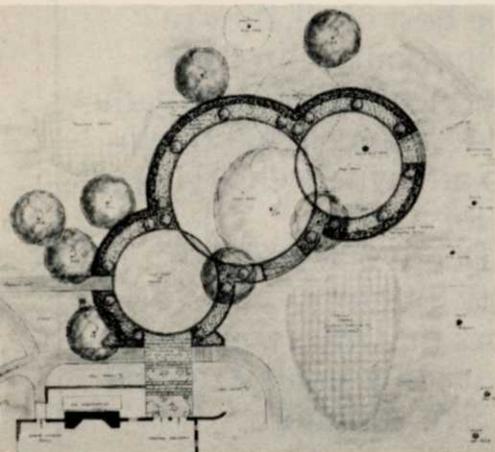


GARDENS FOR GOLF COURSES: SUPERINTENDENTS MUST MANAGE MORE THAN ACRES OF TURF

by R.P. KORBOBO and JEANNE A. FRENCH



Plan for Winner's Circle garden with room for expansion. (Essex County Country Club, W. Orange, NJ)

The golf course superintendent is most frequently thought of as the turf or "greens" keeper of a golf course. Too often forgotten are his additional responsibilities of clubhouse and maintenance building areas, and the thousands of non-turf plants under his care.

We are now observing that country clubs are adding landscaped gardens for golf and non-golf functions throughout the course. These gardens serve both aesthetic purposes.

Garden for large groups

The winner's circle design (on left) is an expandable/retractable garden which can adjust to the size of a particular group. The circle

closest to the clubhouse could easily hold 75 to 100 stand ups or about 30 to 40 sit downs. If the stand ups approached 200 in number, then the large circle could be utilized. For larger groups, all three circles would become involved.

The low hedge around the outside of the circles would be a suggested enclosure, as well as a subtle barrier from the golf course traffic in that area. The pathway into the far circle would be used by golfers coming off the 18th green during a tournament. The score board would be nearby and the tournament champions would be feted in the center "Winner's Circle".

During the days when no large function is planned, the area overlooking the 18th green has chairs and tables for the members who want to sit outside and watch the activity on the course.

When the garden is free of all people, then its strong circular design and flowers in fall color will be a sight to behold from the elevated cocktail gallery. Walking through or viewing any well designed garden definitely lifts our spirits.

Gardens for viewing from clubhouse

Some garden areas are designed for viewing only, mainly from the



The first impression of the course is made at the first tee. This garden at Forsgate Country Club, Jamesburg, NJ, has a formal look and is known as the Tee Garden.

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Low maintenance natural areas, left, serve as garden features at New Canaan Country Club. A **natural** setting for the half way house, right, at Mountain Ridge Country Club, is visible from a number of holes.

dining rooms. Enjoying a meal while viewing an elegant garden scene certainly has a calming effect and adds to the atmosphere of the dining room. Also a beautiful view encourages members to "come again".

One club wanted to do something for its 50th anniversary celebration. There was an area between the 1st tee, the practice green, and the clubhouse that needed landscape attention. After much transplanting and some discarding of unsuitable plants, the entire area was transformed into an attractive curvilinear flower garden. It was mainly to be viewed from the dining room. During their 50th year celebration (1972), all flowers and some foliage plants were as close to gold as we could get them, which meant mostly yellows and oranges. It is now referred to as the "50 year garden" and other colors are used. It is a tremendous addition to that particular clubhouse and everyone delights in its colorful display.

Since the dinner hours often occur after dark, the same garden can be transformed into a beautiful night scene with the addition of tasteful night lighting. The lighting effects can be altered throughout the year to highlight the changes of seasons. As different plants come into bloom or when foliage changes color, they can be uplighted with movable spotlights. This kind of garden can be considered as part of the decoration of the dining room, and should have eye appeal all

months of the year.

Entrance gardens

The first impression of an entrance to any building, particularly a country club, is tremendously helped by a colorful, well maintained area of flowers, which provides an unspoken welcome to the visitor.

