

Michael Bird examines tree establishment and takes a look at what's available for the golf course

TREES

ON THE GOLF COURSE

Unless faced with totally hostile growing conditions or relying solely on the natural contours of the land to provide interest, protection or a challenge to golfers, trees are regarded as an essential element on the majority of courses.

Able to provide shape, shade and shelter, trees can be used to achieve four principle aims:

- Strategic, helping to define the line of a hole, for example, by forcing a dog-leg or for use in the place of bunkers.
- Protective, separating groups of golfers to limit danger from stray

balls landing on neighbouring fairways or in the 'no mans land' between tees and greens.

- Screening, to hide buildings or separate roadways from the playing area and also reduce the risk of balls being driven onto roads, paths or built-up areas.

- Cosmetic, adding colour, interest and an attractive appearance to the course.

Furthermore, trees are also used to reduce soil erosion, to provide shelter from the wind and, in the case of single specimens, to add variety or a degree of difficulty to an otherwise

straightforward hole.

Irrespective of their ultimate purpose, trees should always be selected to fit in with the surrounding area, stresses Peter Dowle, tree specialist with landscape design consultancy, the Julian Dowle Partnership.

"There are sufficient varieties available to meet all of the different applications required on a golf course," he pointed out. "The aim should be to plant species which harmonise with the existing landscape, rather than choose examples which stick out like a sore thumb."

To that end, he advises that trees be considered with a design objective as well as with a practical goal. All too often, trees are planted which are capable of doing the job for which they are intended, yet do nothing to enhance their surroundings due to inappropriate colour or shape.

"A little care over selection will be amply repaid in years ahead," he commented. "Not only will the plantings be of practical benefit but they will also look good and enhance the appearance and reputation of the course."

Apart from environmental considerations, Mr Dowle advocates the use of a check list to help choose and establish the right tree both from a practical and aesthetic point of view:

- Ensure that the tree is suitable for the purpose for which it is intended.
- Select a variety which is suited to the soil type, the aspect and the available light.
- Position the tree so that it does

not provide undue competition to its neighbours for light, water and nutrients.

- Ensure that water is readily available, especially for the first year or two in the case of new plantings.

- Ensure that sufficient access is available for machines and golfers to minimise the risk of damage or distress to the tree.

When it comes to buying trees, avoid "bargain basement" offers, advises Peter Dowle. "Unless you are able to inspect the new trees first, there is no way of knowing how they have been handled or treated by the grower prior to despatch," he explained.

"Deal with a reputable nursery and seek professional advice if unsure of any aspect of selection, handling or planting."

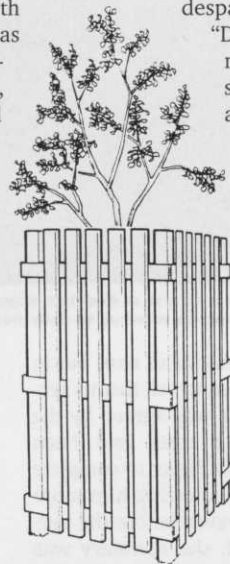
Trees of up to 10cm (4in) girth measured 1m (39in) from soil level will be supplied normally in bare root form. It is essential that these do not dry out.

The usual measure taken by the supplier to prevent dehydration involves dipping the roots in a moisture-retaining solution prior to sealing them in a bag. If there is to be a delay of a week or more before planting, it is

advisable to remove the bag and "heel-in" the roots in a soil trench.

Trees with a girth greater than 10cm at 1m above soil level should come with a hessian or wire mesh wrapped root ball which provides both support and moisture until ready to plant.

Normally, most trees will be available for delivery from late autumn onwards when they are effectively dormant. Planting can



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Correx Galemaster tree shelter is made from twin-walled corrugated polypropylene. Its multi-sided configuration is designed to withstand high wind loadings

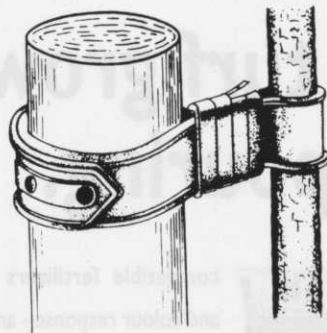
take place from November until March, depending on soil and weather conditions. "If one has a choice, get new trees into the ground before Christmas," commented Mr Dowle. "This will allow them to settle in well ahead of the growing season."

Soil preparation for planting should be carried out when the trees have arrived on the course to ensure that the hole is of the correct size for the roots and that the tree is planted in freshly-turned soil.

For smaller trees of up to 8cm girth at 1m above soil level, an auger is an ideal implement for producing a hole, creating an excellent soil mixing action without compaction at depth. Powered augers of up to 46cm (18in) diameter can be hired or purchased from specialist firms.

Larger specimens with a root ball will need an excavated hole and care should be taken to avoid smearing the base which will adversely affect drainage.

