

TURF'S TINY HERO

Tiny clover leaves can help to keep turf green and healthy all year round, researchers in Denmark have found. The fine-leaved Microclovers fix nitrogen in the soil, providing nutrients to the sward and reducing fertiliser requirement.

Seren Uglit Larsen, agronomist at the Danish Forest and Landscape Research Institute (DFLRI), comments: "Micro-clover can decrease the nitrogen input needed on turfgrass areas. There are also indications that problems with chafer larvae may be reduced where turf is mixed with white clover.

"Generally the turf stays greener during dry periods in the summertime, therefore the need for irrigation may be reduced."

Marketed as Microclover in by DLF Trifolium in the UK, the clover's dense stolon microstructure is also said to improve tolerance to cutting, allowing lower mowing heights.

And because of the lush growth, weeds are crowded out, reducing herbicide needs.

Microclover can be teamed with a range of grasses, including fine-leaved and dense types of perennial ryegrass and with smooth stalked meadow grasses for continental temperatures or where there is a lot of wear.

Viborg golf course has tri-



Microclover (inset) provides a source of nitrogen for turf, producing green, healthy growth.

alled microclover on fairways, roughs and tees, and greenkeeper Per Knudsen says: "What strikes me is the weed free fairway and

rough we have achieved after the microclover mixture has been established. We look forward to this continuing."

Blooming good

A new underground watering system is keeping communal gardens blooming in hot and windy London.

Lillington and Longmore Gardens in South Westminster are part of a conservation area, but planters and beds receive little rainfall due to their location between flats.

Original overhead irrigation pipes have been replaced with the subterranean Mona Plant System from Tricor, a modular irrigation network which uses a series of linked reservoirs to optimise soil moisture and oxygenation.

Because of its design, the system can be extended easily to other parts of the site to cover more planters and beds.

Watering intervals can be extended to up to six weeks apart, reducing maintenance costs by 50 per cent and eliminating surface pipes and pumps.

ATV seeder

For easier seeding of areas with restricted access or narrow strips, or between trees in forestry areas, David Lyles ATV has adapted a 1.5m Fiona drill for use with a quad bike.

Using a drawbar and remote lift/lower system with clutch to disengage the drive when turning or in transport, the seeder has disc coulters and a following harrow to level the seedbed.

For details tel: 01485 518318.

In brief

- Complete Weed Control has added a new mould and algae treatment to its inventory of services. As an alternative to high pressure cleaning and scrubbing, a product which contains anti-bacterial disinfectant, algacide and detergent is applied to hard surfaces by CWC's spraying specialists. Acid- and bleach-free, the treatment is suitable for slate, stone and brickwork of all types, and is said to be effective for up to nine months following initial treatment and 12 months after subsequent applications.

- Projects demonstrating how local authorities can work to maintain environmental quality and diversity of riversides in urban areas and how glasshouses can be integrated into the surrounding landscape are amongst new ventures to gain funding from the EU's LIFE Environment programme.

The programme has been set up to give assistance to organisations aiming to develop new technology for the benefit of the environment, and British projects are to gain £36m from this and government funding.

- STRI publishes *Rootzones, Sands and Top Dressing Materials for Sports Turf* by Dr Stephen Baker next month. The book covers all aspects of sands, rootzones and top dressing materials for sports pitches, golf courses, bowling greens, cricket pitches and lawn tennis courts.

It also incorporates contact details for suppliers in the UK and Ireland. The book will cost £12.95 with 10 per cent discount for STRI subscribers, plus post and packaging.

As a special promotion, all orders received with payment before 27th January will be post free (a saving of £3.00). Orders for pre-publication copies should be sent to Linda Gallagher tel: 01274 565131, e-mail linda.gallagher@stri.co.uk

Lawn laid on tarmac



Lindum Turf's Grassfelt, a living sward on a felt base used for landscaping and exhibition applications, has thrived on a tarmac surface as part of a demonstration garden. Installed for a Microsoft exhibition incorporating a house, office, business area and garden, the 'lawn' received no nutrients but remained convincingly green into the winter.