



the language was vital and has helped me integrate much more quickly,' said Denis, who revealed that watching the German version of *Come Dine with Me* had done much to improve the family's skills and offer up tips to German behaviour.

Along with the team, Denis has already set about improving the surfaces with some micro-tining and slitting.

"We are planning to use the Graden tractor-mounted scarifier twice this season on the older greens in conjunction with trying the compost teas on all our greens.

"We have increased the frequency and type of aeration and have found the sarrel rollers an important tool for keeping the surfaces open. We do alternate the sarrel rollers with the verti cut units but aim to sarrel roll once a week during the season."

The biggest project the team has tackled in the time Denis has been at Schmallengberg has been to lengthen the course by adding a new tee to each of the 18 holes.

"When I first arrived, Ted Coffren, our Californian pro, said that the club wanted to lengthen the course with a view to attracting an EPD Tour event and making the course more attractive to the better players in the area," said Denis, who has already demonstrated his playing

pro prowess by winning several medals at the club and seen his handicap drop to 5.

"The club also benefited from the arrival of Joachim Walter and Richard Feige, the extremely proactive Club President and Vice President, who took up their roles just before Denis arrive and whose input has been invaluable."

EDP is the German National Tour and one which current World Number 1, Martin Kaymer, won as recently as 2006.

"We walked round the course with the committee, Ted and Norbert, and it was daunting because it soon became apparent that they wanted new tees everywhere and they wanted them done before the end of the season with a view to opening them this April," said Denis who never forgets how lucky he was to work with such knowledgeable Course Managers, Head men and senior greenkeepers at Turnberry and Bonnyton GC where he started his greenkeeping career.

But the club pulled together to make the project a success.

"Norbert knew a guy who had an excavator and he did much of the earth work and heavy moving for us, while we got some hard core from a local farmer, who was a friend of one of our members. On top of that we got topsoil from one of

LEFT PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM:

The short par-3 course which has attracted so many new golfers

The land for the proposed new 9 holes

Denis with the team including Chairman of Green, Norbert Hahn, back right

THIS PAGE ABOVE:
The par-3 14th from the new tee

BELOW:
Charly Hennemann's superb tee work

our members who had a construction company and he even delivered it to where we were digging out on the course.

"The work also coincided with a hot drought spell last June so we could use the time we would have spent cutting fairways and tees."

All in all it added significantly to the overall maximum length of the course and created some monster holes. The par-5 6th, for example, is uphill and into the prevailing wind is now over 600 yards from the tips, while there are several other holes over 500 yards long, testing





even the most consistent and long drivers.

As a result the course has been rated the 10th most challenging in Germany and the toughest in its local region.

Although Denis has spent nine years at one of the top golf venues in the world he has picked up one or two tips since moving to Germany, not least the dew clearing in the morning.

“Here we have a buggy with a rope about 20 metres dragged behind and the buggy does a couple of circuits around the green and the rope removes the dew in record time.

“The driver just jumps out and removes the pin and the whole course can be done in an hour. I can’t see a downside to it at all,” explained Denis.

Ever progressive, the club, which also boasts an excellent covered driving range, also had plans at an advanced stage to create an additional nine holes on an excellent piece of land close to the newer nine holes.

An architect has produced drawings and there is an agreement in place with the farmer who owns the land to purchase it when the members approve the project.

Despite now having the weapons in terms of length to test the best, the club does not ignore golfers at the other end of the spectrum and has been extremely pro-active in its attempts to attract more people to the game of golf.

“Over 60% of our members are over 50. That is too high, while 23% are between 31 and 50,” explained Christiane, who last year set about addressing the problem.

She introduced a series of competitions for beginners, mostly young adults, on the club’s six hole par-3 course lasting over the summer months with free use of clubs and rudimentary lessons.

“We charged 99 euro per team of three and once they had spent some time learning the basics we had a series of competitions – Scramble, Best Drive, Alternate Drive, Individual – held between May and September.

“We gave them free use of the equipment and they could play on the course any time they liked over the period.

“We had barbecues at the prize presentations and everyone had great fun. From the people who played last year we got 10 new members and 10 more are seriously considering joining,” she said.

As for dress code, Christiane is keen that nothing is put in their way to prevent new people from taking up the game.

