

Large grants are now available to golf courses undertaking tree planting when using economical woodland establishment techniques. Andrew Vaughan outlines the grants, design considerations and techniques involved.

Trees are a welcome component of any landscape and can bring many advantages to a golf course.

Although shelter is their most obvious benefit, they can also be used to provide security to players/passers-by/neighbours, to divide the course in a natural way, to make certain playing aspects more difficult (or more easy), and, above all, to provide an attractive and pleasant 'backcloth' to the course.

However, expectations of an 'instant' woodland are quickly evaporated when the cost of installing and maintaining very large trees becomes apparent. (They may weigh up to four tonnes each.) Similarly, 'standard' sized trees (2.7-3m tall), whilst being more economical, are still expensive to plant in any number



Trees

Planting new trees at Canmore Golf Club in Dunfermline

and, with a bulky stake and tree-tie, are often unsightly.

Planting smaller-sized trees at greater density is not only cheaper still, but allows for more options in the long-term development of a golf course. For instance, if five small trees in a large group are found to be in the wrong place, they can easily be moved elsewhere. Larger specimens will need to be untied, and

the stake dug up with no guarantee that the tree will survive the transplant shock.

Planting grants

Planting smaller forestry type trees at the appropriate stocking will very often attract substantial grant aid.

The Forestry Authority (tel: 031 334 0303) administer the Woodland Grant Scheme, which pro-

vides grants for woodland establishment. Up to £2175 per hectare (£880 per acre) is available on receipt of a suitably detailed design and grant application. The grants are paid out over a ten-year period up to 80 percent in year 1, 15 percent in year 5 and 5 percent in year 10. The application form is complicated, requiring some technical competence, and you will have to state what

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Typical of many golf courses, previous plantings are haphazard and do not divide the course in an adequate manner

Trees

you plan to do, where and how you plan to do it, how you will maintain it and supply an accurate map. This information can be incorporated in a design plan.

Design plan

After agreeing the general principles of establishment, perhaps after consulting an expert, the design can be drawn up with input from greenkeeping staff and club committee. The most obvious sites will lie between fairways, green/tee, or indeed any piece of 'dead' ground. What is less obvious is the siting of individual trees/clumps in the 'in play' areas, where a detailed examination of the course would be required.

Once sited, the overall shape of each block (or indeed tree) is pegged out and mapped to decide the species plan.

Species

If claiming grant aid, native species are preferred to more exotic, garden-type trees. This does make sense, as native species will not only grow well but will attract the huge variety of wildlife associated with trees and woodlands.

By their very location, most proposed blocks of trees will be long and thin in shape, which makes good landscaping difficult. However, a moderately scalloped (wavy) edge can be further emphasised by siting different sized species in an appropriate manner. Even more texture and shape can be added by varying the species selection both along and through the woodland. Up to 10 percent of woody shrubs are

allowable for grant aid purposes, which are a great help in landscape design, and which promote long-term shelter.

Where safety is an objective, a proportion of the trees should be evergreen conifers which will form an all-year-round dense canopy. These also give winter colour, shelter and add further diversity to the woodland. Scots pine with its orange bark is particularly suitable.

Generally, species are sited by prevailing soil and site conditions which, by happy accident, gives the woodland an even more natural appearance. Fine tuning of the design will involve matching foliage colour and texture both within and between blocks. Bark colour and texture should also taken into account (for winter months, eg willows).

Planting

Trees are usually planted relatively closely. We often recommend using 60/90cm sized trees planted at 2,500-3,000 per hectare (about 1,000-1,200 per acre), if the site is at least moderately sheltered. This immediately gives a 'wooded' effect and creates the necessary conditions for good growth.

As golf courses are often free of rabbits, trees can be planted bare very economically (for not much more than the total grant aid). Where protective measures are required, either fencing or protective guards/tubes can be utilised. The former is often too intrusive and, in any event, is comparable in cost to the other protective measures. Planting and leaving to

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Trees

Even at 3,000 trees per hectare, the initial results are barely noticeable before coming into leaf



chance is very risky, as receiving grant aid under contract requires proper maintenance procedures.

Care and maintenance

Maintenance will involve chemical weeding for at least three seasons, and the replacing of dead trees (called beating up). A site inspection should be carried out in late summer to count losses for replacement in the following autumn. We usually expect 90 percent of broadleaved trees to survive when no replanting is necessary; the Forestry Authority expect an 85 percent stocking rate in year 10.

Longer term management will largely involve pruning, then perhaps thinning which both serve to remove/improve poorly formed, defensive trees and ensures that the remainder grow properly. If the long term plan is to grow good quality, well spaced trees, the close spacing at planting will help the trees develop naturally which, if carefully thinned, can then be progressively respaced to achieve the desired effect.

