

4B *Fairway* *A Dominant Landscape Component*

In an American Society of Golf Course Architects interview, Thomas Fazio, American course designer, was asked the question, “What contribution has America given to golf course design?” 4B discusses the worship of a color.

Fazio’s answer was not about grand course designs in America, but more about the obsession with the color green: *“If we could accept golf in the color brown and program in our minds that brown is good we could do things differently in design and maintenance. . .less water and fertilizer. Unfortunately, Americans go to Scotland and other arid climates. . .and see rough-hewn courses, brown and sparse and they talk about how great it is. Then they go back to their home courses and if they see brown spots they think the superintendent is not doing his job.”* Fazio’s answer was not as expected. It was an indictment of present-day course maintenance practices, traditional tastes, and the power that beauty has over decision makers that drive such practices.

Of all components and artistic features of a golf course landscape the most determinant of a pleasurable visual experience is not form or pattern but color. Green is only one color; there are other shades of green grasses and other colors upon which the ball sits up nicely and is environmentally well adapted. Color is a feature of landscape components but when a color is devised to achieve a certain look at the expense of other attributes, the component’s qualities are compromised.

Attractive, mixed-color fairways are depicted in Wild Dunes, No.18, also Marshside Sea Island, No. 4, Arizona No. 3 and Bandon Dunes No. 13 paintings shown on the following pages. Many depictions of fairways in this chapter with original contours that beautifully ebb and flow over mixed-colored grasses have succumbed to landscape effect and the obsessive desire for the color green. *“Ah, good taste! What a dreadful thing. Taste is the enemy of creativeness.”* (B1)

Wild Dunes GC, No. 18 **Isle of Palms, SC**

The scene from behind the 18th green of Wild Dunes, right, is fascinating. Look at the undulations—one cannot miss them. The undulations were nature’s. They were carefully accommodated for in the landscape, extending from the dunes through fairways into roughs and margins with fidelity to nature.

The undulations are in harmony with the past, a prized feature of early courses that resulted in variety of play from assorted hanging lies. The splash of uncontrived fairway colors— tan, brown, and yellow—are visually pleasing, adding to the aesthetic interest of the scene. Also in view of attractive multi-color fairways and past plant research, there is sufficient evidence to state that pure green fairways are a landscape effect.





David La Verne '90

Sea Island GC, Marshside, No. 4
St. Simons Island, GA

The Marshside, Sea Island hole No. 4 is attractive due to its fairway colors that change with the time of day. Also, reflections upon the water and the transition of fairway to water at the stream's edge are a beautiful gift of nature undisturbed by man.

The mixed, colored fairway grasses depicted in this scene are more pleasing, especially in this scene, because the warm colors yellow, tan, and orange are more attractive than shades of cooler green colors.

The destiny of fairway grasses will eventually become more of the Wild Dunes No.18 and Marshside No. 4 looks with mixed-color grasses that are more environmentally friendly, reduce costs, and add aesthetic interest to a scene.

Appreciation for fairway grasses consisting of a variety of colors is not unique. The British have been playing on fairways with this look for centuries.



