

Drought Impacts On Golf Courses Trees In The Southwest

By Pat Gross, regional director, West Region

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Tree issues have been a frequent topic of discussion during recent Course Consulting Service visits to golf courses in California. While much attention has been given to the impact of the drought on turf conditions, it has also been interesting to note how trees have suffered as a result of the drought.

A common strategy to conserve water this year has been to reduce or eliminate irrigation in the rough, which impacts the growth and vigor of both turf and trees. Typical stress symptoms on trees have included browning and discoloration



Trees have been negatively affected as many golf courses have eliminated irrigation in the rough in an effort to conserve water



An effective strategy for preserving key tree specimens is to water deeply around the dripline with a water injection probe, as was done this year at Birnam Wood Golf Club

of leaves, premature leaf/needle drop and, in some cases, complete death of a tree. Stressed trees also have been more susceptible to insect and disease infestations.

To help trees survive the drought, Birnam Wood Golf Club in Montecito, Calif. identified the key tree specimens that were essential to the strategy and playability of the golf course. They then implemented a program to inject water deep into the soil around the drip line. A water injection probe was inserted approximately 1 foot deep at 3- to 4-foot

intervals and water was injected for 3 to 5 minutes. The water-injection program has done a good job of putting water precisely where it is needed and eliminating evaporative water loss from surface irrigation. The plan is to continue the deep-watering program monthly until the winter hopefully brings some much needed rainfall.

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