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EDITOR’S LETTER

As I write the UK government’s pledge to offer a first dose of a Covid vaccine to the top four of nine cohorts (priority groups) - approximately 15 million people - by Monday 15th February is creeping towards its target. With that, cases of Covid are again, for now, on a downward trend. And one hopes that soon Boris Johnson will start to lay out solid plans for lifting restrictions across the country. So fingers crossed, it will mean a gradual and safe opening up of visitor attractions and open spaces, and that professional and grassroots sports clubs will be able to play on their ‘hallowed turf’ once more, in front of socially distanced crowds. I also hope the news Boris brings will allow for more certainty to trade show and event organisers, as they continue to plan for the year ahead. On page 9, we have the latest news and plans from some of our renown trade shows and events and we will bring updates via www.landscapermagazine.com as soon as we hear on any changes to venues and dates.

While we are missing the trade shows and events for now, there is still important tasks to get through this Spring. This month, we focus on some tools of the trade to get you through these chores. We look at some compact tractors currently on the market and check in with a senior gardener at the National Trust and also the pitch advisor at the Grounds Management Association on page 22 to find out how these versatile power machines assist their working days. We also take a look at some of the great models on the market should you be looking to replace your old tractor or mower. Finally, for those working in landscaping and gardening, witnessing the growth in the number of people wanting to create beautiful outdoor spaces, Paula Warman of The Landscaper’s Circle monthly column advises on how proper planning and scheduling can help you capitalise on this growing trend.

Maggie Walsh, Editor
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Diary date: A week of celebration to mark the role of professional and volunteer grounds care teams who make sports possible.

The Grounds Management Association (GMA), the leading not-for-profit membership body for grounds professionals and volunteers, announces the launch of #GroundsWeek.

The inaugural celebration week will take place from 1-7 March, 2021 to celebrate and highlight the vital role of professional grounds staff, volunteers, and the turf sector play in making sport possible.

Following a difficult year for the sector, due to the impact of Covid-19, the GMA aims to showcase grounds staff and the amazing work that they do – and have continued to do – despite sport coming to a grinding halt. It also comes after a year where parks and green spaces have been valuable to the public’s health – with increased use for ‘daily exercise’ and physical activity.

Grounds management continues to be challenging beyond 2020 due to limited resources and budgets, coupled with more varied and unpredictable weather conditions that makes planning tasks more difficult.

Geoff Webb, CEO of the GMA, says: “We know that the skill involved is often misunderstood. We want to inspire sports fans and the general public to celebrate alongside us and get even more people to enter the profession and lend a helping hand at pitches across the country.

“Without the vital work that grounds staff do, many sports would face cancellations and potentially closure. This is a chance to recognise all the hard work that goes into making sport possible and keeping green spaces accessible.”

The GMA’s campaign will encourage individuals and organisations across the industry, whether they have a career in grounds management or volunteer for an hour a week, to get involved both on the pitch and on social media.

Geoff continues: “Grounds staff are vital and the work they do is essential to getting the nation active – from professional athletes to local communities. After a really tough year, we’re launching this celebration week to raise awareness and give our members the opportunity to get the recognition they deserve.

For top tips and a social media pack for organisations wanting to get involved contact the GMA, who will be releasing more news in February 2021. Businesses can also get involved by pledging to be a #GroundsWeek partner.

https://thegma.org.uk/
Eco-friendly business merchant supports Rainforest Trust

The UK’s leading environmentally-friendly builders’ merchant, EnviroBuild is celebrating five years of supporting the Rainforest Trust to help save the planet’s rapidly disappearing forests and wildlife.

EnviroBuild is making its annual donation to the non-profit organisation, not only to fund crucial projects but also to offset the carbon footprint of its own production processes since the company was founded in 2015.

The London-based supplier has been donating 10% of its profits to the trust for the past five years. To date, it has helped to protect almost 63 million trees and has supported multiple Rainforest Trust projects.

With more than 60 years’ experience in the construction industry, EnviroBuild aims to provide top-quality products, without the negative environmental impact of traditional materials. Its latest donation will help fund green initiatives across Africa, South America, Central America and Asia, protecting more than 65,000 acres of habitat.

These have included safeguarding the threatened snow leopard in the Himalayas, creating a Bonobo reserve for the endangered great ape in the Congo and helping to reintroduce Spix’s Macaw into the wild after it became extinct, apart from 160 birds surviving in captivity worldwide.

James Brueton, co-founder of EnviroBuild and trustee at Rainforest Trust, said: “EnviroBuild have supported Rainforest Trust UK since launching five years ago. We think it’s one of the highest positive impacts per pound of donation causes.

“Each protected area helps to protect biodiversity and engages local communities, whilst also helping to combat climate change by protecting primary forests from being destroyed through the many threats that face them today.

“As a business that supplies products that will always carry some form of carbon footprint, it is vital for us to find ways to offset these. From the beginning, we have aimed for EnviroBuild to be carbon negative through the reduction of embedded carbon in our products and through charitable donations.”

He added they were happy to support such a wide range of projects in 2020, across a diverse range of habitats and locations. The donations will protect habitats including dense jungle, coastal waters and mountainous tundra.

A unique partnership in 2020 between Rainforest Trust and EnviroBuild’s garden furniture brand, Galloca, also meant up to 7.17 acres of rainforest were protected per garden furniture set sold, in addition to the usual 10% donation of company profits.

Having started out by donating to one project in 2015, company bosses have seen the number of projects they can support growing year after year. To date, including the donations in 2020, they have supported 32 projects, protecting more than 247,704 acres of rainforests and oceans.

Ten projects will benefit from the latest annual donations, including saving the critically endangered blue-throated macaw of Bolivia, protecting Columbia’s Barbacoas wetlands - a vital winter habitat for migratory birds - and creating a 150-acre protected wildlife area in Nepal’s TMJ Rhododendron Forest.

Donations will support endangered sea life in the Congo and rescue South Africa’s most threatened snake, the Albany Adder. Three at-risk conservation areas will also be helped: “sky island” on Mount Namuli in Mozambique, Liberia’s only surviving 406,913-acre forest and the Amazon-Cerrado Rainforest in Brazil.

The Rainforest Trust partners with local and community organisations in vulnerable areas around the world to carry out its vital work. It buys large expanses of forested land and then manages it in a sustainable manner to benefit not only the local wildlife but the people who live in the area too.

Sustainability is at the heart of the EnviroBuild brand, which uses only recycled materials to manufacture its products. It aims to be as ethical a supplier of building materials as possible, encouraging people to buy products made from recycled wood to reduce the need for logging. It also aims to raise awareness of the escalating climate crisis to help prevent further deterioration of the rainforests.

When starting EnviroBuild in 2015, James knew how important it was to offset the company’s carbon footprint. As a result, Rainforest Trust quickly became the main sustainable cause the company supported every year.

He finds working for a sustainable company boosts employee morale. “By giving everyone at EnviroBuild the choice of where they’d like to see a part of the donations go, we hope to show their hard work is making a difference to the environment,” he explained.

“We hope the Rainforest Trust projects we support will receive all the necessary funding in time. If all the projects are supported, this will save over two million acres of rainforest and other habitats, which all store a large amount of CO₂, helping to combat climate change and protect unique biodiversity and communities.”

Through raising awareness of the climate crisis, EnviroBuild hopes to help prevent further deterioration of the rainforests, creating a better tomorrow for future generations.

The Red Panda, native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China, is an endangered species

Brexit stops plant supply to Northern Ireland

One of the UK’s Leading commercial nurseries, Johnsons Of Whixley, reports that it has had to stop supplying plants to Northern Ireland after new Brexit restrictions came into play in January.

Before Brexit, the company sold half a million pounds worth of plants a year to Northern Irish customers, but new and impractical restrictions have put a wedge between long-standing trading relationships.

The new legislation stops nurseries like Johnsons supplying Rootball, Bare Root and Container plants into the EU and now Northern Ireland. Plants which originate from a bare root young plant, or those that have had any contact with the soil, even if container grown, are considered a risk due to the likely legacy of soil residue which has the potential to carry pathogens or nematodes.

While not impossible, soil residue removal is impractical and would defeat the object of rootballing and containerisation.

Jonathan Whittemore, Head of Production and Procurement at Johnsons Of Whixley

The restriction was designed to protect the wider EU Flora and Fauna, under this scenario there is ‘nil’ risk to the EU from Johnsons traditional supply into NI be it from our own production or ironically imports sourced in the EU and supplied into NI!”

Long-standing customers of Johnsons and many other nurseries are left with no choice but to go directly to EU suppliers as there are no restrictions on a legacy soil residue between EU members or affiliates in the guise of Northern Ireland.

Johnson’s Head of Production and Procurement, Jonathan Whittemore commented: “This legislation penalises UK growers and gives an immediate competitive advantage to EU suppliers who may go on to monopolise supply into an existing part of the UK at the expense of our business and the wider industry.”

“The Brexit ‘project’ was meant to reduce red tape and bureaucracy and was surely not intended to penalise UK Suppliers and active Northern Ireland/UK customers.

The restriction was designed to protect the wider EU Flora and Fauna, under this scenario there is ‘nil’ risk to the EU from Johnsons traditional supply into NI be it from our own production or ironically imports sourced in the EU and supplied into NI!”

