GREEN HEALTH

Re-evaluating parks and green spaces

Kerb appeal
- Stone solutions
- Hardscape maintenance

TULIP FESTIVAL AT HAMPTON COURT

PLUS
Power tools, turf, mowers, machinery and latest events
EDITOR’S LETTER

The tale tell signs of spring have arrived. Blossom on the trees and a sea of daffodils in parks, gardens and even on the roadsides. Outdoor attractions across the country are getting ready for the season ahead and waiting in anticipation for a surge of visitors escaping lockdown as the country opens up. We will hopefully witness and enjoy a festival of colour as we venture outside once again.

As Greg Rhodes reports in his article this month on page 20, lockdown has shown us how critical access is to our beautiful green spaces. Whether historic gardens or public parks, Greg discovers how stakeholders as diverse as the NHS, The National Trust, mental health charities, public health bodies, Sport England and local community and parks groups are interacting to stimulate fresh thinking and interventions to move the utility and importance of green spaces on to a higher plain to generate wider public access.

There is opportunity for landscapers to work together with local councils, health authorities and charitable organisations to fund and manage outdoor space sustainably and for the good of our population’s mental and physical health.

This time of year also heralds the clearing, planting and maintaining the gardens ready for outdoor entertaining. For advice on what stone to lay and on keeping a hardscape clean take a look at our features page 26-27 for tips from those in the know.

And for those who have a little time to spare who want to witness some seasonal colour then a trip to the Hampton Court Palace wouldn’t go amiss. The royal palace is gearing up for its first ever Tulip Festival from April 17 until May 3 (page 46) – bound to put a spring in your step!

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Cover Story: Porcelain as a paving option (Credit: Sierra Grey porcelain courtesy of TAW Garden Landscapes). See page 26.

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Etesia UK welcomes Border Chainsaw and Lawnmower Services to its ever-expanding dealer network.

Border Chainsaw and Lawnmower Services, based in Earlston, Scotland, was founded in 1974 by the Cowe family. The business stayed within the family until January 2019 when it was acquired by Pearsons of Duns Ltd, who were picked as the perfect suitors for the business.

It was at this point that the experienced Allen Whellans was appointed as Groundcare Division Manager in a bid to increase the company’s commercial offering. Allen knew immediately where to start.

"In a previous role, I worked with dealers and end-users who had a large fleet of Etesia pedestrian mowers. They always commented on how good they were,” he said. “They never used to have any problems with them - it is that knowledge of knowing what the mowers are capable of doing that confirmed that I wanted to work with Etesia.”

Etesia UK is renowned for providing its dealer network with unrivalled support and resources – and Allen revealed that it was this reputation which further appealed to him.

“We only deal with premium brands and it was a case of looking at what Etesia offered in terms of the products but also how they work with the dealer,” he said. “Etesia is very much focused on working with dealers as opposed to online discounting. Customers want support and back-up; they want to be able to speak to someone and they want to demo the mowers.

Border Chainsaw and Lawnmower Services and Etesia have the same ethos - we want to work together for the customer – and that is the sort of partnership we are looking for.”

With immediate effect, the range of Etesia pedestrian mowers will be available from Border Chainsaw and Lawnmower Services throughout the Lothians and the Scottish Borders.

"I particularly like the fact that they can cut and collect long wet grass,” continued Allen. “The Borders are lush areas and there is always lots of thick wet grass. The fact that that operators can get out and cut in all conditions, even in the rain, is going to be fantastic for our customers.

“These Etesia mowers just go that extra mile and therefore I am confident that they are going to significantly grow our attraction to commercial customers.”

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Etesia lands on Scottish Borders

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Seed stalwart retires

One of the most well-known names in the seed industry, John Hughes, has retired from DLF seeds.

Following his degree studies - a BSc Hons in Applied Biology at the University of Salford - John worked at the Welsh Plant Breeding Station (Aberystwyth) in the Chemistry department, and in Plant Pathology at the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB). He also spent some time teaching Biology. This love of knowledge-sharing set John up for a illustrious career in the professional amenity market where he enjoyed positions at Germinial Seeds and Cebeco Seeds before this was acquired by DLF in 2002. For the past 18 years, he has been a fundamental part of the sales team for DLF Seeds in his role as Regional Technical Manager for the North. His wealth of knowledge and experience saw John become a key contact for turf managers, helping to formulate seeding programmes for some of the areas biggest sporting venues.

Commenting on his retirement John says: “The last year has been challenging for the obvious reasons - which has also meant that, sadly, I have not had the opportunity to say my farewells in the traditional way. I wish to thank all of my customers for their ongoing support and help over the years – many of whom I can say I now consider to be friends. When the situation allows, I look forward to using my retirement to spend more quality time with my friends and family, especially my grandchildren, and I may even find the time to get a few jobs done around the house and pick up my electric guitar which has been gathering dust for a few years!”

GA Groundcare appoints sales manager

GreenMech main dealers GA Groundcare Ltd have appointed new sales manager, Matt Textor, as part of their expansion programme. Renowned in the industry, Matt joins the Wiltshire dealership to spearhead sales of the GreenMech woodchipper range across their increased nine-county territory.

Having initially joined T H White Groundcare on a service engineering apprenticeship, Matt spent 13 years in the workshop where he developed a thorough understanding of the mechanics behind a vast selection of groundcare and arboricultural equipment. This foundation went on to set Matt up for a successful seven years in sales, pairing his technical knowledge with an appreciation of the requirements of a wide customer base. During this time, he also headed up sales of the GreenMech range of pedestrian, road-tow, PTO and tracked woodchippers from T H White’s Reading depot during their tenure as a dealer.

In his new position as sales manager for GA Groundcare Ltd, Matt will be in charge of business development across their new larger territory and is ideally placed to serve the south eastern counties from his Berkshire location. On his appointment, Matt says: “I’m excited about the new challenge ahead and being able to target and focus all of my efforts solely on one fantastic product line. GreenMech are great ambassadors for British manufacturing and I am very much looking forward to working closely alongside them again, and the whole GA Groundcare Ltd team, to support customers old and new.”

Commenting on the exciting growth of GA Groundcare Ltd, director Ashley Stevens adds: “I’m very pleased to finally be able to get Matt on board, having worked alongside him a number of years ago. His mechanical knowledge and honest sales approach is a great fit for our business model.”

Operating from their purpose-built depot in Poulshot, Wiltshire, GA Groundcare Ltd are exclusive to the GreenMech franchise, offering supply, servicing and support, together with stocking a comprehensive range of GreenMech replacement parts. The success of the partnership saw an extension of GA Groundcare Ltd’s territory in January 2021 to serve the counties of Berkshire, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Kent, Somerset, Surrey, Sussex and Wiltshire.

Green-tech acquisition

Green-tech, the UK’s leading manufacturer and distributor of landscaping, forestry and grounds maintenance equipment has been acquired by Origin Enterprises. Origin Enterprises is a focused Agri-services group providing specialist on-farm agronomy services, digital agricultural services, the supply of crop technologies and amenity inputs. Origin Enterprises’ vision is to be the leading and trusted partner of choice to farmers, growers and amenity professionals. Green-tech is expected to enhance the offering of Origin’s amenity businesses and offers potential in the areas of Environmental Land Management for their Agri focused businesses.

Says Green-tech founders Rachel and Richard Kay: “When we started Green-tech we had great ambitions to be the ultimate one-stop-shop to the UK landscape trade. We have learnt and grown personally and professionally throughout this time. The Green-tech success story is beyond our wildest dreams and we are incredibly proud and grateful for what has been achieved. Throughout this journey we have made some lifelong friends, but none of it would have been possible without the dedicated team at Green-tech who are the backbone of the business. This deal reflects the ambition of Green-tech, very much onwards and upwards and definitely business as usual!”

Chris Clark, Managing Director of Origin’s Amenity business adds: “Origin Enterprises’ long-term strategy is to further enhance Origin’s amenity brands and the Green-tech acquisition is an ideal fit. Green-tech has a very experienced team, an extensive sector-focused product range, operates in complementary markets and brings a level of diversification. The Origin investment in Green-tech will allow us to better serve our customers whilst driving product development and accelerating growth.”

