

(Experimental Green continued)

tedious. I tightened my belt to the last notch and dug in. Within six weeks the irrigation system, special soil mixes, and remainder of the sod were installed. A tremendous amount of labor on my part, Dr. Kane, and the volunteers got the green ready to seed right on schedule. I don't know how much I can thank everyone.

We seeded the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the green on August 29th. The last $\frac{1}{4}$ of the green contains the variety trials. We were delayed a couple of weeks in seeding because Randy was waiting for specific varieties to come in from Oregon.

Two weeks later my chest heaved with pride just as it did each time when one of my children were born. Throughout all the trials, tribulations, heartache and worry; just as when a child is born, the adventure begins.

Little Prairie on the Golf Course

by Dan Dinelli, North Shore C.C.

Illinois, *The prairie state; The Fighting Illini*. These are metaphors that can be misleading. Yes, a vast amount of Illinois was prairie at one time. Now nearly all of the 22 million acres of prairie originally found in Illinois has long been overtaken by corn and soybeans. A remnant of about 2,300 acres exist today. The Illinois, one of the few Indian tribes once found in Illinois, in fact were passive people, avoiding conflicts when possible. Settlers changed a lot in a short 200 years. Illinois is second to Iowa, having the fewest acres of native vegetation in the United States.

Why should we concern ourselves with this? Each of us will have our own perspective on the issue. However, some facts should not be ignored. The Prairie ecosystem is a highly diverse web of life including many plants, insects, birds and reptiles. This diverse system is what created the fertile top soil that has made Illinois an agricultural giant.

Ten thousand years ago glaciers retreated from Northern Illinois, leaving deposits of glacial till as soil. This infertile soil was home to "pioneer plants." These plants were adapted for infertile high pH soils. As these plants grew and died back each season, they left behind organic matter, which over many years changed the composition of the top soil. Other plants moved in, continuing the process of change. In nature, systems are very dynamic, imposing constant change. Typically change occurs over a very long period of time. The exception is in a catastrophic event, as the one responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs or what man did to the prairies of Illinois. These events of great change in a short period of time are rare in nature.

Life in the prairies was not easy for man. The density of the vegetation hindered travel. The insects created an uncomfortable environment. Farming the land was difficult, until the invention of the plow. Still with these challenges at hand, settlers wrote about the beauty of prairies. The sea of grasses blew in the wind like gentle waves of the ocean. Flowering forbs added color and grace.

The heritage of the prairie touches us all. In respect and beauty of the prairie, the grounds department at NSCC adds to its existing gardens of prairie and wildflower plantings. We look forward to the establishment of the new prairie planting to the left of the 15 tee and wetland/prairie between 6 and 12 fairways.

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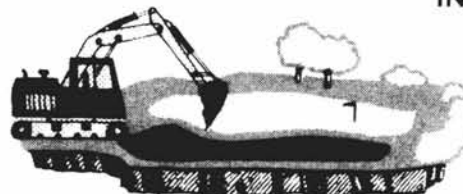
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