James Brueton
Founder EnviroBuild

Jonathan Whittemore
Roadmap target of a 15% reduction in CO₂ per tonne is a significant step in reaching its Sustainability Roadmap target. Suppliers to the building and landscaping industry, to 100% of its electricity from renewable sources. Ibstock plc accelerates Net-Zero journey to become the first building products manufacturer in the UK to procure renewable electricity. It is a market leader in an energy intensive sector, and we believe it is vital that we demonstrate that leadership in terms of reducing carbon emissions and supporting the market for renewable energy. Many of our customers right across the construction sector have made commitments to achieving net zero emissions and our move to Pure Green shows them that we are with them on that journey.

“Many more projects and initiatives planned and under way to further reduce our carbon impacts - but, there is no doubt that this move to Pure Green really is a very big step forward in achieving our decarbonisation goals. “As the first UK building products manufacturer to make a move to 100% renewable electricity, we believe we have set an example to others in our sector; we hope our peers are quick to follow suit.”

Dave Cranfield, General Manager of Total Gas & Power, adds: “We are proud to have been working with Ibstock since 2013 and during that time we have seen them become an industry leader in the drive towards carbon neutrality. It’s particularly pleasing to be helping them reach their Sustainability Roadmap target of a 15% reduction in CO₂ by 2025 by supplying them with Pure Green, 100% renewable electricity. As one of the largest electricity suppliers in the UK, Total shares the ambition, together with society, to become net zero by 2050 for all of our activities. We will continue to work closely with our customers, including Ibstock, as the demand for renewable electricity grows, and we will continue to evolve and invest significantly in carbon neutral initiatives over the coming years.”

Ibstock’s operations commenced use of Pure Green electricity on January 1st 2021.

Decarbonisation measures
This switch to renewable electricity is the latest in a series of decarbonisation projects Ibstock has invested in, including the completion of a solar park – the first of its kind in the brick industry – at the Group’s Leicestershire head office. Supplying 20-30% of the power requirement on site. The company is also continuing to play its part in the reduction of reliance on fossil fuels through the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across several sites. Decarbonisation measures have been a focus and a commitment for Ibstock in recent years, with significant projects underway to further reduce their carbon footprint. This switch to renewable electricity is the latest in a series of decarbonisation projects Ibstock has invested in, including the completion of a solar park – the first of its kind in the brick industry – at the Group’s Leicestershire head office. Supplying 20-30% of the power requirement on site. The company is also continuing to play its part in the reduction of reliance on fossil fuels through the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across several sites.

Ibstock’s Sustainability Road Map

Building supplier on track to reach Sustainability Roadmap target

Ibstock plc accelerates Net-Zero journey to become the first building products manufacturer in the UK to procure 100% of its electricity from renewable sources. This milestone announcement enables Ibstock, suppliers to the building and landscaping industry, to make significant steps in reaching its Sustainability Roadmap target of a 15% reduction in CO₂ per tonne of production by 2025, and accelerates its Net-Zero Carbon journey.

Total Gas & Power, Ibstock’s energy supplier, says its Pure Green energy tariff enables Ibstock to report zero emissions for electricity under the GHG Protocol Corporate Standards, Scope 2 as the electricity can be matched to Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificates. Pure Green guarantees that the REGOs will only come from solar, wind or hydro sources. The generation mix of Total’s Pure Green power is typically hydro/wave power (0.31%); solar (24.69%); and wind (75%).

Ibstock’s Sustainability Road Map

FLP Pond Liner adds tranquil touch to Devon farmhouse

FLP, a brand of leading landscape supplier Green-tech, has supplied the pond liner for a stunning new pond installed in a farmhouse located in South Devon. SWP Hydraulics from Devon approached FLP after an internet search. Their sales advisor provided guidance on measurements to work out the correct size needed. The pond is 29 meters long, 10 meters wide and 1.5m deep and after discussion an order was placed for 0.75mm Green Seal EPDM liner which has a reassuring 20-year guarantee.

EPDM is a synthetic rubber membrane liner ideal for lining ponds, lakes, lagoons and streams. Ideal for aquatic installations, EPDM is a popular choice for larger projects where unusual shapes, contours and sizes are required. It is a highly robust pond liner and is resistant to UV degradation and other harsh environmental conditions. The EPDM pond liners can be installed all year-round as they remain extremely flexible at various temperatures.

Nathan from SWP Hydraulics comments, “We decided to install a feature pond which would be designed to seamlessly blend the stunning Devon countryside with the tranquil calm of water which can all be enjoyed at close quarters from the deck.”

“I have found Green-tech with a simple search online. The support and advise from specification through to fitting was excellent. It was quite a task to install and took nearly 3 weeks to fill from our Well, but we are very pleased with the end results.”

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Ground Control appoints new Managing Director

Ground Control, the UK’s leading supplier of award-winning landscaping and maintenance services, has announced the appointment of a new managing director, with Marcus Watson handing over to Jason Knights in January 2021.

Marcus’ tenure has seen Ground Control win a range of prestigious awards including the Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2016. He continues to be a significant shareholder and Non-Exec Director, helping to steer Ground Control in the future.

“Since joining in 2011, Marcus has led us through a period of significant growth and change,” says Ground Control CEO Simon Morrish. “His leadership has overseen continued phenomenal growth, as well as significant diversification and de-risking of our core capabilities.”

“Marcus has been instrumental in driving our core purpose, Caring for the Environment, as well as putting people at the centre of everything we do, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his hard work and dedication which played a key role in establishing Ground Control's leading position in our industry.”

Jason Knights joins Ground Control from SES Engineering Services where for the past four years he has been Managing Director. SES Engineering Services were acquired by the Wates Group in November 2016 and Jason was part of the Wates Construction Board during the acquisition and the also the newly formed Wates Construction Group Board from 2016 to his eventual departure in September 2020.

Jason joined Ground Control in September and has spent the time gaining an understanding of the company’s operations, customers and processes. Jason has now formally taken over the Managing Director role and will continue to work closely with his predecessor to ensure a smooth transition.

“Going forward we will continue to heavily invest in our people and innovation whilst following a clear and simple plan to achieve growth and a business returning long term shareholder value. I am really passionate that we remain true to our values and vision, learning the lessons of the past and embracing the opportunities of the future,” says Jason Knights.

“Our colleagues have adapted admirably to support customers through this challenging period. This gives us a fantastic platform to achieve our significant growth ambitions over the next 5 years, helping our clients achieve their environmental ambitions and helping the UK transition to an exciting and environmentally sustainable recovery.”

New Turf Rewards for 2021

ICL and Syngenta have expanded the Turf Rewards family to bring even more budget and time saving rewards for 2021 for customers.

Turf Rewards provides the opportunity to earn points from purchases that can then be exchanged against a selection of agronomic or turf related items and learning opportunities. Over recent years greenkeepers and turf managers have praised the scheme for providing them with an opportunity to improve turf management and business performance - at no added cost.

One of the main benefits of the scheme is that it allows users to afford tools and equipment that may be difficult to stretch to when working to a tight budget. With an extensive range of items already on offer, a raft of new rewards for 2021 have recently been confirmed. These include a range of wildflower mixes suitable for links, parkland and heathland areas, Stihl Dynamic Bluetooth ear defenders, Accupro 1000 and Accupro 2000 spreaders, a waste collection and recycling service from Chemastic, TDR150 and TDR350 moisture meters, iMac 21.5-inch desktop computer and a SGL BU10 grow light plus lots more.

New qualifying products for 2021 include the Gronamic range of organo-mineral fertilizers, the recently launched fungicide Ascenity, Hicure, a new biostimulant from Syngena and FR321 – the new one-box solution for autumn turf disease control.

There are now even further ways to boost your points balance with double points promotions on many commonly used products such as Sierrablen, SierrablenPlus, Vitalnova and Qualibra. The qualifying quantity threshold for Sierrablen and Vitalnova has also been reduced.

Users of the scheme will be pleased to hear that the popular fungicide promotion has also returned - but this time with an even better offering. Simply purchase four fungicide applications in 2021 and earn an additional 10 bonus points.

To find out more and to register visit www.turfrewards.com
Despite graduating with a 2.1 in Game Design: Art from Falmouth University, student Jacob Betts soon realised that his heart wasn’t set for the gaming world. During his time as a student at the Cornish university he worked part-time for garden design company, Urban Earth South West Limited, where he began to develop a love for the outdoors. And so when on graduating Jacob expressed a desire to pursue a career in garden design, Urban Earth jumped at the chance to take him on full time as a Trainee Landscape Designer.

And what a shrewd business move that was, as now Urban Earth South West is delighted to announce that Jacob has just graduated from The Oxford College of Garden Design with a Distinction and is now delighting customers across the south west with his designs.

Says Urban Earth Director, Phil Yolland: “Jacob is exactly the kind of person we are looking to have in our business; highly capable, self-motivated, wise beyond his years by some degrees, kind, considerate, thoughtful, extremely hard working.

“He is also a very fast learner and hugely talented across the board, a display of ‘young brilliance’ in a very modest, measured and humble way.”