In one particular entrance plan, the element of flower color is provided for three seasons of the year. The spring display is a combination of Magnolia blossoms and bulbs on either side of the entrance walk. The summer bloom is concentrated in the two planting beds with massed red Geraniums which continue to bloom through the summer and into the fall. If late fall color is desired, Chrysanthemums are used.

When freezing weather comes, an attractive mulch is used to cover the soil, and the dwarf Boxwood edging provides a neat effect through the winter.

The 1st tee

There are areas directly involved with the golf course which sometimes lend themselves to the development of a garden. One of these areas can occur at the 1st tee. In this case, the primary object is to set the mood of the club, and a necessary prerequisite is available space for this project. Page 42 shows a reclaimed area which has now been dubbed the "Tee Garden". This was, for many years, an unattractive, unused championship 1st tee. It was nothing more than an un-

even mound of earth, flattened at the top, with mud around the lower edges where it met with an uneven edge of blacktop. Now it can be described as one of the most attractive golf tees in the area. No one who visits this golf course will forget the picture of the first tee if they are there during the peak of the flowering season. Even in the dormant season, it has enough architecture and evergreen plants built into the design so that it does not lose its basic character, but remains an attractive area year-round.

Very often we find on certain golf courses, especially those on hilly terrain, some elevated tees from a foot to sometimes 6 or 7 feet above the surrounding area. This gives a great opportunity for retaining walls, either made of stone or landscape timbers, to get rid of the problem of trying to maintain turf on an extremely steep slope. Therefore, when these retaining walls are designed you can also design into them the so-called planters. The distinct advantage of this is that by having an area of flowers between the edge of the tee and the retaining wall, there would be very little danger of someone absent-mindedly taking a step or two backwards toward the edge and falling off. Undoubtedly, this has happened in some places since some tees that we have seen do present this hazard. So, raised tees would be another place to add color and interest through use of flowers, shrubs, hedges, etc. These would not precisely fall in the category of

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a garden, as such, but it could be called a "garden spot".

The halfway house

Since the halfway house is a place where the golfer stops and spends a few minutes eating and resting, an attractive and well maintained area is most appreciated by members. A small area of flowers to add color and trees for shade are the requisites for a good halfway house landscape.

Also, the halfway house is usually visible from several or more holes on the course. While its main purpose is to be functional, it should also manage to blend in with the natural beauty of the golf course and not be an eyesore.

In the rough

Occasionally, we see beautiful, natural, wild flower displays in the rough often along a stream. (Page 44) When this occurs, we consider it a bonus from nature, and encourage it with judicious additions of indigenous wild flowers.

In most parts of the country where ericaceous plants thrive (rhododendrons, azaleas, laurel, etc.) we frequently find areas in the deep rough where the golfers can see into it but where the ball would never come into play. Such areas would be ideal locations for what we refer to as ericaceous plantings. This would be large numbers of rhododendrons, laurel, azaleas, blueberries, dogwoods, and other acid-loving plants that can manage to flourish and bloom in the shade of trees. Frequently, such sites are on hilly, or gravelly soil. In this case, we recommend they plant the smallest possible plants, even down to as small as 3 to 4 inches in height. We suggest that they plant two to three times as many plants as are really needed. Very often this type of planting is far from the source of water so many will die of drought. Others will be killed by competition of weed and tree roots. Therefore, those that survive will appear to be native plants placed there by Mother Nature herself.

Everyone is struck by the beauty of the Augusta National Golf Course, scene of the Master's tournament. This is primarily because it was cut out of an ornamental plant nursery at one time and the dogwoods and the ericaceous plants left behind put on fantastic displays of beauty at the time of that tournament. There is no reason in this world why more golf courses cannot have similar and even more colorful displays. We are not talking about our entire golf course being covered with flowering plants. We are, however, visualizing certain key areas being designed to specifically give dramatic displays at various areas around the course. Such plantings cannot be considered as a functional garden to be used for parties—but they certainly can be considered as planned for beauty.

So may we suggest that when considering garden areas, golf courses as well as the Club House grounds be given more attention than they have in the past. **WTT**



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