Picnic on site

Want a hot lunchtime snack while on site? Or need to keep the drinks cool while working under the sun? Look no further than Makita’s new 20-litre DCW180Z Cordless Cooler & Warmer Box. Powered by an 18v LXT battery, this handy product has two 18V LXT battery ports so you can attach two batteries in series for extended operating times. When the first battery is depleted the unit automatically switches to the second battery. This model can also be powered via 240v mains or with an in-vehicle 12v / 24v AC socket. When set at 5°C (normal fridge temperature) the cooler will run for up to 17 hours with 2x 6.0Ah batteries.

The unit can hold approximately 30 cans, or 15 x 600ml water bottles. Additionally it can run at its coldest setting of -18°C for five hours and its warmest setting of 60°C for around four hours.

The box features large 100mm wheels and a pull handle for convenient transport, and side grips for easy lifting as well as a comfortable shoulder strap. It is highly durable for outdoor use with an IPX4 rating.
Ground Control Ltd, the UK's largest landscape and maintenance contractor, made a pledge to be carbon neutral by 2025. The company, which services over 50,000 private and public sector sites, can now boast that it has reached its goal of achieving carbon neutral certification four years ahead of schedule.

The certification by the Carbon Trust followed a detailed analysis of its carbon emissions and illustrates the company’s commitment to fight climate change. Carbon neutrality has been achieved by reducing carbon emissions through a combination of in-house efficiency measures and the use of renewable energy, and offsetting remaining emissions through external projects.

“We are delighted to have beaten our initial target of becoming carbon neutral by 2025,” says Ground Control CEO Simon Morrish. “With the help of the Carbon Trust, we calculated our carbon emissions in our operations, which has helped us to identify where we can do more in the future.”

“We strive to improve our sustainability but there are emissions we can’t avoid, so we purchased verified offsets such as tree planting and renewable energy production through wind and solar to compensate for these inescapable emissions.”

The Carbon Trust’s assessment revealed a significant share of the company’s emissions use came from fuels used to operate its vehicle fleet and equipment, together with the energy required to run its offices, depots and facilities.

In response, emphasis will continue to be made on lowering energy use in the company’s field operations and offices. All company cars will be converted to electric vehicles within the next two years and a review of the commercial fleet is also underway with plans to eliminate the use of higher emission vehicles as soon as possible. Furthermore, the company is committed to converting to 100% battery-powered hand tools for all work by 2025.

Green energy suppliers will be used for heating and powering of offices and landlords and employees are encouraged and incentivised to do likewise. And several tree-planting projects with partners and clients have already been undertaken, and it’s hoped additional projects will emerge to help offset future unavoidable emissions.

To ensure the company’s ambitious growth strategy is aligned with its environmental commitments, Cambridge University’s Institute for Sustainable Leadership is reviewing Ground Control’s wider environmental strategy. Later this year it will publish a five-year plan, focusing on client and supply chain engagement together with establishing science-based targets to help the transition to becoming net zero.

“We are passionate about making a positive and sustainable difference, and this combined with the critical nature of the climate emergency provided a focus for us in accelerating our plans to become carbon neutral,” said Simon Morrish. “As we continue on this journey, it’s essential all companies begin to address their transition to net zero today.”

“The carbon neutral certification is recognition of the hard work we’re doing to improve our environmental performance and drive long-term, sustainable growth,” explains Ground Control managing director Jason Knights. “Our growth plans must be aligned with our commitment to the environment so that we can continue not only to reduce carbon emissions but also reach our ultimate goal of net zero emissions.”

Hugh Jones, managing director at the Carbon Trust Advisory adds: “The Carbon Trust is pleased to have certified Ground Control to PAS 2060, demonstrating carbon neutrality of its organisational footprint. This is a positive step in Ground Control’s sustainability journey and we hope it will encourage the company and its stakeholders to take further steps to raise the bar and ultimately build a net zero future.”
grounds maintenance and landscape creation specialists idverde has announced that doug graham is to step down as CEO of the uk company. he will be succeeded by chris pullen, an experienced business leader who has worked in senior roles across the support services sector, including staffline and AWG.

Doug joined idverde in 2008 and led the company through a strong growth phase, playing a key role in its development from what was then a £38m turnover organisation with 700 colleagues to today where it has a turnover of £240m and nearly 4,000 colleagues across the UK.

Reporting directly to idverde President Hervé Lancon, Group CEO, chris pullen will bring with a wealth of experience in the support services sector. most recently he was CEO at Staffline Plc, one of the largest recruitment companies in the UK and prior to that he was Global Managing Director for IWG Plc. He started his career as an army officer in the Coldstream Guards.

"I am excited to welcome chris to the idverde family," says Hervé Lancon. "His experience in the uk and internationally will be invaluable as we continue to develop our strategy of growth and excellence in delivery."

"idverde has been a great success story across Europe, and having watched the company grow in the UK and beyond I look forward to joining the leadership team, building on the great things that Doug has achieved and meeting my new colleagues," says chris pullen. "The opportunities across our core sectors and in new arenas are strong and our skills base is unparalleled within the market, and I am excited about being part of the development of this great business."

idverde UK welcomes new CEO
The first female managing director takes the helm for STIHL GB, the German manufacturer of chainsaws and other handheld power tools. Kay Green joins an ever-increasing number of women in senior positions across the global STIHL business.

For the past three years, Kay has been UK and Ireland Country Manager for Hasbro UK Ltd. During her career at Hasbro, she held a number of senior commercial roles including director level positions in both sales and marketing and a two-year period as Nordic Country Manager in Copenhagen.

Kay joins a thriving and resilient STIHL GB, with the business recording over a decade of year-on-year growth and a doubling of turnover from £57m in 2008 to £125m in 2020.

Commenting on her new role, Kay says: “I’m delighted to be joining this iconic global brand. 2020 was a record year for STIHL GB, despite the global circumstances. The business saw growth across most markets and categories thanks to the support and commitment of the STIHL Approved Dealer network and of course our professional and domestic end-users. I’m very much looking forward to meeting our partners across the industry as soon as the situation allows.”

“The FSA 135 makes cutting through thick grass and growth effortless. But it wasn’t just the performance that won me over; the craftsmanship, low-noise output and long working times is what makes this the perfect tool for my needs.”

– Christoph Jötten, horticulturist and landscaper
New Forest spring fair

The organising of the 28-year strong BBC Gardeners’ World Live at the NEC, Birmingham are bringing a new outdoor spring gardening event to Beaulieu in Hampshire.

The BBC Gardeners’ World Spring Fair will take place at home of the National Motor Museum and beautiful ancestral Montagu home, Palace House, on the edge of the New Forest from Friday 28 May to Sunday 30 May 2021.

Partnered by Hillier, the fair will present a select number of high-quality nurseries with displays and plants for sale, an inspirational collection of planting ideas in the Beautiful Borders and a range of gardening exhibitors to shop from.

Founded in 1864 in Winchester, Hampshire, Hillier has a network of 18 garden centres across the south of England. It is the UK’s largest grower of semi-mature trees and grows more than 900,000 plants a year at the company’s Hampshire nurseries. The stunning Hillier experience feature at the heart of the fair will be overflowing with spring garden ideas and planting combinations. Visitors will be able to speak to experts from Hillier, who will be on hand to share one-to-one advice. Hillier plan to launch two stunning new plants at the Spring fair.

As gardening becomes increasingly popular and positively contributes to our wellbeing in this uncertain climate, the new outdoor BBC Gardeners’ World Fair offers up a chance for more gardeners to experience the Gardeners’ World brand coming to life.

Amplifying the value of this great day out, tickets to the Spring event include access to the stunning Beaulieu grounds and gardens. Find out more and book tickets at www.bbcgardenersworldfair.com

BALI Landscape awards 2021

One of Europe’s largest landscaping awards ceremony returns in December. The British Association of Landscape Industries’ (BALI) prestigious National Landscape Awards, returns on Friday 3 December 2021. Entries are now open alongside several exciting new announcements for the 45th year.

Registered BALI members are invited to submit their entries now. For the first time they can also enter online, (including their submission pack) thanks to a new entry system, alongside the returning postal option. Due to the effects of COVID-19, Contractor, Designer and International members, for 2021 only, now also have the opportunity to submit a scheme that has achieved practical completion in the last 24 months, instead of the normal 12 months.

There are 33 categories in total, including a brand-new Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Enhancement category. The judges will be looking for projects that demonstrate a significant contribution to conservation or enhancement of biodiversity, embodying the principles of sustainable development using innovative concepts.

Chair of the judging panel, John Melmoe, says: “We are delighted to introduce this new category for 2021. We will be looking for evidence of any biodiversity net gains and clear definitions of innovation or environmental designs. The long-term management strategy must be clearly defined, including proof of monitoring processes. On behalf of my fellow judges and I we look forward to seeing some truly remarkable projects in this category.”

