

Part II. The first part appeared in the January issue.

Carefully chosen trees can center views of each hole

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The first word of caution where we speak of using trees to frame the green is to know the tree and all of its habits for the rest of its life. Then, you must put personal likes aside just in case you have a favorite tree that will not fulfill these requirements. Now we must become very practical and select only those trees that suit your part of the country.

Natural is the key word

Care must be taken when locating the framing trees for the green never to make it a "formal" picture. A golf course is a place that is supposed to reflect nature at its best. Therefore anything formal, such as straight rows of trees, creates an unnatural look. Left should never equal right. Such balance is correctly used in a formal garden design. Every care must be taken to make the ultimate design appear to be untouched by man. This is not as easy as it sounds. After working nearly a lifetime at this we still find it takes great care as to just where to place these trees so that when they grow into maturity, they will look like they grew there out of the struggle for existence and also according to the laws of nature.

Three basic approaches to the green

Another thing that must be considered, in order to do the job in an artistic manner, is the physical approach to the green as seen by the golfer. There are three basic possibilities.

The first one is when the golfer and the green are at the same level. In other words, the ground he stands on is practically the same elevation as the surface of the putting green. In these instances, a broad selection of trees is available. The only concern other than horticultural is that of branching habit, since branches to

the ground would be desirable here.

The second category is where the surface of the putting green is at a higher elevation than the golfer's feet. This is important to the designer because he knows that if the green is higher than the golfer he can use a smaller sized tree in order to gain the effect of framing that green. The golfer will be looking uphill and a tree of only 15 or 20 feet in height, if placed correctly, can give the illusion of being a much larger tree when it comes to the job of framing that particular green.

The third category is when the green is lower than the golfer and he stands above it as he makes his club selection. It will take very tall trees in order for the golfer to have a clear view of the green and yet have it framed.

The most important thing of all when placing these framing trees either on one side or on both sides of the green is the precise location.

These trees can be as far as 150 feet away from the green and still create a frame for it. It should not be a narrow view to the green between these trees. Such tight passages could make it too difficult for the golfer to fly his ball onto the putting surface from a good lie on the cut fairway.

We are reminded of a golf course where one of the authors first cut his teeth on the game of golf. It was a public course and someone had decided that a particular green on a par three hole had to be elevated because of the drainage problems. Apparently, they were not aware of the requirements for successful growth of large established trees. There were two huge, extremely attractive oak trees that were actually framing the green without any assistance from man. They simply were left there. When the green was elevated to a height of five to six feet

above the original grade, the fill that sloped off the green covered the lower portions of the trunks of these two handsome old oaks. Since the soil in that area was poorly drained to begin with, these oaks simply could not take the fill soil that was placed over their root systems and around their trunks. They both died, of course, in a very short period of time. However, even in their death, as the wood became bleached by the sun, they took on a truly beautiful character while framing this green. So they stood there for many years, as the expression goes, "deader than a doornail", but yet were serving a great aesthetic purpose of framing that green. As the years wore on and branches started to fall off, of course, the trees had to be cut down. Once they were removed, this green lost all of its character and looked very nude indeed.

And speaking of death, we might say that Dutch elm disease is now sweeping all the way into the western states of our nation and we have little reason to believe that it will not continue and ultimately consume all of our American elms. Therefore, if you have these trees that are performing vital aesthetic and playing purposes on your golf course and they are having problems with their general health, we certainly suggest consulting with the best tree specialist in your area to see if they can be saved. If such an expert tells you it will be a long down-hill losing battle, it would be wise to consider starting a replacement tree or groups of trees so that you can gain that many more years in time by having new ones starting to take over the jobs of the ones that will die. It is especially important where the tree in trouble is one that is framing a tee, or a green.