

Why are so many trees dying at Hidden Valley?

The most asked question by golfers as trees seem to be in poor health or are dying in just about every section of our golf course obviously causing great concern for all. Recently, (August 2017) we brought in a Pennsylvania State Tree Inspector to examine all trees on the property. This in the hope of learning why some are healthy and some are not. Also, to find out if we can save some of the trees that are alive but not looking the best.

The following conclusions were made after the visitation:

Deciduous Trees (Leaf bearing Trees)

*Diseases Found

Maple Trees

*Verticillium wilt, possible some borers and heart rot

Honey Locust Trees

*Spider mite damage causing defoliation (No spray needed the foliage will come back)

Ash Trees

*Emerald Ash Borer (Nothing we can do now) This is very populated in our region

*There are at least 20 more mature Ash trees on the golf course that have all been affected by this borer that will need to be cut down eventually as they are going to die unfortunately!

Evergreens (Needle bearing Trees)

*Diseases Found

Douglas Fir Trees

*Many have Swiss Needle Cast (Our trees are too mature and it would not be cost effective to spray)

Blue Spruce Trees

*Same as the Douglas Fir Above

The inspector told us that none of the trees examined on our property are declining from practices we are currently doing on the golf course. Also, that the trees we are having problems with are the same varieties seen repeatedly on other inspections in this area showing the same decline. There just is NO simple cost-effective solution to save them right now unfortunately.

Where do we go from here?

As you know, the cost to take down one large tree let alone 25 + takes time to plan and of course funds that were not budgeted. Our Insurance Company strictly prohibits anyone other than bonded, trained professionals do this type of work. You probably wonder if we will ever cut that Damn dead tree down you keep hitting or looking at endlessly. We are well aware it needs to come down, AND IT WILL EVENTUALLY! There is more planning behind the scenes that goes on before these trees are removed.

1. If the tree is “In play” or more importantly a danger of causing injury by a falling limb or otherwise.
2. Weather Conditions
Trees cannot be cut on the golf course unless it is dry as the heavy equipment used Alone causes enough turf damage.
3. Scheduling of our Tree Service KLEAN KUT from Pine Grove to work on “our schedule” as to not interrupt golfers is not always easy. They are the best around and ONLY service we work with.
4. All tree stumps are either dug out or ground up with our machine. We then add soil and plant grass seed over the area.

CONCLUSION

There is a plethora of replacement trees which do very well in our area according to the State Inspector. We will be looking at the list and as time permits doing some replanting especially in areas where safety or directional flow warrants.

Deciduous Trees:

Oak, Red Maple, Beech, Tulip Tree, Linden, Sweet Gum, Willow Tree (Wet Soil)

Evergreen Trees:

Norway Spruce, Concolor Fir, Eastern White Pine