For full details and entry guidelines visit www.baliawards.co.uk.

New dates for Festival of Turf

With the Roadmap out of lockdown now in place, The British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) has rescheduled its Festival of Turf from June to 21 & 22 July 2021.

The Festival of Turf will welcome BIGGA members and others in the turf industry to the 30-acre Warwickshire Event Centre, near Royal Leamington Spa. As social distancing restrictions are anticipated to have been removed by then, the organisers hope bring to life the “festival” with a wide range for vendors and trade stores.

COVID-safety measures will remain in place, such as enhanced cleaning regimes and hand sanitising, plus any other requirements as defined by government guidelines. However, limits on visitor numbers and social distancing measures may no longer be required.

BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton explains: “The Roadmap out of lockdown announced by the Prime Minister provided incredibly welcome news for the country and the association’s members, not least because it provided a date for the reopening of golf courses in England and a potential return to normality for us all. It also presented an opportunity for BIGGA to host the Festival of Turf as the spectacular of sports and amenity turf maintenance that we had hoped for when we first announced this event last year.

“Although the published roadmap only serves as a guideline and the timings are subject to change, everyone at BIGGA is excited about the opportunity to provide an improved exhibition experience for our attendees.

“We always intended the Festival of Turf to be an opportunity for BIGGA members and their colleagues in the turf industry to reunite after so long apart.”
Green for go in the bid to boost health

A diverse cast of actors is assembling in the campaign to create and manage sustainable green spaces, Greg Rhodes reports

As the world learns to live with Covid-19 and its mutant offspring, nations are busy weighing up the winners and losers of the pandemic.

The move from city to country life for more of us, the future of the high street in an online retail era and homeworking offer challenges and opportunities in the climate of the new normal.

Reimagining the public realm comes high on many’s priorities as Britain addresses zero carbon targets and climate change – as does tackling a tidal wave of mental health issues exposed and exacerbated over a tumultuous and transformational year.

What is apparent now is the need for more considered, strategic approaches to health and wellbeing to benefit all sectors of society. Feeding into that vision are climate change mitigation and developing financially and environmentally sustainable green spaces on to a higher plain to generate wider interventions to move the utility and importance of green spaces, measures to optimise the value of green spaces, measures to continually managed.

As traditional roles and jobs die away, new opportunities are opening up and landscapers have a major role in what may become a dramatically different commercial climate.

Actors and stakeholders as diverse as the NHS, The National Trust, mental health charities, public health bodies, Sport England and local community and parks groups are interacting to stimulate fresh thinking and interventions to move the utility and importance of green spaces on to a higher plain to generate wider public access.

The Fields in Trust study “Re-evaluating Parks and Green Spaces” came to some startling conclusions in seeking to measure their economic and wellbeing value to individuals.

The total economic value to an individual is £30.24 a year, it found, and includes benefits gained from using their local park or green space and non-use benefits such as the preservation of parks for future generations.

Furthermore, the wellbeing value associated with the frequent use of local parks and green spaces is worth £34.2bn a year to the entire UK population was another key finding.

Parks and green spaces are also estimated to save the NHS some £111m annually “based solely on a reduction in GP visits and excluding any additional savings from prescribing or referrals”, the report concluded.

The opportunity for landscapers to work together with councils, charities and health authorities could be substantial, judging by moves underway by both The National Trust and CPRE London.

Under the Future Parks initiative, the Trust is working with partners to discover new ways to fund and manage local parks “sustainably”.

“Just as we are beginning to reaffirm the true value of open spaces to our society, the health of our public parks is under threat due to a dramatic shift in local authority funding,” it stated in its launch announcement.

Director General Hilary McGrady said: “We need to give parks a reboot and start thinking about them as essential elements of our communities in the same way we think about housing and transport.”

With National Lottery Heritage Fund and government support, the multi-million pound pioneering programme is set to “secure the future of the UK’s urban parks and green spaces”, focusing on eight urban areas.

**Future Parks Initiative**

*Birmingham : Bournemount, Christchurch and Poole*

*Bristol : Cambridgeshire (countwide)*

*Edinburgh : Islington and Camden*

*Nottingham : Plymouth*

The green space falling within the programme totals 20,000 hectares of parks, woodlands, cemeteries, allotments, playing fields and nature reserves. On top of financial investment, expertise in conservation, green space management, fundraising and volunteering will be shared with other councils to “ensure green spaces are continually managed”.

Within what is now a more coherent strategy for optimising the value of green spaces, measures to identify and measure the benefits they offer have been launched and already adopted.

The Health Parks initiative for example is already “gaining resonance” according to Richard Tisdall, director of landscape architects, Tisdall Associates, which unveiled the scheme two years ago.

“We aim to provide a broader vision of how parks can be better used to provide a context for co-operative working between councils, Care Commissioning Groups and public health bodies to deliver practical interventions...”
Barry Emmerson, Head of Parks for Islington and Camden, takes up the story. “My team worked with Parks for London two years ago on behalf of Islington and Camden and with the public health team,” he recalls.

The assessment of Islington’s 106 parks and Camden’s 72, studied accessibility, health promotion, physical assets such as football pitches and outdoor gyms, environmental factors and biodiversity. “This analysis allows each of the above criteria to be addressed according to whether elements are (1) present and satisfactory, (2) in need of improvement or (3) new opportunities.”

“The ‘Current Health Status’ identifies existing elements and facilities and combines elements that are ‘Present and Satisfactory’ with those ‘In Need of Improvement’. Improvements and new opportunities are also identified separately,” Barry says.

“Utilising information in the Toolkit, we can identify a group of parks in a specific ward, looking at physical health, social prescribing and mental wellbeing of the local community.”

“The report was completed in late 2020 and the findings produced in a format to embed within our capital bid process.”

Key factors centre on how park developments fit into existing health conditions and mental wellbeing of the local catchment, Barry adds. “Do they allow access to nature, offer places for quiet reflection and include woodland planting and flower borders.”

“Also, can we provide opportunities for people to get involved in community gardening and volunteering and develop stronger ties with CCGs and mental health groups?”

Funding will be sought through Section 106 and community infrastructure levy on developers (improvements to roadways and so on) Barry adds. “Longer term, we will approach the NHS and CCG. If we can demonstrate benefits, we can leverage funding.”

Armed with the evidence base the Toolkit can provide, Barry foresees a major strategic role for the landscaping sector to revision park assets matching local needs. “Covid has really shown the true value of our parks and green spaces and they are now seen as more than just good to have,” Barry says. “More people want to get involved post-Covid, and zero carbon and ecological issues moving up the agenda, the role parks and green spaces play in resolving these issues cannot be ignored.”

While momentum builds nationally to safeguard green spaces to create a pollution boundary to absorb vehicle emissions as well as wildlife corridors is one solution,” Neil says. “Species selection is important though, so that they are appropriate to the local setting.”

“Creating bunds to isolate areas within green spaces such as parks is another option, to create a sense of tranquility for those using them. Victoria Park in the East End planted hedges two years ago to create secluded areas.”

Water features in urban public spaces are important, going forward, he believes. “New York is a fine example, where people come to them to enjoy a nicer kind of natural noise.”

CPRE England is seeking a widely-shared vision involving local groups and the Mayor of London in a mission to fund more green development, including greater access by the public.

Pockets of progress are appearing. Grosvenor Estates a year ago began rethinking Grosvenor Square in Mayfair, following the American Embassy’s relocation to Nine Elms in 2017. The 2.5ha open garden now includes a public park.

London’s ‘hidden’ green spaces are in CPRE London’s sights too. “Big questions need to be asked of private access to London’s gardens,” Neil notes, memorably typified in the closing moments of the film Notting Hill.
For example at Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire the Trust’s team built a new boardwalk behind the Roger Clarke hide and out to the new accessible path around the woodland walk. Completed in 2018/19, it delivers a safe, sustainable solution in an extremely environmentally sensitive landscape. On another initiative wider green space access was at the heart of a National Trust/Sport England £4.2m match-funding partnership programme, now nearing delivery, to create ten cycle trails across its mansion properties. Begun in 2014, the programme was designed to raise usage levels by redeveloping existing paths and creating new ones, says project manager Martin Harrison-Putnam.

