

Welcome

RIGBY TAYLOR and **TOP GREEN** welcome you to the second edition of their newsletter – with news of some excellent new cultivars. Sustainability issues are increasingly high on the agenda of golf clubs, sports providers and local authorities. Rigby Taylor and Top Green have been addressing these issues by introducing some cultivars specially designed to significantly reduce maintenance costs and keep grass healthy.



Brian Robinson
Director of Seed Research for leading grass seed agent Rigby Taylor. Driving new cultivar development

and dedicated trials forward, Brian helps clubs to nurture their turfgrass surfaces. Notably Rigby Taylor is the sole seed agent for high-quality Top Green cultivars in the UK, supplying site-specific mixes to ensure clubs achieve consistent results.



Stephen Alderton
Marketing Manager for specialist seed breeder Top Green. Based at the Les Alleuds trial grounds

in France Stephen assists the company in undertaking an innovative programme of research and development. The working relationship between Top Green and Rigby Taylor ensures feedback from customers is included in the breeding programme.



Stephen Denton
Grass Seed Development Manager with Rigby Taylor. Stephen is responsible for supporting Brian

Robinson on specialist projects and liaising with the sales teams, enabling them to provide the best support possible to customers.

Rugby stays on top form



At Rugby School, one of the country's oldest schools and renowned for the hallowed turf where rugby was invented, a renovation programme has been implemented using Mascot R14.

WHEN JAMES MEAD joined this prestigious school, situated right in the heart of Rugby, one of his first roles was to introduce a new management programme for the rugby pitches.

The programme was introduced three years ago to improve pitch performance and started with the removal of weak grass growth using an Amazone. A top dressing was applied using a 70/30 rootzone mix and overseeding then followed. Mead says:

"We use Rigby Taylor's Mascot R14 and improvements have been made to the quality of the sward, its strength, vigour, together with playing performance. I have been very pleased with results."

This Mascot mix has been well trialled by Mead who used it on the pitches at Millfield School and before that in Birmingham.

"They are always very reliable and trustworthy and you know the seed you buy will work well," he adds.

Overseeding has continued to encourage plenty of new growth and a regular aeration programme has also been instigated using a soil reliever and tractor unit.

In total there are 14 rugby pitches at the school, many of which are in use from September to January when the grass is maintained at a 32mm height of cut. Then it is changed over to football and the height of cut reduced to 25mm.

Two first team pitches on the main campus remain set up for the game of rugby

throughout the whole winter period.

Sustaining a good playing surface while under intense use, the premier winter games renovation mix R14 used at Rugby School contains perennial ryegrasses: 30 per cent Greenfair, 30 per cent Hugo, 20 per cent Action and 20 per cent Greenway/Berlioz.

With a staff of 18, head groundsman Mead adds:

"It was particularly rewarding for the team and I when on the annual speech day the headmaster said how delighted he was with the quality and look of the grounds."

INSIDE THIS LATEST ISSUE:

- Tall Fescues have a starring role on Torbay seafront
- Reap the benefits of a regular overseeding programme
- Latest line-up of top-rating cultivars
- Cricket groundsmen bowled over by turfgrass trials



Tall fescues take to seafront

MAINTAINING GRASS areas along Paignton's high-profile seafront has presented challenges for Torbay Council, leading to significant trials with tall fescues on a grassed area called Middle Green.

Pressure was on this council in Devon, as public perception was such that measures were needed to improve grass cover and get the green into better shape. Service manager for landscape and grounds maintenance, Richard Barton, says: "With the amount of events which go on throughout the summer and heavy pedestrian traffic we were trying to find cultivars which would recover more quickly and take wear, but require minimum maintenance."

He had been impressed with the tall fescue trials at Top Green's site in France but was not certain real-life performance would match. "After carrying out trials with Rigby Taylor I have been delighted with the results," he says.



Overseeding took place using a tall fescue on its own, and in a mix, and this has considerably improved the sward's re-growth capacity.

Rhizomatous tall fescue Grande was selected as it significantly improves grass cover and has a deep rooting structure which goes more than a metre deep into the soil. And a further benefit is this cultivar flourishes in dramatic extremes of wet or

dry weather conditions.

A further Top Green tall fescue Scorpiones has also been used to boost turf density. Highly effective, this cultivar is included in mixes for sports and landscaping applications.

Concentrating on heavy wear areas, ryegrass has also been used extensively. There was a lot of growth in the first year and Richard says: "The amount of grass on the seafront green is tremendous to what it used to be. He concludes:

"Working in collaboration with Rigby Taylor, we have been trying grass mixes we would not normally think of using and this is definitely working successfully."

