

USGA

Seeing The Forest For The Trees!

Developing A Program For Tree Maintenance

By: Michael Huck, Agronomist, USGA Green Section

There is no argument that American golfers love the trees on their courses. It would then stand to reason that most golfers would want to provide excellent care for their "loved ones," but often this is not the case. The reality is that there is always money available in the maintenance budget to plant additional trees, but there is never enough money in the budget to properly maintain the existing tree inventory. I often find myself telling green committees that unless an adequate tree maintenance budget is already in place, there is no justification for planting additional trees on their course.

During my travels, I tend to find that tree inventories are one of the most neglected components of golf facilities and when superintendents ask for adequate funds for tree care they are often denied. Why? Perhaps it is difficult for golfers to understand the scope, cost and value of a comprehensive tree management program.

Here are a few suggestions that may help you develop and convince your superiors of the need for a tree program.

- Develop a hole-by-hole inventory identifying each specimen by genus, species, DBH (diameter at breast height), approximate height and general condition of health. (More often than not the total number of trees on the property shocks the course officials.)
- Estimate a current replacement value for each specimen and the total value for the entire inventory. This will help your superiors understand the value of the inventory and justify the importance of maintaining it!
- Identify specimens with poor structure and/or poor conditions of health that should be immediately removed or replaced to avoid safety and liability concerns.
- Utilize the services of a local certified arborist to provide an impartial opinion of the specimens that require removal due to poor structure or health.
- Identify species undesirable for golf courses, (i.e., litter or fruit dropping, surface rooting, etc.) for future removal and replacement with more appropriate varieties.
- Estimate pruning frequencies and costs to trim each specimen based upon the inventory data. Calculate a dollar amount to include in the annual maintenance budget and then implement the program!
- Take the program a step further and have a golf course architect develop a long-range tree planting/removal plan to identify strategic tree locations from both a safety and playability aspect. The golf course architect should also recommend removals where shade and root influence in key playing areas (identified with the aid of the golf course superintendent) are determined as detrimental to turfgrass growing conditions.

Developing a comprehensive tree program will take an investment of time and money but in the long run it will benefit the golfers, the trees and the golf course.

Help your course officials see the forest for the trees. /

Did You Know?

California superintendents are pushing a bill to fund research to eradicate and control the pitch canker fungus that is wiping out pine trees, many of which are used in golf course settings. The bill would provide 2 million dollars for research and is also supported by state golf associations and several environmental groups.

Merchandise Release

Merchandise with GCSANC logo was introduced at the general meeting at Castlewood CC on April 6th with good success. At our next meeting in June, new merchandise will be on display as well as improved labeling of current displayed items. Please take the time to stop by and examine our new line of clothing at the next meeting you attend. If you have any questions regarding the new merchandising program, please contact Barbara Mikel at the GCSANC office.

ROYAL
Turf Services, Inc.
Get The Royal Treatment
Custom Turf Care

Timothy L. King

(800) 505-TURF

Aerification • Fertilizing • Spray Apps.

Fully Insured  Free Estimates

A Cut Above



G R A H A M
REE SERVICE

Tree Surgeons and Consultants

(510) 843-1789

2735 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702
State License #689022