

Trees—

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removal from a green, when he or she is asked by a committee member who voted to save the tree: "Say, I have a lot of shade in my backyard and I can't seem to keep grass growing on it. What type of grass seed should I use?"

Trees and New Construction

When cutting a corridor through a heavily wooded area, trees must be protected from injury to the trunk, roots and canopy. Trees can be protected with silt fences or other temporary barricades throughout earth movement, shaping and seeding. Drip lines must be respected and used as limits of encroachment to reduce stress during construction. Densely tree-lined fairways, which were popular during a boom of golf course construction in the past, can seem claustrophobic to golfers. In this modern era of golf course design, architects are sensitive to the natural lay of the land and make use of contouring to create a natural rhythm.

Selective thinning within the existing wooded areas on the golf course should allow space for the trees to mature into their natural shapes. This process is tedious, and success is limited under the best of conditions. Once trees that supported other growth have been removed, the shock can be too much for the remaining plants. If these trees survive, their high canopies are ideal for golf courses.

The Root of the Problem

Tree roots can cause damage. Shallow feeder roots can be detrimental to healthy turf because of root competition for water and available nutrients. Golf car paths can bulge and crack from the roots of trees planted too close to the paths.

Surface roots from trees can cause players physical injury from club-head impact. Just ask Greg Norman or John Daly of the PGA Tour, both of whom suffered tree-related injuries and had to withdraw from major tournaments.

Mowing around irregular surfaces and over protruding roots is dangerous for crew members and detrimental to equipment. Tripping is common and driving golf cars over roots can be irritating as well. Trees should be located where they can exist in harmony with the surroundings and not be too close to play.

Irrigation Design

Ideally, an irrigation system should be designed to allow for the arc of water from each sprinkler head to extend to the drip line of trees on the golf course. Protect trees from potential injury by irrigating the roots instead of the trunk. The high pressure of irrigation systems on the golf course can damage bark and lower branches with the repetitive beating of the spray and the constant wetness.

The sound of water beating against a tree also can be quite annoying to homeowners in residential golf communities during the early morning hours when the golf course is being irrigated.

When installing golf course irrigation at a site with a

tree placed in or close to the fairway, the irrigation specialist should begin installing the heads around the tree and work both directions from that point. A triangle of irrigation heads should be placed around the tree. These heads need to be placed a sufficient distance from the trunk to allow for the stream of water to be on the downward arc if it must contact the trunk at all. Ideally, the ground containing the root systems of trees should be the only area watered by irrigation.

The out-of-bounds side of a golf car path, away from the centerline in the non-irrigated rough, is an ideal setting for trees. If the budget allows for a totally irrigated rough within the golf course design, the architect should consider a perimeter system with adjustable heads to regulate the amount of water in heavily shaded areas.

It Could Happen to You

Consulting with the architect may come in handy when you have to deal with design suggestions — including mass tree plantings — that may affect course playability and management.

For example, it's not too difficult to imagine a green committee chair unaware that misplaced trees may adversely affect IPM and total course conditioning, mentioning that golfers "really like those trees west of the 17th green." He or she adds that the local nursery has dogwood trees on

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Trees—

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sale and that they'd look nice planted behind every green, "just like Augusta National." It's at these times when an architect can be a valuable third party.

You can suggest talking to a golf course architect and developing a master plan using your existing tree inventory. That way, the architect handles the objective analysis and evaluation of the course while interceding between the green committee, or management, and the golf course superintendent.

Plantings can be more intensive and varied near the clubhouse, within high-focus areas and adjacent to accessory structures where the presence of an ornamental-type tree gives added interest and frames the view.

If trees are not within your budget, invite the person who offers the suggestion to pay for new trees to be planted within the master plan. Suggest memorial plantings, which add a sentimental touch to remembering past club members.

What happens next depends on your situation:

Is There a Master Plan For the Golf Course?

The superintendent should inform the member, green chair or course pro about working within the architectural layout of the course as designed by the architect. Let them see the golf course plan during the next green committee meeting and proceed with implementation.

Remember, if the hole must have trees to develop integrity, it's not a good golf hole; don't plant trees — instead rework the basic architecture. The benefits of golf courses, according to GCSAA, the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and the USGA, are to maintain community greenspace, provide wildlife habitat, improve air quality, absorb and filter rain, cleanse runoff water, enhance human health and protect against erosion. Trees are a part of providing those benefits within the golf course environment.

