

TREES ON THE GOLF COURSE

by

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Don't Allow Too Many Round the Greens

There are a number of jobs on the golf course which, for various reasons, usually wait until the winter. Not the least important of these is tree trimming. There is no doubt that trees are the making of many a golf course, both as decoration and often with a positive contribution to the design of the various holes. However, trees keep growing slowly but surely, and sometimes it proves necessary to check them. Young saplings and shrubs will grow up almost imperceptibly sometimes among older trees and when a green becomes shielded from direct sunlight and free flow of air by a deep semi-circle of trees and woody shrubs, the turf becomes very susceptible indeed to Fusarium Patch disease. Such a green will be much healthier if the young trees and shrubby growths between the adult trees are cleaned out.

. . . Or Round the Tees

It is just as important to keep trees around tees within reasonable bounds. A tee will never do well in a veritable tunnel of tree branches—as one occasionally sees. When there are too many trees round a tee the grass itself is thin and spindly, and in winter especially the surface is soft, never really drying up at all.

When the tree branches start actually overhanging the edge of a green or a tee it is certainly time that they are pruned back. Rainwater dripping from

the branches and twigs directly on to the turf thins out the grass and encourages moss and surface slime moulds. There is also more risk of Fusarium Patch disease below spreading tree branches.

Root Pruning

Trespassing tree roots are not so obvious, of course, but once they get into a green in force they will rob the turf of very large amounts of water and plant foods. They will usually be fairly near the top of the green and sometimes will actually break the surface. When this happens, the roots need to be taken out and that particular part of the green returfed. A good greenkeeper, though, will have anticipated the danger long before this stage is reached. He will dig a trench between the offending tree and the green and sever all the roots he can find before filling in the trench again.

Leaves—A Mixed Blessing

Autumn leaves with all their splendid colour variation increase the golfers' enjoyment of the course. The greenkeeper regards them with less enthusiasm because he knows that they are going to cause him a lot of extra work. However, there are useful aids to leaf collection these days and the small mechanical leaf-sweepers have proved very handy for getting the leaves quickly off a green. Heavy leaf falls on fairways and rough are very troublesome to deal with. Sometimes a forage harvester borrowed from a local farmer has done good work and I have seen large rotary mowers used quite adequately to disperse the leaves below a large tree somewhere near the middle of a fairway.

But leaves do have their uses and one can make really good compost from oak, beech, birch, etc., if there are worthwhile amounts ready to hand. Built up in layers with a little nitro-chalk sprinkled over each layer to speed up decomposition they will produce first class material for top dressing—mixed afterwards if need be with good top soil, sand, etc. A good shredder powered by an electric or petrol motor will make short work of preparation for top dressing once the leaf mould is sufficiently rotted.