

GROWTH RETARDANTS



John Hacker

when compared to the cost of mowing the same area, keeping to the same standard, then retardants win hands down. Using retardants may enable improvement of the overall standard of the course without taking on more part-time staff.

They may also enable a reduction in the numbers of extra summer staff required or more importantly take the pressure off the Greenkeeping staff in the early summer when the work load is especially high.

The following prices are taken from a well known supplier.

COSTS OF CHEMICAL GROWTH RETARDANTS

Product	Cost per 5 litres £	Cost per hectare £
Mowchem	203-88	67-96
Mazide 25	25-94	51-88
Mazide Selective*	36-76	161-74
Holdfast		
D*	84-27	84-27

*Mazide Selective contains Maleic Hydrazide and two selective herbicides - MCPA and dicamba. Holdfast also contains dicamba to suppress weed growth.

These prices may seem high

but how many courses have one hectare (2½ acres) of banks and other awkward places? The cost of spraying is not included.

WHEN AND WHERE?

Chemical growth retardants are most useful and cost effective on areas which are difficult to mow. Steep banks, perhaps those around the tees and bunkers, where hover mowers normally have to be used are ideal sites for trying out retardants.

The rough and semi-rough in addition to areas which are difficult to mow - under signs and alongside walls - can also benefit. Last year a retardant was used on the grass banks of the ditch which runs through the golf course at the Lancastrian College.

We found this reduced the hover mowing at a time when the greenstaff were very busy keeping up with ganging on the fairways. Even when the bank was mown for appearances sake there was much less grass to cut which made the work much easier and quicker.

Although varying from year and from location to location,

perhaps the best time to apply growth retardants is in mid-April. This will catch the early summer growth flush of May and June as most retardants are effective for between eight and 14 weeks. Holdfast is recommended to be applied two weeks before the anticipated start of grass growth.

Grass growth retardants are not usually recommended for use on turf mown less than 25mm (2") and are not suitable for greens. Similarly, retardants are not recommended for use on areas which receive a lot of wear such as tees (except at the base of signs) and paths where the grasses are required to grow back rapidly after use.

It is also important to note that the retardants do not work as effectively on turf weeds and that, although the grass may be retarded, broad-leaved weeds if present will be much more obvious - hence the inclusion of selective herbicides in some retardants.

Using retardants with selectives may then be undesirable on areas which contain attractive and environmentally friendly natural flora which should be retained wherever possible.

Don't expect too much of growth retardants. They do not cut grass and will not give the finish that mowing does. It may then be worth having a combined spray and mow programme, the latter to give the finish that members expect.

A final consideration perhaps - with the general distrust of chemicals by the general public, there may be some resistance to more spraying on the Course by the members. However, as long as the areas are sprayed correctly by trained applicators (remember FEPA) they should be completely safe and give you another useful additional weapon for efficient course management. Don't forget, always read and strictly carry out the manufacturers instructions as printed on the label.

Thanks go to John Doyle of Maxwell Hart and Patrick Goldsworthy of ICI Professional Products for their help in providing information.

Lancashire College of Agriculture and Horticulture currently run the only BTEC National Diploma in Turf Science and Sportsground Management in the UK.

SPRING TURF MAINTENANCE

NOW that winter has passed! and most of the major construction work, such as enlargement of tees, drainage, the renovation of bunkers and walkways, are coming to an end, I look forward to spring.

March and April are still busy months with many other important jobs yet to be done, before we start mowing in earnest. The work will include patching fairways and general areas that have been damaged by normal compaction and last years drought.

I know, seaside links with their light sandy soils are a big advantage to work on through the wet winter months, compared to the heavy type soils on the inland courses, where one cannot take a tractor-trailer for perhaps the whole winter!

A lot of people tend to think links courses look after themselves, but I can assure you, maintenance can be quite high especially following a dry hot summer as we experienced last year, with top soil being less than 1/2" in depth in places, erosion takes place quite easily.

Rabbits for example seemed to thrive on dry conditions, and last year they were more active than usual. I suppose digging in the dry soft sand must have been sheer joy!!

