

Going Green - Eco-Friendly Golf Courses | Womens Golf Center

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Golf courses can pose a potential threat to the environment through their heavy pesticide and chemical use. Many facilities are working to produce environmentally sustainable management projects. These projects are designed to protect the environment while providing positive contributions to wildlife habitats. Others strive for certification from the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Eco-friendly golf courses are on the rise. The following is a list of some of the most recognized eco-friendly golf courses.

Vineyard Golf Club opened in 2002 and is located in Edgartown, MA. The course was required to make the maintenance operation completely organic. In fact, Vineyard Golf Club is the only course in the U.S. truly organic. Vineyard replaced traditional pesticides with bio-stimulants and composted fertilizers that help protect the island's single source aquifer.

Located in Scotland, Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club returns you to the roots of golf in a completely natural setting. The course was built on a preserved area by Scottish Natural Heritage. Machrihanish Dunes was designed around the contour of the land. Changes to the terrain were minimal while no plants were imported into the design. Sheep are used to keep the greens and land trimmed as they eat. Pesticides, chemicals, artificial irrigation systems and heavy machinery are all prohibited on the course.

Harding Park Golf Course, located in San Francisco, CA is becoming a leader in environmental practices. Instead of using harmful chemicals, the Superintendent uses microbes to eliminate fungus and soap to eliminate weeds. They hand pick unwanted wild flowers and flush out moles with hoses. Harding Park has significantly reduced pesticides and the negative impact on the environment.

Mirimichi Golf Course is owned by musician Justin Timberlake. Mirimichi, a world class golf course, is maintained with state of the art environmentally friendly practices. It is the first LEED certified golf course in the U.S. and the only course in the U.S. to receive the Audubon International's Classic Sanctuary certification. The course features irrigation systems to maximize the use of rainwater and electric golf carts powered by solar panels. They continue to receive awards for their innovative environmental practices.

Saucon Valley is private country club located in Bethlehem, PA. They recently hosted the US Women's Open in 2009. The facility boasts three championship courses and a six hole beginner course. In 2008 they were named Environmental Leaders in Golf in the categories of National Private and Overall Winner. The Saucon Valley members formed the Saucon Sanctuary Committee, which oversees all the environmental initiatives. They recently restored a bank of a creek that runs through the property. All water that leaves the property is cleaner than when it entered. In addition, they have a GPS mapping of soil samples for prescription application of fertilizer. This saves the club \$15,000 a year and hundreds of pounds of chemicals.

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