When researching an appropriate study programme for Jacob, Urban Earth were looking for a course that would provide Jacob with on the job coaching and mentoring as well as remote study from experts in the field of garden design. The Oxford College of Garden Design ticked all the boxes, providing a thorough online garden design courses in every aspect of the business, from technical drawing and hard landscaping to contract documentation, pricing and marketing.

The tutorial support given, says Urban Earth was of a high standard and Jacob’s results speak for themselves.

Says Jacob on his career move: “Choosing to take up garden design was a change in direction, however I still feel the same joy in starting a creative project and continuing it to fruition as with the gaming projects.

Many of the technical skills and software knowledge I learnt at university have been transferable, particularly when it comes to creating 3D renders of my garden designs. These give our customers a crystal clear idea of what their garden transformation will look like. As in game design there is still a brief that must be completed and I can choose how to go about it. This component of creative liberty in design was a key factor in my choice.”

Agreeing on the benefits of transferable skills Phil continues: “Jacob has taken to the designing of gardens very naturally. He listens to our clients and produces creative designs to consistently surpass our customers initial expectations.

“This then enables us through Jacob’s vision to create and build ‘dream’ gardens that improve our customer’s home-experience and happiness dramatically after the design has been constructed.

Oxford College’s Principal, Duncan Heather, concludes: “Jacob has excelled on this course. It has been a real pleasure to watch his growth in real time. From a competent landscape contractor, to a highly gifted artist and designer. A personable young man, who is producing professional work of an extremely high calibre. I wish him every success for the future.”
Trade Show and Events update

Trade shows and events across the globe have been dramatically affected by COVID-19. Organisers are either pulling, re-scheduling, or even changing how they bring events to their customers as they battle to overcome what the pandemic has brought to their exhibitors and visitors.

Here are the latest updates of some of the events that affect those in the horticultural, landscaping and turf industry.

Festival of Turf

Just before Christmas, The British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) unveiled plans for a brand new outdoor festival and exhibition for the sports turf industry planned for June 2021. The Festival of Turf plans to bring together the greenkeeping and turf management industry for two days in the COVID-secure setting of the Warwickshire Event Centre, Leamington Spa, near Coventry on 8 and 9 June 2021.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic BIGGA has been in regular conversation with regulators, golf's governing bodies and central government and conversations are ongoing, to make sure any events they organise adhere to current guidelines.

Says BIGGA spokesperson, Karl Hansell: “We know face-to-face meetings are an incredibly-important aspect of building relationships and networking for the members of BIGGA and we’d like to provide the opportunity for our members and the wider turf industry to do so. We’ve pencilled in 8 & 9 June for the Festival of Turf and the Warwickshire Event Centre has set aside those dates for us.

“...But safely really is our priority. We’re going to keep reassessing the situation and we’ll give regular updates to provide you with the latest information.

A decision will be made in due course, but behind the scenes our Business Development team are working really hard to make sure that if Festival of Turf can take place, there will be some incredible exhibitors excited to show you what they’ve been working on for the past 18 months.

For more information about the Festival of Turf, head to the BIGGA website, www.bigga.co.uk

SALTEX

Originally moving the November 2020 exhibition date to Spring 2021 because of the ongoing pandemic, The Grounds Management Association (GMA) has now taken the decision to move SALTEX to 3-4 November 2021.

The GMA has been strategically planning for every eventuality to ensure the exhibition is a bio-secure event, in partnership with the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham. Organisers have been closely re-negotiating with the National Exhibition Centre, returning the exhibition to its original Autumn dateline.

When visitors were asked on date preferences to attend a trade event, November was the first option – followed by October and September. Exhibitors also echoed this, with 64% stating a preference to attend SALTEX in November 2021 due to latest news and restrictions. In addition, latest research showed that an overwhelming majority (80%) stated that attending an indoor trade show was their number one preference.

The next show will be its 75th anniversary marking the longstanding contribution to the grounds sector. Geoff Webb, CEO at the GMA comments: “As hard as this decision was to make, we knew it was important to act quickly and responsibly so we can begin looking to the future and stage a successful event once restrictions ease again. We have recently seen confidence eroding despite early optimism.

“Our recent surveys have given us excellent insight from both exhibitors and visitors, giving us evidence that reflects current circumstances so we can continue planning an event that best reflects the turf care sector’s requirements.”

Exhibitors have the option to carry over their March 2021 booking to the November show at a preferential rate and retaining their stand location. There is also the added option to secure a 2-year SALTEX loyalty deal for those transferring their booking (for November 2021 and 2022), with improved benefits for GMA Corporate Plus members.

Luke Perry, Director of SALTEX and Events for the GMA adds: “We have worked hard to reflect changing situations. We intend to maintain this regular, frequent communication going forward whilst continuing to analyse how our sector feels about events in general.

All exhibitors with a confirmed stand have been informed directly and are being urged to contact the sales team at SALTEX at thegma.org.uk for any further queries.

For more information visit www.gmasalutex.co.uk

RHS Chelsea Flower Show

For the first time in its 108 year history, the RHS is postponing RHS Chelsea Flower Show to take place in the autumn instead of spring, due to the worldwide pandemic. The 2021 Show, which would have taken place between 18 May and 23 May, has been moved to run from 21 September to 26 September at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

The RHS will be in touch with everyone who has purchased a ticket for the event to date.

Whilst the September show will be very different to the usual spring event, the RHS believes it will celebrate the best of autumn horticulture, with seasonal highlights including Salvia, Asters, Dahlias, grasses and fruit and vegetables. Exhibitors who were to take part in the cancelled May event will all be given the opportunity to be at the autumn RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Applications will also be open for new gardens, nurseries and content.

In addition to the autumn event, the RHS will once again host its hugely successful RHS Virtual Chelsea Flower Show online, during the May show week, which millions of people across the UK and around the world tuned in to enjoy last year.

Sue Biggs, RHS Director General, says: “Whilst we are sad to have had to delay RHS Chelsea and are sorry for the disruption this will cause, we are excited that we are still planning to bring the world’s best loved gardening event to the nation at a time when more people are gardening more than ever.

“We know that the autumn dates may not be suitable for everyone, but with our fantastic industry partners we will do everything we can to support them and create a show that will be a moment in history. It will be exciting to see different horticulture and showcase the key autumn gardening season at the world’s most famous flower show.”

“Never have so many people gardened in recent times, nor needed the benefits of gardening more, so we will do our utmost to deliver a beautiful, uplifting and different RHS Chelsea safely in September 2021.”

As was planned for the event in May, RHS Chelsea Flower Show in September will be spread over six days instead of five, with the same reduced number of visitors, another first in its history. There are many further coronavirus safety precautions being put in place for exhibitors, everyone involved in the show, visitors and RHS staff and volunteers.

It is also hoped that as they are later in the year, the following RHS Shows will continue as normal. There will be updates if this changes.

• RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, 6-11 July 2021
• RHS Flower Show Tatton Park, 21-25 July 2021

Mypiant & Garden Green Expo

Mypiant & Garden, the International Green Expo, which takes place in Milan, has confirmed its 2021 dates in favour of February 2022. The professional trade fair for horticultural, landscape and gardens, which attracts attendees from across Europe and further afield, has like many other events suffered due to the Coronavirus.

“The change in dates,” explains the organisers, “has been necessary and utterly shared with our partners. In 2021 we will work to give visibility to our exhibitors through the web platform Myplantonline.com, the organisation of online meetings and in all the occasions in which we will be able to work face to face.”

Mypiant has brought back into the focus of international markets a declining industry, as the latest data of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture confirm. The event presents innovative channels, business opportunities, moments of sharing and contact with the most innovative trends of the industry.

Postponing Mypiant in the current scenario is a gesture of respect and recognition towards all those who have high expectations from the trade fair say the organisers. The current uncertain situation involving health, economy, and the organisation of the event itself would have certainly penalised all those involved.

“The commitment remains that of organising a signature trade fair that confirms its recognised international leadership, by maintaining the high standards of the event, also concerning its visitors and all partnerships involved.”

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<table>
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<th>Engine</th>
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Compact tractors are the workhorses of grounds management equipment. Used for a wide range of vital maintenance tasks, they can be fitted with additional mechanical implements to assist in a variety of operations. For Julien Morris, Regional Pitch Adviser at the Grounds Management Association (GMA), the compact tractor comes into its own for “mowing implements, tractor mounted loaders (which are used when moving soil) and trailers, used when transporting materials.”

Useful attachments

“Attachments have also been important in the past when being used to clear snow,” continues Julien, “or for grounds management tasks, such as spiking, slitting, brushing, mowing, scarifying, fertilising and many others.” A compact tractor is as valuable and as productive as the attachments it operates. Without a good compact tractor that can be fitted with attachments, you are tasked with sourcing separate machines and equipment to carry out many of the tasks mentioned.

Senior Gardener at The National Trust’s Trerice in Cornwall, Vivien McCall, uses the Kubota BX231D for pulling trailers and moving large pieces of wood around. In the past, the Trust has used front loader attachments and a cutting deck. “The front loader was retired as it was quite cumbersome and almost too heavy for the tractor,” explains Vivien. “Plus the tractor lacked the power to really achieve what was needed for the job. In the same year as purchasing a new compact tractor we also purchased a ride-on mower, which has taken over the cutting, so we no longer use it for grass cutting.”