Personally, I don't like to kill them in summer months when they are breeding and have young, but declare war during the winter period when the undergrowth has died off giving them less cover. I am lucky, because some of the greenkeepers are good shots and enjoy the odd night lamping. We will now step up the night shooting and thin them out before the pests start breeding in earnest.

Talking of pests, moles seem to be on the increase. These lovely creatures are rarely seen, and many greenkeepers just smooth over their earthmounds but do not bother to eliminate them, so they go quietly about their business and breed three to four young each year. Trapping and baiting are the normal methods of elimination, but stop their supply of food (mainly worms), and they will have to travel elsewhere, (maybe Safeways), or anywhere except on the golf course.

Once again in our area there shows signs of another bumper crop of Leatherjackets this year. During a quite mild spell of weather, just after the Christmas period, we sprayed and had a very good kill. I was quite surprised how many of the blighters there were, so if



George Brown is pictured, above right, with an assistant on his beloved Turnberry course with the lighthouse in the background.

you have not had a chance to spray yet, it is not too late to do so.

Almost a year ago, we purchased a new tractor mounted sprayer, but never really had the chance to use it. The text books will tell you the best time to spray for weeds would be in the spring or throughout the growing season. (I threw the rule book away several times last year). We normally spray end of April or May, but gale force winds or rain prevented us from doing this, and by the end of May it was too dry, but surely it must rain soon, we are on the west coast of Scotland!

Anyway, as we all know it was at least the end of August before the grasses had recovered enough to even think about it, September too busy with tournaments, October too windy, November too late! (Do you know the feeling?)

The rule book was also thrown away regarding watering, we don't overwater, but how much is too much, especially when we had the hottest summer since records began, 1909? However, many people enjoyed the hot summer, it made a change. I know the irrigation companies enjoyed it, I understand their order books are quite full.

During March and April we do considerable work on our pop-up sprinklers, many of the heads have sunk well below ground level (or is it the regular top dressing that raises the surface levels). I know we have a few hundred, and many of them are rarely used, and soon

become overgrown. They also stick down - especially on sandy soils. (I once thought 'pop-ups' were supposed to save labour!)

The irrigation system will be now primed and ready for testing. Pumps and motors have already been checked and serviced during the winter months (haven't they?). So now to check for broken pipes and cables. We have learnt in the past just how versatile the vertidrain can be, there is no better machine for finding shallow irrigation pipes, as well as doing its intended mission.

After repairing the damaged pipework and making good the turf, we will be hoping to get the drying easterly winds, which will allow us to verticut some low lying fairways that have more vigorous growth. Tees and greens will also have their first gentle verticut of the season, followed by a light top dressing of sandy soil (70-30 mix).

I know there is a difference of opinion when one should apply spring organic fertilisers, but that will depend upon the geographical location of the golf course, for example weather conditions can vary tremendously between the North, East, South and West of Britain, not just in temperature, the biggest difference being annual rainfall. (East coast courses may have an average between 19" to 23", compare that to the west coast where rainfall can be anything between 40" to 80" in the northwest, (they don't get the love-

ly green hills and lochs for nothing.)

Another sign of spring is when certain members who have been trying to tell you how to run your golf course all season, suddenly invite you to pop round and just have a look at their lawn, (because it is in a dreadful state!)

I was interested to read the document 'The Way Forward', prepared by a greenkeeping panel appointed by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews. The document is critical and certainly does not pull any punches. So do find time to read it. One point is put over very clearly, and that is the need for golf courses to have mud free fairways and firm fast greens all year round!

Being a links man myself, I fully agree with the panel, although this will be achieved much more easily on the drier easterly courses than those on the damper west, that have double rainfall.

Anyway, enough of rainfall, spring is almost here, fertilisers are on and we start our cutting. We serviced our mowing machines (haven't we?), they have been rebladed and sharpened (haven't they?). We have painted our flagsticks (haven't we?). We have ordered our new flags (haven't we?).

Must go now, there appear to be a few things I have forgot!
Happy mowing?