“These are safe, traffic-free surfaces, with wayfinders, that are really accessible for wheelchairs, buggies and mobility scooters,” Martin adds. “We transformed tired worn out paths and reclaimed historic walkways where possible, with the aim of pulling visitors out of sensitive areas and creating a springboard for opening up access to our estates.”

“We had to go through a rigorous process of local planning applications and consulting on ecology, garden history, habitats and archaeology with Natural England, Historic England and the Woodland Trust,” says Martin, who adds that current data reveal split in use of 70% walkers: 30% cycling, both showing an uplift.

If the project requirements are any indication of the scope and scale of what is to come in re-evaluating green space, landscape architects, designers and contractors have a major part to play in protecting and rethinking these treasured areas, whether rural or urban.

And with cities and built up areas in mind...
The National Trust and partners have announced plans for blossoming tree circles in cities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland over the next five years, working with local authorities to design and plant the spaces.

“The project is just one element of our ambitions to plant more trees,” says National Trust director general Hilary McGrady, “and to address Britain’s need for green space and nature where people live.”

The first circle, planned for Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Newham, will include 33 UK grown trees, representing the 33 London boroughs, and will provide a place to reflect on the impact of Covid-19 on the capital. Blossom-inspired spaces are also planned for Plymouth, Nottingham and Newcastle, the Trust confirms.
Clean sweep

With outdoor spaces for entertaining becoming a must have as a customer request, Jo Holtom from Kebur Garden Materials looks for solutions to freshen up and maintain hard landscapes.

Whilst there are lower maintenance options such as porcelain, any hard surface is going to require some cleaning. For most people, their hardscape is a significant investment so it’s worth spending a little time to keep it looking good.

To avoid staining, prevention is better than cure. For common culprits like grease, leaves and berries - clean and clear as quickly as possible. If using any chemicals on or near a hard surface, check they’re safe and suitable. De-icing salt and fertiliser, for example can cause nasty damage, so do the homework and read the label.

Why use a sealant?

Sealing is a great way to protect surfaces like concrete and natural stone from weeds and stains, especially in high traffic areas. Choose a sealant that’s specifically formulated for the surface to be treated. Certain sealers will also enhance the appearance of stone and reduce fading over time. Kebur particularly likes Dry Treat Intensia, which is a deep penetrating sealant that can make natural stone features like veins more visible.

If re-sealing a surface, make sure to use the same sealer as originally used to prevent an adverse reaction that will spoil the finish.

Product knowledge

When using specialist cleaners and sealers, always read the label very carefully and wear appropriate PPE. It’s also a good idea to test on a small, hidden area first and be careful with acid-based cleaners. They can cause irreversible damage on limestone, for example.

Pressure washing

Mechanical washers can be great tools, but capable of destruction, especially when it comes to joints and more fragile surfaces like riven stone. Even on tough concrete and brick surfaces, a powerful pressure washer can damage the surface of the paving. To keep joints and surfaces intact, use jet washing sparingly and as a last resort for patios. If jet washing is a necessity, opt for the fan setting and avoid the joints.

How to clean paving

For all paving, the best option is to brush regularly to stop any loose dirt ingraining itself within the stone. Use a stiff brush with warm soapy water or an all-purpose non-acid based patio shampoo (always checking that it is suitable for your type of paving). Once the soap has been thoroughly brushed into the surface, rinse well with clean water until all soap, residue and dirt has been removed.

Certain types of paving and garden environments will need a little more attention. Porous paving like some sandstones (especially honed or smooth) in shadier areas will hold more moisture in, so need cleaning more often. Porcelain paving needs less cleaning as it is less porous.

Driveway blocks

Because concrete driveway blocks are porous, they tend to absorb oil and grease stains quickly. Clean regularly with warm soapy water and a stiff brush as with other paving. Treat stubborn oil stains using a specialist garden cleaner like Easy Grease and Oil Away.

Take care not to disturb the jointing sand when cleaning and top up with kiln dried sand if needed. Some sealants like Easy Seal BC’S bind the sand between the driveway blocks, preventing damage from weeds and insects.

Clay pavers

Regular brushing and soapy water should be enough to shift general dirt and grime. but avoid cleaning within the first three months of laying. As with most surfaces it’s also best to be cautious with jet washing. The high pressure can disrupt the paving bed surface and jointing material, which can cause pavers to crack or come loose. Oil doesn’t tend to easily penetrate clay pavers, but it is still a good idea to clean spills quickly.

Clean decking

Leaves and other debris, especially if there are overhanging trees, can cause stains on decking. Additionally, timber decking can become very slippery. Sweep and clean with a soft brush and warm soapy water. If jet washing, do so with caution and test a small area first. Timber decking will last longer if oiled or sealed to prevent the wood from drying and cracking. Sealants like Easy Deck Protect also help to improve grip when the timber is wet.

Resin bound

Resin bound is pretty stable and low maintenance if installed correctly. If a stiff brush and soapy water doesn’t do the job, use a gentle jet wash. As it’s porous, additional tools may be needed to shift the moss. Non-acid based domestic cleaners or a standard moss killer should be suitable.

Treating stains

Occasionally more stubborn stains appear from organic material or chemicals which need some extra attention. Here are some good fixes…

Natural iron deposits

These can appear in certain natural stones like Kandla or Silver Grey Sandstone because of higher levels of iron. These browner areas will lighten over time but if a client can’t wait, lighten them with treatments such as Hanafin Eff-Erayza again may help as it’s especially designed to remove embedded dirt and restore porous natural stones. Several applications may be required.

Organic stains

With any organic stains, a good treatment to try is Patio Black Spot Remover. Biodegradable and acid-free, it works quickly to break down black spot and other organic residue like berry stains. The team at Kebur find this tends to shift the toughest of stains on a range of hard surfaces, even on the rare occasions when treating porcelain.

Porcelain is a low maintenance paving option but still needs cleaning (Credit: Sierra Grey porcelain courtesy of TAW Garden Landscapes) removing mineral residues including efflorescence, rust marks and limescale.

Grout stains

Grout stains can be a particular problem, especially on light-coloured and porous paving. They’re best avoided by washing thoroughly twice after grouting to make sure all residue is removed. Hannafin Eff-Erayza again may help as it’s especially designed to remove embedded dirt and restore porous natural stones. Several applications may be required.

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Kebur Garden Materials is an established supplier of hard landscaping materials to trade and retail customers. As well as stocking its own collection of natural stone and porcelain, the company offers installation and pre-sealing services.
Stone is such a versatile material that can be used whether constructing a simple patio or an elaborate swimming pool. Deciding on whether to use a natural stone or a man-made material such as porcelain depends on where and for what the stone is being used.

Natural stone
From sandstone and limestone to marble and granite, part of natural stone’s beauty lies in its stunning colour choices, tonal variations, and organic properties. Being such a versatile material, specialists can apply many different finishes to create various looks from a contemporary sawn finish with straight edges to a rustic tumbled finish with a naturally time-aged worn surface. Most sandstone and limestone is easy to install by simply laying on type 1 sand and cement. The stones can also be cut to produce specific designs like step treads or wall cappings to enhance the surroundings.

To make cleaning easier, seal natural stone with an external water-based sealer to keep its beauty and maintain its appearance for longer. Also, regularly clean the natural stone using a diluted chlorine solution (1 chlorine to 5 parts water). Simply pour over the area, brush in and leave for 10 minutes before hosing off. Avoid power washing as this can damage grouting.

Choosing porcelain
Porcelain is a popular landscaping material. Made from a mix of clay, sand and other natural materials, it is revered for its high resistance to abrasion, warping and weathering. It brings together the beauty of a realistic and high-definition nature-mimicking design, with the longevity and durability of a man-made tile.

Thanks to its slip-resistant properties, it works brilliantly for patios, terraces and swimming pool surrounds, and is also very easy to maintain. Porcelain does not need to be sealed as it is not porous and so it should not stain. It is also resistant to moss and mould, which reduces how often it needs cleaning—giving you more time to simply enjoy it. Just give it a simple annual clean with a chlorine solution.

Incorporate it into a water feature by cladding a wall to add a pop of colour and texture, or design a beautiful sweeping garden staircase using bonded over-lips to create a thicker-looking tread that is both durable and elegant.

