

# LANDSCAPING CLUB GROUNDS

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**T**HE problems of landscaping clubhouse grounds are in no way dissimilar to the design of estates, and the grounds about a clubhouse should reflect the spirit of landscaping about the homes of those who are members of the club. A golf course is rather pastoral in its atmosphere. It is supposed to be quiet, peaceful, restful; and it seems to me that the typical spirit the clubhouse grounds should exhibit is one of calm and repose.

Some golf grounds I have visited were laid out originally to accommodate certain facilities and then conditions changed so that it was necessary to add a parking space, enlarge an existing one, construct new service buildings, and so on. More often than not, these additions are located in the most expedient place without regard to their relationship to other parts of the grounds.

It would be a very wise thing for every country club to have a landscape architect in the first place draw up a fundamental plan for the development of the clubhouse grounds. I am sure no club would let an ordinary contractor go out and construct the golf course without forethought. Yet all too often the planning of clubhouse grounds is left to some nursery man who is undoubtedly interested in growing plants, but who has very little idea of the art of landscaping.

## Subduing Service Areas

In many cases the areas devoted to various purposes, such as service, are not properly arranged with respect to the other areas, like game courts and caddie houses. Those latter areas should be arranged for convenience. Such areas as parking spaces should be in locations that are not too conspicuous and should be properly separated and screened from those who are on the clubhouse porch. This may seem a very little matter to harp about, and yet the separation of the parking from the living part of the clubhouse grounds will add a great deal to the comfort and beauty of the arrangement.

One point I would like to bring out is the fact that clubhouses are of different styles of architecture. From the standpoint of architecture, practically every

style should have its particular landscape treatment. A Colonial type of house, for example, calls for plantings that are rounded in outline. If you use a spiky sort of material, such as junipers or arbor vitae, it has the effect of making the place appear more squat.

When we come to a clubhouse of French or Norman architecture, we do have angles and with this particular type of structure the spiky form will fit and will be much more in harmony than rounded types.

## Questions Use of Evergreens

I sometimes wonder why evergreens are so popular in landscaping. Of course, during the winter we like their green appearance, but nearly all the commoner types of evergreens are young forms of forest trees. As soon as they become established and start to grow, they cause a maintenance problem that often is difficult to overcome. There are a few forms of coniferous evergreens that are suitable for the typical Colonial type of architecture, among them happens to be Fitzer's juniper, a plummy rather beautiful broad tree and one that does not give much necessity for increased maintenance cost. A few of the pines, especially some forms of the mountain pine, which are slow growing and rounded in form, are very suitable for this purpose. The Japanese yew and the English yew, where it can be grown, both are decidedly suitable.

Why we should adhere to evergreens is, of course, a question in my mind. They are of no use during the summer period, whereas flowering shrubs have much more in the way of beauty. Most of them are forms which are adapted for hilly country, for the Colonial style of architecture and are much more seemly.

We can make plants do a number of things—we can even make things appear what they are not. I have often wondered why some architects did not depend upon differences of color and texture of plants

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to make golf holes appear longer or shorter than they are. For example, if you place a mass of dark green like the Austrian pine in back of a green, especially on a short hole, it will make that hole appear much shorter because dark color shortens distances. By the same token, you can make distances appear greater by placing back of the green, if conditions are suitable for growth, a mass of willow. The light green color of the willow leaves will make the distance appear greater.

## Does Clubhouse Appear to Float?

Another optical effect worthy of consideration is the appearance brought about when the foundation of a clubhouse is solidly hidden by plants. It is as though the house has been set on a cushion and is not resting on the earth at all, so far as we can see. Unless the foundation is very, very homely, it is usually advisable to allow some of it to appear between plants; then we know for a certainty that the house is resting on solid ground.

Consider the matter of retaining walls. Perhaps we are making a cut and have a bank, as for example at an entrance drive. Ofttimes people will plant a hedge along the top of such a wall and this has the effect of making the wall appear higher. If, instead, something in the way of a vine had been planted at the top of the wall it will droop down over it, hide the wall, and knit the landscape into more harmonious unit.