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Golf Course Manager,
Turnberry Hotel and Golf
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Q A YORK, PARKER & MARTIN

GOLF COURSE OR LANDSCAPE

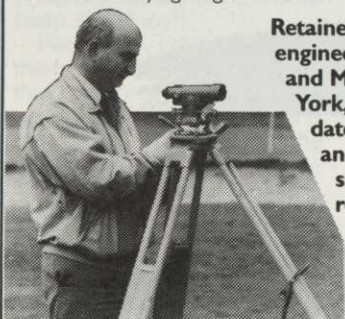
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York, Parker and Martin form what is probably Europe's most knowledgeable and experienced team of independent and objective irrigation design engineers.

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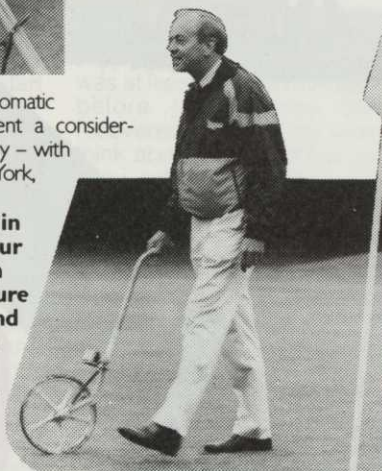


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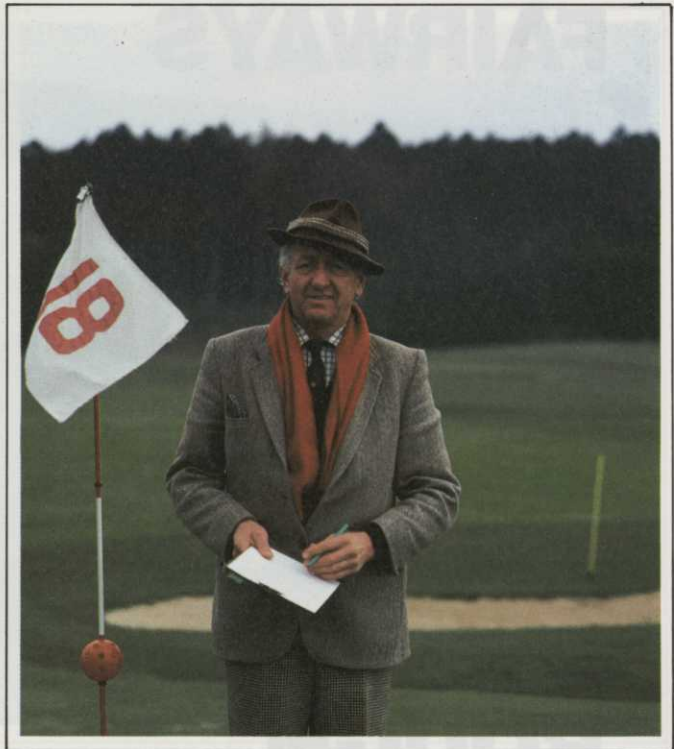
Remember, they are not in business to sell you or your organisation an irrigation system but simply to ensure the design, installation and long term results are the best you can possibly achieve for your money..



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C.W. Roupe, past captain, Stock Rockford Golf Club, Grantham.

VERTI-DRAINING A GOLFER'S VIEW

BRR-MM - Tchunk - Tchunk! "What crass stupidity are the greens People up to? We have enough greens problems. All we need is more watering and fertilizer." Such were the typical comments of most golfers when the Verti-Drainer made its appearance some six years ago.

We watched with fascination to see a tractor and the huge Verti-Drainer armed with umpteen 14" spikes trundling over our hallowed greens. It pierced deep holes every 4" and seemed to lift and shake the earth like a carpet. The effect was to leave an impossible putting surface like Duralay underlay for several weeks.

Our greens were laid some 65 years ago as lawns for a handful of golfers and managed by enthusiasts rather than skilled greenkeepers. As little as 10 years ago only 300-400 golfers each week trampled the surfaces. With the popularity of golf we now have over twice that number. The greens were wearing badly with all the problems of compaction. For the golfer this meant they had less hold and gave erratic putting. It also meant grumbles in the Club and Committee.

