

tion that architects are "in on" the loot in the Public designs. His phrases: "belongs to the people" and "a game of the masses" clearly identify his philosophy.

Congratulations for printing the "right" side in the two letters by Hall and Prozan. Prozan is right on the nail when he says "we pay taxes to support him".

Andrew J. Watson, President
ECCO, Inc.

An open letter from Dr. Hurdzan

Thank you for your readership, your enthusiasm for golf, and your efforts to express your thoughts on the industry. This column was intended to be a written dialogue and the printing of your letters makes it so. However, rather than condemning Mr. Morris and GOLF BUSINESS, I should think that you would rather thank him for the opportunity to read and express a different point of view.

As to your personal disagreements with my perceptions of the golf business, I would like to address those by reiterating my main points again on government golf. First, golf course construction is stagnating because many private and corporate investors feel the return does not justify the investment. Proof of this is that according to National Golf Foundation

statistics only 62 golf courses had opened through the end of September for 1979 and their figures show only about 80 to open in 1980 (this is down considerably from the 350-400 golf courses per year of a few years ago). Of those 62, a high percentage were government golf courses. Consider also that we have no way of knowing how many golf courses may have closed last year. However, it should be clear that the net effect is that the hundreds of golf superintendents who graduate each year and the hundreds of apprentice golf pros will find it increasingly harder to find a position if golf continues to slow down, not to mention the impact on all golf suppliers.

Also remember that government intrusion into the golf market started back about 85 years ago when James Roosevelt, New York City Park Commissioner, built the **first** public golf course in America. Van Cortland Park was built in 1895 and every golf course built before that time was for the private wealthy interests.

As for the free enterprise system, I can only say that I have owned four businesses of my own. But it is not infallible. If greens fees were to be set at the discretion of the individual who was strongly profit motivated, then this price may deny many the opportunity to experience golf. My father grew up in a coal camp in West Virginia during the depression, and the municipal golf courses there were his only chance as a boy to caddy or work to earn money for his family. His exposure to golf gave him a chance to get out of a life in the mines,

and his golfing ability that he learned has benefited him for the past 50 years. Had those government supported golf courses not existed during that time and throughout the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's, he and many other people would have been economically denied the benefits and pleasures of golf.

I assure you that I am of the same political persuasion as you except that I see problems with a strict free enterprise system. Witness the high profits of the oil companies while many Americans must decide to "eat or heat".

Lastly, I do not believe that every municipal golf course should make money nor should they be a tax drain. If a government golf course has such a deplorable income record, then an outside consultant should be retained to study and revise the management system. However, it is the purpose of government to provide for the health, safety and welfare of its constituents and this includes recreation. Whether it is ball fields and picnic areas, public hunting, fishing, boat ramps or camping sites, it is imperative that recreation be provided for all people regardless of their backgrounds or economic situation.

Thank you again for your interest on the subject for I believe we are both concerned about the game; we just have different perceptions.

Michael J. Hurdzan

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Reading...

By Dan McNamara, HHH Horticultural

TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WESTERN GARDENS. Gordon Courtright. 1979 Timber Press. 239pp., illus. \$42.50

Here is a practical visual dictionary of all the plants obtainable from seven of the largest wholesale nurseries in California and the Northwest, omitting those which are closely related to or visually indistinguishable variations of others. Of the 771 color plates, practically all are of specimen plants, five to 15 years old, and standing alone, so that their true form and habit can be readily appreciated. Only a small handful—primarily vines and hedge

plants—are shown in closeups covering about one square foot of foliage.

The book has six major sections—dividing the plants by typical height and type: Low, Medium and Tall Growing Shrubs, Trees, Vines and Conifers. In addition to these major divisions, there are many other valuable features: a simple planting guide gives a clue to the general soil conditions preferred for each plant; temperature ratings (approximate, of course) for each plant, by Zone, from three to ten; a botanical index which includes, as well as the plate number, both the botanical name where nursery practice differs from that of the botanist; and a second cross index with common names alphabetized to help where the botanical name is not known. On top of all this, there are lists of plants by flower color, for fragrance, for seashore plantings, and for use in dry or damp places.

Gordon Courtright is a practical nurseryman with over 40 years of experience, and he has written a practical book for the superintendent to select landscape plants from—a book written in the language of a nursery catalog rather than of the botanists.

The illustrations for the most part are of excellent quality, while the descriptions give preferred uses and individual quirks that make plant selection an easier matter than usual. Beautifully printed on a semi-gloss paper, and in a binding made to last, this is a book every plantsman should have in his library, even at a price that causes a small gulp . . . it's worth it.

PLANTS FOR GROUND-COVER. Graham Stuart Thomas. London. J.M. Dent xxv + 273 pp., 72 pp Illustrations, 32 in full color.

To many of us, "ground-cover" signifies only pachysandra, ivy and vinca, which, delightful as they may be in small doses, and satisfactory as they are for many purposes, are just the beginnings of ground cover.

Golf courses, like public parks, and the surrounding public and industrial buildings, have many areas which are put into grass simply because nothing else has been suggested. Yet, amenity horticulture, as the British put it, is as necessary and desirable there as in our private gardens.

As we all know, a stretch of close-mown turf is a pretty thing. With a contrast, even in just the height of mowing, it can become beautiful. Ground covers, in some variety, offer an easy means to provide low-maintenance plantings to provide more contrast—in color, in form, and in texture—especially around the Clubhouse areas. They can control weeds on hills, in marshy areas, where tree roots and rocks make mowing hazardous, and in those places where soil and light conditions make turf impractical.

