

Trees—An Integral Part of Golf Course Scene

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Considerations For Use

GREENS—Trees which are to be planted near greens should possess features that will not interfere with the growth of nearby turf. These include deep rooting, minimum shade, absence of litter, strong branching and good pest resistance. Although modern equipment is often able to handle excess litter in some circumstances and frequent root pruning can reduce the severity of tree root competition, these operations require extra time and expense. Trees may be of any height, but high branching species are usually preferred so that air flow is not restricted. The outer foliage line of the tree at maturity should not be closer than 15 feet from the edge of the green.

TEES—Plant materials to be used in the vicinity of the tees may be lower branching, possess larger volumes of leaves and be more colorful than those used around

greens. However, care must be taken to insure adequate air circulation, direct sunlight and branching height for the tee area. Deep rooting trees are best used to avoid root problems. Trees placed near the tee should be closer to the edges at the rear of the tee and farther from the sides in front to allow adequate clearance for a golf shot hit from the back. Trees characterized by overhanging branches should not be used near the front of long tees. Sunlight must reach all parts of the tee during a majority of the day to insure strong, dense turf. Trees and tall shrubs can be valuable to provide shade if they are placed carefully and benches may be placed in this shade while still allowing close proximity and full vision of the tee and fairway.

FAIRWAYS—Since the trees around greens and tees are located in out-of-play areas, the prerequisites of trees for fairway

use differ somewhat. Fairway turf requires adequate amounts of light and nutrients and, as a result, trees planted in or near fairways should be rather open and deep-rooted. Litter potential should be an important consideration and trees should be high branching to avoid interference with a golfer's swing. Fairway trees should be used only sparingly and set in strategic locations to develop their full form and beauty. Placements should be thoroughly and thoughtfully considered before they are specified. Trees have a definite place in golf course fairway design, but they must not be over-used.

ROUGHS—Trees to be used in the rough may be of nearly any type. Much will depend on the type of golf facility, existing plant materials and attitudes of local golfers. Trees in the rough may be

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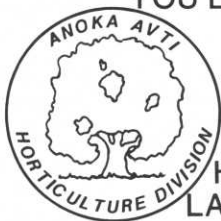
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valued for their color, shape, bark, texture, specimen or massing use, and qualities as an obstacle. They should allow medium to high amounts of light to penetrate to the turf and should be at least moderately free of insects and diseases, litter and root problems. Selection is more critical for those positioned near fairways than for those farther out-of-play.

SPECIMENS—The use of specimen plants has become popular on many golf courses today. Specimen plants are usually selected on the basis of outstanding characteristics such as beautiful flowers, seasonal color, or special form or texture, and are often planted alone to emphasize these characteristics. However, the use of too many specimen trees tends to defeat their purpose and results in a mass of oddities instead of a unified composition of clumps and groupings. Occasional single plants or small specimen clumps are certainly desirable, but it is suggested that the trees be placed in groupings which then flow from one area of the course to another, avoiding a row or straight line appearance as much as possible.

Care and Maintenance

All the efforts and expense in planning your golf course landscape will be in vain if proper attention to care and maintenance is overlooked. Though most trees can survive for many years with some neglect, few will develop to their full potential. Close attention is especially important during the first few years after transplanting, until the tree is well established. An expensive annual program of tree maintenance is impossible on most golf courses today, but one should constantly observe the trees on the course and learn to recognize symptoms of trouble, just as you do with turfgrasses.

A good tree care program would include most of the following: disease and insect control, irrigation, fertilization, pruning, bracing or cabling, thinning, removal of dead trees, etc. In addition, the golf course superintendent's directions to course employees should include instructions on mowing near and around trees. Trees can incur tremendous damage from being hit by mowers and having their bark chipped away, exposing the damaged area to fungal diseases and insects. More and more golf courses

are applying non-selective herbicides around trees so that mowers won't be tempted to come too close. Also, signs are sometimes posted permitting a free drop two club lengths away from new plantings, but no nearer the hole. There are many details on planting and maintenance of trees, but not all can be mentioned here. If you have any questions regarding these practices, contact your State University or local cooperative extension office. Their experts can help you or put you in contact with someone who can. Several recent books which deal with tree care and maintenance include:

Johnson, W. T. and N. Lyon. 1976. *Insects That Feed on Trees and Shrubs, An Illustrated Practical Guide*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. 464 pp.

Pirone, P. P. 1978. *Tree Maintenance*. 5th ed. Oxford University Press, NY. 574 pp.

Tattar, T. 1978. *Diseases of Shade Trees*. Academic Press, Inc., NY. 361 pp.



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