

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TREES

Trees can greatly enhance the value and appearance of your golf course but only if they are chosen wisely with an eye to both function and aesthetics. Trees can serve as wind-breaks, camouflage unattractive views, alter the difficulty of a hole, provide shade to a weary golfer or perhaps enhance an undistinguished clubhouse entrance. In the best of situations, one tree can answer several of these needs.

The considerations you should make when choosing a tree fall into three categories; the intended site, whether the tree is appropriate for your area and the tree's growth characteristics.

The tree's growing requirements must be compatible with conditions at its intended site. Soil drainage and pH are critical in determining whether a tree thrives and grows rapidly or just struggles along. Other conditions, such as whether the tree will be subjected to deicing salts in the winter and how the projected planting will affect and be affected by its surroundings should also be carefully considered.

Find out whether the tree you want to plant is adapted to your area. Some trees simply will not survive hard winters and the number of pests and diseases which attack trees is enormous. The best way to determine which trees are likely to thrive is to observe what types are doing well in your area. Your local extension agent or a reputable nurseryman can give you further guidance.

Growth characteristics which influence whether a tree is satisfactory include its shape and size, which determine whether a tree will answer the purpose you have purchased it for. For example, you should decide whether you want a tall column, a wide, spreading tree or a small accent plant.

Large leaves and some fruits will require time-consuming cleanup operations. Roots can

interfere with turf, drains and paths, but don't overlook tree roots as a means of controlling erosion. Be sure not to choose a tree that will eventually grow so large it will tangle in powerlines or droop over sidewalks or driveways.

The tree you select will be on your course for decades. Be sure the tree you choose will be a sound investment, not a liability.

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