Dedicated Greens Staff, measured watering, suitable organic fertilizers, slitting and fork tining helped hold the

deterioration, but from the advice of the Agronomist it was evident more drastic action was required. It needed deeper tining to aerate the soil, break it up deep down to help with drainage, and to encourage the deep-rooted grasses which are the basis of good greens.

The Verti-Drain at the beginning or end of each season has proved to be an answer. The condition of the greens has improved in spite of increased traffic, and we have now started Verti-draining the fairways annually, too.

No longer do we complain but greatly welcome the improvement Verti-draining has given and cheerfully accept the disruption.

So - Carry on - Brmm, Tchunk, Tchunk.

WESSEX COCOPEAT THE ONLY GENUINE ALTERNATIVE TO PEAT

WESSEX Cocopeat is a 100% renewable resource, with all the characteristics of a high quality peat moss, thereby making it the perfect alternative for peat.

Not only is it a natural alternative to peat but it contains several of its own unique characteristics, such as:

Unlike traditional peat, Wessex Cocopeat has a unique sponge-like structure

THE LEADERS

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No matter what size workshop you have Mower Machine Maintenance can offer you a modular concept grinder which will guarantee a perfect finish, with **5 superb models to choose from.**

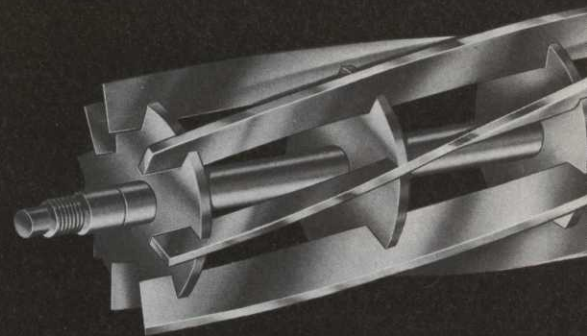
These incorporate advanced safety features such as totally enclosed canopy and water coolant to provide the operator with an excellent working environment.

The top of the range machine, the Supreme Auto Leader represents the ultimate in mower grinding technology with features unequalled in any other machine. This is the only machine currently on the market which can grind cylinders and bottom blades with equal efficiency, utilising variable speed spin and traverse drives.

The standard features on our machines are:

