

## PLAN FOR FALL/WINTER PROJECTS NOW

September is the month when many superintendents begin planning for projects in late fall and early winter. Tree planting, drainage work, stump removal, sod projects, and irrigation system shutdown are just some of the projects undertaken by courses here in the Chicago area.

For the past three fall seasons here at Riverside Golf Club, we have planted an average of 95 trees and 200 bushes ranging in size from 1½" to 6" for trees and up to 10' in height for bushes and shrubs. We plant as wide a variety of trees as possible, having learned our lesson from the way the American Elm was planted for many years. We plant almost all of the trees ourselves, using a 24" auger and hand digging the hole to the proper depth and size. Backhoe digging has been tried in the past and we find hand digging, with the aid of the auger, just as fast and more suitable. Hand digging prevents excessive damage to the area around the hole caused by large machines such as a backhoe.

We do not dig any holes before the trees arrive on the property. This prevents holes from filling with water and allows us to dig the hole to fit the individual tree ball perfectly. The auger digs three or four holes in a triangular or cross pattern depending on the size of the tree ball. The holes are then cleaned out and shaped leaving the hole 8-12" wider than the ball of the tree and no deeper than the depth of the ball. While the hole is being dug, the tree is pruned of 20-30% of its leaf area. Once the tree is in the hole it is straightened according to the trunk and backfilling begins. As the soil is backfilled around the ball, great care is taken to assure that pockets of air are not left. This is done by adding soil a little at a time and compacting it by foot. Where possible water is used to wash soil into large spaces forcing the air out. After backfilling around the ball is complete, a very thin layer (½-1") of soil is placed on the top of the ball (which should now be even with the ground level) to aid in the decomposition of the string and burlap. It is important to note that **nylon** twine should be cut away from the trunk of the tree because it will not decompose before damaging the tree as twine made of hemp or natural fibers will. After the planting process is complete, the tree is mulched with stump shavings, wrapped with tree wrap, and sprayed with Thiram and Clear-spray to keep the rodents away.

This process has provided us with a 95% success rate in our tree planting program.

Last year, we installed in excess of 5,000 feet of corrugated plastic drain tile and plant to do almost as much again this fall. The material we used consisted of the following:

- 5,000' - 4" drain tile
- 250' - 6" drain tile
- 80 tons - ¾" limestone
- 20 tons - Pea Gravel
- Misc. drain tile fittings

This project requires about 500-600 man-hours and we keep two men on an extra month to help with the work. Our equipment consists of a small trencher, 1 ton dump truck, front end loader, and a contractors level.

We begin in summer by keeping records of wet or soft spots and problem drainage areas. We then plan where we will install the new drain lines, locate large main lines to connect into, and determine what size tile is necessary.

Normally we install drain tile at a depth of 1-3' because we are mostly concerned with fast removal of surface water and not necessarily deep drainage. We use our contractors level to assure we have the right

pitch. We normally use .5-1% drop in we are connecting into. We remove all spoil from the site and lay the tile on the floor of the trench. We then backfill the trench to the top 2-3" with ¾" limestone. The remaining 2-3" is then filled with the pea gravel. We do this because the limestone is less expensive than the pea gravel and leaves larger pore spaces. The pea gravel is used on top because it is less damaging to our reel mowers and the turf grows over the pea gravel faster. After a period of 3-5 years, these trenches may need rejuvenating. This is done by removing the sod layer over the pea gravel, removing the pea gravel contaminated with soil and thatch, and refilling with clean pea gravel leaving the surface open for free travel of water. This is a relatively simple process which keeps the entire system working properly for years.

The drain tile we installed last year proved it's worth this season by allowing more days of cart use, fewer wet and soft areas, less disease, and much more rapid drainage after heavy rains. The total cost is about \$1.00-\$1.25 per foot of tile installed.

Many of the things we do in these two projects here at Riverside are common knowledge to many superintendents but I think it never hurts to shake the cobwebs loose a little.

**Roger A. Stewart, Jr., CGCS**  
Riverside Golf Club

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## PRUNE LILACS TO PROMOTE FLOWERING

You'll get more and better lilac blooms next year if you prune this year's flowers promptly to prevent seed development. According to James A. Fizzell, University of Illinois Horticulturist in Cook County, shoots that will produce next year's flowers begin to develop about the time the old blossoms begin to fade.

Since developing seed competes with the growth of new shoots, prompt removal of flowers helps the plant produce more vigorous growth and consequently more flowers next year.

Fizzell also points out that French and Persian lilacs become overcrowded and overgrown unless you prune out old stems each year. This also helps control scale and borer problems which usually are more severe on older stems. Concentrate on the larger stems that are 4 to 5 years old. Remove about 1/4 of them, cutting them off at ground level. It's also a good idea to thin out the younger stems so that each has plenty of growing room and sunlight.

Thumb-sized stems can be just as productive as the large stems if you give them room to grow. Cut back overly long branches to a reasonable height.

**James A. Fizzell, Sr. Extension Adviser**  
Horticulture, University of Ill.

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## FOR SALE

6—3 Wheel Cushman Golf Cars. Excellent condition, \$800.00 each. Call Heinz, 446-5222 Sunset Ridge Country Club.

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**M.A.G.C.S. FALL DINNER DANCE** — Friday, Nov. 27, 1981 at Indian Lakes C.C. More details will come later.