

Where the grass is always greener



Greencraft
With Dave Bracey

KEEP ON TOP

OF THE GREEN



EVERYONE imagines that a bowling green should look a beautiful green colour and be nice and soft to walk on, but that is not our bowlers necessarily see it.

What they require is a firm, fast running surface enabling their bowls to behave as they intend. With the general appearance this can convey grasses are in a healthy condition if the green is consistent in colour.

Any green discolouring might be due to either insect damage, fungal disease, mowing the grass too low for the benefit of the plant, missed areas when applying fertilisers, weeds and mosses. These can all change the colour.

WATERING

Grasses to be at their best need availability of water, as well as nutrients in the soil, because these nutrients are conducted via the roots, stems and into the leaves.

Adequate water must be available in the soil to enable a solution to be available for the plant to absorb to move the nutrients around. Turf needs to have 150mm of moist soil to survive adequately.

In the mornings, when guttation (we see it as dew on the grass) is apparent indicates that the plant has sufficient moisture. Should this not be the case, watering needs to be carried out until eventually the plant is back to normal guttation.

Try ten minutes the first time you notice areas of turf without dew showing and look the next morning to see if there was enough to top the green up.

If not, repeat again until the plant is functioning properly. Do not water areas that have dew on them, because it is not necessary.

FEEDING

In the normal 'close season' if we have

adequately aerated, the Winter rains will have been carried down to the lower levels and held in reserve.

If, on the other hand, at the start of the season you have not done adequate aeration to create a good root system to supply nutrients for the many leaf blades, you will have to supplement what the plant has not stored from the rootzone by adding fertilisers.

LIQUID FEEDS

These are supplementary to the normal Spring and Autumn fertilisers because they do not contain the food necessary for bacteria and are used or washed away in sandy soils to the lower levels that we have on bowling greens.

Liquid feeding in some instances needs to be carried out regularly at fortnightly intervals.