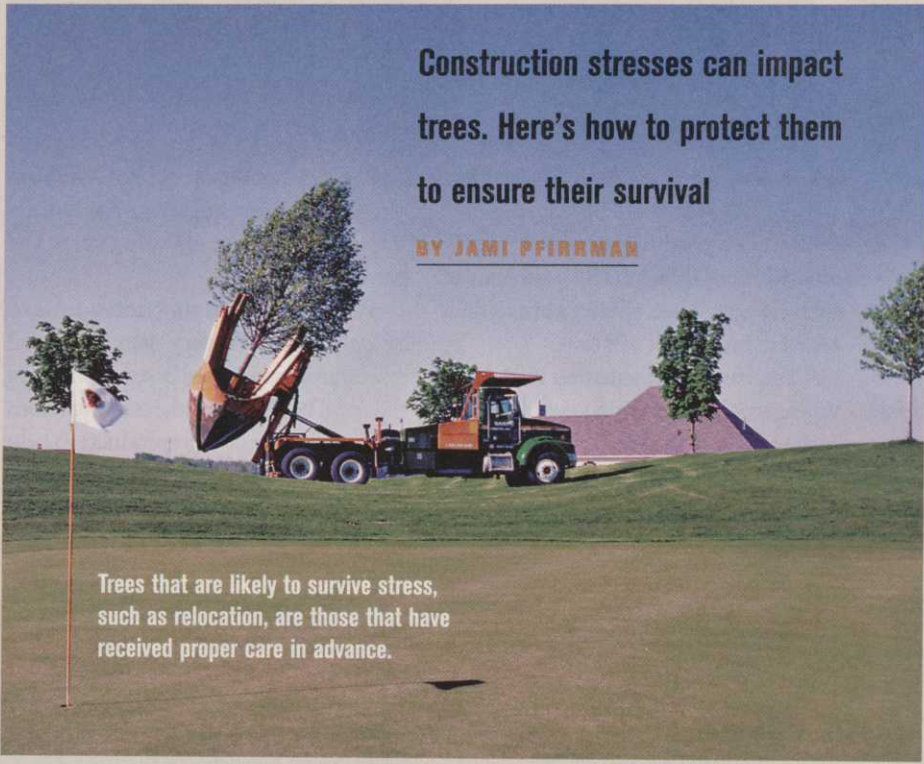


Protect the Lumber

Construction stresses can impact trees. Here's how to protect them to ensure their survival

BY JAMI PFIRMAN



Trees that are likely to survive stress, such as relocation, are those that have received proper care in advance.

Challenge

Your course, which has its share of trees, is undergoing a renovation that will include a lot of construction. How do you protect the trees from getting damaged during construction?

Solution

Simply, prevention is the best cure for construction damage to golf course trees.

Before any change is made on a golf course — whether it's to improve playability or increase challenges for golfers — it's important to lessen the negative impact on the surrounding portions of the course. This is particularly necessary for trees, which can be sensitive to alterations made on golf courses.

Trees, like hazards, are an integral part of every course. So they must be protected to ensure their survival during changes that require a great deal of construction. Superintendents need to remember that construction damage can impair growth and eventually lead to a tree's decline and death.

As is the case in many things in life, prevention is the best cure for construction damage to golf course trees. Before ground

is broken, it is wise to plan how to take care of trees before and during construction.

A professional arborist can be called in to evaluate the site and review construction details to determine impact on trees.

The first step is an inventory. It is important to record the trees that fall in the path of construction and the status of their health. This gives superintendents and/or arborists a baseline of information from which to monitor the trees following construction.

Soil compaction and root damage are the most common causes of damage to trees during construction. Leveling, cutting and filling of the terrain can damage roots, change

soil content and depth and change the natural water flow, all of which can cause tree decline. Irrigation or drainage systems may be needed.

Occasionally, damage from equipment does occur. This is typically seen on the trunks of trees. To protect the portion of trees above ground, physical barriers should be erected around them.

The trees that are most likely to survive construction stress caused by changes are those that have received proper care well in advance.

Trees that are routinely pruned, fertilized and protected from pests and other stress have a greater chance of survival than those that are not. ■

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