

TALKING HEADS

Melissa Jones quizzes Course Managers across the UK and abroad on how they go about looking after the trees on their course.

	Describe your make-up of trees at your golf course?	How do you manage them?
 <p>Name: Walter Montross MG Club: Westwood Country Club, USA Position: Superintendent</p>	<p>50-50 hardwoods (primarily Oaks, Maples, Ash, etc) to softwoods (White Pines and Spruce). We are a parkland course just outside of Washington, DC. The course was over planted in the 1960's and 70's to provide screening and strategic alignment. Many of these trees are now overgrown and at the end of their normal life expectancy. Geographically the course is located in zone 7 or as we call it here, the transition zone. We have cold winters (not a lot of snow) and hot humid summers.</p>	<p>Yearly pruning, fertilisation and some select pesticide spraying. Removal when necessary.</p>
 <p>Name: Duncan Gray Club: Pines Golf Centre, Scotland Position: Course Manager</p>	<p>A mix of new plantings which are indigenous to our area and older woodland which consists of some forestry commission conifers. We also have a natural regeneration of mixed woodland on an old sand quarry which is now a wetland. All plantings have taken into account the needs of birdlife, e.g. elderberry and rowan, and the red squirrels love the abundant Hazel trees.</p>	<p>Removal of lower branches on new plantations to facilitate mowing in playing areas and use of round up, and mulching at bases to avoid strimmer damage and aid growth rate.</p>
 <p>Name: Adam Speight Club: Woodsome Hall, The North Position: Head Greenkeeper</p>	<p>We have a large mixture of both indigenous and non-indigenous trees. The higher percentage is Pine and Birch.</p>	<p>Annually, all trees on the course are thoroughly pruned, and all lower branches and suckers are removed. A spray of total weedkill is applied around the base to prevent any smaller trees being smothered and to stop the need for cutting machinery to get too close and colliding with and damaging the trunk.</p>
 <p>Name: Rob Rowson Club: Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel & Country Club, Midlands Position: Course Manager</p>	<p>At the Forest of Arden the Golf Courses are mainly made up of: Common Oak (Quercus robur) and Silver Birch (Betula pendula), but does have some Holly (Ilex aquifolium), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and Hazel (Corylus avellana).</p>	<p>Each year all the trees in the rough grass are pruned from the crown of the tree to allow light, but also allow the tree to grow to the correct shape. The big coppices or woodlands are managed on a yearly rotation, two to three areas are picked per year to thin out and remove any dead wood/broken limbs etc. All work is carried out between October and March.</p>
 <p>Name: Paul Worster Club: Minchinhampton, South West Position: Course Manager</p>	<p>Both Minchinhampton Courses are on well-drained limestone brash with a high soil pH. In 1970, members planted thousands of Scots and Lodgepole Pines (and Leyland Cypress) on our Avening Course, which were intended to act as nurse trees to Beech, Sycamore, Lime and Ash. To this end - the pines are now being thinned intensively.</p> <p>Our Cherington Course (1995), as the result of a Planning Condition has been planted with only indigenous deciduous trees and hedgerow species. Ash, Beech, Rowan Sycamore, Hazel, Hawthorn and Blackthorn etc.</p>	<p>We have on-going winter programmes of inspection - pruning, thinning and transplanting. We have very successfully transplanted huge numbers of 30 year old trees into more strategic positions using a JCB. The Greens Committee is very conscious of the need to constantly manage trees as an important part of the course for landscape purposes as well as strategy.</p>
 <p>Name: Martin Forrester Club: Essex Golf & Country Club Position: Course Manager</p>	<p>On our course at Essex Golf & Country Club, we have Oaks, Ash, Pine trees - a whole mixture.</p>	<p>The mature trees tend to look after themselves, whereas trees in the rough are limbed up by ourselves to allow mowers to travel in and around them. Trees in the longer rough grow naturally and tend to be checked when we get the time, and dead wood etc is removed.</p>

MAKE TIME FOR TREES

Do you handle work in house or bring in a contractor?	Do you have a club policy/issue precluding non-indigenous trees on your golf course?	How do you convince members that tree removal is a positive exercise?
<p>We use a tree company for large tree pruning, removal and stump grinding. We also contract out the spraying if it entails trees too large for our equipment.</p>	<p>Our policy is to keep the hardwood trees as healthy as possible (within economic reason) and let Mother Nature selectively remove the softwoods.</p>	<p>We have used arborists, the USGA and golf course architects to point out trees that need to be removed. In spite of all the expert testimony it is still a difficult process. We have a lot of tree huggers.</p>
<p>All work is done in house, by both greenkeeping staff and members - one of whom works for the forestry commission and has helped enormously with all aspects of tree management.</p>	<p>No written policy, but as the wildlife aspect is very important to me I will always go down that route.</p>	<p>Fortunately I am in a position where I don't have to convince members but my policy is not to remove unless there is a danger to golfers or the general public. Forward thinking when planting trees will avoid the need to trim or remove them in future because they have encroached on play lines or are causing shade problems.</p>
<p>We are lucky enough to have four members of staff with chainsaw certificates, so the majority of tree felling and pruning is done by the team. We do use outside contractors for any jobs which require a climber.</p>	<p>There is no set policy precluding non-indigenous species. All tree selections are made by the Head Greenkeeper. Over the past years we have tried to steer more towards native species such as Ash, Maple, Lime and Beech, among others.</p>	<p>We have an excellent membership who are fully aware that all the work carried out is for the benefit of the course, so whether it be free removal or new planting, the members see it as positive course management.</p>
<p>All the work out is handled in-house, unless one of the listed trees comes down, then Packington Estate, who own the land deal with the work.</p>	<p>All trees are checked and monitored by Packington estate, they deal with any issues and problem areas, these areas are then addressed by Packington or the Forest of Arden team.</p>	<p>There are a number of ways to show the members that the work you're doing is positive by writing news letter explaining the pros for doing the work, such as increasing wild grasses, developing and improving weaker trees, increasing wildlife and finally tidying the area. Show members a before and after shot before the work is carried out during a power point presentation at the AGM and listen to their point of view.</p>
<p>We handle all work in-house. Utilising four trained greenstaff chainsaw operators, one of whom is licensed to climb trees, and a selection of chainsaws. We hire in a stump grinder at the end of the season, and are just about to purchase our own chipper. The trunks are sold for fuel to a member, who operates a "Carbon-Neutral" Guesthouse locally.</p>	<p>We have a "Tree Sub-Committee". This is composed of an Arboricultural Expert, a Landscape Expert, the Course Manager, the Greenstaff Ecology Projects Coordinator, and a Chairman. The health of the trees together with strategy and landscape considerations is assessed, and the Course Architect is consulted on matters of strategy. Therefore the General Committee are able to present an informed case to the members.</p>	<p>The formation of the Tree Sub-Committee has helped immensely. Prior to that there was a significant reluctance on the part of the members to fell any trees, even the Leyland Cypress. Photographs of Leylandii removal have also demonstrated very clearly that this species is completely alien to the Cotswolds, and the landscape looks all the better for replacement with indigenous trees.</p>
<p>We handle all our work in-house. As we are a young course, we don't have any hundred year old Oak trees etc that need special care. If a job was too big and required a specialist, then we would bring one in.</p>	<p>We have no written policy.</p>	<p>I find that word of mouth usually works. We have a quarterly members newsletter and we write a course report explaining any work that is due to be done on the course. This is a good way of communicating with our members and explaining that the work is necessary for the health of the tree.</p>