

D. G. Reid discusses

Use of semi-mature trees

These notes are intended to explain the reasons and methods used, the procedure and after-care maintenance of replanted semi-mature trees.

A provision not strictly for the groundsman, but an important cultural aspect in alliance with the work nevertheless, and which at sometime during his charge he may have to accept and cope.

There is a growing awareness of the potential of semi-mature trees to embellish a landscape, and large and small projects do need trees.

New sportsgrounds and clubs are on the increase, which automatically gives rise to a fresh landscape. A variety of projects up and down the country are near completion, or in the making. New housing estates, for example, city centres, shopping precincts, hospitals, universities, schools, airports and motorways.

So at this point in time, there is a great demand for man-made landscapes with particular emphasis on tree planting. This is where the semi-mature tree finds a new home; and it is this different environment for trees that is so vital in re-establishment process.

The British Standard of 1966 specifies two important procedures for successful recovery after transplanting. The first is preparation by root pruning up to three years before moving, to encourage a new fibrous root system within the rootball.

The meaning of this is simple. If you hard-prune any tree or shrub, adventitious buds are induced to break out, and in the ensuing years a much more dense growth of the head results, and this same growth

rate is applicable below ground by hard pruning, giving this desirable fibrous root system.

This gradual adaption by the tree before it is delivered is the best guarantee that the tree will make a rapid recovery in its new quarters. Second, the British Standard specifies the wrapping and binding of the rootball before lifting. Most firms wrap the rootball with hessian, and bind it with straps before lifting, so that rupture is prevented. The British Standard advocates very strongly that every care in the preparation and handling of semi-mature trees is paramount.

Providing this treatment is properly executed, the restoration of a tree to normal growth and vigour is within two to three years from transplanting. Many reputable firms claim success rate—measured two years after moving—is almost 100 per cent. Indeed, some offer a service of after-care maintenance, and insurance against failure over one, two or more years.

When public money is involved for large semi-mature tree contracts many firms maintain and guarantee trees. In other words, an insurance against likely failures. Their charges cover maintenance, in particular, watering, mulching, feeding, and attendance to guys. Where conifers and unfavourable site conditions are concerned, no insurance is available.

Smaller headed trees such as might be planted in groups cost less, free standing specimens with heavy heads cost more. The largest trees can be delivered more economically in multiple loads. Size of rootball affects prices

of course. Tree stations, or pits, should be 24 in. wider and 10 in. deeper than the rootball.

Unless one has the right type of implements (some firms will loan and hire charges are reasonable), the moving of semi-mature trees should be left to experienced operators.

Semi-mature deciduous species include acacia, alder, beech, birch, elm, maple, hornbeam, lime, poplar, sycamore, thorn and willow.

Semi-mature coniferous and evergreen species include cedar, cupressus, holly, Scots pine, Douglas fir. For a single delivery a 35 ft. high tree 14 ft. spread, 9 in. trunk, 5 ft. diameter rootball, 36 in. rootball depth, will cost in the region of £100-£160 within a radius of 30 miles from place of origin. This price range applies to any deciduous tree. Conifers are dearer.

With acknowledgments to: *The Groundsman*, December, 1972/January, 1973.

New Literature

A new catalogue has been published by The Mommersteeg Seed Company. This gives details of mixtures for golf tees, roughs, greens and fairways. Several articles are included, written by turf experts. Golf Greenkeepers may obtain a copy free of charge by writing to Mommersteeg Seed Company Ltd., Station Road, Finedon, Wellingborough, Northants.

People

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