- Single blade relief grinding
- In frame grinding
- Variable speed spin and traverse drives
 - Self contained coolant
 - Automatic infeed
 - Dual purpose wheelhead incorporating two grinding wheels enables cylinders and bottom blades to be ground with equal efficiency
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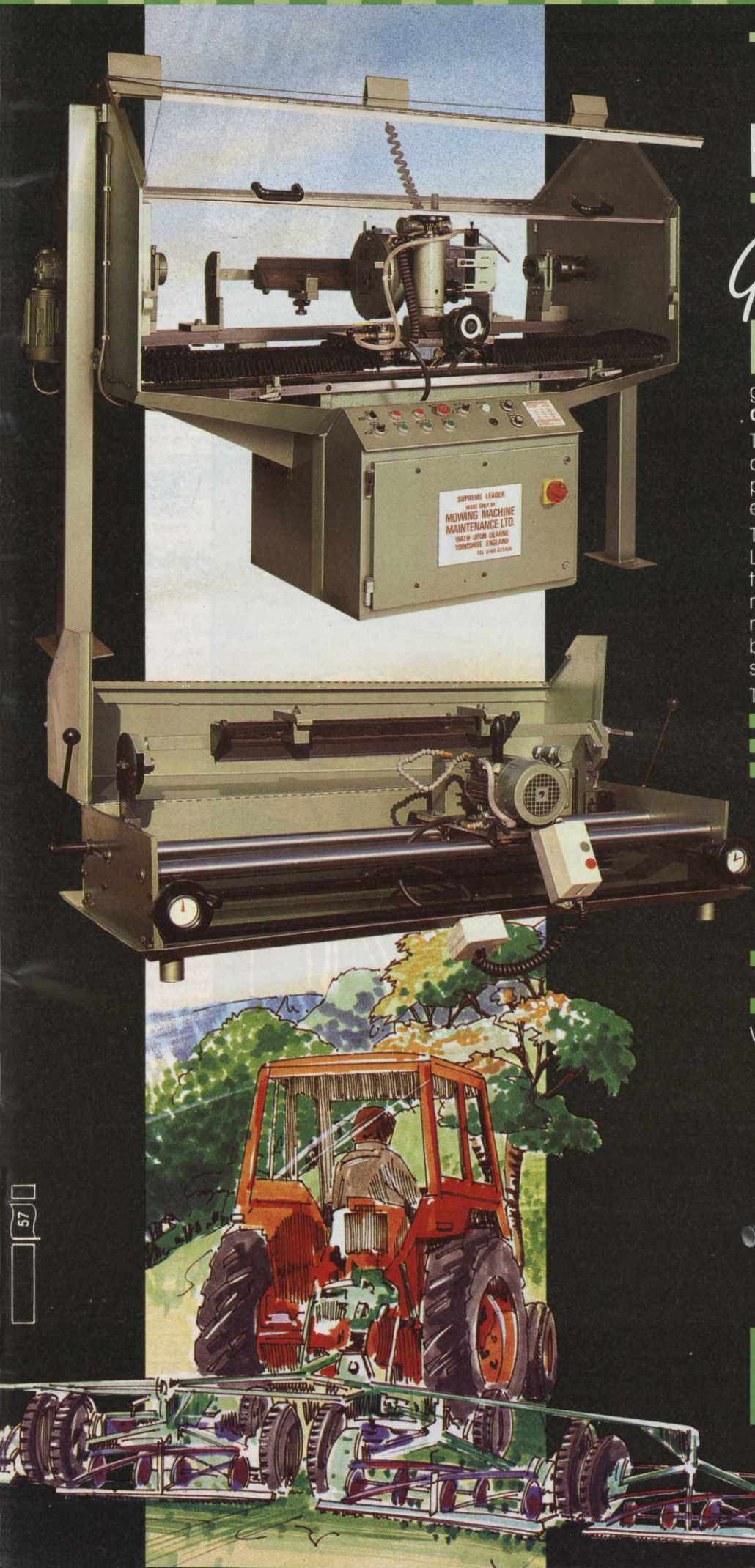
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SPRING TURF MAINTENANCE

which will retain larger quantities of water, nutrients and oxygen (AFP), resulting in less leaching, thereby reducing the amount of additional feeding and also has the advantage of being 100% weed free.

Wessex Cocopeat differs from traditional peat by containing small quantities of naturally derived NPK and trace elements and has an ideal pH of 5. It is virtually impossible to destroy the spongy cell-like structure of Cocopeat, making the same fine grade used for the growing of seeds, seedlings and bedding plants ideal for the growing of nursery stock and container growing as well as for tree planting or as a mushroom casing.

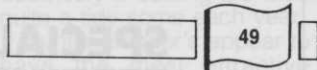
This is because, unlike traditional fine grades of peat, the fines in Cocopeat will not float to the surface and therefore will not result in capping. The hard peat particles, pieces of wood, cotton grass etc., usually found in medium to coarser grades of peat are not found in Cocopeat, therefore there is no problem with the all-too-familiar blocking of screens, jamming of potting machines etc and the obstruction of natural root growth. In fact, on trials undertaken at our nursery in Sri Lanka and on limited trials here in the UK, it has been found that up to 25% more root growth has been achieved using Wessex Cocopeat.

Due to its naturally high AFP, another major saving in both material and labour in using Wessex Cocopeat over traditional peat is that there is no need to add perlite and bark etc.

More than just being a peat alternative, with all the added benefits listed above, one would expect to pay a premium for Wessex Cocopeat but, in fact, it is competitively priced against a good quality sphagnum peat moss.

By using Wessex Cocopeat, you are helping to save the world's ever diminishing vital resources and also significantly contributing to the economy of the third world countries.

