

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

RISE's James lists top concerns

In his 2005 outlook for the specialty pesticide and fertilizer industry, Allen James, president of the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), said that reviews of regulations under the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act as well as local pesticide and fertilizer bans continue to be top concerns for the industry.

"In the administration's second term, I see a number of issues that will affect our industry during 2005," James said in a press release. "First of all, I believe the Endangered Species Act (ESA) needs to be updated. The regulation of pesticides vs. the ESA continues to be a battleground that hampers our industry without benefit to the public. Change is needed right now."

New Englanders begin winterkill research group

New England-area superintendents and turf specialists from the University of Massachusetts have started a multiyear research effort to combat winterkill. The Winter Damage Initiative Group will attempt to identify specific factors leading to winter-related turfgrass injury, determine best autumn management practices for preventing winterkill, and evaluate the effectiveness of various types of greens covers.

"Traditionally, winterkill is something we'd experience to some degree every few years," said Tedesco Country Club superintendent Peter Hasak, who is spearheading the project. "But during the winters of 2001, 2003 and 2004, the problem was very widespread, and many courses got hammered. So a bunch of us got together and decided that we needed a specific course of action to figure things out."

Briefs continue on page 16

Relaxed Atmosphere

BIGGA SHOW MORE OF A SOCIAL EVENT THAN A TRADE SHOW

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

HARROGATE, England — Stan Kinkead stood outside the Harrogate International Center and lit a cigarette. Even in England, smoking indoors has been outlawed in many places.

It wasn't the mild weather that brought the president of National Mower all the way from St. Paul, Minn., to this town in northern England.

Rather it was the British International Golf Greenkeepers Association's annual BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition and Educational Seminar Programme and Club House. The BTME is the conference and show for United Kingdom superintendents.

National Mower does well in the United Kingdom and Europe. Its mowers are especially valued for their ability to handle wet turf, not just on golf courses but also on municipal sites and large estates.

This was Kinkead's 12th straight year at Harrogate, as the conference is called by most of the attendees.

"I don't have the heart to tell them it's just the Ohio Turfgrass Show," Kinkead said, smiling as a stream of greenkeepers made their way inside.



Stan Kinkead, president of National Mower, is a regular BIGGA attendee. This was the 12th time he's attended.

What Kinkead was referring to was the size of the event. While this year's GCSAA show drew well over 20,000 participants, 5,500 hundred made their ways into the BIGGA show — a record number — and about 100 companies displayed their wares.

The manufacturers that dominate the U.S. scene were all represented along with other companies familiar to U.S. superintendents, such as Lastec and Rogers Sprayers.

Their booths were alongside U.K. companies such as Earthquake Turfcare and Tower Chemicals.

One company grabbing many people's attention was Underground Rake. As the name states, the product is designed to store rakes in the ground. A push on the lid with the back end of a golf club opens the lid and pushes out the rake for easy removal.

Company spokesman Steve Jones said the device saves golf courses money in two ways: first, operators do not have to leave their machines to move rakes while mowing or maintaining bunkers. Second, it also cuts down on the number of rakes broken by golf cars or maintenance equipment. The lid, the one exposed part of the device, is about half the size of an irrigation control box.

Jones said Underground Rake is already at a few courses in the United States with more showing interest.

Although the BIGGA show might be compared to the Ohio or New England regional shows strictly on size, it differs in significant ways.

In the United States it's all about business and education with most attendees taking classes and business being done right on the show floor. It's much more of a social event in the U.K.

The conference center was broken down into five exhibition halls, each with one or two places to sit and eat or enjoy a beverage. The lounges were constantly full throughout the day with friends renewing acquaintances and catching up before the U.K. growing season gets underway.

With little emphasis on superintendents earning their master greenkeeper certificates, the educational classes were nowhere near the size as one would find in the United States.

For National's Kinhead, selling mowers during the show was not the priority it might be back in the United States. "Our goal is to get [superintendents] to have demonstrations at their courses," he said of Harrogate.

Life outside the event is also much different. Harrogate is a charming town with plenty of shops and restaurants within walking distance of the conference center, which is booked for much of the year.

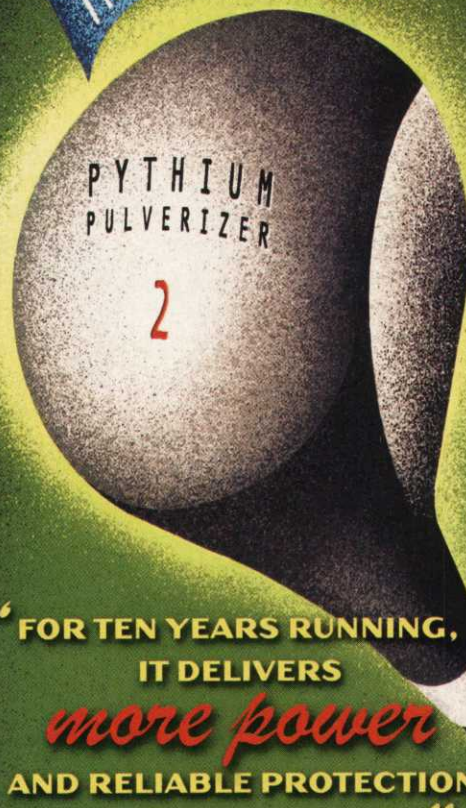
In England the laid-back attitude appears to work for greenkeepers and manufacturers. Kinhead said he and National Mower would be back again next year.

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