Arbor Care

Tree Inventory & Analysis: A Key Management Tool

As has been explained in previous articles, trees are an asset to a golf course. But, if we tried to find trees in the asset column of a golf course’s balance sheet, they wouldn’t be cash, working capital or equipment. Trees would be inventory. We can increase the value of our inventory by planting trees and maintaining existing trees, or we can decrease the value through neglect or removal. On the other hand, even without our help, by either growing or dying, trees represent either a positive or negative asset.

Exactly how extensive is our tree inventory? How can we expect to plan and budget for the care of hundreds or thousands of trees on our golf course? These questions, along with many others, can be answered with a multi-level tree inventory and analysis -- preferably performed by a certified arborist.

There are three levels of complexity to an inventory and analysis -- level one being the least, level three being the most complex. Each level is a stand alone project, although time is spent more effectively if levels one and two are done at the same time. In the future, we will discuss levels two and three.

This month, we will review what is involved in a level one tree inventory.

Level one consists of no analysis. An arborist identifies all the trees on the course by genus, species and common name, and plots these trees on a map. The purpose of level one inventory is to help a superintendent see the variety and extent of their tree inventory. The map and species list is the first indication of how intimidating it can be to manage acres of trees on a golf course. At the same time, there is comfort in knowing that number of trees on the property is finite.

The map and species list can be provided to a private tree care contractor when tree work is bid and executed.

In the next issue, we will determine the data that should be recorded for each tree as part of a level two tree inventory.