Size matters

In the future the team at Terrace may purchase a new cutting deck but will need to weigh this up as it widens the footprint of the machine, meaning that it can’t access some narrow areas of the garden.

When buying a compact tractor, size matters, says Vivien: “Trerice is a small property with narrow pathways and gateways, so we are limited to the size of the tractor we use in the garden plus we only have one small shed to store equipment”. As with much of Cornwall, there are hills, so Trerice requires a machine that can be trusted not to roll if it has to manoeuvre inclines. Their old tractor was a Kubota, so they stuck with a brand they knew and trusted. “As we are limited to one machine, we need the most powerful and agile we can get, with all the above factors in mind and for a reasonable price,” says Vivien.

The GMA advise the key factors to consider when buying a compact tractor is reliability, ease of maintenance and its usability. “There are of course other factors to consider too which may not be as clear, such as customer service and support from the manufacturer,” adds Julien. “Good manufacturers should offer quality advice and support pre-purchase, but there should be good aftercare, vital if there are any problems post-purchase.

“Other benefits also worth considering are the availability of replacement parts, adequate lifting power and sufficient towing capacity for any attachments.”

Functional elements

There are useful functional elements worth looking out for too, Julien mentions, “Roll Over Protection Structure/Support (ROPS), Independent rear Power Take-Off (PTO) with mid-PTO if required, high-capacity hydraulics, and also 3-point linkage. Manual or hydrostatic transmission and cruise control are useful features if needed, plus the ability to use front loaders and turf tyres are helpful, and a cab is always a nice addition to have if your budget can stretch that
far or the working environment justifies their need.”

The environmental effect of the compact tractor is certainly an important consideration when purchasing one, and with the available technology, for most people decisions come down to a balance between operability, cost, and efficiency.

Whilst it’s encouraging that modern tractor engines have become less harmful for the environment, there is certainly room for improvement,” says Julien. “Building on existing developments in environmentally friendly machines, it would be fantastic to see practical and electric-powered tractors in the future, but in order for this to be realistic, they would have to be more successful in winning the battle with combustion engines. They will need to be comparable to them in terms of convenience and also functionality. Regardless, the GMA would suggest looking for “a machine that offers reduced fuel consumption and low pollutant emissions. There is already some great battery-operated technology in the industry, so we hope further advancements are a natural progression.”

Electric power

For the landscapers at Trerice, they are moving towards replacing petrol/diesel machinery in their gardens with electric powered machines starting with pedestrian mowers, hedge cutters, strimmers and chainsaws. They will start to include bigger machinery as the technology moves forward. “We are very aware of petrol/diesel usage on the property and try, where we can, to keep it to a minimum. Winter, however, can see a considerable increase in tractor usage as we perform lots of heavy maintenance and landscaping work, so we aim to keep our machines as energy efficient as possible so making sure they are regularly serviced and maintained.” The Trust are keeping a close eye on the progress of technology in electric compacts, but there is concern surrounding the reality of whether electric power can match the power and agility of what they are using now and whether electric machines can cope efficiently with attachments.

Compact manufacturers are constantly upping their game to keep ahead in the market. While there have been major innovations with the development and introduction of electric tractors in recent years, other small adaptations are also welcome. “Perhaps there is some way the seats could be kept dry, perhaps by folding down,” suggests Vivien while Julien at GMA is some way the seats could be kept dry, perhaps by small adaptations are also welcome. “Perhaps there is some way the seats could be kept dry, perhaps by folding down,” suggests Vivien while Julien at GMA would like to see “affordable GPS technology filtering down to the smaller tractors. This would offer ultimate precision for users and would prove to be highly beneficial in spraying or any fertilisation operations.”

The new Stage V environmental requirements for tractors has resulted in the introduction of a whole host of new models and features for the Kioti range of Compact tractors. Starting from 21 HP models all the way to 110HP. Luxury standard factory cabins with air conditioning now start at 25HP.
Buyers Guide: Compact Tractors

Best buys for those looking for a compact in 2021

Kubota B1 Series
Kubota has unveiled the latest version of the popular B1 compact tractor, featuring a new development - an all-new folding mid ROPS (rollover protective structure) option. The ROPS is positioned in front of the operator platform, providing essential protection for fieldwork, but folding flush with the bonnet when working in a height-restricted situation. This reduces the overall height of the tractor to a maximum of 1.41m, ideal for accessing polytunnels, greenhouses or low buildings. It also avoids any interference with rear mounted implements, and folding is a simple matter of removing two pins at the base of the ROPS frame.

A number of other improvements have been made to the B1 series tractor, which is available with a choice of 18 and 24hp proven Kubota E-TVCS engines. The straightforward mechanical transmission offers three forward speeds in each of three ranges with highly effective power steering improves manoeuvrability in tight yards and sheds. Bevel gear four-wheel drive keeps productivity up in tough conditions, its design also enhancing ground clearance.

The tractor also has a category 1 rear linkage and optional mid-pto for a mower deck on the 18hp B1181 model. The LA213 front loader can also be specified for the B1181 to tackle materials handling jobs around the farm or nursery. This is also a tractor that’s a breeze to maintain – the bonnet lifts clear, side guards come away and the front grille comes out to give all-round access to the engine.

“The mid-ROPS options will make the B1 series, which already punches above its weight, a real favourite for nurseries and growers or anyone who needs versatile power in a compact package,” comments Phil Catley, Kubota Key Account and Groundcare Product Manager.

www.kubota.com

TYM’S TS25 Tractor
TYM’s TS25 tractor is a solid choice for any landscapers’ fleet. It’s one of the few sub-compact tractors on the market available with either a manual or hydrostatic transmission, which means it can be tailored to specific turf maintenance needs. For example, for loader and mid-deck work, the simple-to-use hydrostatic transmission is the best choice, whereas for aeration and sprayer work, which requires a set working speed, the manual transmission machine will deliver the best results.

Adding to its versatility is a wide range of accessories including a spool valve kit, mid-mounted mower, front weight kit, front loader and a rear counter balance.

Transporting tools, towing trailer, moving tasks (logs, rubble, soil) and maintenance work, the TS25 is more than capable and nimble with it. The tractor’s uses are further extended with the optional 60 inch mid-mounted mower which allows you to cut vast areas of grass with ease and without the expense of a separate dedicated mowing unit.

Plus, its lightweight credentials mean it’s the perfect choice for fine surfaces. Its 25hp three-cylinder engine gives it enough power to perform its tasks with ease without being detrimental to turf.

Available from distributor Reesink Turfcare, the TS25 is a powerful, multi-purpose option in a compact package.

www.reesinkturfcare.co.uk

John Deere 3038E compact tractor
John Deere’s 3038E compact tractor is an economical and versatile machine suitable for a wide variety of customers, including landscape contractors and grounds maintenance service providers.

The four-wheel drive 3038E is equipped with a powerful, emissions-compliant Stage V diesel engine, while the hydrostatic transmission with Twin Touch foot pedals provides the operator with simple, comfortable controls to select exactly the right speed for the job at hand.

Combined with power assisted steering, these pedals are intuitive and easy to use and enable the operator to maximise productivity. The tractor’s independent pto can be engaged on the go, eliminating the need to stop and use the clutch. The 3038E also features an easy-lift bonnet that provides wide-open access to the engine bay for maintenance.

A new 300E front loader has been designed to complement the tractor and features a curved boom and durable components. Together with the 3038E’s tight turning circle, this offers a highly manoeuvrable combination for materials handling, whether working indoors or outdoors.

Telescoping draft links are also available as a factory or field-installed option. This makes attaching and removing rear implements such as mowers, rear blades and posthole diggers very easy.

www.deere.co.uk

The full-electric Avant
Avant was the first manufacturer to introduce a full-electric, battery-powered multifunctional compact loader to the marketplace in the mid 1990s. A full electric loader with zero-emission and low noise has long been the request by operators – both indoors and outdoors.

Avant e6 is the first multifunctional compact loader with a lithium-ion battery. It works efficiently throughout the day thanks to the more efficient battery. The e6 can be fully charged in just over an hour with an optional 400V rapid charger, and operates between two to four hours with a full battery. It is possible to charge batteries anywhere a 230 volt /10A power outlet is available.

The running costs for e6 are significantly lower than any diesel-powered loader due to the fact there is no combustion engine. Electricity cost compared to diesel is roughly 75% cheaper. Another advantages of the battery-powered machines is easier maintenance, leading to less cost.

To hire or buy? Many UK customers want to buy and own the compact loader with the basic tools and hire the more-special attachments from authorised AVANTiRE partners as and when needed.

www.avant.co.uk/loaders/sales@avant.co.uk

Siromer 35hp Lightning
2020 was the year Siromer launched its new 35hp Lightning tractor to the UK market in 2020. And despite the rather unusual year, the Lighting tractors managed to triumph throughout this tricky period. “The new tractor is a product of our customers feedback,” says Louise Howard, Siromer Managing Director.

“In listening to their requirements, it became clear that a narrower tractor was needed for those who work in close confines. The tractor also had to be powerful enough to carry out heavy duty work. We needed both a David and a Goliath.”

