

TREES ON THE GOLF COURSE

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A good tree program on the golf course is essential in meeting the needs of the game. Trees can add to the playability and aesthetics of any course but, improperly managed, can detract from each.

Two things that are helpful for a quality tree program are having an inventory of your tree assets and establishing basic tree functions on the course.

A tree inventory is the first thing that should be done to implement a good tree program. It is always helpful to know where you are before determining where you would like to go. Whether you do this on your own or contact someone to do your inventory, much valuable information can be derived from such a study. The inventory should include the number, size, species, and health of all trees pertinent to the golf course. Sectionalizing by geographic location makes record keeping and referencing easy. At Interlachen Country Club I divided the course into 30 sections. Statistics that can be derived from an inventory include percent distribution of trees by location, species, size and health. This can be of great value when determining where and what trees to plant. Existing tree maintenance programs can be monitored and prioritized much more effectively as well. In addition, having a realization of the tree population disease problems, overplanting of certain species, or trees not well represented on the course can be dealt with in future plantings. A major consideration for future planting is to develop a wide genetic base. The use of a variety of plant materials can minimize any catastrophic effects of disease problems. Limitation of same species planting in groups or root graft proximity can further reduce adverse effects of future disease problems.

A second major consideration in developing your program is determining the basic tree

functions desired in particular geographic locations. Form follows function is a basic rule of all design that helps determine tree planting and maintenance. One cannot lose sight of the primary function, the game of golf, when planning and maintaining tree populations. The proper balance between the functional aspects of trees versus their competitive nature must be taken into account. The USGA Green Section may recommend no planting of trees within 60 feet of greens but, the site may demand plantings closer than this. Competition for light, water and nutrition should come into play when deciding on your site planning or maintenance. Lack of light can be a limiting factor in the production and health of bentgrass. Try not to block east to west light, as ignoring this may lead to inconsistency in putting surfaces. If this situation already exists, heavy thinning of the affecting trees may be desirable, especially to increase east light. Morning light has distinct advantages as it offers the light benefit without the heat stress of latter day light. To avoid water and nutritional competition with desirable turf, there are many actions that may be taken.

Root pruning is a valuable tool. I would recommend a 2 foot depth vibratory plow for most root pruning situations. The use of vapam, trenches or a four foot depth vibratory plow would be good alternatives for tree disease problems. Remember, the object is to prune roots—know what's in the ground.

Another method of reducing root competition is to match the right species with the site. Try to avoid planting trees with aggressive surface roots close to fine turf areas. Trees with fibrous or strong tap roots can lend themselves to planting sites closer to these areas. Ornamental trees may be good for backdrops or aesthetic plantings and will not compete as much closer to fine turf as larger species. Plantings of this nature are definite candidates for discussion with golf and greens committees as they may adversely affect play. In addition, trees can be fertilized and irrigated, a factor which will help reduce the demand on those fine turf areas by supplying basic needs.

In choosing plant materials, foresight can

eliminate many potential problems. The function, matching plant requirements to the site, size at maturity, selecting quality stock, potential disease problems, and any possible adverse affects on desirable turf should be studied prior to planting. Take care in planting trees around tees. Ideally, trees should not limit use of teeing areas but, may be used to limit potential target areas. Properly planted, trees at maturity will not require as much strategic pruning as those planted for sudden impact. Some basic functions for tree planting may include increasing the difficulty of play, creating visual backdrops to target or non-target areas, screening of undesirable views or noise, adding definition to fairways or may be purely aesthetic.

Matching the right plant material with the intended site requires knowledge of available plant materials, zone hardiness, soils and growing requirements. It is helpful to have good resource material such as tree books and manuals and soil

test results. Future disease problems should be strongly considered. Dutch Elm Disease and Oak Wilt are only two of many tree diseases in Minnesota. Information is available from the University of Minnesota extension service on tree diseases.

Perhaps the single most important aspect in a tree program is determining desired function. This is the area where good communication with the golfing membership is essential. Discussion of short and long term affects can clarify the needs and views of your golfing membership. Topics such as fairness to the golfer, priorities, adverse affects of competition and budgetary concerns should be addressed prior to any planting. A concensus of how trees should and should not affect play can help set your basic planting guidelines.

Once you have these tools available, record keeping and decision making with good foresight will become easy. Above

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all, remember, form follows function and that your functions must be determined for your particular golf course.

Good luck in 1986 and I hope to see you out on the golf course. I'll be in the woods as usual!



EDITOR'S CORNER

RANDY NELSON

Well, our unusually cool, wet spring has certainly reverted quickly into our usual hot, humid summer. Although the weather conditions can change dramatically, not so for our bodily metabolisms. Such drastic fluctuations in temperature and dewpoints put a strain on employee performance. Those of you fortunate enough to have air-conditioned maintenance facilities are to give your staff members a needed break from the strength draining heat. I know that when plans for a new maintenance building at my course are compiled one item which I firmly hope to include will be air-conditioning for the office and employees' breakroom. Our staff members deserve that kind of consideration during these periods of stress.

Stress was certainly the farthest thing from the minds of the 55 MGCSA members that attended the June meeting at Detroit Lakes Country Club. This meeting was the first of two that will take our MGCSA members on a northerly trek of courses that will test our golfing skills. On behalf of the members who were in attendance I would like to thank Brad Klein for allowing us to interrupt what I know was an extremely busy and profitable time at your course. Brad's course was in the same super condition that I remember he provided for the 1982 State Amateur; however, my golf game was not. I know we all enjoyed ourselves, Brad, and I hope you will extend our appreciation to your club officials.

Also at the June meeting was Dr. Clinton

Hodges from Iowa State University. Dr. Hodges' appearance was sponsored by Turf Supply Company and their fine staff which includes Jack Kolb, Dave Krupp, and Carl Tychsen. Dr. Hodges reviewed his research findings about the pythium root dysfunction problem on sand greens. He stated that this dysfunction problem is unique to greens built with 100% sand; however, as the greens mature the problem seems to correct itself. He cautions anyone building 100% sand greens with surrounding native soil collars to be aware of the dysfunction problem.

Our next meeting will bring our venturesome volume to the Violet Vulture's lair. We all know the host superintendent and awesome wonder of this course as Fred Anderson. If you still haven't guessed the location of our resident MGCSA touring 8 handicapper I won't keep you in suspense any longer. Watch for the next meeting flyer coming to you by Purple Hawk express mail.

MINNESOTA'S GOLFING HERITAGE



TOWN & COUNTRY CLUB

by TOM FULLER
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THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB

The year was 1892 and the first round of golf in Minnesota was played at the historic Town and Country Club of St. Paul.

Actually, golf began there as an afterthought. A pioneer member, William F. Peet, conspired with a St. Paul newspaper reporter. Desperate for tid bits of news, he asked Peet for the latest Town and Country gossip. Peet suggested a story about a new game called golf which was getting some print in papers along the east coast. The reporter disliked his duties of social reporting so he contrived