

## British Seed Houses' Velvet Bents Prove Victorious!



7 September 2010

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**PRESS  
RELEASE**

BSH brought Velvet Bents to our attention a couple of years ago – today Richard Brown is proud to report that the increase in the numbers of Greenkeepers choosing velvets over other seed varieties is on the up.

He bravely stood up in front of the Press a year or so ago and made the claim that 'Velvet Bents were being hailed as the grass species which could bring Greenkeeping into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, reducing the cost of inputs and their negative effects on the environment .....' and he's pleased to announce a strong example of one Greenkeeper of many who have found just that!

Water is becoming an increasingly expensive commodity and in some parts of the world it's considered inappropriate to use high volumes of water on a golf course. This growing trend for sustainability in Greenkeeping means that Velvet Bents are proving to be a viable alternative. They offer considerable benefits with the greatest tolerance to shade and the highest visual merit of any bent grass.

A very good example is Andre Erlah, Greenkeeper at Easingwold Golf Club since 2001. When Andre arrived at Easingwold, almost all of the organic matter on the greens was dead. The greens were thatch ridden (up to 2 inches in places), unplayable in winter and disease ridden.

It took 4 years hard work and intense aeration for Andre to get the greens in a fit state to overseed and he then bravely put it to his Committee that they use Velvet Top Bents on the greens (he put forward BSH Avalon) which they agreed to. Andre was pleased to see a very good take on the greens – between 10 and 25% initially.

He subsequently introduced Aberroyal, British Seed Houses' Low input Brown Top Bent, a few years later to strengthen the advances made by the Velvet Bents as he wasn't keen on having a monoculture on the greens.

Andre has had excellent feedback from the Committee and members – the greens are now playable in the winter. Andre comments: "we're now able to open more, allowing more playing time for the

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members. Also, the greens are ready for play sooner in the season because the Bents take off a lot quicker than Poa after being seeded.

From experience, Richard Brown comments that velvets also offer the truest putting surface of any bent and have been awarded 8.8 and 8.5 for fineness of leaf by the STRI. Players at Easingwold have reported that their putting is truer and faster. The Treasurer's also happy as he's noticed the water bills and fungicide and pesticide costs reducing too.

Seeding greens with Bent grasses, is, in Andre's opinion is a natural progression and will make your life easier as a Greenkeeper. It may still be seen as a big step to take but more Greenkeepers are coming round to this way of thinking.

Because of the finest of velvet bent grass seed the use of a precision seeder is essential.

British Seed Houses experience with very fine WF17 Wild Flower mixture has led them to the RotaDairon RG 140. Making its debut into the UK at Saltex, the beauty of this machine is its ability to handle any size and mixture of seed.

Wild flower areas are becoming a more popular choice for all types of developments – from new roads to hotels and shopping centres. Yet developers are frequently disappointed with their choice, seeing the area deteriorate into a dull weedy mess – the use of a more appropriate piece of machinery when seeding would cure this problem.

Ends.

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Andre Erlah at Easingwold Golf Course

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