

## June in January



Figure 1.

by Stanley J. Zontek, Eastern Agronomist, USGA Green Section

When we speak of course maintenance, mowing, aerations and topdressings principally come to mind. Oftentimes, with all this work to be done, another facet of course maintenance is overlooked. This is course landscaping and beautification. Basically, it involves turning an ugly, difficult-to-maintain area into an accent point of beauty, especially when the foliage is in bloom. Figure 1 is an example of this. In this case the natural and low-growing mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) has been planted on a steep bank looking out from a tee. It provides green color year-around and beautiful flowers in the spring. Once established, the heavy leaf cover chokes out competing weeds and small trees, leaving a picturesque minimum maintenance area.

An increasingly important use of landscape plantings is in traffic control. A strategic planting or flower bed can direct foot and cart traffic away from an important turf area. Figure 2 shows how a split rail fence with various spring and summer flowering shrubs planted along it has directed potentially damaging traffic from going over the tee to the cart path on the right. The resulting planting has improved the appearance of the area and hopefully relieved the tee from some needless wear and tear.

Figure 3 is another example of how a

planting can easily and beautifully direct the flow of traffic. Being strategically located at the fork of the cart path, the planting tends to keep the traffic on the roadway by eliminating the natural tendency of riders to strike out on their own. Such a planting has now made the area good looking and functional.

A little landscape planning can also clear up an eyesore and traffic problem. Previously the area in Figure 4 was a scarred mud spot worn by heavy foot traffic through a confined area. The installation of the fountain, crushed stone, curbing and some sod transformed the spot into a neat, smart-looking area that adds to the manicured look of the clubhouse grounds.

Perhaps the single most important purpose of course beautification is being overlooked. That is, the improvement in the appearance of the golf course. Flowers and flowering shrubs add color, beauty and charm. What better tonic is there in the spring than the sight of flowers in bloom after coming out of a bleak winter. Or, the sight of bright colorful flowers around the clubhouse when members and guests arrive. What better start to a round of golf than a path lined with flowers leading to the first tee (Figure 5). Out on the course, what better way to dress up a bridge crossing than with a flower and shrub planting. At the end of the round, colorful flowers add a sense of



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

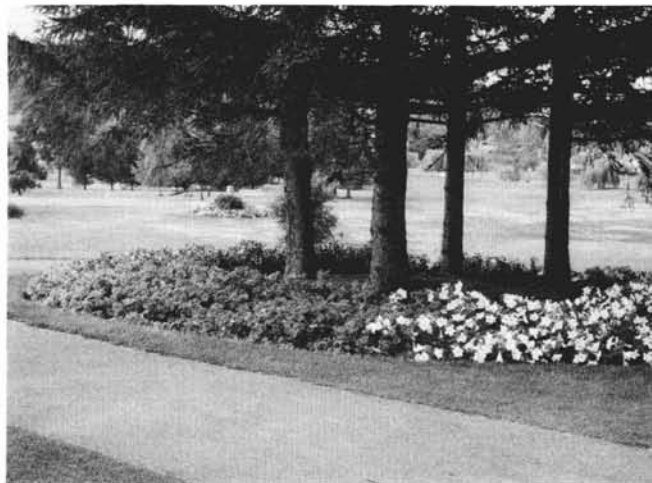


Figure 5

well-being to cheer the winners and lift the spirits of the losers. Flowers and landscaping can accomplish much.

One might say, "Well, I don't know very much about flowers and plantings. I'm an expert on growing grass, not flowers." But there are many experts available for help and service. These are your local nurserymen. Since *their* job is knowing what flowers look and do best under each circumstance, they would be most capable to help you set up a flower and planting program. In most instances the nurserymen have crews that do the actual planting. This saves labor, and in addition when the nurserymen do the work, the plants are usually guaranteed. County agents are also an excellent source of information on questions in horticulture.

The cost of a planting program can be surprisingly low. When bought in quantity, the cost per plant goes down rather sharply. This is especially true when annuals are used. In the case of flower bulbs, the relatively high initial

cost is offset by the fact that once planted, only a small amount of replacement bulbs are needed each year. Shrubs once purchased and planted last for many years providing good looks with minimal upkeep.

In conclusion, many things can be accomplished by a good course landscaping and beautification program. The membership especially the ladies, like and appreciate this type of work. Also, ugly, high maintenance eyesores can be transformed into colorful, picturesque accent points that add to the aesthetics of the course instead of detracting from it. Traffic patterns can more readily be controlled with maximum eye appeal. And finally, the course as a whole benefits. Flowers and ornamental plantings add immeasurably to the beauty and aesthetics of the golf course. It is one of the things that adds to the manicured appearance of the course that all superintendents desire. Start planning now, spring is just around the corner.



# A TURF TIP FROM QUINTON:



Quinton Johnson, Superintendent at Brookhaven Country Club, Dallas, Texas believes top-dressing is important but the labor to shovel it from trailers or trucks into power spreaders is time consuming and costly. And so a power dump trailer was built in his maintenance shop. With the use of a front-end loader and two power spreaders, eighteen 5,500 square foot greens can be top-dressed with half the labor costs of previous methods. "It's been a great labor saver," Quinton reports.

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