Landscaping beauty does not have to come from plants. Use stone to create structure, texture, colour and design. www.cranbournestone.co.uk

Kerb appeal
The type of stone used can make or break a garden design. Colour, material and size affects the finished look and choosing the right materials is just as important as deciding on the plants and trees that surround the hardscape says Cranbourne Stone.
Water wise

Planning and maintaining landscape irrigation brings all round benefits says Peter Longman, Northern Europe Landscape Area Manager for Rain Bird Europe

Using an automated irrigation system is one of the best ways to keep new lawns and landscapes healthy whilst minimising water waste, keeping utility bills low and helping to protect the environment. In combination with up-front planning and professional advice, automated irrigation will help to ensure long-term satisfaction with any new residential or commercial landscape.

At the landscape and irrigation planning stage, working with a local qualified designer or contractor with knowledge of soil types and climate conditions will help greatly in the selection of appropriate turf and plant species. Grouping plants with similar watering needs close together and separating grassed areas from shrubs will assist in effective irrigation planning.

Irrigation zoning

Irrigation zoning is a process to be undertaken carefully, whilst also ensuring that the irrigation system will have enough capacity for now and the future. The more zones that are planned, the more irrigation can be customised to the installation, even if the landscaping is modified or extended at a later date. Installing extra connections at the outset makes it easier and less expensive to expand the irrigation system later.

Irrigation zones are areas that are watered by the same irrigation valve and delivery system, with irrigation scheduling taking into consideration sun, shade and wind exposure. However, the best system design will not perform as well as it should if inferior components are selected or installed incorrectly. Checking on-site water pressure and the selection of the most appropriate sprinklers is essential as low or high water pressure can seriously affect their performance.

Something as simple as selecting the correct type of pipe can also mean the difference between a system that lasts for years and one that requires constant attention. Where surface or sub-surface dripline irrigation is installed, lines should be installed carefully to protect them from damage from aeration or other garden tools as well as other lawn or landscape maintenance procedures.

In operation, water wastage can be avoided by setting sprinklers accurately to reach plants but not to soak an adjacent driveway, path or patio. Run-off can be reduced by watering each zone more often for shorter periods. For example, setting a system to run for three five-minute intervals lets the soil absorb more water than watering for 15 minutes at one time.

Scheduled watering

Watering at the right time of day is also important and the best times are late afternoon, evening, and just before sunrise. When the sun is low there is less wind and temperatures are lower, reducing evaporation by as much as 30 percent. Adjusting the watering schedule regularly to account for seasonal weather conditions and other factors will help to keep plants healthy without overwatering.

Irrigation systems need regular inspection and maintenance to keep them working efficiently year after year. Damage from lawn equipment or the effects of winter weather can cause leaks and other problems. Checking water pressure, examining for leaks, inspection of sprinkler heads and other components for damage should be routine, along with ensuring sprinkler heads remain set high enough to clear plants that may have grown taller since the system was installed.

It’s Your World.

Rain Bird offers the broadest range of easy-to-use controller solutions.

Smart controls

The inclusion of smart controls as part of an irrigation system will automatically adjust watering based on rain, soil moisture, evaporation and plant water use. Rain sensors will stop the system from operating when it does rain whilst a soil sensor measures moisture at the root zone and turns off the system when no additional water is needed.
Irrigation rotors prove success

Launched in 2020 by Kar UK, the Hunter TTS-800 rotors are now one of the most sought-after irrigation products in sportsturf. Sales manager Mike McDonnell reveals why:

“Greenkeepers, course managers, grounds persons, stadium managers and sports turf managers in general have a very difficult job when it comes to irrigation management,” explains Mike. “Playability can directly impact revenue and so effective irrigation is critical at all times.”

Harsh environments and dirty water can complicate matters further. Turf Managers can push past such obstacles with TTS rotors. Heavy duty, highly efficient easy to service – to ensure beautiful, playable pitches and courses for years to come.

“We have been delighted to see such interest in the TTS-800 series in the past year,” says Mike. “A lot of research has been carried out over the years and it is not a surprise to see that Hunter systems offer unmatched performance.

With the large number of product brands, users need to carefully check the concentration of the active ingredients in the formulations. These vary from 4.8% up to 40%. The literature and label recommendations for use are often not very clear. Sometimes they make claims, which are different to the HSE Biocide database.

Many products sold for this all need similar conditions to perform effectively. They all need large volumes of concentrated product, circa 100 to 200 litres of product. This needs to be applied in about 1,000 to 2,000 litres of spray per Ha. Hence a 15l knapsack will only treat about 40-80 square metres of hard surface per fill. These products also require a 24 hour drying cycle post application to work effectively.

Recently Nonanoic acid has received UK BPR approval for use as a hard surface biocide and marketed by Rigby Taylor Ltd as Enclean (500g/l nonanoic acid) The product is a naturally derived ingredient extracted from sunflower and oilseed rape meal.

Applied at 18.5 l/ha, just 1 litre of Enclean plus 14 litres of water mixed in a 15l knapsack will treat 55 square metres using a 45 degree red even spray nozzle. This makes application much easier and quicker, saving time and money.

Nonanoic acid also has the benefit of working very quickly even under poor conditions. The site below was sprayed at the end of October in dull damp conditions and the speed of activity from Nonanoic acid (Enclean) can be clearly seen.

The path below was sprayed, in the wet, a day before the recent freezing weather. Picture show effective Enclean is, even under very poor conditions.

Enclean is produced from plant origins, so it is a sustainable biocide that is not produced from fossil fuels. Applications can be made under wide range of conditions and works within 48 hours irrelevant of temperature.

Contact Rigby Taylor for more information on the latest biocides. www.rigbytaylor.com
Employees working for Yorkshire based landscaping suppliers, Green-tech, can now further their career prospects and opportunities by studying for a degree apprenticeships, while working.

Designed in partnership with employers; higher and degree apprenticeships offer a higher education qualification, work experience and industry-relevant skills to create graduate calibre individuals within an organisation. Leeds Trinity University will be running the apprenticeships for Green-tech.

Green-tech has long since invested in sourcing, developing, and retaining ‘talent’. In 2017 they embraced the Government’s apprenticeship scheme which saw them take on several apprentices. It was a huge success with a 75% retention rate and the company continues to take on apprentices directly from school or college.

Three of Green-tech’s team across the marketing, IT and purchasing departments have enrolled on the degree courses. Kate Farrer, marketing executive has recently started a digital marketing degree, George Shepherd a software engineering degree and Sarah Whitley a supply chain degree.

“Enrolling for a degree apprenticeship supported by Green-tech will give me the opportunity to progress personally and professionally which will help me to achieve my goals for later life,” says George. “I will be working my full-time job which will really help with my apprenticeship, I’ll be developing my knowledge, gaining a degree qualification and getting paid. It’s a win-win for me.”

Sarah Whitley is Green-tech’s buyer. She forecasts and buys the thousands of product lines Green-tech sell. She also looks after all pricing enquiries for non-stock items. Sarah is undertaking a BSc (Hons) Professional Practice in Supply Chain Leadership which will take her three and a half years to complete.

Sarah adds, “Throughout my employment, I have always made it clear that I’ve wanted to progress professionally, and Green-tech has always been receptive to that. During the four years I’ve worked here, I’ve been promoted three times, each time gaining more responsibility. Studying for a work-based degree will aid me in becoming better in my current role so that I can better support the Green-tech team and it will also give me a professional/academic qualification that I wouldn’t have had otherwise.”

Rachel Kay, Green-tech’s Managing Director concludes: “It’s important for our business that we invest in our people and encourage them to have a worthwhile and meaningful career, especially the younger generation just entering the landscaping industry. Our commitment to career development is appreciated by our people and one of the reasons our staff retention rates are high.
Evolution is the solution

The Evolution Controlled Fine analysis provides a triple action nitrogen source to promote growth in a range of conditions and the immediate availability of nitrate ensures a rapid response. Polymer coated urea controls further release and ensures the grass continues to receive nitrogen over an extended period, which is exactly what Graham was looking for.

Further evolution coated nitrate boasts significant calcium and magnesium content to support turf health and colour.

Graham took David’s advice on-board and he first applied Evolution Controlled Fine to two of the five rugby pitches. However, he admitted to keeping his options open and wanted to make sure he had the right product before applying it to all five.

“First, we applied Evolution Controlled Fine to two of our rugby pitches in August, but it wasn’t until a bit later that we carried it over to the other three,” he said.

“The reason for doing so was because I was conducting a trial with a competitor product. I quickly found that it didn’t work as well as Evolution Controlled. Based on the results, Evolution Controlled is now on all five rugby pitches.