It has become the fashion these days to pass over English gardening and horticultural books as being impractical for this country because cultural conditions are so different, and detailed directions for specific plants do not apply here. It seems to me, though, that there is far more difference between, for instance, Oregon and Arizona or Texas than between England and Missouri or Illinois! We can make adjustments to climatic conditions for plants quite easily; adjusting our ways of thinking is a lot harder.

Thomas lists and discusses here literally hundreds of plants—woody, climbers, and herbaceous—to give wide choices for any part of the United States. He lists them by use, by preferred habitat, and by soil requirements. He points out, not just their favorable aspects, but the difficulties which they can cause, as well. This book, though written for the amateur, is an authoritative reference for the professional groundskeeper, the landscape architect, and, yes, the Golf Course Superintendent.

Graham Thomas, by the way, is a top notch plantsman himself, awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour and the RHS Veitch Memorial Medal. He has been official Gardens Adviser to the National Trust, which administers many of Britain's finest estate gardens.

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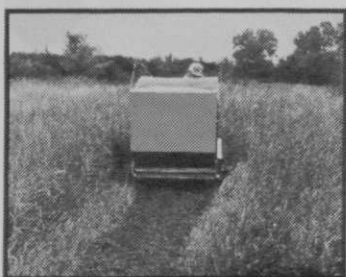


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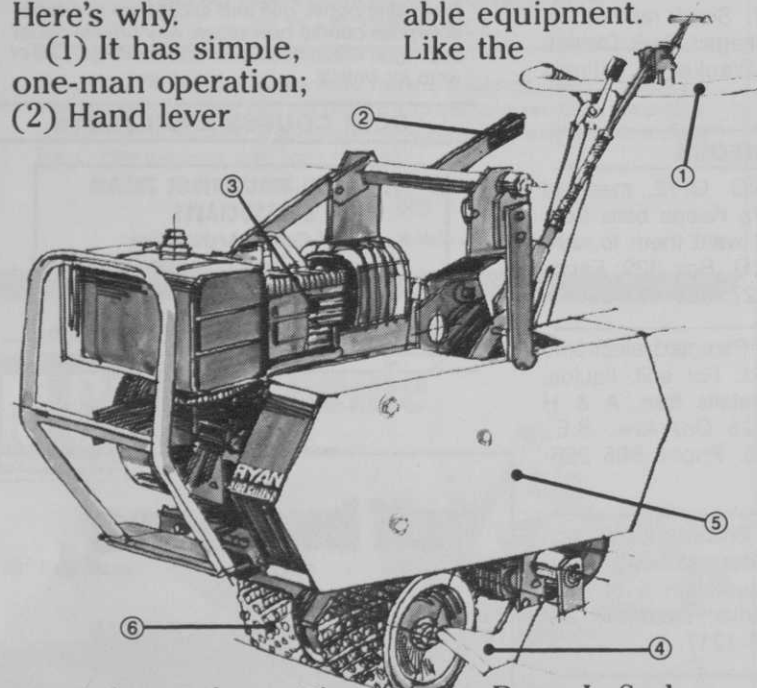
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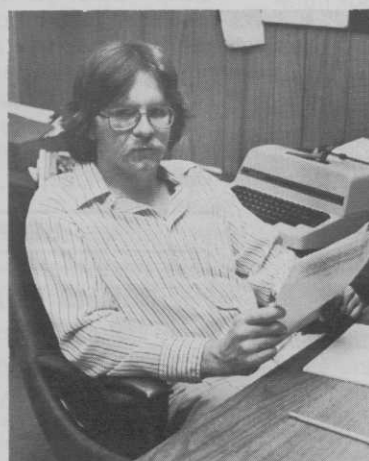
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Viewpoint



Designer's forum in the November issue raised quite a fuss. I got several letters suggesting that Dr. Hurdzan was not "a very nice guy". I happen to know Dr. Hurdzan personally and could only wish that every person involved with golf had his dedication to every aspect of golf. However, as he stated in his open letter in Readers forum, the column was designed to generate healthy controversy, and indeed it

has.

I would like to point out a couple of facts gleaned from the November/December 1979 National Golf Foundation Golf Market Report. Statistics show that the average golfer "is a mature adult with a sound education, better than average income, a genuine passion for the game as indicated by his frequency of play and willingness to spend generously for his recreation." That speaks quite eloquently for the modern golfer, a fellow you would be proud to have on your course. However, it is a little foreboding when it is generalized into: "All of which makes him not unlike his private club predecessor of early America when golf was a game of the classes rather than the masses."

Now, it would seem to me that, in order to support all of the public courses, golf would have to be a game of the masses. Is it a message that course construction is slowing down? The subject is definitely worth a lot of thought and a lot of lively discussion. GOLF BUSINESS will keep printing everyone's thoughts as long as they come in and are relevant.

GOLF BUSINESS is going to have a booth at the GCSAA show. I'm hoping that many of you will stop by and let us know your feelings about the magazine. We welcome constructive criticism and a pat on the back will get you a drinking buddy. The show is going to be bigger and better than ever and I know I'm going to have a good time and learn something in the process.

We've included the program and a listing of exhibitors at the show to help you plan. There will be a lot to cover in five days. Take the magazine to the show with you. We think it will be useful.

The second part of the replacement parts discussion is in this issue. The third and final will be in the March issue, along with another article on golf course landscaping by French and Korbobo. If you don't make it to the show, or our booth, write something on the Reader Forum card and mail it in. Write something on it and mail it anyway.

Ron Morris

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