Football goes greener for Brighton

STEVE WINTERBURN, head groundsman at Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club, has three key objectives in mind when making his grass seed selection.

He says: "There are three issues I have to consider - the current Withdean Stadium at Falmer, east of Brighton, the new stadium - which should be open in 2010 - and the training facilities.

"I discuss with Rigby Taylor what grasses are most suitable for each environment and have been working in conjunction with them for some time now."

Going to Les Alleuds on a trip this summer, Steve was keen to see how specific grasses re-act under heat, as irrigation is an issue and watering needs to be kept as low as possible.

"Ryegrasses and rhizomatous tall fescue were of particular interest and how the cultivars perform against each other on the trial site," he says.

At the club since 2001, Steve previously worked at its training facilities at the University of Sussex. Gearing up to create the specification for the new pitch he adds: "With the new stadium shade tolerance is a key issue and one I will seriously consider when selecting the appropriate mix."

STOP PRESS: TOP TALL FESCUES

At the forefront of rhizomatous tall fescue research and development Top Green's Grande was the first ever registered cultivar in Europe of this type and now the next generation Grande 2 is in the pipeline and set to take a starring role.

How regular overseeding reaps rewards



Here to help . . . Steve Denton (left) advises on cultivar selection.

TO MEET the ever-increasing demands of heavy-use sports surfaces, addressing issues such as winter density, quick establishment of the grasses and good recoverability are vital.

So, to improve course and pitch performance during the demanding autumn and winter period, a regular overseeding programme is recommended.

Brian Robinson of Rigby Taylor says: "This creates

new healthy vegetation and reduces annual meadow grass and other non-grass plants from germinating in place of the correct grasses." A specially selected range of Mascot mixes has been formulated to provide rapid establishment, uniformity and density.

To further enhance germination and the health of the sward Activate R and Amino-Form can be used to great effect.

How benefits of natural turf add up

- Reduces runoff
- Helps to neutralize carbon emissions
- Improves air quality
- Purifies water
- Helps combat erosion
- Modifies temperature
- Releases Oxygen



Top-listing seeds from Rigby Taylor and Top Green

KEEPING YOU up to date with recent introductions the following cultivars are making their mark.

Greenvie is ideal for golf tees and fairways. This great strong creeping red fescue – ranked number one on the STRI list – is included in Rigby Taylor's dedicated Mascot mixtures R5, R128, R6 and R129.

Stephen Alderton, Marketing Manager for Top Green says:

"Greenvie's density makes it ideal for all fine turf sports applications."

And for shady areas, and situations where renovation is required, Rigby Taylor's Mascot R116 dramatically improves course conditions, especially on highly stressed greens.

Containing specially developed perennial



ryegrass cultivars 15 per cent Greenway, 5 per cent Ace, together with slender creeping red fescues 25 per cent Helena and 15 per cent Lanai, these are combined with 32.5 per cent Calliope chewings fescue and 7.5 per cent Egmont and Egmontwo

browntop bents to provide good levels of growth throughout the season. Great results have been achieved at the public golf course Garon Park in Essex, where a dedicated overseeding programme has considerably improved wear

tolerance in greens over the winter period.

And at the Three Rivers Golf and Country Club in Essex overseeding has taken place to produce good playing conditions on two particularly shady greens. Mascot mixes are available which cater for all weather conditions – from the colder north to the warmer south – or bespoke mixes can be prepared. All are designed to help customers achieve a good playing surface 365 days of the year.

Seed mixtures are supplied in newly-designed fully recyclable 10kg and 20kg bags, with finer mixes available in 10kg bags.

For individual advice please contact Rigby Taylor on freephone 0800 424919 www.rigbytaylor.com

Two new Browntop Bents for 2008



TWO NEW exciting browntop bent grasses are now available to UK professionals.

Greenspeed and Egmontwo have been bred from the finest New Zealand browntops (*Agrostis capillaris*) and are ideal for use on golf greens, tees and fairways, blending in extremely well with fine fescue and other cool season grasses.

Greenspeed has stood out in BSPB lawn and fairway trials with high scores for shoot density, visual merit and winter greenness. It is a medium light green colour. A medium dark green colour, Egmontwo has performed

exceptionally well in the BSPB close mown golf trials and boasts high shoot density, above average leaf fineness and excellent visual merit.

Leading French seed breeder Top Green has worked in collaboration with the New Zealand breeder PGG Wrightson Turf to develop and extensively trial these outstanding new cultivars.

Ideal for the UK climate, Greenspeed and Egmontwo offer clubs the opportunity to create great year-round conditions.

