

## CAREFUL PLANNING IN DESIGN STAGES OF GOLF COURSE CAN REDUCE MAINTENANCE COSTS

The rising costs of maintaining a golf course are proving to be a real headache. The mushrooming price of equipment along with the ever-increasing costs of labor are making maintenance expense an item worthy of considerable planning.

According to the American Society of Golf Course Architects, there are several steps a club can take in the design stages of construction or renovation to reduce maintenance costs:

1. Whether a club is planning a new course or making renovations on an existing one, a well conceived, specific master plan will produce great benefits in terms of reduced future maintenance and smoother overall course operation.

2. Design a course with careful planning to permit the easy flow of traffic on and off the greens.

3. Eliminate areas which require hand maintenance as much as possible. Automatic watering systems and larger trees lead to maintenance savings down the road.

4. Educate the membership that lush green fairways are not always the best way to go. The texture and lie are much more important than the color.

5. Let out-of-play areas grow wild when feasible, eliminating costs and providing cover for wildlife at the same time.

6. Employ the minimum number of sand traps to trim costs.

7. Take great care in selecting a contractor to work on the course and, upon completion, keep maintenance procedures under constant review.

8. Incorporate the maintenance equipment traffic pattern into the course design to facilitate easy access of machinery to all areas, reducing the need for hand maintenance.

9. Design trap edges to divert water away from traps to eliminate washing and sand replacement.

10. Install golf car paths to strategically route traffic.

11. Replace bridges with culvert crossings.

Careful planning in the design stages of construction or renovation can help reduce maintenance costs in the future. Taking a little time in those early stages can save you money in the long haul.

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