

Landscaping For Architecture

By OSCAR B. FITTS

MODIFYING or altering the landscape to comply with the requirements of testing golf on a modern golf course, and to harmonize these facilities with the scenic beauty desired, presents numerous challenges and possibilities which have been woefully neglected in many instances, even on some of our higher ranking courses.

The golf course architect is the first to be confronted with the challenge of taking the natural landscape of a given tract of land and converting it into a golf course suitable to the demands of the game as he believes it should be played. In doing this he takes advantage of the topography and terrain as well as the existing trees or other vegetation which will aid in providing the desired emphasis on premium or penalty, whichever may be his objective, on all the shots required in his design. These natural features then are supplemented by artistic and methodical design and placement of sand traps, bunkers and other artificial features. These features, as well as the contour and outlines of putting greens and tees or other artificial construction, should be designed so as to blend or harmonize with the natural landscape in so far as commensurate with the requirements of the game.

This should apply to the outlining of fairways and other designated areas, also to the selection and proper allocation of varieties of grasses and other vegetation. All of these features add to the beauty, restful and pleasant aspect of the overall landscape which tends to make the game more enjoyable and the course more attractive to the casual observer.

Now, assuming that the architect has complied with the above requirements, construction has been completed and the subsequent management of the course has been turned over to the club, the responsibility for further improvement is usually placed in the hands of the greens committee or the golf course superintendent or both.

Consequently, the subject should be studied intently by anyone contemplating this undertaking in an effort to stimulate interest and visual charm.

A "Sifting" Program

In our effort to achieve the purpose in this work we should first determine a program outlining the various projects necessary to the ultimate attainment of our objective. Now, with this plan to work by we should begin its execution by first appraising the existing landscape features with a view toward segregating the desirable from the undesirable . . . trees, shrubs and plants, removing all the undesirables and pruning, shaping and properly treating those selected as desirable or suitable for a place in our plan.

Next, we should determine the areas that may be improved by introducing additional trees or other plants and the selection of plants best suited for their individual purpose and place as an attribute to each objective. These determinations will, of course be governed by locale and environmental influences, such as adaptability to specific local purpose, soil and climatic conditions and congeniality with existing terrain and natural flora.

Let us begin with property boundaries where the introduction of plants may serve as an ornamental supplement, the breaking up or softening of harsh geometric lines, or the screening against unsightly scenery or for the protection of adjacent property. In areas populated with a predominance of deciduous trees or adjacent to such wooded areas, the introduction of flowering plants such as dogwood, judas trees, laurel, rhododendron and azaleas and deciduous trees bearing colorful autumn foliage such as maple, gum, sassafras, sumac, etc., may be used very effectively. If these trees and plants are properly placed in the woods or along the fringe, they will provide a pleasant scenic variety throughout the better part of the year.

Where there is need for softening up harsh lines very effective results may be obtained by the proper use of evergreens and shrubs or small trees of the flowering varieties. These should be arranged so as to emphasize the effectiveness of the restful green particularly in winter, and the harmonizing of the bright and exhilarating colors of the flowers on the green

background in the spring and summer.

A very attractive setting is one that is sometimes known as the banking or tapering off arrangement. This is accomplished by placing the taller growing plants at the back and gradually working down to the low growing specimen in front. Care should be taken to avoid straight lines, in so far as is possible, and to adhere to an informal design in the distribution of colors and types of plants so as to present a naturalistic scene from both front and profile views. This plan may be effectively utilized for the softening up and beautifying of corners and for providing background and garnishing effects around tees, greens, resthouses, shelters and other occasional buildings on the course.

Many of the above mentioned projects can be executed with desirable results by the interdispersion of evergreens and flowering trees and shrubs. Careful planning and the selection of suitable plants for each job undertaken will produce a pleasing landscape effect which may be enjoyed for many years. Caution should be observed in all instances to allow sufficient space between the plants to provide ample room for future development of the individual plants and to permit full utilization and appreciation of the capacity and functional qualities of each plant, both individually and supplementarily to the overall scene.

