

## Welcome

**RIGBY TAYLOR** and **TOP GREEN** have been developing and trialling the 'next generation' of grass seed cultivars for professionals.

Hand picked, these are used to create Mascot mixtures supplied by leading grass seed agent Rigby Taylor.

Significant benefits of these latest cultivars include quicker establishment, greater disease tolerance, the ability to cope with drought and waterlogged conditions and importantly grass which requires less cutting.

With more and more greenkeepers, groundsmen and local authorities asking for mixtures that have a reduced impact on the environment these cultivars address sustainability and environmental concerns.

These advances help to ensure we in the UK can continue to enjoy our sports and landscaped areas in a 'green and pleasant land'.

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## How a Southampton golf club achieves greater grass cover

WHEN TWO brothers looked to diversification from farming their love of golf took them on a new course. And at the East Horton Golf Centre playing conditions continue to rise with excellent grass cover playing a vital role.

In the 1970s Ed Bastian and his brother Richard moved to a farm near Southampton and in 1992 their dream of becoming golf club owners became a reality when they set up the East Horton Golf Centre. Proving extremely popular with the public a second 18-hole course was built in 1994 and a family par three 9-hole facility added later.

### Sowing standards

Nine greenkeepers care for the East Horton Golf Centre and this includes Marcus Hewitt who has been with the course from its inception, becoming head greenkeeper five years ago.

The course is predominantly clay with a sand belt running through the middle of it.

Recognizing that first impressions count, one



Steve Denton of Rigby Taylor (left) and Marcus Hewitt inspect dramatic improvements on green

of the most significant improvements has seen the first green on the Greenwood Course re-built and grass cover increase dramatically.

*Hewitt explains: "New grass cultivars have been a vital ingredient to this success."*

*"On the agronomy side Brian Robinson of Rigby Taylor has been marvellous at offering advice on the different cultivars we should be using. And this has worked extremely well."*

As this USGA spec green is located on the edge of a 30-acres ancient woodland

conditions were never going to improve. There was considerable lack of airflow and very little sunlight in winter so to improve conditions a hedge was taken out and banking areas removed. The green itself was raised by 500mm and tripled in size to 680 square metres.

Seeding took place and the programme was specifically designed to develop the density of grass cover and depth of root. And Amino-Form was added to aid establishment and root development.

To improve shade and wear tolerance Mascot R116 shade renovation mix was selected and sown at a rate of 35gms/m<sup>2</sup>. R128 was chosen for use on the banks because of its good shade and wear characteristics.

*Hewitt is now considering extending the programme further saying: "Today it is essential golf clubs strive to be better than the competition and present the course really well. Great grass cover using new cultivars plays a vital part in achieving this."*



Head greenkeeper Marcus Hewitt (left) with owner Ed Bastian

# School cricket soars

## Sustainability is sorted



*James Mead takes cricket pitches to another level*

AT RUGBY SCHOOL - of Tom Brown's schooldays fame - head groundsman James Mead is keen to take the six cricket pitches to another level.

Since Mead joined this prestigious school three years ago a regular overseeding programme has paid dividends.

He says: "What I like is this keeps the square alive, bouncy and vibrant and the

visual look is excellent too.

"We change the wickets around so we can always have the pitch nice and green when we want it. The lovely thing about school cricket is we have time to allow the grass to re-grow."

A perennial ryegrass mixture Mascot R9 containing 40 per cent Ace, 20 per cent Tucson, 20 per cent Greenflash and 20 per cent Greenway is used in

conjunction with Microflow-CX a controlled release liquid fertilizer.

James Mead says:

"This gives top presentation levels and we also ensure whatever member of our 18-strong grounds staff cuts the grass the result is consistent.

"Securing quality sports pitches for pupils is vital and we strive to maintain the highest standards."

THE 'NEXT GENERATION' of grasses designed to cope with a changing climate pattern are being developed by Top Green.

Vitality grass seed mixtures now available are designed specifically to produce less clippings. This has considerable implications as the cost of on-going grass cutting is often a key budgetary issue.

Stephen Alderton says:

*"If we all cut our grass once less a year a lot of fuel and labour would be saved."*

Successful trials on roadside verges at Torbay and the M25 network have demonstrated the true value and importance of these slower growing varieties.

Top Green's research trial work is continuing to develop a tall fescue cultivar with shorter growth habit, making it highly suitable for golf course use.

Already flourishing rhizomatous tall fescue Grande has a vital role to play in a mix, coping well with dramatic extremes of dry or wet weather conditions due to its deep rooting structure.

Tall fescue Scorpion also boosts turf density and is included in Rigby Taylor mixes for sports and landscaping applications.