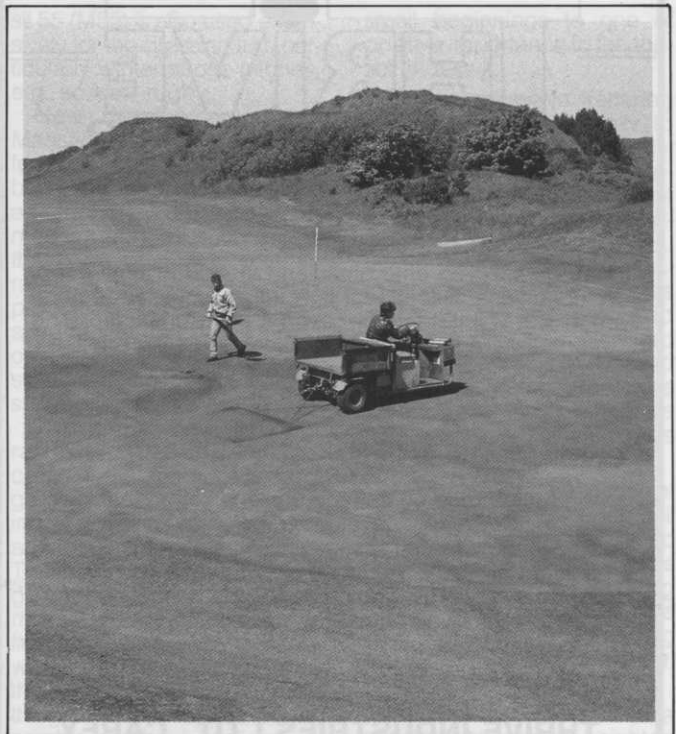
Treat the earth well - it was not given to us by our fathers, but loaned to us by our children.



THE POCKET TOUCH WEEDER - SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND APPROVED

THE Pocket Touchweeder from Thomas Elliott Ltd. is a government approved (MAFF) weedkiller. A wax stick impregnated with selected weedkillers, it deals with most broad leaved weeds. The safest way to get rid of all unwanted weeds, it is ideal for use on the greens and in places where weeds cannot always be dug out or hoed.

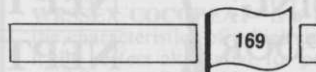
It is safe because it is controllable - there is no dust or spray to blow onto or leach and it avoids the risk of accidental spillage or leaving traces in the watering can. The Pocket Touchweeder will kill most broad leaved weeds, including dandelions, plantains, buttercups and daisies etc, and will not harm grass if the manufacturer's instructions are followed. During consumer trials in 1987, Thomas Elliott are pleased to report that another important success can be added to the claims of this product £ a 99% destruction of field bundweed within 2-3 weeks of application. Further trials have recently concluded that over 100 weeds can be killed with only one touchweeder - thus it is economical too!



Putting in hard work on the green at Hillside Golf Club

The Pocket Touchweeder is impervious to water, both from hose and rain, and is therefore not only a labour saving product, as re-application is usually unnecessary, but also ideal to use near garden ponds where sprayed weedkillers cannot be used.

It is the only safe, efficient and economical way to treat unwanted weeds, the Pocket Touchweeder - a government approved Garden Care product from Thomas Elliott Ltd. For further details please contact Alan Gloak, Thomas Elliott Ltd., Hast Hill, Hayes, Bromley, Kent. BR2 7AJ, telephone: 01-462 2271. Fax. 01-462 7035.



NEPTUNE Scotland Ltd, having established themselves as Scotland's leading manufacturer of seaweed based, organic soil improvers and allied products, are set to expand to meet increasing demand.

Mr Peter Walker, son of managing director John Walker, has recently taken over as sales director. Peter will have the responsibility for all distributor outlets and is expected to liaise with local authorities, landscape architects and contractors, throughout the UK.

The sales of Neptune's organic products for greenkeeping management in particular and the sports field market in general will remain in the capable and experienced hands of Stewarts of Edin-

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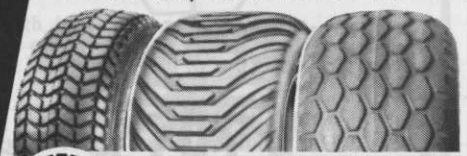
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SPRING TURF MAINTENANCE

burgh in Scotland, Maxwell Hart in the North and South of England and James Cockburn in Northern Ireland. Neptune Scotland are also a present involved in re-organising and increasing their manufacturing and storage capacity at Irvine.

