For centuries the open links of Scotland have afforded the ultimate in golfing interest. Nevertheless, few golfers will deny that trees add impressive dimensions to our North American inland layouts.

Planted anywhere on a golf course, trees enhance eye appeal. But haphazard planting has compromised many a great hole and compounded the superintendent's problems in maintaining his greenswards. To be an asset, rather than a liability, each tree must be critically positioned in accordance with the overall considerations of course architecture—namely the game itself, aesthetics, and future maintenance.

Established clubs and daily fee courses should take a close and critical look at their trees from time to time. Additional trees may be needed, or rearrangement of existing ones. In regard to the latter, transplanting of larger trees is more likely to be successful today than formerly, since the advent of giant tree spades.

The important but sometimes overlooked subject of siting trees on a golf course is introduced in accompanying sketches that illustrate several considerations necessary in planting new trees, transplanting established ones, or initial clearing.

Potential playing interest may never be realized on a hole devoid of trees (left). Planted haphazardly (center) trees create a "freak hole". Positioned correctly (right) they enhance strategy and eye appeal without adding maintenance problems.
In addition to beauty and mass between fairways trees exercise many functions. A few of these are (a) shade at tees, (b) shot definition, (c) strategy, (d) wind break, (e) depth perception, (f) safety along boundaries.

In selecting and siting a species consider silhouette in relation to function. These are silhouettes of trees often seen on golf courses north of the palm areas.
Trees on Golf Courses

4. Trees closer than 60 to 80 feet from the putting surface aggravate turfgrass problems by reducing sunlight and air circulation. Here arrows indicate an area where water surface drains from the green. If shaded for even a few hours a day severe problems arise in humid periods or when ice lingers in spring.

5. Trees are associated with safety. On the other hand they can cause accidents. Here a ball ricochets from a tree trunk near a tee.
6. Choice gallery space for major tournaments is increased or decreased thru tree positioning.

7. Trees behind a green aid depth perception making the approach easier to judge and more exciting.
8. Contour mowing of fairways to create curving rather than straight lines between fairways and roughs adds to playing interest, eye appeal and may reduce maintenance outlays. Trees can be worked dramatically into contour mowing patterns.

9. A breathtaking view of a finishing green with harbor in background is reduced and then eliminated in less than a decade by siting trees between green and clubhouse with no thought to mature height.