“I have no problem with wearing jeans on the golf course – sorry – and when people ask me what to wear, I say jeans, a polo or a t-shirt is ok with me at any time. I love jeans and wear them most days,” she revealed.

“Strict dress rules don’t make the game accessible.”



ABOVE: Dew clearing the Schmallenberg way.

Christiane is delighted with the club’s new Head Greenkeeper. “He has created a great team spirit and has brought fun to the job,” she said.

While missing life at Turnberry and all his old colleagues, Denis and his new wife, Dawn, and 10-year-old, Logan, have not regretted their move to Germany for one minute and is grateful for all the support he has received.

“We really like the lifestyle. Over here family and hobbies are just as important as jobs and things are a little more relaxed.”

It may be relaxed, but you can be sure that Denis will continue to give 100% to ensure that Golfclub Schmallenberg develops along the successful path it has already started.

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A fistful of five *Injurious Weeds*



Dr Terry Mabbett offers some information and advice on dealing with the famous five

Weeds are simply green plants growing in the wrong place at the wrong time. Thus dandelion is a serious weed of professional turf but a useful wildflower addition to roadside verges and other habitats.

Plants proscribed as weeds are by nature and definition harmful and injurious to other valued plants in the same environment, including grass plants in professional and amenity turf as well as agricultural grassland. The effect of some weed species, including ragwort, bracken and giant hogweed, may extend beyond these parameters to harm livestock, pets and people, while Japanese knotweed can damage civil infrastructure including concrete and tarmac pavements and roads.

Believe it or not only five plants, and all native species, are proscribed as 'Injurious Weeds' under The Weeds Act of 1959 (United Kingdom), while even more notorious weeds are conspicuous by their absence.

The five native species classed as 'Injurious Weeds' are common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), two species of thistle, *Cirsium arvense* (creeping thistle) and *Cirsium vulgare* (spear thistle) and two species of broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and curled dock (*Rumex crispus*).

They are proscribed as injurious weeds due to an overwhelming competitive effect on other useful plant species in agricultural and amenity situations through inherently rapid growth rates and prolific rates of reproduction.

All are invasive in nature if not by definition.

They have characteristics and features which are common to most if not all. These include deep-seated sturdy tap roots which allow good survival rates during adverse conditions, including sub-zero winter temperatures and summer droughts. And versatile vegetative reproductive systems making attempts to physically remove them not only futile but counterproductive, because any remaining root and stem fragments generate new plants. All are prolific seed producers.

Not everything about these five weeds is bad. As native plants they are important food sources for wildlife including insects, other invertebrates and birds.



Dedicated application and control

Once established and allowed to grow and spread during late spring and early summer these weeds become difficult if not impossible to shift, easily and safely, using standard 'over the top' herbicide spraying techniques. Providing these weeds are carefully targeted early in the year, while still at ground level and in a sluggish vegetative state, all can be easily, quickly and safely dispatched by spot applications of total herbicide using hand-held applicators.

These include weed-wipers with rope-wicks dispensing herbicide by direct contact with the leaf surface, and trigger operated spray applicators placed close to the weed to deliver small exact volumes and doses of herbicide onto the leaf rosettes. Advantages of hand-held applicators include targeted spot

application with minimal risk of contamination from spray-run off or spray drift. They are light-weight to carry and easy to use.

Ragwort and spear thistle in particular are two of the earliest growth starters in spring.

Following an unusually early period of low temperature-induced dormancy from late November and through December 2010 ragwort responded rapidly to the much milder conditions in January and February 2011.

Having survived one of the coldest Decembers on record essentially unscathed, ragwort and spear thistle were already moving in February, especially in southern counties.

It is quite common to find some or all of these five injurious weeds growing together in the same grass sward at the same time and in clumped distributions which makes the use of hand-held appli-

The five famous weeds

MAIN PHOTO ON PAGE 24:
Creeping Thistle.
The seed and down produced by creeping thistle is used for food and nest building by goldfinches

THIS PAGE ABOVE LEFT:
Docks (two types).
Docks are opportunistic weeds of turf and grassland and can grow into clumps if left unchecked.

ABOVE RIGHT:
Ragwort
Ragwort rosettes are growing fast by April
Spear Thistle
Spear thistle bears viscosly sharp spines

cators that more appropriate and easier. Rabbits will generally avoid these weeds, grazing around the leaf rosettes of ragwort and creeping thistle to make them much easier to recognise for spot application in spring.