Management grants are available from year 10 onwards, and are intended as a contribution to

the net cost of the management operations necessary to maintain and improve woodlands in recognition of the resulting silvicultural, environmental and social benefits. These are modest grants of up to £45 per hectare (£18 per acre) per year.

Despite the best efforts of the designer, however, the club members are often the greatest handi-capped to growing young trees.

Any change to a favoured (or even loved) hole will result in criticism from at least some of the regular users. Even where the argument for planting trees is without question, it is a major change of land-use which once planted requires a determined resolve to protect and nurture from the non-believers. We strongly recommend placing newly planted woods out of bounds for at least four or five seasons. This may sound draconian, but just remember that each club member is carrying around 15 scythes!

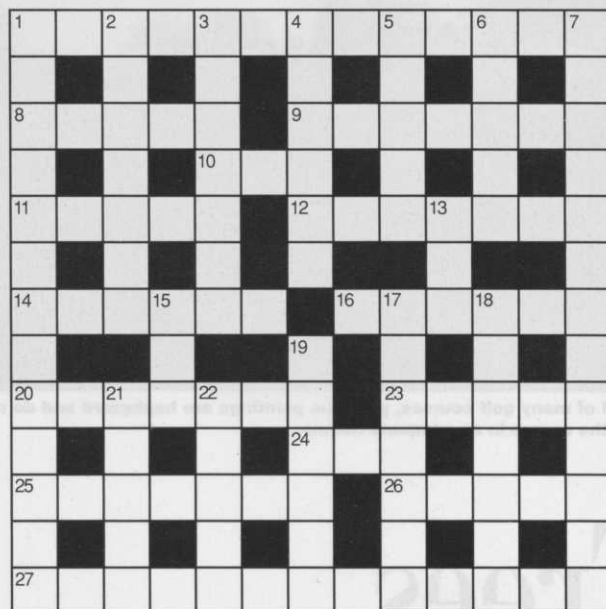
■ *Andrew Vaughan is a woodland consultant with the woodland design and management firm Eamonn Wall & Co (tel: 0259 743212).*



Note the position of the evergreen conifers which will eventually shelter the adjacent houses and right of way

GREENKEEPER'S CROSSWORD

Compiled by Mark G Smith, first assistant at Frilford Heath GC



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Australian winner of the 1991 Open Championship at Royal Birkdale (3,5-5)
- 8 A lie where the ball hugs the playing surface (5)
- 9 Surname of the winner of the 1947 USPGA Championship (7)
- 10 A hole in one (3)
- 11 Object of historic interest such as a 'feathery' ball (5)
- 12 Greenkeepers may live in a tied one (7)
- 14 Floral name of the 13th hole at Augusta National, part of the Rhododendron family (6)
- 16 Implement used to remove dew from a green (6)
- 20 Entomologists study them! (7)
- 23 Of what are Quercus Robur, Tilia Cordata and Fagus Sylvatica, the Latin names (5)
- 24 Temperature of a putter that holes everything (3)
- 25 L. Domestic, plant genus that lends its name to the 17th hole at Augusta National (7)
- 26 A negatively charged particle that sounds like a club (5)
- 27 How to kill a tree! (3,3,3,4)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 The; USPGA tour event played under a modified Stableford system, held in 1993 at Castle Pines CC, Denver, Colorado (13)
- 2 "Devil in a Bush" (L ... Damascena) (7)
- 3 Case for the head greenkeeper's papers (7)
- 4 The result of a course manager's action (6)
- 5 346 yard hole at Cherry Hills CC, Denver, Colorado, with a plaque commemorating Arnold Palmer, driving the green on his way to winning the 1960 US Open (5)
- 6 Local currency in which the winner of the Nigerian Open may be paid (5)
- 7 (L Aesculus Hippocastanum) (5,8)
- 13 Having two roots or branches; Bifurcated or-forked (3)
- 15 The sheltered side; of a tee or green perhaps (3)
- 17 Power rating of electrical items (7)
- 18 Surname of the golfer nicknamed "Supermex" (7)
- 19 Of what are hickory, steel and carbon examples (1,5)
- 21 Approximate time the greenkeepers commence work (3-2)
- 22 The-Chaff (L Phylloscopus Collybita), a small warbler (5)

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Closing date April 8, 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.

This is the solution to last month's crossword, and the winner, who has opted for a BIGGA blazer, is Mr A Frost, head greenkeeper at Kirkbymoorside Golf Club, North Yorkshire.

Winner of the March crossword will be announced in the May magazine.

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