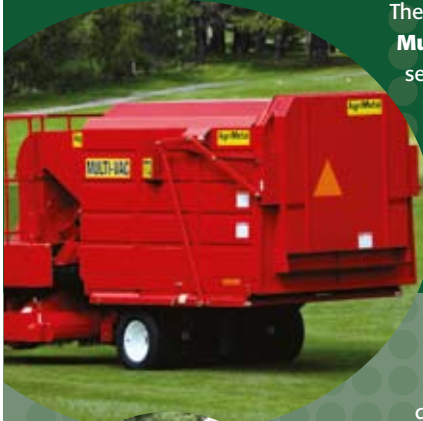
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e: archie@landmaps.co.uk

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IS A LOW COST ATV THE RIGHT UTILITY TOOL FOR TOUGH TIMES?

By James de Havilland

ATVs, or quad bikes if you prefer, have struggled to find a niche in the golf, sports turf and wider amenity sector. It is easy to come up with arguments why this is the case, but does this also mean we are overlooking the merits of these machines?

If an ATV were to be in the dock, charged with not being fit for sports turf and amenity purpose, there would be quite a long list of 'evidence' that could be levelled against it. How about seating for just one person, no weather protection and limited carrying capacity? Then add petrol power as the killer piece of detail. Verdict: These tools are just too limited to appeal the sports turf and amenity sectors.

These arguments have now been used for so long that many may wonder why there is a reason to 're-open' what should be an open and shut case against the ATV. The reality is that these days nobody can afford to just assume a particular tool remains unsuitable for a specific set of task. We live in interesting times, after all.

So, rather than consider what an ATV does not offer it is perhaps worth reconsidering what these tools can do. The first and most relevant point is that they have a light footprint. Fit turf friendly tyres, as opposed to the cleat pattern that enables most ATVs to excel in traversing really tough terrain. Next, inflate the tyres to no more than 0.2 bar/3 psi and you can drive a suitably shod ATV across the finest of turf without the risk of doing any damage.

Now consider this same ATV equipped with a sprayer, and the complete package starts to make a degree of sense. Add the narrow width of these vehicles, the most portly squeezing through a gap of under 1.30m, and it is clear an ATV can access the narrow spots that could well be off limits to a wider utility truck. There is no reason why an ATV could not be used to spray a bowling green.

That said ATVs have a notoriously poor turn radius and a tendency to chew up turf in a tight turn. This is down to the fact that most do without a differential in the rear axle and, in the case of the

widely available 4WD models, the front wheels not only have a relatively modest turn angle but a fair degree of resistance to overcome too. The words 'clean', 'tight' and 'turn' are not usually blended together in a sentence describing ATVs.

So, after coming up with a potential use for an ATV, the next paragraph counters it with an equally valid reason to look at something else. The point that is missed, however, is that not all ATVs are 4WD models and that some have a rear differential. Step forward the Kawasaki KLF300.

Weighing in at around 240kg, fuelled up and ready to go, the little KLF300 will pull at trailed load approaching 320kg, is nominal 15kW/20hp 270cc petrol engine driving through a five-speed semi-automatic transmission that allows for a gentle spraying pace through to a top speed that will easily meet the demands of most users.

Of equal importance, this ATV is the only mechanical transmission utility 2WD model the writer knows off to be fitted with a locking rear differential. With drive to both rear wheels



Kawasaki offers its KLF 300 in 2WD form, this model benefitting from a rear differential. This enables this ATV to turn not just pretty tightly but more cleanly too. With moderate care, amenity operators can see many years of service from an ATV, a point to consider when looking at true operating costs.