Regular applications of organic materials are considered by many greenkeepers and groundsmen to be one of the top priorities when it comes to promoting and maintaining fine turf surfaces in optimum condition.

Enquiries from greenkeepers and sports field managers have become a daily occurrence. We must be in a position to give a first class service and back-up to our distributors. Investment now will ensure our ability to remain in the forefront of manufacturing seaweed based organic products. Seaweed we believe is, and will always be, the best natural organic material available for improving soil structure. With the help of Dr Harry Duncan and his team at Glasgow University we will continue to strive to produce top quality organic products. "Seaweed is earth's best friend", says John Walker.

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ERIC HUNTER GRINDERS

In conversation with Hunter Grinder's recently, it was revealed that this company has achieved a personal best — delivering six of their mower grinding machines into British Golf Clubs in less than two months!

As Mr Eric Hunter the managing director readily admits, six machines installed in a little over six weeks, is more golf club business than the company has handled in the year previously.

Hunter's attribute this to resounding interest in Mower Grinding Machines, and simply that more Golf Clubs are wakening up to the fact that they can save hundred's, indeed thousand's of pounds by equipping themselves with a grinding machine at a sensible price.

Most clubs have a Head Greenkeeper or least one member of staff who have a little mechanical knowledge. Many Clubs are discovering the advantages of owning a 'small' workshop for doing repairs under cover. Why in fact send machines out for repair when you can 'do-it-yourself'?

Another little known fact is that the standard of repairs and mower cutting efficiency can actually be improved by in house repairs. Sadly a minority of Clubs and Greenkeepers lack the necessary confidence to tackle their own repairs, preferring instead to call in the private contractor, who undoubtedly is costing the Club quite a tidy some each year.

Hunter Grinder's appear to have the most attractive machine on the market at present. It has a full 36" capacity and can accurately grind the fixed bottom blade as well as the cutting cylinder.

The other technical benefits of using a Hunter JUNO machine are that due to the lack of friction, obtained by 'relief' grinding cylinders (1) a cleaner cut (2) less fuel is used to propel the mowing machine (3) doubles the service life of a bottom blade and (4) much longer intervals between major overhauls.

The six clubs or courses who have installed a Hunter Grinder between December 1989 and January 1990 are: Slaye Hall Golf and Country Club in Northumberland. Leek Golf Club in Staffordshire. Whitecraig Golf Club at Giffnock, Glasgow. Kinross Green Hotel Golf Course. The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers at Muirfield, Gullane, and Ely City Golf Club in Cambridgeshire.

They join an impressive number of courses using Hunter's machines, which include Gleneagles Hotel, Carnoustie and the Royal Dornoch in Sutherland.

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MANSFIELD SAND TURF DRESSING PRODUCTS

MANSFIELD Sand Company produce a range of high quality, washed and graded sands which are fully approved by STRI, Bingley for sports turf applications.

The range is sold under the 'Mansil' tradename and includes a medium-coarse grade, Mansil 35 (M35), which is used by many golf courses as a bunker sand and for various specialised drainage uses in addition to its use for top-dressing either alone, or in a blend with topsoil and/or peat.

The sand can be supplied in a dry condition in order to facilitate on site mixing by the greenkeeper.

A medium-fine grade, Man-

sil 55 (M55) is also used extensively for top-dressing turf, particularly winter sports pitches, e.g. soccer, rugby.

New developments from Mansfield sand include a reinforced silica sand which can be used to produce a stabilized free-draining root zone medium and, as such, forms the basis of a new product range named 'Fibreturf'. This product can be used as a pure sand medium or easily mixed on site with a small amount of suitable top-soil to give a sand-soil medium.

The other new product range is 'Gypsand' which is a controlled blend of sports grade, Mansil sand with varying proportions of powdered, agricultural grade, gypsum. The virtues of Gypsum as a general soil conditioner and more specifically as a flocculating agent for clays, are widely recognised, however, the Gypsand range now offers the groundsman opportunity of combining the beneficial effects of two natural products in one relatively simple, dust free operation.

