

# Letters



Please email your notes to:  
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## ARTICLE CORRECTION

### Dear Readers

Following the article published last month 'Soil Wetting Agents' on page 40 of the May edition of GI, the STRI would like to bring the following to readers attention. The article was a supplement put together to accompany a review completed for The R&A in 2007, identifying the modes of action of wetting agents available in the UK Amenity market for use on golf courses. The review was completed using product labels and was not as a result of any testing carried out by the STRI. Information on products and Distributors was correct at the time of writing but have changed in the intervening two years.

Please see the correct table below:

Product	Distributor	Straight/Blend	Chemistry	Advertised Uses
Advantage pellet	Farmura	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	b, e
Alleviate	Sherriffs Amenity	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant and organosilicone	b, e
Aqua-Aid	Vitax	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	e, f, g
AquaMaxx	Vitax	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	a, e, f
Aqueduct	Farmura	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	b, e
Aquifer	Vitax	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	a, f, g
Aqua - zorb	Turftech/Sherriff Amenity	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	a, b, d, g
Award Osprey	Aitkens/Avoncrop	Blend	Block copolymer	a, b, e, f
Breaker Advance	Rigby Taylor	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	a, b, e, f
Breaker Curative	Rigby Taylor	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	b, d
Clearing	Vitax	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	c, e
Correct OARS	Tower Chemicals	Blend	Non-ionic soil surfactant and organic solvent	d, e, f
Dewcure	Headland	Straight	Non-ionic surfactant	e
Dispatch	Farmura	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	e, f, g
Excel	Sherriff Amenity	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant and organosilicone	b, e
Fifty 90	Farmura	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	a, b, e, f, g
H <sub>2</sub> Pro	Scotts	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	a, b, e, f, g
Info XL	Headland	Straight	Organosilicone	b, e
Noburn	Novozymes	-	Yucca plant extract	a, e, f
OARS <sup>®</sup> Curative	Vitax	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant and organic solvent	b, d, e, f
Percol-8	Vitax	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	e, f, g
Primer Select	Farmura	Straight	Block copolymer	a, b, e, f, g
Revolution	Farmura	Straight	Modified block Copolymer	a, b, e, f, g
TricureAD	Headland	Blend	Non-ionic surfactant	a, b, e, f, g
Ultraflo	Vitax	Straight	Non-ionic surfactant	a, c, e
XL Fairway	Headland	Straight	Organosilicone	c, e

**Table 1: Example soil wetting products, modes of action and distributor. Neither the list of products or the distributors is exhaustive. Other products are available and each product may be available from other distributors.**

- a – To treat localised dry patch preventatively
- b – To treat localised dry patch curatively
- c – To manage fairy ring
- d – To strip away organic coatings on sand grains
- e – Aid water penetration/dew removal
- f – Help ensure even water distribution in the rootzone
- g – Reduce irrigation requirements

Please note the information contained in the above table has been taken from the respective product labels. STRI does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of these claims

This information sheet is of a general nature and is intended only to outline the basic information. Such information is not intended to constitute a specification or comprehensive guidance in relation to any project/subject which should only be undertaken after consultation with those holding appropriate qualifications. The STRI employs persons so qualified who can provide advice and/or relevant specifications. The STRI accept no responsibility or liability for any claims arising from work carried out pursuant to this leaflet.

If you require any further information, please contact:

**Dr Ruth Mann**  
**Head of Turfgrass Protection**  
**STRI Ltd**  
 01274 518913  
[ruth.mann@stri.co.uk](mailto:ruth.mann@stri.co.uk)



## Head Greenkeeper

Salary £26,000 - £28,000



An exciting opportunity has arisen for a Head Greenkeeper at Botley Park Hotel, Golf & Country Club. A 130 bedroom hotel situated in 176 acres of mature parkland with 18 hole championship golf course and academy practice facilities. The thriving golf operation consists of stay and play, golf break residents, casual green fees and 500 members.

You'll make sure every golfer, whether member or guest, playing on the championship golf course has an exceptional experience by presenting the course to its' highest standard at all times. Managing a team of Greenkeepers, you will be able to demonstrate the ability to lead, motivate and effectively manage a team. You should be able to demonstrate high levels of initiative, be motivated and enthusiastic with sound administrative ability, have excellent communication skills and be IT literate. It is vital that the successful candidate works closely with the Hotel Management and has a modern and realistic approach to green-keeping.

The position would also require experience to include bunker refurbishment and drainage installation, knowledge of irrigation equipment and modern watering techniques, be knowledgeable of current Health and Safety regulations, machinery maintenance and record keeping and hold PA 1, 2 and 6a spraying certificates. A knowledge of USGA spec greens is desirable but not essential. Candidates must be eligible to live and work in the UK.

*Closing date for applications: Friday 26 June 2009.*

## Deputy Course Manager

**Five Lakes Hotel, Golf, Country Club & Spa** is a 194 bedroom stylish resort hotel with two 18 hole golf courses, a driving range and practice facilities. Five Lakes also has the pleasure in hosting the PGA Euro Pro Tour each year.

The successful candidate will already be a deputy course manager at a similar golf club or a green keeper ready to make that step up. They must have NVQ level 2 (preferably level 3) or equivalent in sports turf management, PA1 PA2 and PA6 qualification. Basic knowledge of irrigation systems is essential along with a sound knowledge of H&S legislation.