“I cannot fault it at all,” continued Graham. “It has nearly been four months and I still have good colour, plenty of growth and the turf is really healthy. It just continues to tick along nicely and most importantly it hasn’t given me that excessive growth. It is also cheaper than the previous product I was using, which is also another huge bonus.

“It has done exactly what David said it would do. The all-round customer service from Agrovista Amenity has been fantastic throughout the process. What I particularly like about David is that he gets the impression he is not just trying to sell me the most expensive product – he genuinely has an interest in your grounds and he works hard to identify the products that will benefit you the most.”

For more information about Agrovista Amenity, visit www.agrovista.co.uk/amenity

New cultivars and formulations for Johnsons seeds

DLF Seeds continues to set the bar high in seed research and development. The launch of their Johnsons Sports Seeds mixture guide for 2021, introduces new cultivars and 11 updated formulations. These promise further improvements to disease resistance, wear tolerance and visual performance across a number of key mixtures in their golf and sports portfolio.

With sustainability an increasingly key consideration, turf managers are discovering the benefits associated with DLF’s 4turf® Tetraploid Ryegrass technology. New in is Tetragame, a cultivar which significantly improves disease resistance and sward recovery, as well as demonstrating strong germination and establishment even at temperatures as low as 4°C. Tetragame features in the new formulation of J Outfield, together with updated J 4Turf and J 4Turf 100 mixtures to deliver the strength and durability demanded for winter sport.

With a trusted track record for high performance, Johnsons J Premier Wicket and J Premier Pitch mixtures will continue to set the standard for cricket and football respectively – with ProNitro® coated options available for even faster establishment and reduced input costs. DLF’s ProNitro® SG seed coating contains a targeted combination of controlled release nitrogen, together with hydroactive water management technology, which leads to stronger germination and improved nutrient utilisation during the early stages of plant growth.

Also new for 2021 is Absolom. This highly-rated Slender Creeping Red Fescue cultivar delivers exceptional disease resistance and tolerance for close mown management making it a great addition to a number of Johnsons golf mixtures including J Fescue, J Premier Fairway and J Green. In addition, all mixtures across the Johnsons putting surface range are now ‘DLF Select’ purity as standard, meaning course managers can be assured that only seed from the purest crops and meeting the stringent cleanliness grade makes it into the bag.

Praxys impresses at the Royal Birkdale

Course Manager at the Royal Birkdale Golf Club in Southport, Chris Whittle, claims that Praxys, ICL’s high performance, highly concentrated systemic selective herbicide, plays an integral role in his weed control programme.

Renowned for killing the toughest of weeds, the herbicide possesses a number of benefits. Systemic uptake down to the roots with no regrowth, this fast-acting weedkiller allows rapid entry and is rainfast within just one hour. It also has the lowest dosage rates and water volume of any selective herbicide available.

It combines the three most powerful active ingredients on the market, Florasulam, Fluroxypyr and Clopyralid, to wipe out weeds on golf courses, sports and amenity turf and lawns in one application.

Developed to target common weeds like daisy and dandelion Praxys also kills more problematic species such as Self-heal, Ribwort Plantain and Spear Thistle. The low dose rate, from one litre per hectare, is flexible depending on the weed spectrum to be controlled.

“We predominately apply Praxys to our tees and fairways and it has been really impressive,” says Chris. “We’ll never totally eradicate difficult weeds, because new weeds keep coming through each year. However, Praxys works well in our integrated approach towards managing them and with its low water volume coupled with its low impact on the environment it makes for a great product for us to use”

www.landscapermagazine.com
Seasonal nutrition

As grounds staff start work on their spring nutrition regimes, Headland Amenity has a range of fertiliser products to kick start growth.

Multigreen® CRF, is a popular choice for golf and sport clubs as it overcomes the efficacy issues associated with some granular feeds in high moisture situations, as nutrient release is governed solely by soil temperature. It features urea or potassium nitrate prills within a permeable polymer-resin coating, which start to release their solubilised nutrients once soil temperatures rise above 6°C - in line with grass growth. Nutrient availability is gentle and controlled by temperature alone, avoiding ‘flush’ growth and producing a strong, healthy sward that is sustained for up to six months depending on the analysis. This field longevity makes Multigreen® ideal for use on winter sports pitches and racecourses with lighter, free-draining soils.

For areas with heavier soil types, Headland’s XTEND® range of slow release granular and soluble fertilisers provides two to three months of consistent nutrient release from a single application. Each urea prill in XTEND® granular features two components to enhance the slow-release nature of the nitrogen; NBPT which prevents the loss of ammonia nitrogen to the atmosphere by volatilisation and DCD nitrification inhibitor to slow down the conversion of ammonium to nitrate in the soil, allowing the ammonium nitrogen to be held in the soil more efficiently. In liquid form, XTEND® is an ideal tank mix partner to Clipless NT® and Elevate Fe®, creating a cost-effective spring/summer feed without excessive clippings generation.

Designed to fill the gap between traditional outfield and fine turf products, the H-CoteTM range of mini-granular controlled-release fertilisers is suitable for use in all coarse and close mown turf situations including golf tees and fairways, sports pitches and racecourses. It offers field longevity of three to four months thanks to the high levels (70-91%) of controlled release nitrogen, surrounded by dual-coat technology which allows for a high specific nitrogen analysis per prill while reducing the risk of nitrogen lock-off.

Specifically for fine turf, Greentec® Mosskiller Pro is an ideal spring starter or low temperature hardener on amenity turf where prolonged colour, but not too much growth, is required. In addition to its low NK analysis, providing a consistent response in cool conditions, it is an approved mosskiller, providing rapid control of moss in managed amenity turf.

Adi Porter, Course Manager at Greetham Valley Golf Club, has found the SISIS Flexibrush to be an ideal solution for dispersing worm casts. Picture perfect facilities are important to Adi on his courses and he admits to being frustrated by an all-too-common issue.

“Worms are becoming more and more of a problem on every sports surface because we lost the chemical control a few years ago,” he explains. “At Greetham, the worm population has undoubtedly increased and the worm casts can be a nuisance. If they are not kept on top of then they just get smeared into the grass with the golf that is played and foot traffic, trolleys and buggies.”

For a non-chemical solution, Adi looked to the SISIS Flexibrush. This tractor mounted brush is equally effective to disperse top dressing and remove excess material on natural turf and on synthetic surfaces. Versatile, it can also be used for dew dispersal and striping for improved presentation. It has a 5.35 m working width, its brush sections float to follow ground contours and the outer sections fold for transport and storage.

“It is very productive, and we can easily do 36 holes in a day, says Adi. “I also like the fact that it folds up quicky – you can easily move it about the course, through trees and from fairway to fairway. “Another main reason for purchasing it was so that we can use it for presentation,” he continues. “We will use it for brushing before moving to stand the grass up because it provides a better cut. Also, in the autumn and winter months when we are not actually cutting the grass, we can still present a fairway nicely by striping with the Flexibrush.

SISIS Flexibrush gets results at Greetham Valley Golf Club.

Results with flexibrush
perfectly designed for the commercial user who is looking for a mower that is lightweight to tow from site to site, economical to run and low initial cost. Its compact size allows for effortless manoeuvrability whether mowing large parks or gardens that contain lots of obstacles to cut around. The SF224 is powered by a 22.5 hp diesel engine that is Stage V compliant and does not need complicated emission control devices. This allows the mower to be extremely fuel efficient and only requires simple maintenance. Available with a range of rotary or flail decks, tool carrier or collector.

Contact your local ISEKI dealer to book a demonstration today!

Tel 01473 599266 | info@iseki.co.uk

Looking for an alternative?

Branching out

Varying your skill set can increase your value to clients, says Paula Warman. Here are some considerations to take into account before extending your operations.

1. Target Market - Is it a complementary service or product that targets your existing client base or would it appeal to other markets and clients? This will involve looking at your avatar (ideal client) for the new service or product and will be a good basis before going onto step two.

2. Marketing Strategy - When launching a new service or product, look at your existing marketing pillars - the ways you obtain leads and clients into your business. For example, social media. Can you use these existing pillars by running a campaign promoting the new service or product? Also, could you add more pillars such as paid adverts. A major consideration is deciding whether you have the budget to promote the new service or product? There is an opportunity to capitalise when launching a new service or product by building interest with a specific and well-executed launch strategy and campaign.

3. Processes - This needs consideration particularly if you are outsourcing or using third party suppliers. How will you deliver the product or service? If someone buys this from you? What staff will need to be informed, how will the enquiries be handled, how is the order processed etc. Not the most exciting aspect of launching a new product or service but definitely a must do.