The Lightning was so well received it was almost sold out before the first container of tractors landed at Siromer HQ. With four cylinders and a turning circle of 3.5 meters, the meter-wide Lightning sits comfortably within Siromer Tractors established line up. Fitted with a dual stage clutch and double acting spools, the choice of possible attachments are plentiful.

As versatile as all the Siromer range, this 8 forward and 8 reverse shuttle gear box tractor also has a folding roll bar and power steering. “It just proves what we’ve always known,” adds Louise, “Our customers know what they want.” Such a practical and efficient tractor.

www.siromeronline
**Kioti Premium CS2020**

2021 sees the introduction of the latest generation of sub compact and compact tractors from Kioti UK. All models conform to the latest Stage V environmental requirements and take the evolution of the Kioti models even further in front of the market competition.

The sub compact models see the introduction of a Premium CS2020, running with a Kioti 24.9 HP three cylinder diesel engine. The tractor has a quality steel bonnet, integrated front loader joystick giving two additional spools. The driver platform has wide easy access, a premium comfort seat, adjustable steering wheel and electro hydraulic power take off (PTO).

The previous popular CK2810 model is now replaced by the high spec CX2510. This new range can be supplied with either mechanical or twin pedal 2 x range HST (hydrostatic transmission). The customer has the choice of rollover protective structure (ROPS) open platform or, new to this tractor size, a spacious factory fitted cabin with air conditioning, heated rear screen, rear screen wiper. Independent electro hydraulic PTO. Higher in the range the New 30 series DK tractor models build on the already renowned reputation of the previous Kioti DK models.

HST or mechanical models are available from 45 to 60 HP. HST models are available with ROPS or air conditioned cabin.

[www.kioti-uk.com](http://www.kioti-uk.com)

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**Iseki TH5420 and TH5370**

With the introduction of the new Stage V engine emission regulations, ISEKI has taken the opportunity to introduce new models to their range of compact tractors, renowned for their build quality and reliability. Designed and built in Japan, the tractors are powered by ISEKI built engines from 19hp up to 67hp.

The recently launched TH5420 and TH5370 models are powered by the new ISEKI Stage V engines producing either 40hp or 35hp respectively. These engines produce more horsepower and torque than the previous models whilst being smoother, quieter, and more economical in operation. Available with either ROPS or a spacious air-conditioned cab – very quiet at only 76dB – the new TH5 tractors are compact but powerful capable of lifting 1200kg with the rear 3-point linkage and powering implements with the two speed rear PTO. Built with mid-PTO as standard, the TH range can be used to run a mid-mounted mower deck, or with the optional front hitch and PTO, it can drive implements such as a brush or front mounted mower deck.

Three-range hydrostatic transmission offers the ultimate versatility with memory cruise control as standard plus response control which enables the transmission to be tailored to the task in hand. ISEKI MX C3/C3+ loaders are available for the TH5 tractors increasing their versatility further with cab model having a joystick control and valve outlets as standard.

[www.iseki.co.uk](http://www.iseki.co.uk)
Scheduling for success

The landscaping boom looks set to continue into 2021. To ensure this growth doesn’t impair how we run our businesses there are some steps Paula Warman would like to share.

Setting Goals
The process of deciding what you want to achieve for the year and devising a plan to get there. Some are hesitant to set goals - without a goal there is little to aim for and it can be like setting sail on a ship with no destination.

What goals should you set and how should you set them? Choosing S.M.A.R.T goals are key – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.

Specific – Avoid non-specific goals. Rather than planning to increase profits generally, aim for a set target, for example to up profits by 10% on last year.

Measurable – How do you know if your goal is achieved? Decide what the measurement is and tracking progress along the way. Examples of measurements might include turnover/profits, number of enquiries, average project value, increase on number of followers on specific social platforms to name a few.

Achievable – Don’t set huge goals that are unlikely to be hit. By all means dream BIG but check that the goals are within your reach.

Relevant – Ensure your goals align with your company’s mission and values. If your mission is to reduce your impact on the environment then ensure that the goals you set not only grow the business but align with that mission, whilst taking into account current business climate and conditions.

Timely – every goal set needs a deadline.

Project Management
If you fall down when it comes to project management and scheduling your projects, then achieving the goals you have set can become more difficult and the business can become overwhelming. Overwhelm can lead to less action being taken and less (or no) progress being made.

There are a multitude of ways to schedule projects. If you are technology savvy, look at digital platforms such as Monday.com, asana.com, trello, Zoho or similar. All offer online based project management tools and schedulers that come on an App for your mobile too.

If you hate technology, then a paper diary and wall planner can work just as well. The key is to block out the time you anticipate for each project leaving gaps for over-run and breaks.

Adjust client expectations
Finally, what goes hand in hand with managing your projects and your time is the ability to say no when required.

We have all been in the position where you hate saying no to any projects. However, this is a skill to master in itself, if you want to achieve your goals and avoid overwhelm. You can choose to schedule jobs in well and turn down jobs that do not fit your calendar or ideal client profile. Alternatively, you can choose to schedule projects but squeeze customers in to ‘get the job’ or accept projects that you don’t really want to do in order to say yes.

Personally, I would choose the former every time. This is the biggest change and challenge for any business owner yet it’s the one thing that can accelerate business growth and improve your work life balance.

So that’s it, set your goals create a plan, manage your schedule and learn to say no! Have a fantastic 2021!
Winter in Bloom

A record number of wild flowers were in bloom at midwinter. Has Covid-19 played a part asks the The Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland

The Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland’s (BSBI) 10th New Year Plant Hunt took place at the start of this year, when the society asked plant-lovers across Britain and Ireland to head out to discover what is flowering in their local patch. 1,811 people took part this year – more than ever before – and the results are now in. Restrictions around Covid-19 had surprising impacts on the wild flowers they spotted as more species were spotted in flower than ever before.

The survey recorded 710 different plant species in bloom across Britain and Ireland compared to 615 last year and 627 in 2019, with a total of 21,419 records submitted: almost 50% more than last year. In addition, 1,195 lists were submitted, compared to 796 in 2020 and 712 in 2019.

Plant hunters joined in from Orkney to Guernsey, from Anglesey to Norfolk and from Donegal to south west Cork. As expected, the milder south and west of Britain and Ireland had the highest numbers of species in flower – 86 on Jersey. This is less than the 2020 total of 115 species in Swanage and almost half the 2016 top total of 162 species recorded in Berkshire.

Ellen Goddard of BSBI’s Events & Communications Committee analysed this year’s results and compared them with those from previous years.

“2021 has been a record-breaking year, with more species recorded in bloom and more lists submitted than ever before, but we are still seeing the same split of native vs non-native plants,” reports Ellen.

“We have also seen a change in the way people took part in the Hunt this year: with organised group hunts cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions, people have been going out on their own or in small family groups and support bubbles. This has led to a small increase (around 5%) in the number of participants but a marked increase (45-50%) in total lists and records submitted. "This is likely to have played a large part in the higher number of species recorded this year, but there was also a higher temperature anomaly than we saw in 2020. So, the Covid-19 restrictions may have influenced how people took part in the Hunt but the warmer weather in the period leading up to the Hunt could also have influenced the total number of species and the number of records we received."

The main findings from this year’s data were:

- 53% of the flowering species reported were of plants which normally flower after midsummer and had managed to carry on flowering. These include Autumn Stragglers’ such as Yarrow, Ragwort and Hogweed. This proportion is very similar to previous years.
- Only 24% were ‘Springtime Specialists’ like Primrose and Lesser Gelandine, so there is no indication of an early spring. This proportion is similar to previous years.
- 23% of the records submitted were of species one might reasonably expect to flower at New Year, or species which cannot easily be categorised as either ‘early’ or ‘late’. These include typical ‘All Year Rounders’ such as Shepherd’s-purse as well as ‘Winter Specialists’ such as Winter Heliotrope.

The top four most frequently seen species were Daisy, Groundsel, Dandelion and Annual Meadow-grass – this was identical to last year’s list and all (native) plants that would expect to be flowering at this time of year.

Smooth Sow-thistle moved into fifth position on the Top Twenty list of most frequent plants, replacing Common Chickweed which moved to number 14 on the list.

Bramble and Nipplewort entered the Top Twenty replacing Winter Heliotrope and Ivy. 36% of species recorded were non-natives (aliens). This includes plants from warmer climates that have escaped from gardens or cultivation, become naturalised in the wild and were able to extend their flowering into the winter months.

As in previous years, urban areas tended to have more non-native species in flower than rural areas, as there are more sheltered and disturbed places with warm microclimates where alien plants can thrive.

Kevin Walker, BSBI Head of Science concludes: “As Ellen’s analysis of the New Year Plant Hunt shows, our plants are responding to changing weather patterns, with more flowers being recorded during the past decade as we experience autumns and winters with warmer temperatures and fewer frosts. We cannot, however, prove conclusively that more species are flowering nowadays in mid-winter compared to in past years. We can’t say for sure yet what impacts these changes in flowering times will have on associated wildlife - but we can see that weather patterns are changing and our plants, both native and non-native, are responding.”
CIH appoints development role

The Chartered Institute of Horticulture (CIH) has recently announced the appointment of Helen Sessions as Development Officer, moving from her previous role at the National Trust.

