

trees AND A GOLF COURSE

by Leslie Todd

Trees can be both an asset and a liability to a golf course. An asset from a beautification standpoint and a liability from roots, leaves, broken branches etc. Therefore, great care should be taken as to where, when and the kind of a tree or trees are planted.

It is a shame to think it took the "Dutch Elm" problem to get people to trim the oaks. I have used this phrase many times, more as a figure of speech than anything else, however, I honestly believe there is a lot of truth in it.

On the golf course we will find people more critical of grass than trees and we believe it should be the complete golf course. Superintendents are continually striving for better grass and turf, whereas we tree men are trying to enhance the beauty and use of trees.

I work on a theory with trees (the same as the superintendent does with grass and many do not realize it), the theory being that a tree should be treated the same as a person; treat the tree according to the symptoms of its problems. A tree feels, it breathes, it gives great beauty but it still needs help the same as you and I. The difference being, we can go to a doctor, a tree just stands there waiting for help and in most cases the only help the trees get is from mother nature and without her the trees would not be on earth. However, we can still give mother nature help.

The most practical thing to do is to sit down and plan a program just as you do with your grass. Included should be the kind of trees you want, the purpose and, of course, the location. After they have been planted give them the care they deserve to get the most out of them and to minimize the cost as the cost is much less to maintain than to repair or replace.

SOME SUGGESTED WAYS TO PROPERLY MAINTAIN A TREE

1. The first and most important thing is a good sanitation program, such as trimming as needed; trim for health as this is just as important if not more so than to trim for beauty.
2. Spraying is very important and it becomes more important as we learn more about tree problems. This again compares with the care you give turf.
3. When transplanting, variety, location, soil condition, water supply and many other considerations must be taken into account.

What this all boils down to is, work with your trees and they will work with you.

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As for tree trimming, here are a few items that I feel are very important to look for in a tree trimmer.

1. Not only the boss, but all members of the staff should know the species and its needs.
2. No live tree should be damaged by using spikes to climb. A good climber does not need them.
3. Cuts should be painted to keep out insects and for general appearance.
4. Make flush cuts for better healing. This is important.
5. When selecting a tree trimmer, select a licensed, insured company and you can be sure of an interested, competent company.

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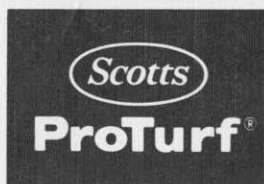
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