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# ARBORWISE, LTD.

Urban Foresters • Consulting Arborists • Tree Preservation Specialists • Horticultural Forensic Investigators

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## The Golf Course is an Urban Forest

Nowhere in horticulture do trees hold more value than on a golf course. Assumed during construction and planted throughout the life of the club, trees on the golf course provide beauty and benefits just as they do in other landscapes. Trees on a golf course produce one additional benefit as well: they are “working” features - trees control play. However, trees differ from all other play features in that they control shot path as well as limiting the landing zone; large trees dominate play philosophy in course design and management, in club selection and in shot implementation by each player. Trees uniquely affect and alter the game: strategically and practically.

Of the five features used to control play on the golf course - water, sand, mounds, rough and trees - only trees are “dynamic”: they are guaranteed to grow in size and to change over time. The reality of change is a functional and budgetary consideration.

The “turf - tree” interface is combative. When young, trees are compromised by strong, thick turf. The grass takes the majority of water and applied nutrients and aggressive turf management always impacts the trees’ growth and longevity. The trees live in lower vigor and are far more susceptible to disease and insect attack. Planting, nurturing and managing trees on the golf course takes the highest level of science and continual focus.

As trees mature, their subsurface wood (roots) displaces soil needed by turf, their roots remove the critical moisture needed for a high intensity play surface and the shade reduces solar intensity and photo-period for surrounding turf. As a course matures, the trees take a more dominate role and usually impact greens, tees and fairways negatively. Whether a grove of native trees is assumed at the original construction of the course, or a grouping of new specimens has been recently planted, the trees WILL interact with each other, influence each other and make a micro-environment, which will progressively affect the turf.

Obviously, management success of a golf course first accounts for the balance of the tree-turf interface and its ever-changing paradigm: the trees’ needs, contributions and character verses the turf (which golf requires and demands). It also recognizes the intensive turf management is anti-tree and accommodates its while creating playing surfaces.

In a native woodland, nature always picks the right plant for the right site - over time. Site managers often chose trees based on price and they plant without consideration to soils and the tree’s generational character. This results in trees with many problems... and shortened lives. Critical to the course’s “forest” is plant diversity, species and cultivar selection, site preparation, and action plans for on-going arbor-care.

ARBORWISE, LTD. has more experience in working with golf course urban forestry situations than any other firm. As arborists, we understand the interplay of tree physiology, pathology and the site dynamics. As Urban Foresters, we calculate the site's needs, the desires and goals of management to have trees located throughout the course, and the risks of growing trees in artificial sites.

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*“at the root of modern arboriculture”*