Helen brings a wealth of horticultural experience to the Institute and will be a key figure in the promotion of routes to Chartership, CIH representation within the horticultural industry and in the active growth of special interest groups.

A Chartered horticulturist with an Honours degree in Horticulture from Writtle College, Chelmsford, Helen has more than 15 years’ experience in horticultural buying and supplier management. She has worked as a consultant for a number of companies, and has worked in commercial horticulture in Australia and the Middle East.

Commenting on Helen’s appointment, CIH President Gerald Bonner says: “Helen will be instrumental in growing our Chartership remit, our professional learning programme and expanding our membership throughout the UK, Ireland and the Commonwealth.”

Regarding her new role, Helen says: “I am looking forward to working with such a diverse range of horticultural expertise that spans our membership base. In the immediate term I will be looking to understand how I can best serve our members’ needs, represent their views and build a collaborative relationship with our partners in the industry.”

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Cofabel secures INFINICUT® franchise - and first order - for Belgium

Within just a few weeks of renewing their partnership as official distributors for the INFINICUT® and TMSystem™ collections for Belgium, Cofabel had secured their first order – two 34” INFINICUT® FX machines to Belgian First Division A stalwarts Standard Liège. Complementing an impressive list of franchises, Cofabel Sales Director Wilfried Onkelinx predicts a bright and busy future for the INFINICUT® range – with its reputation for leading cut quality and performance delivering demand from sports venues around the country.

“I have received many inquiries from clients in Belgium about using the INFINICUT® mowers, having seen them become the best,” explains Wilfried. “Clubs recognise more than ever that success begins with an excellent pitch – this allows for attractive football and in many cases results will follow. Groundsmen won’t settle for anything less than the best, and that’s where the INFINICUT® is now top of mind.”

The first club to come on board was Royal Standard de Liège, where a conversation with club consultant Frédéric Cahay and maintenance contractors Devils led to the purchase of two 34” fixed head INFINICUT® mowers in July 2020. “Devils have been trusted with the maintenance of Stade Maurice Dufrasne for a number of years and they came to us specifying the INFINICUT® mowers, having seen them become the mower of choice for a huge number of top-flight clubs in the UK. They are not disappointed! The mowers were put to use straight away, delivering an unparalleled quality of cut, simple and finish which has amazed all at the club.”

“Despite the challenges we have all faced with COVID restrictions, we have already seen phenomenal interest and have conducted a number of demonstrations of both the cylinder and rotary mowers.” Wilfried concludes, “As the reputation and visibility of INFINICUT® continues to grow across Belgium, we are expecting to see several football clubs, and other turf managers, become proud owners of an INFINICUT® very soon.”

New ICL distributor in Northern Ireland

ICL announces Irwin’s Sportsturf as a new distributor for the ICL plant protection range in Northern Ireland. Irwin’s Sportsturf, based in Lurgan, Northern Ireland, was formed in 2018 by former greenkeeper Kyle Irwin. Kyle believes that the ICL appointment is yet another step in the right direction for Irwin Sportsturf.

“Since we started the business, Irwin’s Sportsturf has strived to offer the best products and service to our customers. As our reputation grows, we are delighted to be appointed as an official ICL distributor for Northern Ireland and look forward to working closely with ICL and Syngenta in the future,” says Kyle. “The appointment sees Irwin’s Sportsturf join Lindsay Turfcare as an official ICL distributor in Northern Ireland. Lindsay Turfcare, based in Co. Armagh, also provide ICL’s plant protection products and the extensive range of ICL fertilizers.”

When it comes to protecting turf and managing landscapes, ICL’s range of plant protection and control products provide the tools needed in any armoury. Featuring Syngenta’s leading range of fungicides such as Insetra Elite and Medalion TL, a powerful line-up of fast-acting herbicides including Praxys and Esteron T; the number one plant growth regulator Primo Maxx II; the innovative turf pigment Ryder; and Nemays which controls turf pests such as Chafer Grubs and Leatherjackets – there is a solution to ensure that turf managers are always in control.

The full range of ICL plant protection products are available from Irwin’s Sportsturf with immediate effect.

SISIS Litamina saves manpower

Deputy head greenkeeper of Gillingham Golf Club, Kent, Mark Jaques, is thankful for the SISIS Litamina 1200, which makes light of fallen leaves on the fairways. The short parkland course boasts some of the fastest greens in the area, but is lined with a substantial number of trees, with constant leaf fall issues.

“Due to the sheer number of trees, we have to constantly keep on top of the fallen leaves - hence the reason we bought the Litamina 1200,” explains Mark. “It was a three-man operation and if the wind were to blow in a different direction, then we would find ourselves constantly blowing leaves around the whole course,” he says. “It was so time consuming and with three members of staff there was no way we could continue doing this.”

Mark claims that he knew the Litamina was the machine he needed straight away because he used one in a previous greenkeeping role. A demonstration was quickly arranged, and he purchased it on the spot.

The SISIS Litamina 1200 is a compact sweeper for efficient collection of unattractive debris or leaves from fine turf and outfield turf, and from sand filled or rubber crumb synthetic surfaces. Ideally suited to follow ground contours it collects a wide range of debris including leaves, pine needles, grass, thatch, cores, litter and its effective sweeping brushes help to keep surfaces free of contamination.

“The manpower it has saved us has been golden,” continues Mark. “It really does free up so much time and enables us to get on with other important maintenance tasks and as a small team that is invaluable.

“I like the brush on it too and you can see how it lifts the grasses up – we actually use it as an opportunity to go behind with a mower. This, for me, is an added benefit as it helps with presentation. I would say that the course is the tidest it has ever been and it hasn’t gone unnoticed by the members!”

FIFA’s “Greenest Football Club” chooses Johnsons Sports Seed

It’s not just Grounds Manager, Nigel Harvey, who has moved from the Stanley Park Training Ground to the main stadium pitch of Forest Green Rovers FC – his Johnsons Sports Seed programme has made the switch. Having used Johnsons mixtures for almost 15 years, the club’s renowned eco and environmentally friendly approach means the combination of J Premier Pitch and J 4Turf will become Nigel’s main weapon in the fight against weed ingress and disease.

Nigel moved from Forest Green’s training facility to take up his new position at The New Lawn Stadium in June 2020, which he maintains alongside a recently appointed apprentice. “The maintenance methods are very different between the training ground and the stadium, with fewer conventional tools and techniques at my disposal in the approach we take to issues such as weed and disease control,” he explains. After being described by FIFA as ‘the greenest football club in the world’ and becoming the first UN certified carbon-neutral football club, it’s out with chemicals and in with cultural practices - including regular overseeding.

“Johnson’s J Premier Pitch has proven itself to deliver fantastic resistance to disease, great appearance and plant strength at our training ground and at many of the country’s other leading sports venues, so achieving that is going to be key moving forwards in maintaining...
scarification to new depths with Verti-Cut

Redexim brings two new additions to their scarification portfolio. Extending their Verti-Cut range, 2021 sees the introduction of two larger working widths with the launch of the Verti-Cut 1600 and Verti-Cut 2000. Developed in direct response to customer demand and to complement their existing offering, both of the new models offer scarification to depths of up to 50mm (1.95”).

The Verti-Cut employs specially designed carbide-tipped blades which encourages healthy turf by cutting the lateral growth of grass roots and removing dead plant material, providing more room for roots and shoots to grow and allowing for better water penetration and airflow. This improved downward movement of moisture and nutrients delivers far more uniform, vigorous and vibrant growth in return. The new Verti-Cut 1600 offers a 1.6m (63”) working width which makes it ideal for smaller, undulating surfaces such as golf greens while at 2.0m (78.7”), the Verti-Cut 2000 lends itself to the scarification of larger spaces such as sports fields.

Both new models are tractor mounted and PTO driven, with the drive system utilising chains to ensure constant drive to the blades – even when working at depth. The adjustment of the Verti-Cut’s working depth can be done accurately and with ease through alterations to the front roller, which also helps to negate scalping when working on undulating ground. As standard, the Verti-Cut comes with 2mm blades operating at a spacing of 30mm (1.18”), though this can be increased to 56mm (2.28”) if required. 1mm and 3mm blades can also be specified as an optional extra.

The Verti-Cut is one of a number of scarification solutions available from Redexim – a range which spans pedestrian, trailed and cut and collect machines to suit a wide variety of sports surfaces and applications. The new Verti-Cut 1600 and 2000 models will be available in the Spring, with the additional added security and support provided by Redexim’s worldwide distribution network.

Deep aeration cures waterlogging at Stratford Town FC

Stratford Town Football Club moved in the 2007/8 season to Knights Lane Ground, Tiddington, where they built a new stadium and pitch. The summer of 2007 saw large areas of flooding and when work on the grounds began that July with heavy machinery moving in, the crushing and compacting of the ground created a problem that lasted until the end of 2020.

“The pitch has never properly drained,” explains Club Director, Mark Bickley. “The club has spent many thousands of pounds treating the top of the pitch, which does let water through, but two areas around the 18-yard box flooded badly enough to stop play, especially when the water table was up. Several schemes were applied over the years, at some expense, but none solved the problem and during the last two seasons with excessive winter rainfall the problem escalated.”