## GETTING SEED OFF TO A GOOD START

FOLLOWING extensive trials over the last twelve months Rigby Taylor is introducing ESP (Enhanced Seed Performance) seed coating to their Mascot range progressively during 2009, commencing with Mascot R14 in the spring. This new initiative means the plant gains the benefits of a specially-formulated biostimulant coating as soon as it germinates - resulting in improved seed establishment, turf density and root mass as well as strengthening the grass and so reducing the potential for disease.

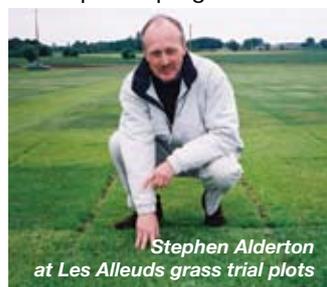
## Latest grass seed solutions for sports

VISITING TOP GREEN'S Les Alleuds trial grounds in France gives greenkeepers and groundsmen the opportunity to see first-hand the next generation of grass seed cultivars aimed at improving disease resistance, stress resistance and which can cope with heavy wear.

Grass seed development manager for Rigby Taylor, Stephen Denton, says: "Following discussions with a group of cricket groundsmen at Les Alleuds it became clear they would welcome a deeper

rooting grass with faster respiration to help dry the cricket wickets.

"Priority has now been given to this within Top Green's research and development programme."



*Stephen Alderton at Les Alleuds grass trial plots*

## Tackling topical issues

AMAZING BREAKTHROUGHS have led to the introduction of grass cultivars with tremendous benefits including:

- Slower growing cultivars reducing maintenance costs and helping to reduce the carbon footprint.
- Reduced clippings saving on disposal and impact on the environment.
- Greater drought resistance for great looking grass without using our valuable water resources.
- Quicker establishment for greater protection from soil erosion.
- Cultivars more able to cope with waterlogged conditions to give greater stabilization and improved grass cover.
- An increased ability to withstand windchill providing greater growth throughout the seasons together with a more even and harder-wearing sward.



## Converting pitch problems at grass roots level



Bishop Stortford Rugby Club

EXCELLENT RESULTS have been achieved at Bishop Stortford Rugby Club, following overseeding carried out by groundsman Gareth Davies in conjunction with Rigby Taylor.

Remedies were sought to overcome poor pitch quality, shade issues and very uneven levels on the third team pitch.

Using specially selected grass cultivars from leading breeder Top Green these trials included a planned management programme.

*“Correct seed selection is always a vital element when seeking to improve a sports surface,” says Brian Robinson of Rigby Taylor.*

*“We were particularly keen to confirm how well tall fescue fares in this particular sports situation.*

*“So far the performance of the selected cultivar mixture has exceeded all our expectations.”*

### Great results

This pitch was in constant use for training and games of rugby so suffered from reduced grass cover. Starting with a good foundation, pitch improvements included the introduction of sand to ameliorate and create an even playing surface.

Quick to establish, Mascot R14 was overseeded at one end of the pitch, as it produces extended growth periods at lower temperatures and provides good wear and recoverability.

At the shaded end of the pitch a mixture of

rhizomatous and non-rhizomatous tall fescues together with rye was included in the mix.

“Tall fescue is a really remarkable species with unrivalled recovery and tensile strength,” says Brian Robinson.

Now the trial work is paying tremendous dividends and management of the pitch has also changed. Gareth says: “Instead of bashing the pitch to death through continual training we have put more controls down.

“But we have had more games on the pitch than ever before.”

**For individual advice on increasing grass cover please contact Rigby Taylor on freephone 0800 424919 [www.rigbytaylor.com](http://www.rigbytaylor.com)**

## Top team for great grass results

WORKING IN collaboration leading seed agent Rigby Taylor bridges the gap between the specialist grass seed breeding programme of Top Green and end-users.



**BRIAN ROBINSON,** Director of Seed Research at Rigby Taylor, says: “By taking the time to make personal visits to golf clubs,

local authorities and sports providers we find out exactly what their requirements are. “We then feed this information to Top Green who ensures all major issues are included in its breeding programmes.”

These top-rating cultivars are then included in Rigby Taylor’s dedicated Mascot mixtures, which are successfully used by sports and amenity professionals nationwide.

With a wealth of experience Brian Robinson and the Rigby Taylor team are the specialist grass seed agents you can rely on and are the sole distributors of quality Top Green seed in the UK.



**STEPHEN ALDERTON** is Marketing Manager for major specialist seed breeder Top Green and at their Les Alleuds trial grounds in

France he oversees development of exciting new cultivars.

Alderton says: “Part of our very latest research includes looking at new festuloliums, a cross between tall fescue and ryegrass, which produce a plant with the beneficial characteristics of deep roots from the fescue combined with the wear tolerance of ryegrasses.”