I saw a golf course recently where they had made an entrance cut through quite a hill. What they did with that hill was to put rocks on it and then among those rocks put a lot of evergreens that in a few years will be very, very unsightly. They will be too tall. It was not very much in keeping with the spirit of a golf grounds and further, so much effort had been devoted to the development of that rockery that the lawn above it had been allowed to grow to weeds.

I mentioned earlier the desirability of screening unsightly objects. I entered a very prominent golf course in New Jersey the other day. Naturally we must make some allowances for winter conditions, but as we came in the entrance gate we saw a large meadow stretching up toward the clubhouse and in full view from the gate were the service buildings. The driveway from the entrance gates to the clubhouse was lined with properly

spaced trees; between the trees in each instance was a shrub.

Now, to the eye of one who is trained in the art of using plants and arranging grounds, the fact that these shrubs were there gave too much in the way of rhythm or beat, and it struck me as I went in that if they would take the shrubs from between the trees and plant them in a mass near the service buildings they would not only improve the appearance of the driveway but they would also screen out a very objectionable feature.

It takes few plants to screen off unsightly objects. There are all sorts of screens we can use. If we have playing grounds, like roque or tennis courts, we may want them very thoroughly screened out and enclosed. For that sort of thing we can use the formal hedge, but again I am looking at maintenance costs. The simpler you can make your plantings the lower the maintenance cost and while the very formal hedge is a fine thing it has to be trimmed three or four times a year and I wonder if it is worth-while.

It is not necessary to shut out unsightly objects entirely. If there is something in the line of sight between the eye and the unsightly object, then that screen, whatever you use, serves the purpose because the unsightly object is partly hidden from view and does not make itself so obnoxious.

With reference to the use of flowers around clubhouse grounds, I find planting in round beds a very common fault. Flowers are desirable, but if we can keep our plants grouped toward the margins of the lawns we will have larger expanses of lawn that can be trimmed much more readily and there will be a feeling of spaciousness created.

#### Some Flower Beds Are Bad

You go to some courses and you find large groups of very showy, conspicuous flowers like cannas or geraniums. They seem to shout out. They are noisy plants. Is that the sort of spirit we would have around country clubs? I know the spirit differs in various clubs, but before flower beds are put out it should be carefully considered whether or not they really carry out the desire we have for the development of the property.

Generally speaking, we do not like to see flower beds in circles, crescents or squares. Today we have a different type of arrangement. Instead of round beds, we use more rectangular ones. We put

our flowers at the base of shrub borders. If we must have them along the drives we put them in borders rather than in beds of varying shapes. In this way they conform to the lines of design and do not break it up.

I do not think the rock garden is altogether in keeping with the country club atmosphere. We should not plan one unless it actually fits the landscape and appears native to it. The rock garden is not a place to exhibit odd forms of rocks. It is designed to make growing conditions favorable for plants which naturally live in that sort of environment. Consequently, most rock work you see in gardens is not really suitable at all. As I said before, we may need to use rocks on banks in order to hold up the soil, but if we do, it is an advisable thing to cover them rather than to make them more conspicuous.

I have tried to tell you some things that will be useful to you. But after all, if you have a definite plan for the development of your clubhouse grounds which can be carried out over a series of years, if you adhere to it, if you use common sense and good taste and good judgment, your grounds cannot help appear very much better.

#### It's "Superintendent," Not "Greenkeeper" in New Jersey Now

**I**N NEW JERSEY now it's the Golf Course Superintendent's association. Greenkeeper has been abandoned as the identification of those responsible for course maintenance because it was inadequate, and a long way from giving the right idea of the heavy and complex responsibilities of the man who has charge of an outdoor plant that represents an investment of from \$50,000 to more than ten times that amount.

The Golf Course Superintendent's association of New Jersey has circularized the state's green-chairmen suggesting that a minimum of \$25 a year for 9-hole courses be budgeted as the superintendent's expense allowance for attendance at short courses, district golf meetings and national conventions.

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