4. Training - Will you need to upskill any staff? This could be on the ‘doing’ or the new service or product and it can also mean training on the sales and ordering side. Think about both sides of the training coin. Finally, launching a new service or product can be exciting and diversification into another element of the landscaping industry is the easiest and most effective way to do this. However, be mindful of the time pressures and investment it will take to make it work.

For help with diversification in your business and/ or launching a new service do ask the team at The Landscaper’s Circle. Both the Landscaper’s Circle and The Landscaper Magazine would love to hear of any inspirational stories of how you diversified – especially coming out of lockdown.
Power for the outdoors

Power tool manufacturer, Makita has released a Twin 18V (36V) LXT Brushless Linetrimmer and 36V LXT Brushless Blower, as part of its expanding outdoor equipment range.

Brushless Linetrimmer
The powerful 36V DUR368L brushless motor can reach fast cutting speeds of up to 6,500rpm and offers a cutting diameter of 350mm. Thanks to Makita’s Automatic Torque Drive Technology (ADT), speed and torque levels are automatically adjusted according to the density of weeds and the machine also features Makita’s highly responsive Active Feedback Sensing Technology (AFT), that shuts down the tool to protect the user if the rotation speed suddenly slows down.

Brushless Blower
Powered by Makita’s PDC01 or PDC1200 backpack battery systems (sold separately), the brushless UB001CZ LXT Blower performs at 36V high power for extended run times and outstanding performance similar to a 50cc class engine machine, offering speeds of up to 24,000rpm in boost mode.

For the most efficient clearing operation, the blower has been engineered with an optimised grip to frame angle, providing the best nozzle to ground position. The lightweight and compact design is perfect for single handed operation but can also be attached to a shoulder belt for added comfort.

As well as a variable speed control by trigger and a cruise control lever, the powerful, portable tool has a three-stage telescopic long nozzle attached as standard.

Speaking on the new devices, Mark Earles, Business Development Manager for Outdoor Power Equipment at Makita UK, comments: “We are pleased to launch these new outdoor products which form part of an exciting roadmap for our cordless garden machinery range this year. Our complete line up of cordless outdoor solutions continues to transform the way professionals work with new levels of productivity and efficiency.”

STIHL expands kombiengine range

For landscapers faced with a variety of tasks from hedge trimming, grass trimming to clearing scheduled for one job, the STIHL KombiSystem is a great option. It’s designed so users can pick and mix between different engines to suit their regular needs and then acquire tool attachments to get the combination that works perfectly. Just one engine head to power a variety of tools.

Most professionals are familiar with the fuel based heads and now STIHL has launched the new battery powered KMA 135 R, adding to its range of high-performance KombiEngines for professional users tackling tough jobs in noise sensitive area.

The new robust and powerful KombiEngine accompanies the KMA 130 R in the range. Featuring a sturdy new battery housing, users can now easily slot in STIHL’s high-performance 36V AP batteries, adding greater versatility to carry out the quick jobs where KombiTool’s are so effective.

As well as delivering excellent performance across a wide range of KombiTool’s, the motor requires little-to-no servicing, whilst the easy to clean air filter ensures a long service life and optimum engine cooling.

The KMA 135 R has an ergonomic control handle with three level speed pre-selection displayed on an LED panel and infinitely variable speed control on the trigger to perfectly match the KombiTool and the work being carried out.

A quick-release coupling allows the splitting of the KombiSystem into two parts for easy transport and storage – and then re-assembled without any tools required.

The new FSA 135 R is compatible with STIHL’s wide range of KombiTool attachments, which are all interchangeable thanks to the straightforward and sturdy connection point. Further ranges of accessories are also available to use with the KMA 135 R, including Shaft Extensions, RTS Harness, Angled Gearhead and Carry Bag.

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Black spot removal

The Landscapecer Magazine sits for a Q & A with Simon Essex from the Patio Black Spot Removal Company.

What did you do before you set up Patio Black Spot in 2012? What gave you the inspiration to set up the company?

For 30 years I ran a stone restoration company that restored Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed buildings. We only restored patios for English Heritage, mainly York stone and other very ancient stone surfaces. In 2009 my tennis partner asked if I had any ideas for removing the hideous black spots from her patio. I mixed up a solution, and gave it to her. Three weeks later, her friend called to say, “Rosie has given me some of your ‘magic potion’... can you come and see me?”

So I took to google and saw there was nothing on the market specifically connected to removing black lichen, other than Patent Magic, Jeys Fluid, both of which I knew didn’t work. A year later, I was interviewed on Radio 5 Live, on Richard Bacon’s “Help Line”. Following that the phone never stopped ringing! The Patio Black Spot Removal Company Limited was born.

What do you think it is that sets you apart from other patio cleaning products?

Patio Black Spot Remover treats the root of the problem, on which everything else on your patio grows. It completely restores the original colour, to any stone, whether five or 50 years old, in just two hours. Over time garden stonework becomes covered in layers of lichen, algae and white fungi. Successfully remove this and the original stone will be as good as new. The Patio Black Spot Removal System® containing Euchanal®, is a complete garden stonework restoration system, that lovingly restores and permanently prevents the return of the black spots.

In addition, our product is different as other patio cleaners contain hydrochloric acid, which dissolves limestone and stains sandstone or are basically pesticides. These are “removers” not “killers or destroyers”. It’s not the strength of the solution, it’s how it reacts with organic growth and how it affects surrounding plants, which governs the results.

Our product was almost three years in research and development stage, before we were able to sell it to the retail market.

What actually causes the black spots on patios?

The black spots start life as pollen size lichen spores, emanating from the trees, travelling on the breeze until deposited, by the rain in the pores of your garden stonework. Their micro-fibrous roots penetrate the surface, anchoring themselves, the mineral in the stone sustaining their growth. The older the stone, the worse the infestation, which can number millions!

Pressure washing has little effect; it removes dirt but, in the process accentuates their presence and inadvertently damages the surface. Sandstones are sedimentary - the vibration causing delamination of the layers. The pressure opening the pores in the surface, making it susceptible to frost, eventually destroying the surface.

Can you reveal your secret formula that kills the spots? Do your products work to clean dirt on other surfaces, too?

The product contains Euchanal®. This is a piece of technology, based on Eucalyptus, which no other product contains. It can be used on any garden stonework, and we produce different products for natural and artificial stone, as well as block paving.

With sustainability and the environment affecting the buying habits of day to day consumers and tradespeople working across landscaping, how is Patio Black Spot keeping pace with changing demands?

The product itself, is organic, pet and bird friendly and completely biodegradable leaving surfaces clean and unaffected, immediately after washing away. Also, the packaging is recyclable.

How do you market your products? Do you have plans to take your product to market overseas? If you already have, where are you seeing the most success and why?

All the products are sold through garden centres, such as Squares. For the past eight years we have also exhibited at garden shows, around the country, such as RHS Chelsea and Hampton Court. This gives people a chance to discuss their own garden stonework issues face to face, with the experts.

We also set the business up in Australia six years ago, with a small manufacturing base, just outside Sydney. 2021 has seen us launch a new Website, with on-line orders already beating last year’s levels.

Currently we have a distributor in Singapore and export to the USA, the latter market we are looking to further, once the pandemic has subsided and we are free to travel.

We have witnessed a global pandemic never seen before. How has it affected your business?

The pandemic has been very good to us. Business wise we had another record year. Whilst we lost three months of garden centre turnover, we more than made up for it online and on the service side of the business. The start of this year has also indicated that purchasing levels for our products and services are at record levels.

Can you tell us about any forthcoming developments for the Patio Black Spot Company?

We have two new products coming out this year, but details of those are strictly classified information, at present.

To find your local stockist call 01793 333220 or visit www.cramertools.com to learn more

www.landscapermagazine.com
They were one of the most sought-after commodities of the time, and were synonymous with former Hampton Court Palace resident, Queen Mary II. From this month, the Surrey palace’s grounds will be filled with colour as Historic Royal Palaces launches its first ever Tulip Festival, which will see over 100,000 bulbs bloom in spectacular displays throughout the formal gardens, in homage to the estate’s long royal history of tulip cultivation. Visitors will also be able to marvel at types of tulip that have not been on show at the palace since the 17th century, as part of a partnership with the Hortus Bulborum in the Netherlands.

