

Beyond Commemorative Tree Plantings

Now is the time to develop a Long Range Landscape Plan / Restoration Plan!

By Nancy P. Sadlon - President Sadlon Environmental - Golf Division &
Colleen Sundholm Associate of Sadlon Environmental

The current trend:

The golf course is the perfect location for commemorative plantings. Almost always the plant of choice is the shade tree and inevitably its donator insists that it be planted in a visible location for all to see and admire. So the question is: how many shade trees can reasonably be located near the club house, the first and the ninth tees and not effect the original character of the course or impact its playability? Typically the answer is a lot fewer than is typically perceived as acceptable by the club membership. Additionally it is often forgotten that the trees' full effect will not be realized for 30-40 years and at that time its size for the chosen location is out of scale. The solution to this trend is the development of a Long Range Landscape/Restoration Plan that provides alternative commemorative solutions, allows for the changes over time in plant growth and provides for the overall enhancement of the character of the course.

The Long Range Landscape Plan:

The type of long range plan suggested is much more than a planting plan that looks for ways to dress up areas of the course and identify areas to be planted with ornamental trees, shrubs, ground covers and annuals. This plan includes a hard look at the site's inherent natural qualities, its character (both present and desired) and proposes a long term plan of action to achieve an enhanced aesthetic character. It seeks to identify and follow through with projects such as restoring a meadow area that existed at the time of the course's construction, or a forest area which gave the special backdrop and definition to the par 5 or the restoration of the pond that last has lost its natural beauty over the years. It is landscape projects such as these that have a large impact on course's character. To paraphrase the golf course architect Geo. C. Thomas Jr.,

The most important thing in our enjoyment and exhilaration of the game is the thrill of nature. It is the natural course which embraces its own special natural features that is touted as the superior course. Places like the rolling hills of Pine Valley with its lovely contrast of sand and pine trees and the courses of the linksland by the sea in Scotland are remembered in part for the strategy of the course's layout but mostly for their natural beauty.

Every course has its own unique setting, natural beauty and sense of place which is worth enhancing. The long range Landscape Plan/Restoration Plan can help to achieve this goal. It should include:

- A) Evaluation of course style and statement of desired character
- B) Evaluation of the natural setting of the course and determination of the inherent natural qualities which are of significance of its character
- C) Identification of natural functions such as drainage and infiltration
- D) Identification of current landscape/horticultural plantings and evaluation of these additions for their consistency to desired course character
- E) Preparation of Landscape Plan including specific suggestions for plantings and restoration projects
- F) Identification of Management and Maintenance practices to achieve or work towards the goal over time
- G) Provision for the commemorative needs of the membership, including the recognition through plaques or photos in the club house.

Commemorative Alternatives:

Projects to consider as alternative commemorative projects include the use of Perennial Gardens / Butterfly Gardens, Pond Restoration, Reforestation or A-Forestation, Wetland Restoration, Native Grass / Meadow restoration. In addition to the enhanced character of the site that can result from these projects, there are other benefits such as reduced maintenance and enhanced wildlife habitat. As always it is critical to choose appropriate plants. Plants that are consistent with the regional geography and the site's natural vegetation communities, plants with pest resistance and which require the least amount of maintenance. Typically native plants that are adapted to the site's soils, climate, and available water conditions can provide habitat for desirable species and are important to include in the long range landscape plan. There are a number of plant species which satisfy these criteria. Our top ten list of plants to consider for the New Jersey region, which are often overlooked, are noted below:

Common Name	Latin Name	Points of interest / values
Trees		
1 Hardy rubber tree	<i>Eucommia ulmoides</i>	resistance, leaf texture
2 Black gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	fall color, wet tolerant
3 Ginkgo	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	unique habit, fall color
4 Carolina silverbell	<i>Halesia carolina</i>	intricate white flower
5 European hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	resistance, unique bark, wet tolerant
Shrubs:		
6 Virginia seetspire	<i>Itea virginica</i>	fragrant flowers, fall color
7 Summersweet clethra	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	fragrant/showy flower, multiuse
8 Blue-spirea	<i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>	showy blue flower/attracts butterflies
9 Spicebush	<i>Lendera benzoin</i>	fall color, naturalizing
10 Japanese kerria	<i>Kerria japonica</i>	yellow flowers, hardy

Professional Assistance:

There is probably no one that knows his golf course more than the Superintendent, perhaps most for the problem areas and for the hot spots of concern to the membership. There is no one more qualified than the Golf Course Architect to determine the distances and arrangements which set the strategy and diversity of golf shots of the course. But in choosing a professional to assist in the task of the Long Range Landscape Plan as outlined above, it is the professional which provides a combination of talents that is needed. These talents include: a strong knowledge of the natural environment including soils, vegetation, climate, hydrology and aesthetics; knowledge and appreciation of natural succession of various vegetation communities; a thorough understanding of the game of golf; and working knowledge of the plants of the region. The professionals trained in each of these areas include Landscape Architects, Restoration Ecologists, Golf Course Architects, and Horticulturists respectively. It is critical to find one that has expanded his professional expertise to include all the above and one that can bring all these talents to the project.

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Summary

Utilize the label information available to you in market channels and required by State and Federal seed laws. If seed is offered for sale as certified, it must have the appropriate certification tag attached to the container of seed.

All seed must be properly labeled with a seed analysis tag. Use the additional information available to you by asking for the complete seed laboratory analysis reports. Make sure the viability test results are current. Select the crop kind and variety that will do the best job for you. Utilize additional steps that are available to you to compare value among seed lots. For example, calculate the pure live seed percentage for each seed source and determine the actual cost per pound that the seed lot will cost you.

Be specific in your requests for bids on the minimum factors of seed quality that you will accept. Become knowledgeable in seed quality. Visit with different agencies that have responsibility in monitoring seed quality. Learn how seed testing is done. Becoming aware of the factors of seed quality will help make your job enjoyable and successful.

List of Helpful Publications:

Association of Official Seed Analysts. 1988. Rules for testing seeds. Contact your local seed laboratory for current address.

1991 Oregon Certified Seed Handbook. Oregon State University Extension Service, Corvallis, OR 97331.

Federal Seed Act and Rules and Regulations. Available from USDA-AMS, Beltsville, Maryland.

Hafenrichter, A.L., et al. 1979. Grasses and Legumes for Soil Conservation in the Pacific Northwest and Great Basin States. Agriculture Handbook 339, Soil Conservation Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.