**STEPHEN DENTON** as Grass Seed Development Manager at Rigby Taylor supports Brian Robinson in trial work on specialist

projects. He also liaises with the professional sales team enabling them to give tremendous support to customers.

Stephen Denton says: “We as a company work hard to ensure customers receive sound advice and supply select cultivars which enable them to produce an excellent sward to cope with all weather conditions.”

## How to encourage biodiversity

BY COMBINING new grasses with a wildflower or floral planting mix from Rigby Taylor a beautiful vista can be created. With serious concerns about declining wildlife populations from sparrows to bumble bees it is vital to provide a natural haven for animals and insects. What better than a combination of sustainable grasses and stunning flowers?



## Chilly Cairngorms

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION of what is thought to be Europe's largest vegetation translocation and reinstatement project in the Scottish Cairngorms is still reaping significant benefits.

Challenging conditions with altitudes spanning from 600 metres to more than 1,080 metres and with winds often gusting up to 100mph meant it was vital to create immediate ground cover. And cultivars developed for this project are now being used to great effect in sports and landscaping applications.

**As a testimonial to this dedicated research in the Cairngorms Scottish National Heritage has agreed to Rigby Taylor mixes and Top Green cultivars being used at many highly sensitive sites, including the Lake District National Park.**

### Benefits achieved from Cairngorms trials:

- Seeds germinate quickly at low temperatures to help create immediate groundcover. This makes a dramatic difference in helping to combat soil erosion on site.
- Cultivars have been developed which are tremendously resilient. They will grow at temperatures down to less than 40 degrees F, six degrees C.
- Grass grows more into the winter months improving wearability. This is essential in Eastern England where a cold wind often means growth does not start until later in the season.
- Grass seed is now available to create grass areas that produce less clippings - making considerable savings on maintenance.



Development of new cultivars in the Cairngorms

## Leading role for our parks

IN OUR PARKS and open spaces local authorities and landscapers are responsible for bringing the public, green grass and plants together like no other part of the industry. Getting the community closer to nature is a vital role for them – particularly within inner city and urban environments.

Best practice can include setting aside experimental

grass sites to foster biodiversity.

Brian Robinson of Rigby Taylor says: "It is a huge commitment to change something you have always used, but grass varieties have moved on and upgraded cultivars provide far greater efficiency. Most importantly our parks and open spaces have a key role to play in helping to combat high CO<sub>2</sub> levels."

### Sound solution to pathways in Derbyshire

PROMOTION OF OUTDOOR and leisure activities means footpaths in public places are under continual pressure.

And in the Derbyshire National Parks grass seed has been applied in a unique way to cause minimal damage to the landscape - by helicopter.

Brian Robinson of Rigby Taylor says:

"Here we created a bespoke mix so some grasses are designed to die back after three to five years to allow natural vegetation to re-establish.

"This is crucial to sustain these areas of natural beauty."

## Striking grass seeds at airports

BIRD STRIKE is a major problem at our airfields. Airport authorities have become more and more aware of this fact and a remedy has been found through the dedicated mixtures from Rigby Taylor.

Brian Robinson says: "We have now created low clipping grasses which maintain a bird deterrent and require less maintenance."

### Flying forward

When airports and RAF stations were first built they adopted a long grass policy but existing grasses encourage insects which then attract higher and higher populations of birds.

Robinson says: "As a result it is apparent that these areas either need major renovation or significant changes in their

maintenance structure."

Grass at airfields has generally been kept at around 150mm in height as birds are then very wary of landing but the type of agricultural ryegrass species originally used create decaying matter – now sometimes 100mm deep. Creating an ideal habitat for mammals such as voles and rats this then encourages birds of prey – further heightening the danger to aircraft.

Robinson says: "Our aim is to create a thicker sward at the bottom to prevent weed grasses from being able to come through."

**The BAA, Ministry of Defence and Civil Aviation Authorities recognize the tremendous value of these new hand-picked mixtures from Rigby Taylor.**

## YOUR CONTACTS

• **Brian Robinson** on 01483 446900 email: b.robinson@rigbytaylor.com • **Stephen Denton** on 07770 762819 email: s.denton@rigbytaylor.com

• **Stephen Alderton** on 0033 241 689 905 e.mail: stephen.alderton@tgsas.fr

• **HEAD OFFICE:** Rigby Taylor House, Crown Lane, Horwich, Bolton BL6 5HP. Tel 01204 677777 • **REGIONAL OFFICES:** SOUTH: Guildford, Surrey (01483 446900) SCOTLAND: Newbridge, Midlothian (0131 333 3344) • **Email for all inquiries:** sales@rigbytaylor.com • **FREEPHONE** 0800 424919