First introduced to the British Isles in the 1630s and with around 100 species now in existence, tulip planting at the palace dates back to the reign of Queen Mary II. Both she and her husband King William III were keen horticulturists. Across the gardens, ten different heritage and modern types have been planted, including Parrot, Triumph, Rembrandt and Darwin tulips. In preparation for the spring event, a total of 105,000 bulbs were planted during autumn 2020 by the gardens team at Historic Royal Palaces. The most historic bulbs from the Bulborum are still relative newcomers, but their ability to deliver year-round productivity and multiple cutting options, cope easily with longer, coarser, dry or wet grass and combat extended mowing cycles immediately caught the market’s attention.

With a 24.7hp Yanmar engine, the Groundsmaster 3200 packs a punch, perfect for applications in smaller estates, schools and colleges. Meanwhile the heavy-duty Groundsmaster 3300 with its powerful 37.4hp engine is a real jungle-buster. Both machines benefit from Toro’s CrossTrax all-wheel drive system, which provides automatic traction control, shifting power to the wheels in slippery conditions for increased control and accuracy even in tough conditions.

Each has the option of 152cm (60ins) or 183cm (72ins) rear and side, or rear-only discharge rotary decks, with or without mulching kits, or a 152cm flail deck. There are three deck options; two rotary options to meet customers’ feature and price requirements – the standard deck has rear and side discharge and replaceable deck bumpers – and the Turbo Force deck has rear discharge and welded deck bumpers. Another bonus is the durable deck design. With 4.5mm high strength steel decks, rugged spindles, a bullnose bumper and reinforced sideskis, it’s built for longevity and reduced downtime. Plus, the tip-up cutting deck makes servicing even easier, with access to the underside of the deck in under 15 seconds.

When it comes to the Groundsmaster 3200 series however customers don’t need to consider how the addition of a diesel particulate filter or a reduction in horsepower will affect the machine’s performance, because the design process considered it for them. Alastair continues: “Toro benefitted from its experience with the roll-out of Tier IV products in North America. It learned how to design out inefficiencies in systems and looked at whether a product can meet customers’ needs with less horsepower or migrate to alternative fuels. For example, the fact that the Groundsmaster series has a fine-cut flail attachment option means you can cut two ways with one machine.”

Launching onto the market at the beginning of last year, the Groundsmaster 3200 and Groundsmaster 3300 are still relative newcomers, but their ability to deliver year-round productivity and multiple cutting options, cope easily with longer, coarser, dry or wet grass and combat extended mowing cycles immediately caught the market’s attention.

With Stage V emissions regulations now in place, finding compliant yet reliable, durable and productive machinery has become a key priority. For out-front rotary mowers, the Groundsmaster 3000 series from Toro is leading the way.

Alastair Rowell, UK sales manager for turfcare equipment for distributor Reesink Turfcare, says: “Stage V engine legislation is welcome and good, but it brings with it a period of uncertainty as customers assess the way they maintain their grounds and contracts. Is there a different way to compile a fleet or can different purchasing decisions be made that allow customers to remain profitable and productive? It might cost more to buy a specific machine but if you can buy one machine to perform more than one function, or opt for a machine under the 25hp limit that hasn’t incurred the associated Stage V engine cost increase, those factors become more important than ever.”

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When it comes to getting jobs done quickly, the Groundsmaster 3200 series benefits from a transport speed of 22kph, so you can move between sites efficiently, and its 19.8cm ground clearance means curb climbing is easy and doesn’t break up work. Plus, a large 45.4 litre fuel capacity maximises mowing time between refuelling for even more efficiency.

Stage V compliant out front rotaries

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Battery zero-turn mower

Specialist supplier of grounds care machinery, GGM Groundscare have added the industry’s first removable lithium-ion battery powered zero-turn mower (ZTR) from US manufacturer Ariens to its range.

Fusing next generation battery technology with the rugged frame of a commercial grade Ariens mower, the Zenith E ZTR offers grounds care professionals a powerful new way to lower costs, increase profitability and enhance their green credentials.

The Zenith E ZTR mower is packed with commercial features and a large 152cm (60”) cutter deck has been designed from the ground up to ensure it delivers features and performance that rotate at over 1100rpm to sweep grass clippings, fallen leaves and other debris into the hopper, even when the grass is wet.

Spring is also a good time to scarify the lawn to rid it of winter accumulated moss and thatch and that is simply done by switching to the easy-to-insert Scarifier cassette.

Using the PTO an operator can also drive other accessories such as a powered broadcast spreader, which is ideal for spreading salt and grit on paths and drives to keep them ice-free. Choose a B Series Countax for the benefit of the unique 4TRAC four-wheel-drive system offering a garden tractor capable of tackling slopes, mud and rough ground. It also makes the perfect partner for a snowblade to clear paths in the depths of winter.

Available with either a 60” side-discharge or rear-discharge mower deck, this model is the first Ariens machine to feature FusionCore lithium-ion battery technology. It has a number of key benefits including zero emissions and quiet operation, making it an ideal mowing solution for commercial users in public areas without disturbance such as hospitals, care homes and schools.

The addition of the battery powered mower demonstrates further that GGM Groundscare is continuing to deliver on its promise to become an eco-friendly organisation and its determination to offer its commercial customers environmentally sustainable mowing solutions. GGM has been selected as one of only a handful of dealers to supply the Ariens Zenith E and have invested in service training and diagnostic test equipment to enhance customer support.

Managing Director of GGM Chris Gibson says: “Following a successful demonstration to our sales team we are really excited to bring the new, battery operated mower into our range. Not only is it environmentally friendly and in keeping with our business values, but it also offers the excellent performance that is synonymous with all our commercial products.”

GGM Groundscare are now booking demonstrations of the Zenith E zero-turn mower in line with government restrictions. To register interest visit https://promo.ggmgroundscare.com/ZenithE.

Ride on summer 2021

John Deere is introducing new features to its X100 Series range of lawn tractors for 2021, along with updates to the X300 and X500 Series, and three new ZTrak zero-turn ride-on mowers.

All six models in the X100 range incorporate the stylish new bonnet design. The hydrostatic transmission and side-by-side pedals enable the operator to change direction without raising a foot, making them very comfortable to operate. The grass collector bag has been redesigned for easier emptying and cleaning. Standard on the X117R, X147R and X167R lawn tractors, the collector is available as an option on the X107, X127 and X167 side-discharge models.

The car-style dashboard now includes an easy-to-read fuel gauge on the X127 and X167 models. A new open back seat on selected models in the range offers enhanced comfort, especially on hot days. Prices for the new X100 Series start at £2714 (€3092) including VAT.

All X300 and X500 Series lawn tractors for 2021 benefit from more powerful engines which enable them to handle steeper slopes and speeds up mowing in larger areas, as well as improved snow blowing performance in winter. The X354, X370 and X380 models comes with a side-by-side pedal seat that delivers a higher level of comfort and support. Prices for the X300 Series start at £4474 (€5095), while the larger X500 Series start at £7532 (€8578) including VAT.

Vanmac to distribute Progressive rotary mowers

Vanmac Ltd have been appointed as full-line distributors of the Progressive range of trailed and mounted rotary mowers for the professional grounds and sports turf market.

Progressive have a long and illustrious track record for designing and manufacturing innovative, rotary finishing equipment for use on golf courses to sports fields, turf producers and local authorities. This, combined with Vanmac Ltd’s vast knowledge and experience in the sector through the distribution of other leading brands such as Trilo vacuum sweepers, promises to bear fruit for both parties.

With the main growing season fast approaching, of particular interest from the Progressive range – and available in the UK for the first time - will be the tri-deck TDR-X contour mower. The three independently floating decks promise to closely follow the contours of the ground, without scalping, offering a combined cutting width of 3.2m and an easily adjustable cutting height range from 9.5mm to 84.5mm. Along with other machines in the range, the TDR-X takes advantage of Progressive’s Pro Lift-N-Turn™ technology, allowing the operator to temporarily raise the decks, with the PTO still engaged, to make turning easier and increase overall productivity.

“Expanding our agreement with Progressive to cover the professional turf care market is absolutely fantastic news for Vanmac Ltd” comments Area Sales Manager Jeremy Vincent. “Their range is renowned for delivering durability and fantastic cut quality and it complements our other product lines, including Trilo and Brouwer Kesmac, fantastically. We can now offer those managing turf surfaces a comprehensive collection of equipment, together with parts service, all from under one roof. Over the next few months, we look forward to building a network of dedicated dealers to assist with the all-important back-up support and beginning demonstrations as soon as we can.”
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