If the Course Can't Afford The Master Plan in Its Entirety

Contact a member of the ASGCA for a consultation report and include the high-focus areas of the grounds and the problematic holes on the course. Trees can be sensitively integrated onto the course using your experience and that of a professional golf course architect.

If The Club Has a Tree Inventory Only

Interview golf course architects with regional experience and emphasis in planting plans for golf courses. They should have successful track records of implementing renovation master plans, as well as good communication skills.

If There Isn't a Tree Inventory

Begin to educate the decision-making constituents about the financial and agronomic benefits of a tree inventory and master plan that address the relationship of trees and

golf. An environmentally responsible facility will begin plans to cultivate the future of its trees. Waiting until the last minute or until problems get out of control has been the standard for the industry. Plans for the future begin now.

* * * *

(Editor's Note: Tamara Horvath is a Kansas City, Mo.-based horticultural consultant and writer. Craig Schreiner is a Kansas City-based golf course architect and a 1983 GCSAA National Scholarship winner. His firm has designed courses in North America, China and the Caribbean. This article was reproduced with permission from the January 1998 issue of *Golf Course Management Magazine*.)



TARTAN PARK'S TEAM tries to negotiate a birdie putt on Elm Creek's third hole during the MGCSA Scholarship Scramble.

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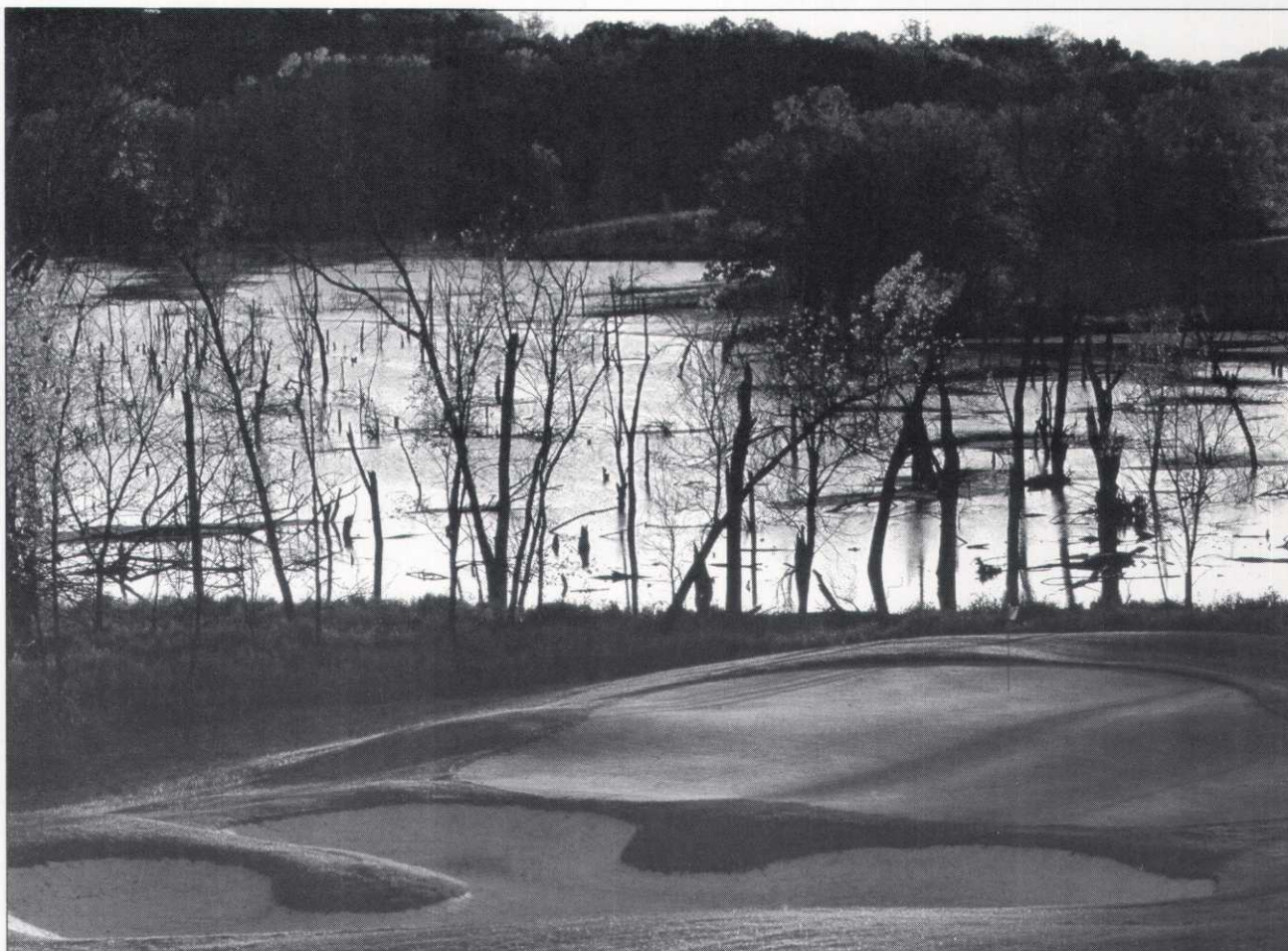


