

As the one given the responsibility for insuring playable, quality turfgrass and visually pleasing surroundings, McCarthy faced huge communication challenges when he realized that there were certain trees bordering the greens that were blocking an enormous amount of light yet adding little to the course strategically or aesthetically when it came to the light needs of the turfgrass. The main obstacle was, as is so often the case, a great reluctance to remove any trees, or parts thereof, along the golf course. People's affinity with trees is just so strong. Also making things difficult was having to potentially guess, albeit an "educated guess," which trees or limbs to remove. That reduced McCarthy's bargaining power with the Green Committee to the "not very convincing" level.

It was for these reasons Ron McCarthy decided to call in sun-location consultants from ArborCom Technologies to utilize their technology to ascertain precisely how much and when light was reaching the trouble spots, thus enabling scientifically-backed recommendations for specific tree removal. Putting the challenges into perspective, McCarthy explained that easily fifty percent of the golfers are not low-handicap golfers. As such, they are there to get out of the cities and enjoy the fresh environment of the outdoors. In particular, they enjoy all the trees. To touch the very thing that is attracting the golfers, the club's bread and butter, is really taboo. As such, the benefits gained have to far outweigh the perceived or realized cost to the trees.

Touching this point, McCarthy stated that the light penetration gained is "priceless" to the green. Edgewood spends upwards of \$35,000 annually on tree pruning. ArborCom's recommendations help to pinpoint exact

needs when doing this pruning. When asked about the Green Committee's initial reaction to the recommendation of removing a number of trees, McCarthy stated that several members were shocked. Sensing this, McCarthy used ArborCom's findings to make a hole-by-hole, tree-by-tree "road map" of the actions needed. He used logical reasoning backed by hard, scientific data. He was able to quantify how much more sunlight would penetrate to the turf, thus making for a superior putting surface. The data enabled the committee to move from the "This guy's crazy!" reaction to one of more acceptance and final agreement.

The recommendations were used to show where five particularly troubled greens would greatly benefit from increased light. On one particular hole, the course president stood alongside

McCarthy and stated that three-quarters of the membership would never even realize any changes took place to the surrounding trees.

Ron stated that he was actually surprised at some of the trees that were blocking light. ArborCom's consultation demonstrated that some greens' sun windows were being adversely affected by trees two and even three hundred yards away! Again, scientific data proved far more convincing than an "educated guess" when it came time to make pruning recommendations. The scientific report helped McCarthy give the decision-makers of the golf course a working knowledge of the big picture. They started to see where the limited sun windows were and the importance of broadening those windows. It has opened the door for McCarthy to grow healthy, vigorous bentgrass. ■

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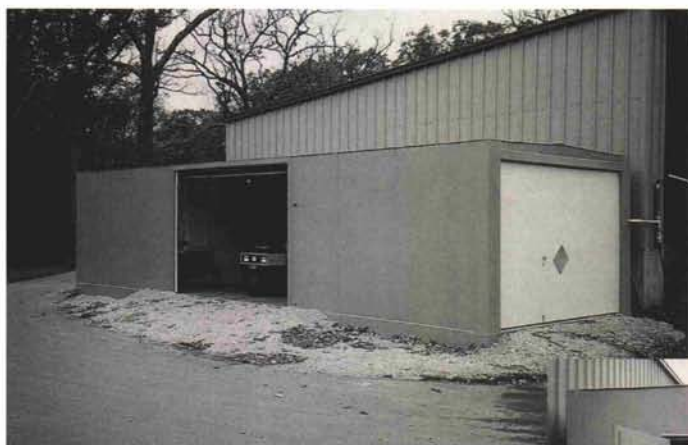
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