The groundsman took on and stuck to a regime of sifting, aerating, Verti-Draining, scarifying and top dressing and in the late summer months the pitch looked like Wembley. But as soon as the heavier rains came the problem returned. However, on the junior pitch, only two hundred yards away, and which had little attention, was fine. Similarly, the nearby golf course had no drainage problems.

A Robin Dagger was brought in for two hours of drilling and backfilling and the fact this helped for a period led to suspicions about what was going on deeper under the surface. Even a week after rain the pitch remained soggy and the grounds team relied on the wind to dry it. Two of wettest winters in a row prompted the investment in a tarpaulin to cover 125 sq m. of the worst affected areas. Mark Bickley turned to an ex Villa Park Head Groundsman for more advice, who suggested brining in Terrain Aeration. In October 2020 the the deep aeration specialists carried out a test at the back of the ground with a Terralift machine. “It took just fifteen seconds for their JCB road breaker probe to go down to a metre,” says Mark. “Moving onto the pitch it took at least a minute to drive through to the same depth.”

The Terralift went on to treat the worst affected parts of the pitch, two strips about 40 metres long. The hammer is used because the ground is usually so compact at depth it is needed to break through. Once the probe reaches one metre deep compressed air up to a maximum of 20Bar/280psi is released to fracture and fissure the soil. The Terralift is the only machine using such necessary high pressure. The probe is withdrawn, and the process repeated at two-metre centre spacings on a staggered grid. This means each shot interconnects. On the tail end of the blast, dried seaweed is injected which sticks to the fissure and expands and contracts with the soil’s moisture content, allowing drainage and aeration. The probe holes are backfilled with Lytag aggregate.

After treatment the club was able to immediately play games up until the second Covid-19 lockdown. Even the Christmas storms wouldn’t have stopped play. Says Mark, “We would certainly have been able to play the local Derby with Banbury on Boxing Day if the league hadn’t been suspended.

“This was money well spent and we will have Terrain Aeration back as soon as possible to treat the rest of the pitch. If anyone is having drainage problems on their pitch, I would recommend they do the same.”
Germinal has launched an all-new grass seed mixture designed specifically for golf greens. ‘Tour Leader’ – a 50:50 blend of 007 DSB and new cultivar Tour Pro (GDE) – is a landmark in the evolution of creeping bentgrass products: this exceptional blend sets the bar high with unrivalled performance, seasonal adaptability, high disease resistance and vivid colour retention.

Tour Pro (GDE) is the latest creeping bentgrass to join Germinal’s class-leading portfolio: having excelled in the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) in the United States (where it is ranked in the top five of 20 varieties in all trial categories and the highest rated of all commercially available bentgrasses), this top-performing variety has recently achieved the highest mean score (6.8) for creeping bentgrasses as a new cultivar on table G1 of the 2021 BSPB list. It has also been awarded the highest score for shoot density (6.6) and visual merit (7.0) for a creeping bentgrass.

“Tour Pro (GDE) was selected as the next variety to join our creeping bent portfolio thanks to its low input requirement,” explains Richard Brown, Amenity Sales Manager for Germinal. “This enables greenkeepers to demote Poa annua by implementing management strategies which place the latter under stress, thereby allowing Tour Pro (GDE) to gain the upper hand and dominate the sward.

“By pairing Tour Pro (GDE) with 007 DSB we have created a seed mixture with enough genetic diversity to ensure golf greens remain in good condition all year round irrespective of what the weather might throw at them: with the UK’s variable weather patterns meaning no two seasons are ever the same, Tour Leader’s unrivalled performance in terms of drought and cold weather tolerance, disease resistance, wear tolerance and visual merit make it the ideal over-seeding and reseeding mixture for modern golf greens.”

With limited stocks of Tour Pro (GDE) available in 2021, Tour Leader is anticipated to sell out quickly. “As such sales are strictly on a first-come, first-served basis,” Richard continues. “We therefore recommend that anyone interested in using creeping bents to convert their greens away from Poa annua should act quickly to ensure they are able to secure the necessary quantity of seed.”

Tour Pro (GDE) and Tour Leader are available exclusively in the UK from Germinal.

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<th>Visual merit</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Fineness of leaf</th>
<th>Resistance to Red Thread</th>
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Source: BSPB, Turfgrass Seed 2021, Table G1 Creeping bentgrasses (Agrostis stolonifera)

New Terafirm™ Granular from Headland Amenity

Headland Amenity have announced the introduction of a new granular version of the popular penetrant wetter Terafirm™. Suitable for use in all fine and coarse turf situations, the Terafirm™ range improves the downward movement of water through the soil profile, helping to achieve a firmer playing surface.

Terafirm™ is a non-phytotoxic soil penetrant, which works by reducing the surface tension of water to facilitate accelerated water movement and drainage. As a result, Terafirm™ also acts to speed up surface drying and open up pore space within the soil profile during dry down by improving natural soil contraction.

The launch of Terafirm™ granular, in addition to the existing liquid formulation, means it can now be applied in even more areas and in different conditions than was previously the case. Terafirm™ Granular is easy to spread on bunker edges, slopes, or other areas where access with a sprayer is difficult. Containing the same active ingredient as in liquid Terafirm™, use of the granular product is an effective alternative to spraying. Although no chemical penetrant can, in itself, alter the physical properties of soil that determine drainage rates, Terafirm™ will help get the water out as quickly as the physical properties of the soil allow. Applications of Terafirm™ can be made on a monthly or more frequent basis, most-effectively before the onset of seasonal periods of heavy moisture. As a spot treatment on wet areas, Terafirm™ can be applied at two-week intervals until the excessive moisture conditions subside.

Regular use of Terafirm™ offers the turf professional an effective tool to help maintain drier soil surface conditions, helping to reduce puddling and anaerobic conditions, and producing a faster-draining, drier and healthier sward.
New engine options from GreenMech

A raft of new woodchippers by GreenMech are on the way to meet the demands of today’s professional arborist. With the full effects of the Stage V Emission Regulations coming into force in June 2021, GreenMech will be introducing a range of new engine options across their popular Quad and Arborist collections, along with some more exciting additions to their revolutionary EVO series.

June now the revised cut-off date for the manufacture and sale of pre-Stage V engine units, GreenMech is ready to introduce new compliant diesel engine options along with extending their petrol offering across some of their most popular ranges. 2021 sees the introduction of a 25hp Kubota diesel engine in the QuadChip and QuadTrak 160D models (replacing the non-compliant 34hp engine), along with a 37hp petrol option for the QuadChip and QuadTrak 160P. Fitted with the 37hp Vanguard petrol engine, the 160P machines offer comparable performance to the diesel-powered alternative, but at a reduced cost.

Further up the range, will be the introduction of the Arborist 200P – powered by a 57hp Kubota petrol engine. It will boast impressive torque and pull-through from the massive 200mm x 280mm letterbox opening, making it ideal for handling large quantities of bulky material.

Alongside engine upgrades, GreenMech will also be launching further expansions to their proven EVO 165 series. Since the original EVO 165D came to market, the evolution has continued with a tracked variant and more recently the introduction of a SUB-750kg petrol machine. Joining the line-up in early-2021 will be the EVO 165PT – a fixed-track model with the 37hp petrol engine – and a SAFE-Trak variant of the original EVO diesel model which will become the EVO 165DST.

In addition to the new tracked models, the EVO concept of powerful bite, torque and throughput will be extended further with a new 8-inch product line. The EVO 205D will feature a Stage V compliant 50hp Kubota Diesel engine and new GreenMech “Smart Sense” Controller – for intelligent feed speed and a Smart Economy option for optimising fuel economy. Available at launch in road-tow format, SAFE-Trak and SURE-Trak versions of the EVO 205D are due to follow later in the year as replacements for the legendary 19-28 models.

STIHL launches first climbing helmet

STIHL has launched its first multi-norm helmet, the X-Climb. Designed for use on the ground as well as climbing, it offers full ear and face protection for arborists and tree surgeons. The well-balanced X-Climb features a high visibility all-round reflective strip, plus large side and rear helmet openings for better ventilation. The four-point chinstrap with innovative magnetic buckle makes for quick-fastening when suiting up and the headband is easily adjusted using the rotary knob to find the best position.

The nylon visor provides sturdy eye protection even in the toughest working conditions and the ear-defenders feature high insulation hearing protection capsules with a value of SNR 28 (H: 35, M: 26, L: 16). Conforming to both EN 397 for industrial safety helmets (or “hard hats”) and EN 12492 for climbing and mountaineering helmets, the X-Climb is compatible with a number of accessories, including the BT ear defender adapters and rain and debris neck protection scarf.

Hillier Trees supply to cancer charity

The first of more than 100 British-grown trees supplied by Hillier Trees have been delivered to the Maggie’s Centre adjacent to Southampton Hospital. The cancer support centre and surrounding grounds, which will be the first for Maggie’s in the South of England, is designed to create a tranquil oasis for visitors.

The Centre is being created in partnership between award-winning architects AL_A, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust and Sarah Price, one of the country’s most sought-after landscape designers. The design will create an oasis in the grounds of the hospital’s suburban campus. Almost three quarters of the 1,470 square metre site is being given over to four distinct gardens that are inspired by the ecology of the nearby New Forest. The intention is for the garden to look as if it has always been there, providing seclusion from the outside world.

