

Off The Fringe

Computer Modeling Helps Make Case for Tree Removal

IT'S NOT CHEAP, BUT IT COULD BE WORTH IT

By Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor

Scott Robinson, vice president of Toronto-based ArborCom Technologies, suggests superintendents consider using computer modeling to help make the case for tree removal when talking to green committees.

Robinson's company created a computer-modeling program five years ago that graphically shows green committees how much shade a green receives during a day.

ArborCom plots the position of the green and the trees that surround it. Then the program creates a three-dimensional model of the green

complex. Entering the longitude and latitude of the golf green, which allows the computer to calculate exact sun angles as it crosses the sky, allows the software to show how shade moves across the green during the day.

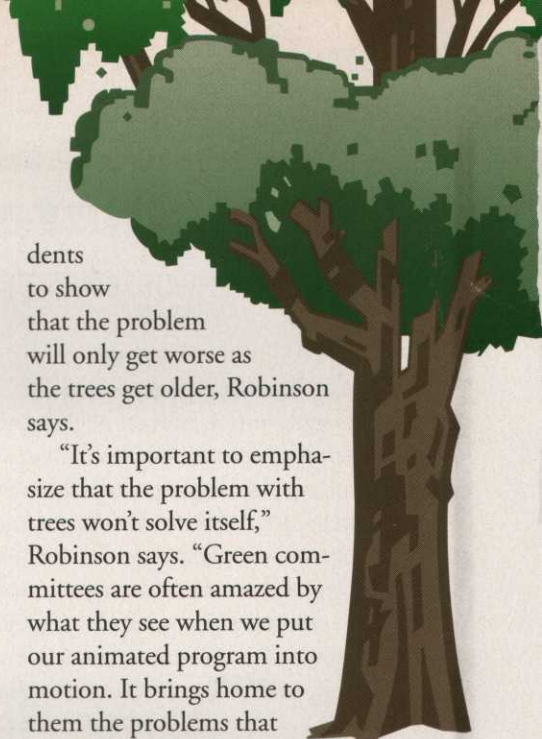
It then calculates how many hours different sections of the green remain in the shade, Robinson says. This gives superintendents additional ammunition when they explain why certain trees need to be removed.

The program also allows ArborCom to "age" trees for a set number of years, which allows superinten-

dents to show that the problem will only get worse as the trees get older, Robinson says.

"It's important to emphasize that the problem with trees won't solve itself," Robinson says. "Green committees are often amazed by what they see when we put our animated program into motion. It brings home to them the problems that trees are causing on their turf."

Robinson warns, however, that hiring his company to create such models isn't for everyone. The cost of an evaluation is \$3,500 per site, whether it's a tee, green or fairway edge. "It's not cheap," he adds.



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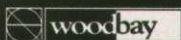
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