In all cases, the soil replaced around the tree roots should be



Standard tree tie from R Proctor & Son features a unique spacer system which splits as the tree grows enabling the tie to adjust itself to the greater stem diameter.

mixed with a suitable compost. This can be a proprietary tree or shrub planting medium or a mix of material such as composted bark and spent mushroom compost plus a slow-release fertiliser. If watering periods are likely to be irregular, then a handful of water-retaining crystals in the soil will be beneficial

Always firm down the soil around the stem. A slow-release

granular herbicide scattered close to the tree will reduce competition from weeds and grasses and make mowing easier and safer. Alternatively, a mulching mat made of wool, polythene, felt or polypropylene laid around the tree will limit weed growth and also reduce water loss and raise soil temperature.

Staking is recommended for all trees of 6cm girth or more to prevent stem movement disturbing the roots. Smaller specimens should not move unduly in the wind, but stakes can be beneficial, an action which will be appreciated also by golfers.

A single stake and tie are normally adequate for the smaller bare-root tree. Those planted with root balls will require two or three stakes positioned outside the root ball's span with a cross member and rubber collar support. An alternative method involves anchoring at ground level using a frame and steel rope guying system.

In every case, ties should be selected which hold the tree

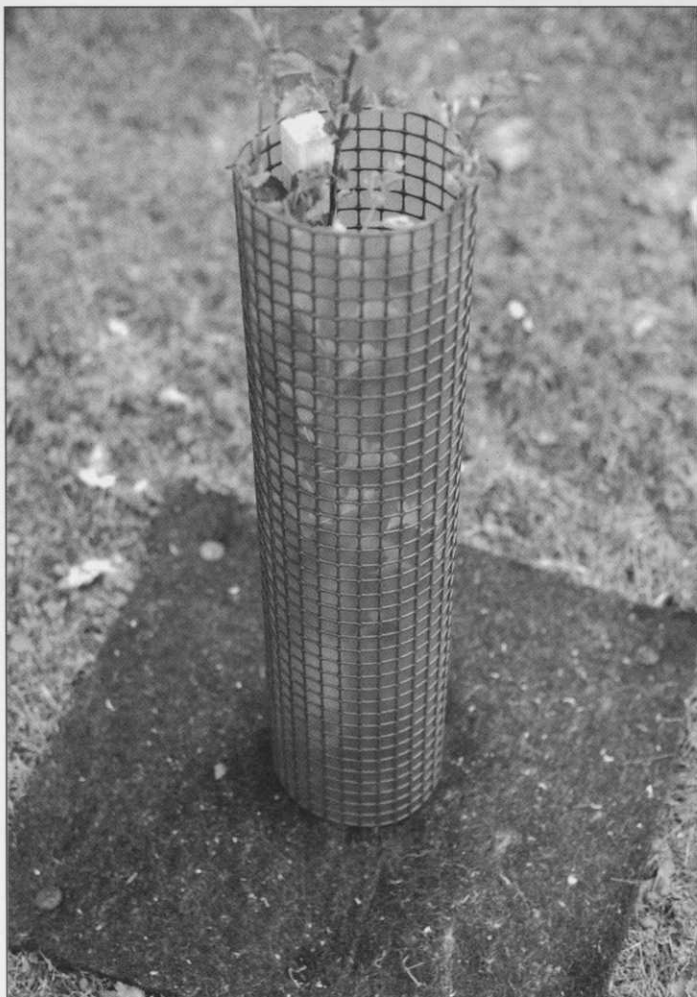
securely but do not chafe or cut into the stem, with regular inspections carried out once the tree is actively growing.

A wide range of protective devices is available for most sizes of tree to help limit damage from wind, vermin, chemicals, machines and golfers. Ranging from a simple PVC spiral wrap to UV-stabilised polypropylene with built-in stake ties, shelters are offered in a range of colours, diameters and heights to suit the tree and location.

Translucent twin-wall shelters are able to combine protection with the creation of a micro-climate around the stem, reducing moisture loss from the plant.

Against the benefits, however, must be set the cost of each shelter, which may be more than the tree, and the fact that any insect or fungal attack may not be readily visible.

Exposed areas will often benefit from a staged planting programme, with a hardy shelter belt being established first to protect more valuable, delicate → 23



Acorn's Shelterguard is made from a laminate of plastic netting and polythene sheet. Here, it is used in conjunction with the company's Treespat mulching mat

21 → varieties planted in later years. Particularly difficult areas should be planted with more trees than necessary to allow for future thinning.

Protection against rabbit, hare or deer attack is best provided with individual tree mesh guards or suitably high and robust fencing erected around a newly-planted area.

"Selecting and establishing new trees is not a simple task," concludes Peter Dowle. "If in any doubt, always seek specialist help to ensure that every tree planted will be right for the job, right for

the location and has the best possible chance of survival."

