

# 'MY REASONS FOR TREES'

Richard Boehm is a man who loves trees.

He would love them even if he didn't need them, but as superintendent of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Military Golf Course he feels trees are not just nice to have but an absolute necessity.

So necessary that in his first year, he put out about 490 new trees. That was only more than twice as many as started with. So far this year he's put out fifty more.

The course is directly across a road from the flight line, and you know where they build airfields: on the biggest, flattest hunk of real estate they can find.

Boehm's course does have some low, rolling "hills," and there is a nice little lake between tee and green of one par three hole, but mostly it's next thing to runway flat.

Fairways going in opposite directions are often separated only by a narrow rough and out-of-bounds markers . . . or were, until Boehm started setting out his trees.

Now those trees delineate the fairways, decorate the tees and greens and do their part to make sure golfers use and hone their skills.

"There are a number of reasons  
*(continued on page 27)*



Superintendent of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Military Golf Course, Richard Boehm (foreground), checks the installation of tree fertilizer. Below: Eliminating time-consuming trimming around trees is accomplished by applying Casoron herbicide around the base. Boehm claims this practice eliminates about 90 percent of all hand mowing.



## TREES (from page 10)

for putting trees on a golf course," says Boehm. If trees are set out in the right places "... they define the hole and make a good backdrop for the hole. We try to keep nice open fairways with a few traps around the greens for the scenic value of that nice white sand. If a golfer hits down the fairway, he's got a nice easy shot ... but if he hits out in the boonies he ought to be lost out there behind a tree. There are still some open areas, but I'm putting in trees to make those more challenging holes. Still, this is an easy course for the average golfer. Even with the trees he doesn't get penalized that much."

"I just want this place to look good and play good and be a good golf course, and the only way to do it is to define the holes. You've got a fairway on one side and a fairway on the other side and what's the use of playing one way when you might as well be playing with the other group coming the opposite direction? You don't want that; you want to be in your fairway and play your hole by yourself. You don't want to share it, except with your playing partners. Never with the party playing the next fairway."

It isn't just a matter of putting out any old tree for the sake of its being a tree. Variety and placement are important.

"I like color," says Boehm, "I like to put out the red maples and flowering trees; crabapples and purple plums. We get dark greens from our pines; red pine, white pine and scotch pine. We also use mountain ash, lindens, honey locust, sycamore and maples."

Boehm's trees are not little bitty ones. The smallest are 7-8 feet high and big enough to do some good for the course right now, although, he says, "... they gave us some little ones this year, so we found places for them."

You can't just stick in a bunch of trees and forget them.

Boehm says: "Some people don't believe in fertilizing trees." He says it as if he really means some people don't care about trees; perhaps consider them a necessary evil, existing mainly to make mowing and turf care more difficult, and in an age of soaring labor costs, more time-consuming.

It isn't so.

"Maybe you can ignore an established tree. Some big old river cottonwood with a massive root

system isn't going to have any trouble finding nourishment. But a young tree — anything less than 8-10 inches in diameter — needs food."

The old, established methods of fertilizing trees take time. You can go out with an auger and bore holes and pour in bulk fertilizer. It works, but you need the auger, a crew to run it and it's time-consuming. If you broadcast fertilizer around the tree — enough to do any good — you either make the grass grow so much faster than surrounding grass that it's unsightly, or you put down too much and burn the grass. There was no easy way.

Now there is, says Boehm. "We use Jobe's Tree Spikes. As far as I know they're the only people making fertilizer in this form."

The spikes are fertilizer compressed into a stick with one end slightly pointed and a plastic cap on the other. "You take a box of spikes, a hammer and pound one spike into the ground for each inch of tree diameter. That's all it takes. Last year, after we put in all those new trees, I sent a three man crew out to fertilize and they were done in a day and a half. Seven hundred trees. I couldn't believe they'd done them all so fast, so I checked. They had," said Boehm.

"You can see the difference it makes. There are some places on the edge of the course where similar trees were put in on the other side of the road. Ours are greener."

What about time consuming close-trimming around trees? Its been all but eliminated. "We use Casoron, a granular type product which completely kills all vegetation but doesn't hurt the tree. You put it around in the winter, when the tree is dormant, using a little spreader of any type. In the spring we put wood chips around the trees so the dead grass won't look unsightly. We also use this treatment around out-of-bounds markers and buildings. You can mow right around them with a rough mower. It eliminates about 90% of all hand mowing. you still have to do some, but you can't imagine how much it saves.

"Of course any time you put out that many new trees, you're going to have some problems. That man out there on a seven-gang mower has to learn where each of those trees is, and how to make his cut so he gets close enough, but misses the tree.

Sometimes the man on the mower runs over a tree. When that happens, I send him back out with a can of tree paint, have him paint it up and stake it, and let him know he'd better not do it again. They learn fast. That's another reason for big trees — because they're easier to miss — or should be."

Boehm doesn't neglect turf care, of course. He has established regular programs of soil testing, so he can give each part of his course exactly what it needs, and aerification, to relieve the compaction caused by the muckey, clayey soil and the very heavy use of the course.

## EDITORIAL (from page 6)

This simply means that segmented lobbying — such as being done now by each little group — will never be wholly satisfying in terms of favorable legislation and/or rulings by EPA, OSHA, USDA, etc.

For a time we had hopes that this could be accomplished via a "Green Industry Council" in which every organized group — associations, societies, foundations and whatever — might serve as a communications and lobbying medium whereby forces necessary to achieve needed action could be raised. Now, we are not so sure. There appears insufficient interest to develop the type of council body which could conceivably coordinate the efforts of the segmented Green Industry. Funding is a further problem. We as a magazine are open to suggestion.



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