But once these weeds have grown up through the sward to heights of one metre or more they can only be safely controlled using vehicle drawn 'weed-wiping' applicators which apply herbicide by direct contact with the leaves and no accompanying drips.

These applicators deliver the chemical by direct surface to surface contact between herbicide moistened pads and the weed foliage, exploiting significant height differences between these now tall full grown weeds and the grass and other useful plants at soil level.

There is no danger of damage to the grass below from drips or drop-let drift which can occur during

conventional spraying using tractor mounted sprayers and lever operated knapsack sprayers.

Five culprit weeds

On golf courses these five 'Injurious Weeds' are mostly confined to the rough and other areas, along fences and hedges and around trees, where ground cover may be left uncut or untreated with herbicide. Be that as it may, these weeds will establish in turf if an opportunity arises such as divot-damaged turf on golf tees, especially in close proximity to an area with a high weed seed load. Invasion of turf by ragwort on golf tees alongside railway embankments is not uncommon, the weed seeds germinating and establishing rapidly in patches of bare soil caused by turf damage during teeing-off. Now in their early vegetative state as flat rosettes of leaves they can withstand even low grass cuts to remain in turf for some time.

Thistles with no 'tears'

Creeping thistle and spear thistle are strong competitive weeds establishing and spreading quickly to smother grass plants. Both possess leaf spines and those of spear thistle are especially sharp and unpleasant.

All grassland is at risk and once established this pair of thistles is notoriously difficult to shift. Non-agricultural environmentally-sensitive grassland is one of most important areas affected by these species of thistle.

The copious quantities of seed produced by creeping thistle are largely non-viable but this thistle more than compensates with a highly efficient system of vegetative propagation. Creeping underground stems (rhizomes) spread quickly to form huge patches. Soil disturbance, including attempts at mechanical control, generally make matters worse because new plants will grow from even small pieces of rhizome.

In contrast spear thistle seed is viable and is carried far and wide by wind inside the hairy pappus (parachute type) fruits.

These are not the sort of weeds that greenkeepers and grounds-men want to see in sports turf and amenity grassland. From small seedlings in late winter they will grow at a phenomenal rate and by May are good sized spiny plants. Spear thistle in particular, as its common name suggests, has leaves ending in long, hard and ferocious

PHOTOS ON PAGE 25 FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

Ragwort
Ragwort problems become patently obvious during late summer

Creeping Thistles
Thistles are important sources of nectar for butterflies – small copper butterfly on creeping thistles shown here

Creeping Thistles
The seed and down produced by creeping thistle is used for food and nest building by goldfinches

spines that impart painful jolts to any sports person making contact.

It was almost certainly spear thistle which thwarted a night-time attack by the Danes at the Battle of Largs in Scotland when cries of pain from the attackers awoke the slumbering Scots.

Spines of the creeping thistle are individually less fearsome, but the capacity of this thistle, which has been called the United Kingdom's 'worst weed', to form huge clumps of bristly plants in a matter of weeks more than compensates.

Creeping thistle and spear thistle are robust perennials with underground food storage organs (rhizomes and tap roots, respectively) for successful overwintering with a quick 'getaway' in spring.

Early spring is the ideal time to hit thistles while they are still relatively small and vulnerable, but easy to

Creeping thistle and spear thistle are robust perennials with underground food storage organs (rhizomes and tap roots, respectively) for successful overwintering with a quick 'getaway' in spring

identify in turf, amenity grassland and on bare ground in their vegetative leaf rosette stage.

Wildlife trusts acknowledge the weed status of creeping thistle and spear thistle.

However, both are food sources and breeding sites for many non-pest insects, including butterflies and moths, and a major food source for birds like the goldfinch which feeds on the seed heads and uses 'thistle down' for nest building. Thistles (Cirsium species) are food plants for small skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) and painted lady (*Vanessa cardui*) butterflies while white-letter hairstreak (*Satyrrium w-album*), brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) and peacock butterflies (*Nymphalis io*) nectar on the yellow flowers.

Two chances to hit ragwort

Common ragwort is an exceptionally resilient weed with a robust and deep-penetrating taproot and with prolific seed production.

This ensures continuity from its first year of vegetative growth into the second and final year of flowering and seed set characteristic of this normally biennial species.