In keeping with Sarah Price’s design ethos, the tree selection includes species that will create a natural, woodland look and feel; offer a colour palette that blends with the striking architectural design and provide year-round interest.

Tree species selected for the new Centre include Betula pendula (silver birch), Pinus sylvestris (Scots pine), Sorbus aucuparia (Mountain ash), Prunus serrula (Tibetan cherry) and Prunus avium (wild cherry). Many of these have been specified as multi-stem or more naturalistic forms, as opposed to a more traditional neat clipped form, fitting with the design ethos.

MJT Landscapes and Voreland Design supported Hillier with hard and soft landscaping, while Westland donated mulch and Platipus Anchors provided all the tree anchors used to support and stabilise the trees. “Maggie’s are delighted to be working closely with Hillier to realise Sarah Price’s landscape at University Hospital Southampton,” says Siobhan Wyatt, Property Projects Lead at Maggie’s. “Our New Forest oasis will be a haven for anyone living with cancer, and their loved ones, while they receive support from our staff.”
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The new 82V range offers true petrol rivaling performance, with industry leading power output from products including chainsaws, trimmers, and brushcutters. Cramer offers the most comprehensive dedicated commercial cordless range in the market. From chainsaws and hedge trimmers, to telescopic pole pruners, twin bladed lawnmowers and sweepers. The range has everything for the commercial user, except emissions.

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A cut above
Looking for a mower this spring? Then look no further...

Faster finish
Packed with marketing-leading innovations and a Kawasaki engine, the Cub Cadet XT2 QR106 lawn tractor boasts the power and performance needed to finish work faster and with better results. Offering the tightest turning circle on the market at just 170cm, the XT2 QR106 provides unparalleled maneuverability, ideal for working on tough terrain. The market-leading cutting, collecting and mulching option 3-in-1 system with a large 320 litre grass bag, available as an optional accessory, is perfect for mowing larger lawns and small paddocks.

With a large 42”/106 cm welded mowing deck, the machine has also been designed with a hydrostatic drive system to make precise mowing of an area up to 8000 m²/hr easier and more convenient. The range of accessories available, including agricultural tyres, allows the machine to be used year round for a variety of tasks. An adjustable seat provides comfort and the cutting height memory cursor displays the most frequently used level, so grass can be cut to the desired height.

Freedom mower
The Mountfield Princess 38 Li has been upgraded for 2021 and is so easy to use! This 48V battery powered lawnmower forms part of the new Freedom500 range. The innovative Freedom500 range really does make gardening easy with all the power of petrol but the convenience of cordless. The smart batteries are able to adapt to the tool they are fitted to through a smart ID microchip and the battery management system on the mower or garden tool - provides the best performance and efficiency, regardless of whether you are cutting the grass or cutting the hedge.

www.mountfieldlawnmowers.co.uk

Brushless motor
Newest in German manufacture Einhell’s range of award-winning lawnmowers, the GE-CM 18/33 Li Kit is a cordless mower that is driven by an Einhell brushless motor. This motor has a longer life and running time than conventional carbon brush motors. Equipped with a high-quality, impact-resistant plastic housing and a folding long handle, the product can be stored in confined spaces. The large, grass-protecting wheels provides multiple options for height adjustment, a height-adjustable long handle with 3 settings for convenient operation and a generously sized grass box with a level indicator.

www.einhell.co.uk

Self propelled mower
The Husqvarna LC 551iV is a battery-powered lawnmower with high-capacity cast aluminium cutting deck designed for full-time commercial use. Based on the same platform as the petrol-powered LC 551SP and VBP models, the Husqvarna LC 551iV offers the same performance levels with the added benefit of no direct emissions, and reduced noise and vibration levels. All possible due to the high performance weatherproof, IPX4 rated battery power unit which replaces the traditional 4 stroke engine.

The machine is self-propelled and features 4 speed options enabling operators to select the most suitable ground speed. With high performance brushless blade and drive motors vastly reducing noise levels when compared to equivalent petrol machines, the machine can be used in noise sensitive areas and public spaces without disturbance, increasing productivity.

Husqvarna LC 551iV is Fleet Services™ capable allowing easy integration into the Husqvarna fleet management tool. Fleet Services™ allows fleet operators to track machine location, monitor machine use, service intervals and much more from a smart phone or desktop. Assisting in a variety of working conditions, operators can choose between the machine’s normal or savE™ mode for optimum runtime based on the application. The machine features a PowerBoost mode where the lawnmower will automatically increase its blade speed when mowing in heavier conditions, which ensures extra power is guaranteed when needed.

www.husqvarna.com
STIHL chainsaw wins award

The STIHL MS 400 C-M, the world’s first chainsaw with magnesium piston technology, has been recognised by the International Magnesium Association (IMA) with the prestigious Award of Excellence 2020.

The annual award ceremony brings together companies who demonstrate outstanding magnesium products and innovative manufacturing technologies. The component and the production process specially developed for the magnesium piston technology utilised in the MS 400 C-M was the winner of the Commercial (non-automotive) Cast Product or Process category.

Paul Hicks at STIHL GB, says: “At STIHL, we have more than 60 years’ experience working with magnesium and fabricating it and we constantly strive to set new benchmarks in machinery development and production. “Although we use magnesium in many products, the desire to continue to enhance machinery performance led us to using magnesium piston technology in a chainsaw for the first time. Thanks in no small part to our partners in the development, we have succeeded in reducing the weight of the piston and increasing the rpm in the STIHL MS 400 C-M, providing more power and torque to the pro user.”

The IMA Award of Excellence win quickly follows the MS 400 C-M receiving the top prize at the Euroguss 2020 industry trade fair in the “magnesium components” category.

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STOP PRESS

Sowing seeds for job satisfaction

Tom Hobbis, former greenkeeper, father-to-be and Amenity Specialist for Agrovista Amenity reveals exactly why he feels blessed – every single day

As the end of his school life was approaching, Tom Hobbis didn’t really know what his future held. However, a chance work experience placement at his local golf course made him fall in love with working in the great outdoors. “I was offered a full-time role after my work placement at the golf course and I found that working outdoors with early starts and early finishes was something that appealed to me – it just suited me down to a tee,” he explains.

Following a greenkeeping career for 13 years Tom moved to machinery sales, where he worked with some of the most prominent brands in turf care. At the time he didn’t have much experience in sales, but that wasn’t going to hold him back.

“I’m a firm believer in the saying, ‘if you don’t ask you don’t get;’” says Tom. “I thought it was something I’d like to do so I just asked the company outright if I could have a job. They gave me one and in turn it gave me the experience I needed to be able to apply for the job with Agrovista.”

Tom was in this role for 15 months before he saw the opportunity at Agrovista Amenity. He admits that it piqued his interest immediately, but this time, it wasn’t as straightforward as just calling someone up and asking for the job.

“Agrovista is a huge company and it seemed to tick every box for me,” continues Tom. “I knew a couple of people that were working there, and they explained how good a company it was to work for – in terms of support, training and development. It was quite a long application and interview process but fortunately I was offered the role and I’ve never looked back.”

As Agrovista’s Amenity Specialist for just under two years, focussing his efforts on a variety of sites around Scotland. Tom clocks up the miles as his daily travels take him to some spectacular places on his home soil, including East Lothian, Perth and Aberdeenshire – to name but a few.

The days can be long Tom explains: “It’s always a 5am start and it will be a case of catching up with customers; going over a quotation or looking at the results of some products that have been put down; talking about the plan moving forward – or just having a chinwag. I love a good chinwag! The conversation always varies depending on the site and each has their own objectives and goals. The whole aspect of the job is completely different, and it certainly keeps me on my toes.”

Tom makes an average of five visits a day to customers and even though two years might seem a long time, he claims that he still has some work to put in when it comes to getting to know all of his customers. “I cover pretty much the whole of Scotland and it is still a learning curve,” he says. “I’m still in that period of getting to know my customer base on a personal level. Every customer is just as important as the next, whether they spend £2 or £20,000 – it’s essential that we offer the same level of service at all times.”

With customer service in mind, Tom believes that the bar has been raised even higher in this respect since Agrovista acquired Maxwell Amenity earlier this year. “It’s been an exciting time to be part of this company. The portfolio of products that we can now put forward is second to none. I feel it has put Agrovista Amenity in a position where it is at the very top of the marketplace. It’s just a case of driving forward in the right direction – and that is exactly what we are doing as a company.”

“Agrovista is supportive in so many ways, it is unbelievable, and someone is always at the end of the phone as well. I’m also currently working towards my BASIS and FACTS qualifications so there is a lot to look forward to.”

Life is good for Tom right now; not only is he in a job he loves but he and his partner are looking forward to welcoming a baby into their family (in just five days, in fact, at the time of writing). “I’m a big family man and I love spending quality time with my partner and the kids. We’ve got another little girl on the way which we are over the moon about. “Career wise – I couldn’t be happier, and the position that I am in now makes me feel immensely proud. To be able to go out walking on a golf course, a football stadium, a race course or the beautiful grounds of a private school and to be able to talk to people with the same shared interests – well it’s not a bad gig is it? “I feel very blessed, every single day, that I can do this job.”

Agrovista Amenitywww.agrovista.co.uk/amenity

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