

TALKING

Six of the country's top men give their views on Trees

Trees

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Stuart Cruickshank
Course: Deere Park G&CC, Livingston
Region: Scotland
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)
Staff: Course Manager, plus six, plus gardeners



Name: David Leach MG
Course: Lancaster GC
Region: Northern
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)
Staff: Course Manager, plus seven



Name: Mark Ellis
Course: Stocks Hotel and Golf, Albury, near Tring
Region: Midland
Course Type: Downland
Staff: Course Manager, plus five



Name: Ian McMillan
Course: Queenwood GC, Ottenshaw, Surrey
Region: South East
Course Type: Heathland (18 holes)
Staff: Course Manager, plus 10, plus mechanic



Name: Rob Challacombe
Course: Morteheo and Woolacombe GC
Region: North West and South Wales
Course Type: Coastal Parkland (9 holes)
Staff: Course Manager, plus two



Name: Simon Briers
Course: Whitehead GC, McCreaf Bray, Whitehead
Region: Northern Ireland
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)
Staff: Course Manager, plus four, plus three seasonal

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1. What do you consider to be good golf course trees and why?

1. In our case, pine and small leaf trees such as hornbeam, whitebeam and silver birch because they are native to the area. Large leaf trees cause more problems.

1. Anything indigenous to the area, in our case oak, beech and ash with a few cherry, apple and rowan. Deer play havoc with our trees particularly the ash.

1. We need trees which are indigenous to the area such as oak, beech, ash, field maple and copper beech. They make a pleasant backdrop and re-inforce golfing strategy.

1. The simple rule to remember where trees are concerned is always to use the indigenous species. For instance, on seaside links you would use no trees, heathland - no trees, parkland - majestic oaks.

1. Good trees on golf courses are those native to your area and preferably don't cause you problems - large leaf etc. We have ash, sycamore, oak and beech and a few Scots pine which provide shelter for young trees and will benefit those here in two generations time.

1. We are on an exposed headland on high ground. Eleven years ago the Forestry Commission provided oak, ash sycamore and beech trees but they haven't grown because of the conditions so now we have planted a mixture of pines.

HEADS

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2. Conversely what do you consider to be poor golf course trees and why?

2. Hawthorn, in particular, as you can get badly scratched and it hasn't got a good appearance in any case. Leylandii is an unnatural tree on a golf course and has no aesthetic appeal.

2. Leylandii, poplar, sycamore, which don't support any life, willow and anything which looks out of place.

2. Leylandii and any tree which bears fruit or has large leaves which need a lot of manpower to remove them.

2. Following the above rule I would be dismayed to see the likes of Leylandii, cypress, lombardy, poplar being planted on any golf course.

2. Anything ornamental such as leylandii, cherry, Japanese pine and which look as though they should be in someone's garden rather than on a golf course.

2. While I don't think any tree is a bad tree, broad leafed trees are no good for our course and any tree not native to the area such as leylandii would look out of place.

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3. What is your management policy with regard to trees?

3. We have our own woodland management five year plan which is ongoing with three acres of planted woodland. There is some housing development round the course so we sometimes move trees to provide a shelter or barrier.

3. We began a woodland management scheme 18 months ago, felling trees in a big square in the middle of woodland, replanting and thus creating new woodland in the middle of an old one.

3. We have to make sure they fit into the landscape and are easy to maintain. We have a problem with herds of fallow deer so we have mesh guards round the base of the trees and put total weedkiller round the base as well.

3. A management policy would work towards having healthy trees varying in age and species. This could entail a programme of thinning and dead wooding.

3. Annual clearance and pruning where necessary. We have only had a course here for 12 years so there is not too many really well established trees.

3. We have an annual tree budget for replacements and we have planted a lot in recent years in a bid to establish some after the initial disappointment outlined earlier.

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4. What do you know of the grant aid which is or was available for tree planting?

4. I am aware of several schemes which are excellent. However, we prefer to fund a plan ourselves as we then have more control and can be more flexible, rather than working under certain conditions.

4. I arranged a grant and we were the first in the Lancashire area to be awarded one I believe. The scheme has gone well since then on our course.

4. Personally, not a great deal. We employed a company to do all our planting and we let them deal with all the details.

4. This is a strange question to ask me as anyone who knows me would know. I have much more experience in obtaining felling licences to clear unwanted trees. That said I am aware of grants for tree planting.

4. The Heritage Trust provided 4,000 trees at no expense to use and these were planted by volunteer labour. We have also had a package from the Tree Foundation at no cost, putting a plaque up to mark the generous gesture. So we have had no need for grant aid as you can imagine.

4. We had a grant from the Forestry Commission 11 years ago and since then they have come back to inspect. We lost a lot of them and so the decision was taken after talks with the FC to plant Corsican pines, Monterey pines, sitka spruce and lodge pole pines.

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5. What methods do you employ for leaf removal?

5. We use an Amazone Groundkeeper and blow as many leaves as possible back into the woodland. Greens are cleared of leaves on a daily basis and the rest of the course on a weekly basis. We also make good use of a Sisis Litamisa.

5. We are in a very windy area on an estuary near the River Lune, so most leaves blow away naturally. We also have an Amazone Groundkeeper which sucks the leaves up into a hopper.

5. A Tornado Leaf Blower for the fairways which we use on the back of a tractor. We have a steel knapsack leaf blower to push leaves to the edge of greens were they are raked up by hand or collected with an Amazone machine.

5. We use all methods, from mulching, hand removal, backpack blowers and various tractor mounted blowing and collection equipment.

5. Trees are not big enough to give any problems with leaves. Those that do fall are taken care of by Mother Nature as we are on a windy site.

5. We have no problem whatsoever with leaf removal as the very strong winds of Mother Nature take care of them. We have a Litamisa should any problems arise.