

Landscaping the Course for Beauty and Upkeep Thrift

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Unfortunately most golf clubs lack either the funds or foresight when planning a new course or remodeling an old one to retain a competent landscape architect to collaborate with the golf course architect in planning at least a basic landscape development of the course along with the golf layout. So, in the usual case, the greenkeeping superintendent inherits the job of landscaping the course to the best of his ability as time and funds may permit and, all too often, he is expected or required to carry out the planting whims and fancies of each succeeding green committee.

My conception of landscaping the golf course is not limited simply to the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers although this, of course, is an important part. Much can often be accomplished in the way of improving the natural beauty of the course simply by the intelligent selective clearing of woodlands and areas bordering the fairways and roughs and by the regular and systematic clearing and mowing of visible areas outside the limits of play — by the opening of pleasing vistas and views and by the improvement of the shorelines of waterways — by such things as re-locating service roads where they will be less conspicuous — by the planting of appropriate plants to screen out buildings and unsightly views — by opening up to view and accentuating any natural points of interest or beauty — and last but not least by maintaining a general appearance of neatness and tidiness over the whole course.

Introduced plantings are placed on the course to serve one or more of several purposes. The first and perhaps most important function of trees and plants, aside from their esthetic value, is their strategic purpose in influencing the play of the hole. Trees or large shrubs bordering or separating fairways have of course a great deal to do with the limiting or directing of a desired line of play of the individual hole. This sort of planting should be undertaken only after the most careful study of what the results will be when these plantings have reached their maximum growth.

Greens with backgrounds of trees and large shrubs are certainly enhanced in beauty, and distances are much easier to judge. Although, as you well know, plant-

ings around the greens must be kept far enough away from the green itself for obvious reasons, of which all superintendents are familiar.

Generally speaking, low undergrowth should not be allowed to encroach or shrub plantings introduced too near to the edge of fairways or roughs where they may interfere too much with the play and often result in slowing down the play of the course on busy days. Such encroachment also, of course, detracts greatly from the pleasure of the average or below-average golfer who, at best, continually finds himself entangled hopelessly in the bushes.

Plantings of flowering shrubs can often best be concentrated around teeing areas and along the walks from the greens to tees where the golfers have more time and inclination to pause and enjoy them.

Often courses have considerable areas of water or streams where shrubs and trees may be planted and where their reflection in the water adds greatly to their total pictorial beauty.

Get the "Bold Look"

Plantings, particularly those which are used mainly by reason of their conspicuous flowers or foliage, generally appear to better advantage when planted in fairly large groups or masses of one variety or color so as to gain bold effects instead of spotty ones. One should, of course, be careful to arrange plants of harmonious colors and textures together. Some plants may appear best when viewed from a distance — others depending upon close inspection for greatest appreciation.

Flowering shrubs and trees are often most effective when seen against taller backgrounds of evergreen foliage. Plantings should be chosen so there is something in bloom during each season that the course is in play.

Plants and flowers which need special cultivation and care, regular watering, etc., should only be used around the club grounds, unless adequate labor is sure to be available to properly care for them. I think we have all seen examples of clubs that at sometime or another have put on a too ambitious planting campaign, without

realizing or providing for the cost of yearly maintenance thereafter; and, these exotic plantings, often not too well suited to their environment and neglected over the years, actually detract from the appearance of the course rather than add to it.

Any and all plantings should be considered first from the viewpoint of their natural fitness to the general scheme of things and their harmonious blending with the natural scene.

Each course and each locality presents its own problems and opportunities in infinite variety in the way of landscaping and of course it is not possible to set up any definite rule that will apply in all cases.

It might be helpful to mention a few of the more desirable trees and shrubs for southern golf course planting under the usual conditions. Inasmuch as I have had little experience with extreme South-Florida plantings, I will not attempt to suggest plant materials for that area but rather for North and Central Florida, Georgia and the Gulf Coast.

Large Trees

Among the larger evergreen trees adapted for golf course use in these areas are live oaks and other oaks native to this particular region, most of the native pines, particularly slash and long-leaf, Southern magnolia, the bays, camphor, laurelcherry, palms in variety, hollies, Southern waxmyrtle and many others. A few of the deciduous trees may be effective when planted along with the evergreen ones for their

spring or fall coloring such as scarlet maple, sweet gum and liriodendron.

Flowering Trees

A list of the most effective flowering trees would certainly include dogwood, flowering crab, Judas (or redbud) tree, mimosa, crepemyrtle, Parkinsonia and acacia.

Medium and Large Shrubs

A few of the larger shrubs which are useful either for their flowers, foliage or both include cleanders in variety, the clump-type bamboos, ligustrum, bottlebrush, cassias, daubentonias, anisetree, yew podocarpus, photinia, pyracantha (or firethorn), the evergreen viburnums, hollies in variety and many others.