If you feel you are the right candidate for the role please send your CV and covering letter including salary expectation to:

[celia.hills@fivelakes.co.uk](mailto:celia.hills@fivelakes.co.uk)

See careers at [www.fivelakes.co.uk/careers](http://www.fivelakes.co.uk/careers) for more details  
**The closing date for applications is 12th June 2009.**



## BROOKMANS PARK GOLF CLUB

Is one of Hertfordshire's most prestigious golf clubs with over 700 members and a busy golfing calendar requires:

### Course Manager

The successful applicant will have the following:

- Ability to work with and manage a team developing skills of staff
- Excellent communication and Interpersonal skill.
- Qualified to N.V.Q. 3 or above
- Full range of spraying and chainsaw certificates
- Up to date on all health and safety aspects
- Experience and proven track record in producing a high standard of course presentation throughout the year
- The ability to produce up to date work scheduling, coordinating works with the General Manager and Greens Committee.
- Produce and maintain accurate budgeting for the greens department.

**Closing date:**  
**21st June**

Please send your C.V. along with a covering letter, stating your salary expectation to:  
**The General Manager, Brookmans Park Golf Club, Hatfield**  
**Herts AL9 7AT**



# On the Soapbox

A new vehicle for people within the industry to express their viewpoint

## I have been asked many times why I cut so low and put the grass plant under so much stress.

There are several reasons. As a golfer, I always like to putt on fast smooth greens. You tend to find this type of green on links and heathland courses with their sandy fescue and bent dominated sward. As soon as you come inland to clay based, Poa Annuua dominated swards, the speeds drop dramatically.

I have always been amazed that the educational bodies in greenkeeping seem to suggest the same height of cut wherever your course and whatever your soil type. Looking at it logically, if you want a faster green, cut it shorter.

Simple!

Or so you would think.

The longer the grass plant, the more resistance or drag there is on the ball roll. The ball will sit in to the turf and not on top of it. The majority of courses in England suffer from this.

The dominant species on parkland soils is meadow grass which will produce a 'snakey' ball roll if cut above 3mm.

Cutting Poa Annuua at 2mm maximises its potential. Agronomists and research bodies focus on the negative aspects of Poa. It was actually in the weed idents when I was at college!

You hear that it is thatchy, shallow rooting, disease ridden grass and will burn out under stress in the summer months. I disagree. It tolerates very close mowing under all kinds of environmental conditions.

Roots will only be shallow if the soil is compacted, as with all grasses. They will go down to the bottom of a verti-drain tine if given the chance. In fact the density of roots in the top 100mm (4 inches for you oldies), is quite impressive.

Disease is not a problem as long as you create a firm surface through pure sand dressings. Poa has the potential to produce the most fantastic surface, only bettered by Creeping Bent, if treated with respect and handled in the right way.

Poa can be your saviour and not your enemy given the chance.

The most important reason for cutting low is to give golfers what they want; fast true greens in all environments.

Fast greens on brand new U.S. specification creeping bent grass are relatively easy to produce. The cultivar A4 has been bred to have a high shoot density under extreme close mowing.

Producing similar results on a pure links green, with the finer grasses dominating the pace of the ball is also easily achievable.

To produce fast greens on a parkland course surrounded by trees is far more challenging. Cutting at 2mm will help you to achieve them.

We all hear the spike bar complaints about the slow pace of the greens. When you want that pay rise or new fairway mower, you are more likely to get what you want if you are giving them what they want, fast greens.

Bewarned though, as with any good green, a solid cultural plan must be in place.

Your plan must be based around these six areas:

**1. Aeration.** As much as you dare. Especially in the summer. This will give the roots oxygen that it craves at its most stressful time. You will also have better greens for longer in the season.

**2. Sanding.** No soil, just 100% sand. It is at least as important as aeration. If golfers and mowers didn't compact our greens, as long as we applied enough sand, we would have no need to punch holes in to the greens. Now the golfers would love that!

**3. Verti-cutting.** Essential on a Poa dominated sward in order to produce an upright grass plant. Equally important on creeping and velvet bent greens. The disturbance theorists are questioning the need for verti-cutting. Think long and hard if you are thinking of heavily reducing or eliminating it. You may regret it later.

**4. Overseeding.** Pure bent. As often as your budget will allow. This is for greater sward density.

**5. Irrigation and fertility.** Little and often. The plant must be healthy. Keep them lean but healthy.

**6. Cutting.** The most important operation that you do. As long as you have the above in place, frequent low cutting is a must for fast greens.

Over the years, a lot of scary stories have been circulated about greens being cut at 2mm.

It's a slippery slope' or 'It's impossible to achieve this for long periods and still have grass left' you will be told.

This is rubbish! Yes, it does need some understanding and yes, it can be intense and hard work, but this is what we as greenkeepers are here for; to give the golfers what they want in a sustainable manner.

There's a lot of talk from bodies such as the R&A and STRI, who want you to eradicate Poa.

Why? As I have already mentioned, Poa can produce the most fantastic surfaces and is sustainable.

Learn about it and understand it. You may not love it but you should certainly respect it. For the vast majority of us, we have no choice.

Anyway, on a meadow parkland environment, what is the indigenous species?

Poa of course!

## Looking at it logically, if you want a faster green, cut it shorter



Greg Evans is the Course Manager at Ealing Golf Club. He also runs the Complete Golf Solutions consultancy company, which aims to give greenkeepers advice in going down an aggressive route. He can be contacted on 07951 157208 or by email at: gregevens1973@hotmail.com.

Greg Evans

The views expressed within On The Soapbox are not necessarily those of Greenkeeper International



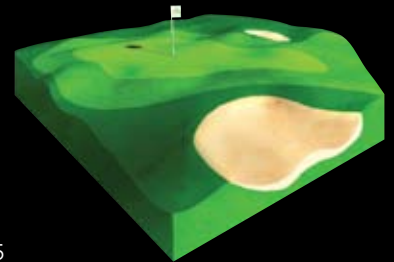
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**Jonathan Gaunt, international golf course architect**

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artificial grass

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