Common ragwort is one of the first plants to re-start growth in spring although the ground hugging rosettes of leaves look completely different to how the mature plant, up to 1 metre tall and covered with yellow daisy-like flowers, will look from June/July onwards.

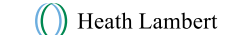
This can present real problems for effective early season control. Many people do not recognise ragwort in this early vegetative stage because leaf shape and form is very different (much less finely divided) to that on mature flowering plants. By the time they realise there is a ragwort problem it is too late to use hand-held applicators with good effect.

During July, August and September you cannot miss the fact that you have a ragwort problem and neither will anyone else because the toxic weed advertises its presence with swathes of golden yellow flowers on tall stems. The fast spread of ragwort is down to its prolific seed production with 150,000 seeds per plant per season and a germination rate approaching 70 per cent. What's more the seeds can lay dormant for up to 20 years.

A group of pyrrolizidine alkaloids (predominantly 'jacobine') in the plant tissue are responsible for ragwort poisoning, although their breakdown products called pyrroles actually cause the metabolic and tissue damage. Once eaten pyrrolizidine alkaloids are absorbed by the gastro-intestinal tract to strike at the very 'heart' of animal metabolism, destroying liver enzymes to cause liver cirrhosis and death. Horses and other equines are especially susceptible to ragwort poisoning.

Attempts to cut down flowering ragwort may temporarily hide the problem but only make matters worse in the long run. These normally biennial plants simply switch to a perennial life style rather than dying after seed set at the end of the second year which occurs in the normal life cycle of a biennial plant. Common ragwort will survive the severest winter thanks to its food-rich tap root resuming growth in spring and flowering during summer. What's more seeds already formed on cut down ragwort stems still mature and ripen thus adding to the seed bank in the soil.

There are essentially two chances to control ragwort with herbicide. Firstly during early spring by treating the leaf rosettes with herbicide dispensed by hand-held applicators and subsequently during late summer by using a vehicle drawn weed wiper.



This article comes to you courtesy of the BIGGA Learning and Development Fund.

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For all its toxic properties at least 30 species of insects and other invertebrates are totally dependent on ragwort for food. These include solitary bees and wasps, hoverflies, conopod flies which parasitize solitary bees and wasps, butterflies and about 40 noctuid moths. Ragwort flowers are major sources of nectar for gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) and small copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) butterflies, and the plant is sole food plant for the cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*).

Rumex in the dock

Broadleaved dock and curled dock are conundrums, being classed as 'Injurious Weeds' on the one hand but reached for instinctively with the other as a leaf poultice to soothe nettle stings and rashes. Though lacking the spines and prickles of thistles or the poisonous chemicals found in ragwort, docks still have a 'toxic' effect on grassland. Their overwhelming competitive advantage from fast growth rates and overarching shading by huge broad leaves quickly dominates all other herbaceous plants (grasses and broadleaves).

Left to their own devices docks will develop into huge clumps drastically reducing the area of serviceable amenity grassland and productive pasture. Docks spread quickly on patches of bare ground and within thin swards especially in shaded areas and on nutrient enriched sites. Docks allowed to flower will generate a high seed load remaining dormant for decades.

Chemical control with herbicide is the only effective and sustainable option. Conventional spraying with the total systemic herbicides required to kill these robust and stubborn perennial weeds may cause off target chemical damage. Contamination occurs through spray droplet drift and spray liquid run off which may damage and kill adjacent grass plants and valued wild flowers in amenity swards.

Wildlife trusts acknowledge the weed status of broad-leaved dock and curled dock but also their role as native plants providing food sources and breeding sites for non-pest insects. Dock seed is relished by most finches and especially the bullfinch. Rumex species are food plants for the small copper butterfly (*Lycaena phlaeas*).

By using hand-held applicators to spot-treat docks early in the season, environmentally aware operators can leave some plants in the sward as food plants for wildlife if they so wish. Large dock leaves



offer the ideal target for hand-held weed wipers to give the best and most easily achieved coverage of herbicide across the broad flat leaves.

Application timing for docks in relation to the advent of spring can be critical. During the exceptionally late spring of 2010 advice was put out to delay the treatment of docks with herbicide for up to 4 weeks. Cold damaged and stressed dock plants, indicated by reddening of the foliage, do not show optimum uptake and translocation of herbicide.