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EDITOR'S CORNER

By Steve Shumansky
Perham Lakeside Country Club



Dawg Days of Summer

I think it's safe to use that phrase now. Yes, it seems as if the season goes by so quickly. We have new staff to train in the spring and work on projects and general maintenance throughout the season. And bang, in a week or so, most of our summer staff will be going back to school leaving us with memories. Some good, some funny and some just memories. There are still many things we must do to keep our courses running as if we are fully staffed. For most of us, we're looking at aerifying greens, tees and fairways or have already started to. Then come the sayings from our members. Why do you have to tear up the greens, they were putting so nice. It doesn't seem as if they mind so much when we do tees and fairways. I wish I had an easy answer for them as to why we do it without sounding technical. And hopefully our golf pros will stand behind us in our endeavors.

Re: An Open Letter to Affiliate Members Article

I want to touch on an article from last month. "An Open Letter to Affiliate Members." I had received a few calls on this article and it's hard to try to take a side on such an issue as this. I understand this individual's frustrations. I think we all can relate to that at one time or another. However, I believe this person should have gone to the superior of the individual in question. I can also understand why the person did not sign the letter. They didn't want hard feelings. But by not signing it stirred up a lot of questions as to who was to blame and who wrote it. So, I think basically this person got their point across. Right or wrong, this was a way to possibly get all of us to communicate better. I know I'll return phone calls from here on out. I know this person didn't mean to bash all the affiliates, it was just frustration.. That doesn't make it right but it happened and I know from talking to Scott and Jeff in the office, it won't happen again. One item was, however, brought to my attention, what about a "Letter to the Editor" column? I would welcome and comments from any member as long as it is in good taste. We have a professional publication and we should all take a part in its success.

Did I Say "Normal" Summer?

Oops, looks like I was wrong, again. Or is having eight inches of rain in June and as much in the first two weeks in July normal??? Holy smokes! Baseball-sized hail, too! I'm used to running my pumps every day this time of year, but for irrigation, not for pumping rainwater off the course. Whatever happened to the nice half-inch rains we normally

get? Not the Ohhhh we had 2.35 inches last night. For me, I feel lucky having my course on sand. I know of others that aren't so lucky. But what can you do? Looks like a good year to see where drainage work is needed. (Yes, even for me on my sand-based course!)

* * * *

Congratulations to Tom and Kathy Schmidt, Moorhead CC, on the birth of their daughter Hannah Teresa Schmidt who was born on April 5th. As always, it's nice to print a birth announcement.

I hope your month goes well for all of you. See ya next month.

— Steve Shumansky
Editor



The picturesque 9th hole at Elm Creek.

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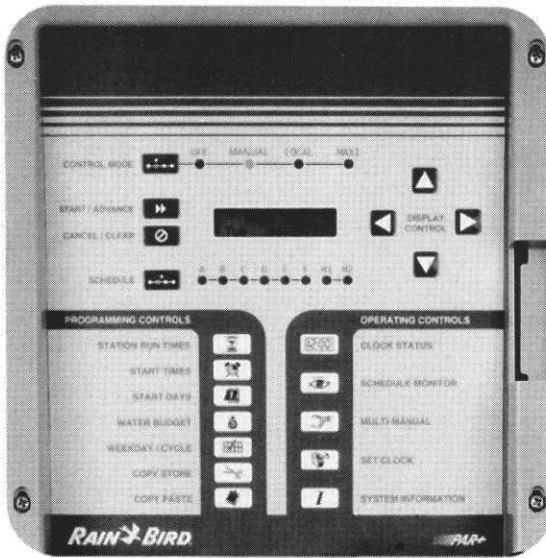
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