One group of plants which I think should be used more profusely on golf courses in the far South is the oleander. No other plant I can think of in any section of the country produces such a profusion of color over so long a season with as little care as these plants. There are some 12 to 15 common varieties and colors of oleanders cataloged by most Florida, South Georgia and Gulf Coast ornamental nurseries. If these colors are properly grouped and blended, superb color harmonies can be arranged, which are conspicuous for considerable distances. The foliage, too, of these plants is excellent the year-round.

Some of the most colorful and interesting lower growing shrubs for use where they can be properly maintained are azaleas in

LEFTHANDERS BATTLE PAR HERE JULY 30



This is the finishing hole across the lake from the 18th tee at Tippecanoe CC near Youngstown, Ohio, where the National Lefthanders Championship will be played July 30 to Aug. 1. No. 9 green is at the far right.

variety, camellia japonica and camellia sasanqua, flowering quince, the shrub jasmine, plumbago, lantana, hibiscus, halva-viscus, etc.

Vines

Vines also have their use in enhancing the beauty of the course where suitable trees or fences are available on which to train them. Some of the most colorful ones are wistaria, bougainvillea, several varieties of Bignonia, Alamanda, coral vine, the red honeysuckle, star jasmine, tecoma and many of the climbing roses which are adapted to the far South such as the native white Cherokee, Mermaid, the white and yellow Banksia, and the old-fashioned climbing tea roses. These roses will usually thrive without spraying but should be planted with good soil preparation and should be fertilized adequately every year.

Naturalized Flowers

Another way to add seasonal color to the course is by planting flower seeds which naturalize well in the odd corners or even perhaps in some of the roughs such as annual phlox drummondii, gaillardia, California poppy, toadflax, vinca rosea, and the common petunia. All of these are grown in rather poor sandy soil where the grass is thin or non-existent. Seeds are scattered generously in the fall to bloom in the spring and summer.

Simple Maintenance Cost Records Are Urged

Western Missouri and Kansas superintendents in their Heart of America Association Turf News outline a course maintenance cost record system that involves the minimum of paper work.

The system recommended:

Adequate cost records are a necessity to the efficient operations of a golf course. Unit costs are the only way for a committee chairman or superintendent to determine the proper amount to spend on each operation. In appearing before a board of directors, a chairman or superintendent with accurate cost records to back up his requests has the battle half won.

In all clubs, minority groups will at times advocate changes in maintenance practice and design, which are neither good golf nor sound maintenance. These pressure groups can sometimes be stopped by accurate cost records before they become a problem.

A golf course superintendent, working long hours, seven days a week, is prone to neglect paper work. He has little time for complicated forms and feels his time is better spent in seeing that the maintenance work is properly performed. Not having an office force at his disposal, he wants to keep paper work to a minimum. The following minimum is suggested.

Divide your maintenance work as follows:

GENERAL EXPENSE: Your salary; subscriptions; expenses to conferences and short courses and other items not directly chargeable to a particular division of golf course maintenance.

PUTTING GREEN MAINTENANCE: Mowing; watering; fertilizing; spraying; aerating; weed, disease and insect control; and miscellaneous, such as changing cups.

FAIRWAY MAINTENANCE: Mowing; fertilizing; seeding; weed control; aerating and watering.

ROUGH MAINTENANCE: Mowing; fertilizing; seeding; weed control.

TEE MAINTENANCE: Mowing; watering; seeding; weed control; fertilizing, and miscellaneous such as changing markers and service to ball washers.

TRAP AND HAZARD MAINTENANCE: Mowing; raking sand; weed control.

MISCELLANEOUS: Maintenance of water lines; service drives; service buildings; shelters and any other items chargeable to the golf course.

GROUND AND BUILDINGS: Mowing; spraying; care of flowers, shrubs and trees; repair to buildings.

Procure an accountant's work pad with 12 to 14 columns. Use one sheet from the work pad for each division each month. Use a column for each sub-division and a column for supplies and one for repairs. At the end of the day, enter the hours chargeable to each sub-division in the proper column. When you O.K. an invoice for the club bookkeeper, enter the amount on the proper page. 5 to 10 minutes a day will do this, if you do it every day while the day's work is still fresh in your mind.

At the end of the month, total the columns on an adding machine; multiply by the hourly rates to get the labor costs. Add the cost of supplies and repairs and you will have an accurate report of your expenditures for the month. At the end of the year, an hour with the adding machine will total the monthly sheets, and you will have the answer to many questions.

The above minimum has been used and proved adequate. The plan can be expanded to any extent you may desire, according to the amount of detail wanted.

Your totals will enable you to submit an intelligent annual report to your chairman. He, in turn, can use your report as a basis for his report to the board of directors. If you have done a good job with the amount of money provided, you have the facts to prove it. At times, accurate cost records can be your greatest asset.