For Screening Use

For screening purposes, the selection and arrangement of plants is a matter to be determined by the purposes of the screen and the character of the site or area to be treated. For instance, if the purpose is to hide or block out unsightly objects or undesirable sights on or very near the ground, such hedge-forming plants as barberry, privet, forsythia, hemlock spruce and many others may be used, depending on density, height and formation desired, bearing in mind always the importance of using only acclimated plants. If there are boundary fences or if trellises are permissible, rambling roses or such flowering vines as wisteria, clematis or honeysuckle may be used as screening and beautifying accessories with good results.

For protective screening where clump or clustering plantings are required for windbreaks, guards against errant golf shots, etc., hemlock spruce (often referred to as North American or Canadian hemlock) is very effective. They grow rapidly,

both in height and spread, and produce a dense mass of graceful branches and foliage which is very pleasant to the sight as well as protective. They are also indigenous to or acclimated to a very broad range of environmental and climatic conditions prevalent in North America.

Next, we will undertake to treat the areas separating or outlining fairways where there is need for and space for landscape planting. These areas may be planted for the purpose of defining the fairway, to restrict the playing of the hole to the area prescribed for it by the designer, or it may be done for ornamental or scenic purposes. In either case, coniferous evergreens, such as pine, hemlock spruce, juniper, aborvitae, etc., may be utilized very effectively, both as an attribute to attractive scenery and as a guard against attempts at short cuts and over-optimistic efforts of players who fail to respect the architect's evaluation of the hole.

Evergreens with random interdispersion of the flowering trees including an occasional magnolia or cluster of rhododendron, laurel or azalea are preferable for this portion of the job for two particular reasons: first, because they are attractive and effective throughout the year and secondly, because they do not present the fallen leaf problem as do the deciduous trees, a problem which is undesirable from the players' viewpoint as well as an expensive nuisance.

An informal design should be used in planting these areas and care should be taken to space the plants far enough apart to allow for free movement of tractors and mowers among them and for the future spread of the branches without overcrowding. Trees of the larger and spreading types should be selected that are capable of forming a crown high enough to permit mowing equipment to pass under the spreading branches.

This plan is also applicable to most waste areas, the character of which lends itself to landscape planting as a factor of improvement, and to sites where the scene presents a deceptive visual influence, in the form of a blank horizon or skyline with no visible background, such as is found where a green is situated on the crest of a nob or hill for example. The introduction of trees or shrubs to break up this horizon will add to the attractiveness of the hole and correct the deceptive visual features of the approach to the green.

This purpose may be accomplished by the planting of evergreens and flowering trees in combination, being careful to choose a variety of types that will produce an uneven growth in height so as to present a broken skyline at all stages of growth. These group plantings around the back of the green may be extended as far as is desired around the sides to form a "framing" effect which, in many instances, greatly improves the perspective of the hole. Care should be taken at all times not to crowd the trees too close together or close enough to the green to interfere with the proper maintenance of the turf or a reasonably well played golf shot.

There are numerous other functional uses for background planting on the golf course, however, the successful planting of each individual project depends on the locale and its adaptability to the objective. For example, we will consider the opposite of the skyline project . . . that of treating a perceptible slope up from the back of the green which presents the surface of the ground as a visibility deflector. Here the most obvious purpose is to

beautify by the creation of a variant scene.

This may be accomplished by the introduction of colorful, low growing plants that tend to interrupt or deter the upward sweep of vision. Very effective plants for this purpose are recumbent junipers, spreading yew and boxwood, if planted in clumps and backed up or supplemented by strategical placement of forsythia, spirea, japonica, etc.

