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One of the aims of our Greens staff is to keep our course as sustainable as possible using biological products. This means that we must try to maintain Organic or a least minimising the use of chemicals which in turn will reduce stress on the grass. Grass experience stress from heat, drought, wetness, compaction, nutrient deficiencies or imbalances, and disease and pest infestations. To minimize stress on grass you need to pay attention to the following principles.

- Establish and maintain a healthy soil environment.
- Include a diversity of species in the lawn environment.
- Use cultural practices that reduce stress on turf growth.
- Understand and work with your local soil and climate conditions.
- Use biological pest control methods.

This means using biological products to sustain the living organisms within the soil.

*Living organisms - Fungi, bacteria, beneficial nematodes, and earthworms in the soil are important for the decomposition of thatch, enhancing soil aeration through the formation of soil aggregates, and reducing populations of soil-borne plant pathogens. To support a healthy and diverse population of soil organisms, soils need to have on-going additions of organic matter, a near neutral pH, and a balanced supply of nutrients. In addition, soil organisms thrive best in soils that are well aerated and moist but not wet.*

Unfortunately, we have just had one of the wettest winters for quite a while. This resulted in the living organisms became inactive or even dying in some instances. When this happens it allows the pathogens to be prevalent causing a disease called Fusarium.

*Fusarium - It is recognised by the die-back of quite large areas of grass on compacted Turf in particular. Usually found in Autumn, but also in Spring after there has been snow lying on the lawn for some lengthy period. It can spread and take hold under cover of snow - hence it's common name of Snow Mould.*

To remedy this our Greens staff have been aerating as you will have noticed, this is to increase the air flow within the soil giving the organisms a boost to start working again. Aeration ( in different forms) will continue throughout the year as it is paramount to the well being of Living organisms.

*The best defence against Fusarium Patch Disease is to consider the growing environment that the turf is living within throughout the seasons. Provision of light, air, food and water are essential for a healthy turf. Fusarium, like most fungi, relishes damp, enclosed, still, low light conditions. If it is possible to improve any of these factors this will aid disease resistance in the future. An appropriate maintenance regime should be followed, including mowing, scarification, feeding, weeding and aeration.*

## **Winter 2009/2010**

The greens have had a early feed, that was designed for the Scandinavian countries where the temperatures struggle in the spring. This was designed to provide a full macro and micronutrient package directly via the plant leaf to take advantage of favourable daytime growing conditions. A spring fertiliser, fulvic acid and a bio seaweed was also added to get the grass and for a green up.

The tees have been verti drained and top dressed with a slow release fertiliser. The 13<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> greens have a further boost of fertiliser because the grass was patchy .

Over the winter the Green staff have been either upgrading or filling in several bunkers. The 14<sup>th</sup> has been filled in because it was too steep to cut and dangerous, also it was rarely used. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> was pure clay and held water, it might be considered to construct new bunkers in the future but the drainage must be considered. The 16<sup>th</sup> was very little used and was blocked by a hedge and was considered unfair. The 9<sup>th</sup> was too far away to be of any use.

The work on the pond on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was paramount as the sleepers were rotten and had to be replaced therefore it was decided to make it more pleasing to the eye.

Work over the winter was severely hampered by the weather but as you will have noticed crown lifting on trees and brush cutting has been on going.

## **April 2010**

The greens are going to be verti drained and top dressed during April this will result after several weeks to be a lovely putting surface as normal. And the dreaded Fusarium will be all in the past.

The fairways are going to be verti drained also and a balanced fertiliser applied, this is much needed to counteract compaction and give a boost to the turf.

A few bunkers every month are going to be renovated by having the edges sorted and the depth of sand increased.

The divots on the tees will be continually treated with top dressing and seed.

## **NEXT MONTH**

I hope the above information has been useful and if you would like more information please leave a note with the desk. Including your name and I will publish your question with an answer in next months report.

*Gillian Garbutt*

Greens Liaison Chairman