So, why are the best browntop cultivars bred in New Zealand?

Bill Walmsley of PGG Wrightson Turf is in no doubt why and says: "This grass was first introduced to New Zealand from Europe in the earliest days of European settlement, so they have a long history in our country. "Browntop rapidly spread to become our most widely distributed grass and our cultivars are still well adapted to UK and European conditions today."

What are the advantages of browntop bents?

Interest in browntop has

increased for two significant reasons – fewer pesticides are permitted on turf and the Royal and Ancient Golf Association is encouraging the theme of sustainable golf. Browntop is ideally suited to a regime of reduced pesticides due to its tolerance to the regular use of ammonium sulphate to help eliminate moss and weeds.

For further details on these NEW cultivars and the MASCOT GRASS SEED 2008 RANGE contact your local Rigby Taylor representative or call Freephone 0800 424919.

REDUCED CLIPPINGS

The problem: Did you know that most grasses produce 6.5 tonnes of clippings per hectare per annum and a high percentage of this gets washed down drains and gulleys? This can cause serious problems during periods of heavy rain.

The solution: The amount of clippings can be dramatically reduced by changing to different cultivars such as Greenflash. From tests carried out using 20 varieties the average clippings per cut was 140gms. Greenflash produced just 20gms.



Cricket groundsmen bowled over by trials

LEADING COUNTY CRICKET groundsmen from England and Wales visited grass seed trial grounds in France on a fact-finding mission to discover the latest high-performing cultivars. They visited Les Alleuds, where seed breeder Top Green develops and tests cultivars specifically designed to meet the ever-increasing demands of cricket.

The company's sole seed agent in the UK Rigby Taylor provides essential feedback from cricket groundsmen that fuels this dedicated research. Pitches Consultant for the ECB Chris Wood says: *"With TV coverage at matches, players and the public have extremely high expectations and the pitches need to look fantastic all the time. This is what cricket groundsmen are striving to achieve. Twenty-five years ago we did not consider*



grass seed cultivars and that is how things have changed dramatically."

Latest trends

At the Les Alleuds trial grounds the group saw firsthand the next generation of cultivars aimed at improving disease resistance, stress

resistance and which can cope with heavy wear.

Marketing Manager for Top Green Stephen Alderton says: "Some ryegrass cultivars have revolutionized cricket outfields. Greenflash is a prime example as it has exceptional wear resistance

but its slow re-growth characteristics means it produces significantly less clippings."

He adds: "Groundsmen should also look at using a rhizomatous tall fescue cultivar on the outfield as it has much deeper rooting, making the turfgrass more drought tolerant."

Current research is looking at new festuloliums, a cross between tall fescue and ryegrass, that produces a plant with the beneficial characteristics of deep roots from the fescue combined with the wear tolerance of ryegrasses.

Grass Seed Development Manager for Rigby Taylor, Stephen Denton, says: *"From our point of view it is vital we continue to listen to the cricket groundsmen and their requirements, so we can meet their current needs and plan for the future."*



Stephen Alderton on the trial grounds at Les Alleuds

Lining up French rugby

THE FRENCH Rugby Federation was seeking a solution to marking out the pitch in Marseilles for the prestigious 2007 Rugby World Cup series. As this is a multi-use stadium the pitch was marked out with soccer lines.

Going for an innovative ready-to-use white line marking system developed by Rigby Taylor, this was applied

using the company's latest Impact Glider line marking machine.

Speedily marked out, with no messy mixing of paints, the lines were dry within 15 to 20 minutes.

Following this success story, Top Green has now launched the Rigby Taylor Impact Glider line marking system into France.

Cutting council costs

WITH COUNCIL BUDGETS being slashed the interest in low maintenance grasses has hotted up. Already successfully trialled by Torbay Council, Richard Barton its service manager for landscape and grounds maintenance says: "If councils are serious about reducing their carbon footprint they should look at minimizing the amount they spend on cutting grass verges and reduce the weight of their grass clippings.

"I am extremely pleased with the results of trials we have carried out with Rigby Taylor and plan to roll out the programme into other areas."

Low maintenance grasses are definitely the way forward and a district council in

Hampshire says: "We only have the funds to cut the grass on a monthly basis, so anything that reduces the number of cuts required and looks good is something that definitely interests us."

And this is backed up by a South West city council who says: "We will be looking at sustainability issues this year and ways to reduce maintenance costs are always of interest and will be vital in helping achieve our goals."

Further advantages to councils are that they make considerable savings on manpower, mower wear and repairs, clearing up clippings and blocked gulleys.

• *Find out how your council can benefit by contacting 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