DEALER OF THE MONTH

The series aimed at celebrating the great work done by dealerships up and down the country

JSM LTD

Location:

Sheffield Park, Mid-Sussex.

Employees and size of premises:

20 employees, 1.5-acre site with 10,000 sq feet of covered storage, workshop and offices.

Number of service vans:

Five.

Brief history of company:

The company was founded in 1985 as a Toro dealership to serve professional grounds machinery users. Our association with the Toro brand has remained unbroken since.

Initially covering the Sussex area, the business has grown over the years to now being active in Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Hants, Berkshire and South London. From an initial staff of just four in 1985 the business has grown over the years, but has remained focused on the professional grounds care markets.

Key services offered:

Sales, parts, servicing and hire for professional grounds maintenance equipment.

Specialist services offered:

Full compliment of training and education services, NSTS-approved test station, Toro irrigation parts agent, fixed-price-contract servicing, extended warranty schemes and financial planning.

How has the dealership changed over the years?

Early on, the business had a very limited range of products to offer its customer base. But now, with manufacturer introductions and a broader range of agencies, we have become a 'one-stop shop' for anyone's grounds care needs.

As the business has grown we have also been able to do much more with relatively modest staff numbers due to the advancement in business and communication systems.

What would you like to see changed?

We would like to see the advancement in IT and communication systems to continue the progress we've made in providing as seamless a flow of data and support between customer, dealer and manufacturer as possible. Advancements in fleet management software, such as Toro's 'myTurf', should particularly help us achieve this.

Do you support customers who have in-house service facilities (i.e. OEM parts supply)?

Yes, we support with OEM parts, parts training, integrated look-up systems, technical training and technical data.



Pictured outside their premises are, from left, JSM's executive director Steve Vogels, managing director David Cole, parts manager Peter Biddlecombe and service manager John Davies.

Major customers:

Our wide customer base/type includes: Wentworth Club; All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon; home of the RFU, Twickenham Stadium; Fulham Football Club; The Oval; Guards Polo Club; Charterhouse School in Surrey; Gatwick Airport; Royal Ascot Racecourse; and Kent Landscape Services.

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BIGGA Regional Conferences

All forthcoming conferences are as follows...

REGION	DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT
South East	16 November 2011	Stock Brook Manor Golf Club, Essex	Clive Osgood, RA, 01737 819343
South West & South East	17 November 2011	Oaktree Arena, Highbridge, Somerset	Jane Jones, RA, 01454 270850
Scotland	6 March 2012	Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline	Peter Boyd, RA, 0141 616 3440



Energy crops are plants grown to provide fuel for heating and electricity generation and are able to deliver high yields from relatively small areas.

These crops could fit into the footprint of an existing golf course, providing a sustainable, low carbon and low cost energy source and diversifying the habitat available for wildlife.

Much of the cost of establishing energy crops could be offset through grant funding under the Energy Crops Scheme and the recently launched Renewable Heating Incentive could turn energy crops into cash crops for golf clubs.

The Energy Crops Scheme

The Energy Crops Scheme is a Government funded scheme, available through Natural England, which provides funding for establishing energy crops. The funding literature and website is mainly aimed at farm owners but Natural England does provide funding to other land users and have provided funding to golf clubs under the scheme. The Energy Crops Scheme is open to new applicants until 2013.

Grant funding covers the cost of establishing either miscanthus or short rotation coppice (SRC), either 50% funding for 'actual' costs i.e. the cost of materials and contractors and/or 'on-farm' costs, i.e. use of a golf club's own labour and machinery. Funding can cover ground preparation, fencing, purchase of planting stock, planting, weed control and first year cutback of trees.

A few points to bear in mind:

- The grant is available in England only and land must be registered with the Rural Land Registry in order to receive funding (land not currently registered can be registered).

- The overall area of land available for planting must be over three hectares and individual planting blocks must be at least 0.5 hectare in size. Planting can be phased over three years.

- There must be a buffer zone of unplanted land alongside public rights of way, residential housing and utilities infrastructure. These areas of open ground may also be included within the grant funding.

- Applications are subject to an environmental assessment, including a site visit, and golf clubs would need to sign a five-year agreement with Natural England.



Money grow o

Kelly Harmer examines energy of great benefit, and offer signi