Trees which are capable of producing shade should be located at strategic points on the course where they will serve best two very useful purposes . . . that of protection from sun or rain and the improvement of the landscape perspective. Trees to be used for this purpose should be selected from a list of species best suited to local conditions and should be arranged so as to best serve their particular purpose. This can be done best by the superintendent or manager of the project as he is logically the man who is most familiar with conditions prevailing on his particular course. It should be remembered, as always, not to crowd these trees



CONNECTICUT SUPTS.' EXHIBIT AT FLOWER SHOW

Connecticut Assn. of Golf Course Supts. returned by invitation to Hartford (Conn.) annual Flower Show after the golf course maintenance experts' initial display last year was pronounced by thousands of visitors the most helpful booth in the show.

The superintendents took turns at the booth, answering lawn maintenance questions and explaining their "turf clinic" exhibit. They gave away a mimeographed pamphlet "Tips on Lawn Making."

The supts.' exhibit drew large crowds and got highly favorable newspaper publicity.

too much and to place them far enough away from playing areas so that excessive shade and spreading roots and branches will not interfere with the maintenance of the turf or the playing of the game.

Flowers on Courses

There are numerous possibilities for the use of flowers, both annual and perennial, in various sites to be found on most golf courses, to enhance the beauty of the course. The job of selection, location and arrangement should be entrusted to the course management, as in the case of shade trees, as familiarity with the ground to be treated is of the utmost importance in planning and executing the job.

Now that our plans are formulated and the plants selected for the different phases of the job, we should take into consideration the preparation of the soil for the reception of the plants. A suitable soil texture should be provided to insure proper root development, and this should be supplemented with the necessary plant food elements to provide a gradual but constant food supply to keep the plant healthy and growing until it becomes thoroughly established in its new environment, after which time, it may be fed from the surface when and as food requirements are indicated.

The extent of the preparation for planting can be determined by the natural character and quality of the soil and the requirements of the individual plants consequently a thorough study should be made of these factors, before planting is begun. If these precautionary measures have been properly observed the plant will require a minimum of time to attain a state of normal growth.

From here on, the problem of care and maintenance is of utmost importance and should be systematically planned and carried out. Pruning, spraying and fertilizing are some of the maintenance **musts** if we are to expect satisfactory results from our previous efforts.

A final suggestion . . . do not rush into this job with the intention of completing it in one quick operation because it is, in reality, a protractive job that requires time and gradual process. In order to achieve maximum results with a minimum and distributed financial burden upon the club, it may be spread out over a period of years . . . provided the ultimate objective is kept constantly in mind throughout the process of development.

Armour's "How to Play Your Best Golf" Helps Pros

Tommy Armour's first book comes up to what was expected of the Silver Scot in writing a sound, straight-forward job of instruction as well as extension of Tommy's vigorous and distinctive personality. The book "How to Play Your Best Golf All the Time," is published by Simon and Shuster, New York City. Its price is \$2.95.

Armour has turned down numerous offers to put his teaching into book form. Getting the highest rate ever paid on the lesson tee Tommy was understandably coy about trying to transfer the influence of personal instruction into print. His job is better than he may have thought possible in this respect. He worked hard on it, taking considerable pains to get the right words to put across the ideas in confusion-proof form.

The illustrations are line drawings rather than photographs as Armour decided the simplified drawings made it easier for the readers to get the points and learn how to study sound golf form. There is considerable reflection of Armour's own extensive experience as a student of other masters.

Tommy's development of the learning attitude of his pupils and his material on how he gives lessons and the reasons for his methods will be of great benefit to pros as it frankly and constructively tells the pupil what is required of him—or her.

Armour's conviction is that a primary task of the teacher is that of determining the possibilities and limitations of the pupil and applying instruction accordingly. That's the reason for the first part of the book's title. "All the time" was added by Dick Simon of the publishing firm, taking his cue from Armour's comment that it isn't entirely the capacity to play great shots that makes the great golfer but also the ability to keep from playing bad shots, and that the same principle can be applied to the games of other golfers.

The book has had by far the largest advance sale to book stores of any golf book published.

Professionals who have read advance copies say that Armour's job will be the standard textbook of golf instruction.

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