FROM QUARRY TO QUALITY

Boughton Loam Limited is a Company that has grown from

small beginnings to one of positive importance in the top-soil industry.

Their premises in Kettering were planned specifically to produce quality turf dressings, loams and horticultural products and their high-tech plant for mixing, sterilising and bagging is purpose built. As you might imagine, such investment has brought its rewards and Boughton Loam is able to supply not only a standard range of dressings, but also to any specification that the greenkeeper may require, be it for additives, soil improvers etc.

To ensure a maintenance of consistent quality, the top soil that is continually available to them is thoroughly checked as to its suitability before being bought in and stockpiled. The final destination is processing for their 'Top of The Table' range of top dressings.

The Soil is blended with a constant source of Leighton Buzzard sand to give a mix of carefully selected top soil with a minimum of clay and silt, and washed lime free silica sand with the majority of particle sizes in the range 0.125mm - 0.5mm. This produces a final product that will encourage

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Over the past 23 years, the Wessex Peat Group have built up an enviable reputation for the manufacture and distribution of quality products throughout the United Kingdom and Europe; and now after many years of research we are now bringing to the UK market **WESSEX COCOPEAT*** the only genuine alternative to peat.

WESSEX COCOPEAT* is a 100% renewable resource, with all the characteristics of a high quality peat moss, thereby making it the perfect alternative for peat, so helping to save the world's ever diminishing resources.

Not only is it a natural alternative to peat but, as it is made completely from coconut husks, it contains several of its own unique characteristics:

Unlike traditional peat, **WESSEX COCOPEAT*** has a unique sponge-like structure which will retain larger quantities of water, nutrients and oxygen (AFP), thereby improving aeration. This also results in less leaching, thereby reducing the amount of additional feeding and also has the advantage of being 100% weed free, with an ideal pH of 5.

Due to its naturally high AFP, another major saving in both material and labour in using **WESSEX COCOPEAT*** over traditional peat is that there is no need to add perlite and bark etc.

More than just being a peat alternative; with all its added benefits one would expect to pay a premium for **WESSEX COCOPEAT*** but, in fact, it is competitively priced against a good quality sphagnum peat moss.

*Treat the Earth Well —
It Was Not Given To Us By Our Fathers,
But Loaned To Us By Our Children.*

**COCOPEAT is a trademark of the Wessex Peat Group.*

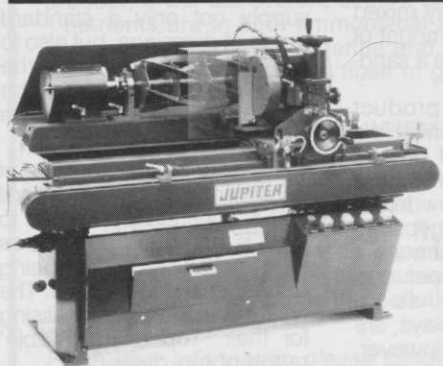
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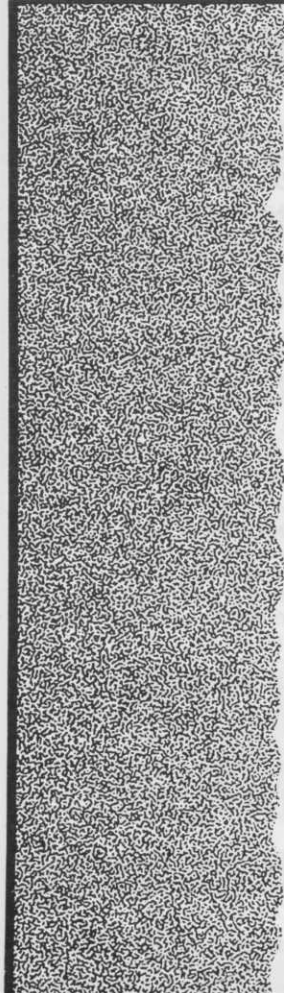
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