● *A concise guide to trees suitable for strategic, protective, screening or cosmetic purposes on golf courses has been produced by the Julian Dowle Partnership. Included is a brief description of each tree together with details on colour, expected height after 20 years and tolerance to water (excessive and lack of). The guide can be obtained by writing to Peter Dowle, The Julian Dowle Partnership, The Old Malt House, Newent, Glos GL18 1AY.*

Product sources

Looking for shelters, guards, supports, ties and other tree planting aids? Contact these suppliers for literature and prices:

Acorn Planting Products Ltd, Loddon, Norwich NR14 6JD.
Tel: (0508) 28763.

Blenheim Estate Sawmills, Combe, Witney OX8 8ET
Tel: (0993) 881206.

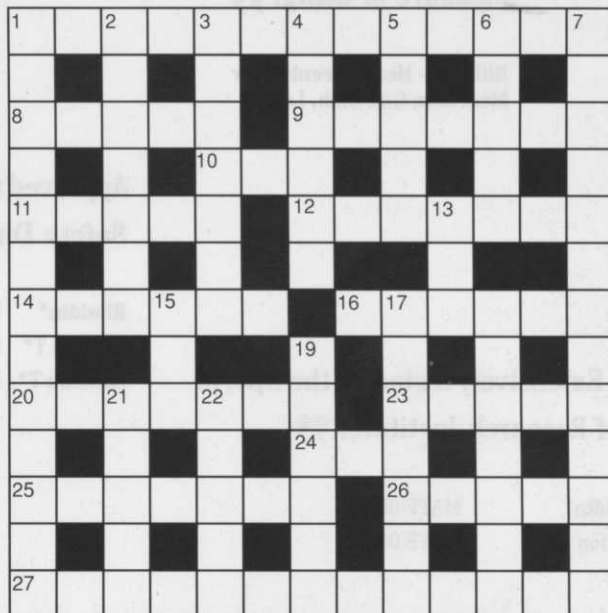
Correx Plastics, Bristol Road, Gloucester GL1 5SG.
Tel: (0452) 301893.

R Proctor & Son, Walton, Lutterworth, Leics LE17 5RG.
Tel: (0455) 553323.

Stanton Hope Ltd, Laindon, Basildon, Essex SS15 6LY.
Tel: (0268) 419141.

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Compiled by Mark G Smith



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1 (L. Anastatica Hierochuntica), otherwise known as "Resurrection Plant" (4,2,7)
- 8 Leaf vein or rib (5)
- 9 Heavy rough (slang) (7)
- 10 'p' 17th letter of the Greek alphabet, which represents liquid density in formulae (3)
- 11 Hole known as "Railway" on Carnoustie Championship Links (5)
- 12 Commonest of the British ferns (L. Pteris Aquilina), found on heathland courses (7)
- 14 A plant does it to thrive in unfamiliar surroundings (6)
- 16 Facility provided for player's families at the bigger tournaments (6)
- 20 Heavy duty mower, eg. a Wessex (7)
- 23 Scottish county containing Duff House Royal and Royal Tarlair Golf Courses (5)
- 24 Beyond the course boundary or white posts (abbrev) (1,1,1)
- 25 De Vincenzo of Argentina, Open Champion in 1967 (7)
- 26 Makers of "The Trooper" off-road vehicle (5)
- 27 Publications helping players to judge distance (7,6)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Irish Golfer who headed the PGA Order of Merit in 1989 (5,8)
- 2 The common lilac (L. Vulgaris) (7)
- 3 Apply too much power to a shot (4-3)
- 4 Surname of the former British Ryder Cup player known as "Dr Golf" (6)
- 5 Strong Creeping Red Fescue (L. Festuca Rubra) (5)
- 6 Common name of Calcium Carbonate; used to make acid soils fertile (5)
- 7 Old fashioned method of expressing a round of 71 (3,5,5)
- 13 Charles R., US Amateur Champion in 1949 and 1958 (3)
- 15 Units in which tyre pressures may be expressed (abbrev) (1,1,1)
- 17 Refuse a poor shot! (7)
- 18 Become victorious over a Horse Chestnut we hear (7)
- 19 Manufacturer's indentation on a club face (6)
- 21 Alternative name for a tree (5)
- 22 An insect in the grub or caterpillar state (5)

★ Solve the crossword puzzle and you could win either a BIGGA blazer (worth £87.95) or £50 in cash! Send completed entries to: Crossword Competition, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF.

Closing date August 26, 1994. First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win the prize. Photocopy your entry if you don't want to cut up your magazine.

Winner of last month's Namesearch competition was Christopher Powley, first assistant at Dinsdale Spa Golf Club. Correct answers were: Faulkner, Max, 1951 and Royal Portrush. If you were wondering who the champions in the Namesearch were, turn to Page 10.

Name:
Address:

If I'm the winner, please send me £50 cash or BIGGA blazer, size