

Starting a Native Prairie Plant Reference Library

Tom Voigt
Extension Turfgrass Specialist
University of Illinois

Are you considering planting some native prairie plants on your course but are hesitating due to a lack of knowledge about this group of plants? In response to the many questions I receive about this topic, I have compiled a listing of my impressions of several books that can be used as the foundations for a prairie plant reference library. These books are also good starting points when trying to answer questions about native Midwestern prairie species.

• Kirt, R.R. 1989. *Prairie Plants of Northern Illinois: Identification and Ecology*; and 1995. *Prairie Plants of the Midwest: Identification and Ecology*. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing L.L.C.

Russell R. Kirt is a local; he began teaching biology at the College of DuPage in 1970 and began restoring prairies in 1974. The older book of the two, *Prairie Plants of Northern Illinois: Identification and Ecology*, includes information about some 70 plants. The newer book, *Prairie Plants of the Midwest: Identification and Ecology*, includes the original and adds approximately 40 plants to the list. Included for each plant is a description that includes a line drawing, botanical and identification features, and ecological notes. Both books are paperbacks; and if you have a choice between the two, select the newer book due to the larger number of inclusions.

• Ladd, D. 1995. *Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers*. Helena and Billings, MT: Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc.

The major attributes of *Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers* are the outstanding color photographs of more than 200 prairie plants. Along with the photo is a written description for each species that includes morphological features, their habitat/range, and other pertinent comments. The book opens with an interesting discussion of prairies and instructions on using the book as a field guide. It closes with a glossary and a directory of Midwestern tallgrass prairie sites. *Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers* is one of the newest books in my library and is destined to become heavily used in the field

due to its high-quality photos.

• Runkel, S. T., and D.M. Roosa. 1989. *Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Prairie*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.

Color photographs of more than 130 prairie plants highlight *Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Prairie*. A written description is included for each plant that traces the origins of the plants' scientific names, their habitats, and their morphological features. Within the descriptions are tidbits of interesting historical facts of how these Midwestern plants were used for food and medicine by Native Americans and pioneers. I like this publication, particularly the great photographs. Be forewarned, however,

(continued on page 26)



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My Friend Russ

John Ebel

One of the realities of life as one grows older is that you begin to lose friends. Losing a good and close friend can be very difficult, and so it was for me when my friend Russ Reed was called home November 8, 1996. I would like to tell you a little about my friend Russ.

We first became acquainted back in the '50s. As some of you know, Russ was a sales rep for George A. Davis Co. He would call on me at Biltmore C.C., and he had an enthusiasm about him that was unique. A few years passed, and we discovered that we had a mutual interest beyond the golf world—and that was “hunting.” It became the glue that bonded us together for over 30 years!

Russ had many good friends in the Midwest golf scene and even beyond; however, we had a special friendship that was nurtured by hours in a duck blind and thousands of miles on the road in pursuit of feathered quarry. You really get to know a guy when you hunt with him.

Some of you oldtimers, and even some of young oldtimers, know that Russ was dedicated to serving his customers with Herculean vigor. If you had a problem related to his products or needed service on some piece of equipment, he was on the spot with help no matter what time of day or night. Just call Russ, and he was there pronto to help however he could. For Russ it was the sooner, the better. I'm sure that if Russ had been born before 1889, he would have owned at least one-half of Oklahoma! Russ could get around—fast! Some of you older Midwest members may have ridden with Russ and know what I mean. I tried to push out the floorboards in his station wagon many times while whizzing along with him.

Don't get me wrong, Russ was an excellent, if not a daring, driver; and I believe he should have had a shot at the Indy 500.

Russ always had a big smile on his face; and when he made his business calls, he always had the news around town. To know Russ was to keep up with what was happening in Chicagoland golf. Russ had a strong personality and his own ideas about things but was always ready to hear your opinion. He was never wavering but was steadfast and lived by his word. He was up and positive about life, ready for any challenge or new adventure, kind of a spontaneous bundle of energy, always ready to lend a helping hand.

Today it's a new and different kind of world in golf and everywhere else. Instead of a Russ Reed pulling into your maintenance facility center (no more barn) and giving the news around town, you just square off with your computer and cyberspace dot-slash-dot-com, or whatever, and miss out on real live face-to-face conversation. Too bad.

For you younger superintendents, I wish you had known my friend Russ. Maybe someone like him will come along in your lifetime, but I doubt it. Russ was a special kind of guy, not complicated, but a man you would like to have along in a tough situation. How can one sum up a man's life in a few short paragraphs. One cannot.

And so it was on a cloudy, rainy Sunday morning in Des Plaines, Illinois, that I said my goodbye to my friend Russ and wished him Happy Hunting.

John C. Ebel
Retired Keeper of the Green
15111 West Domingo Lane
Sun City West, AZ 85375

Starting a Native Prairie...

(continued from page 18)

er, that the physical design of this book is poor; mine has many loose pages due to its self-destruction.

• Smith, J.R., and B.S. Smith. 1980. *The Prairie Garden*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.

The Prairie Garden does a nice job of identifying 70 of the most attractive, easily grown, and useful species for inclusion in prairie plantings. It provides line drawings, appearance and propagation information, and siting requirements for each of the prairie forbs, grasses, and sedges. It also includes a list of companion plants (may be called associated plants or associates in other references) for each of the 70 plants listed. The book concludes with a series of useful graphics and tables that include line drawings of typical root systems; lists of prairie plants and their habitats, flowering period, and color; and sources. *The Prairie Garden* is a great little paperback book with which to start your native plant reference collection.

• Voigt, J.W., and R.H. Mohlenbrock. No date listed. *Prairie Plants of Illinois*. Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Conservation.

John Voigt (no relation) and Robert Mohlenbrock have turned out some of the most useful books about Illinois flora in my library. My paperback copy of *Prairie Plants of Illinois* is well worn due to heavy use. A line drawing, botanical description, listing of uses, and range/habitat information is included for each of the more than 100 species of forbs, grasses, rushes, and sedges included in the book. A plant identification key is included. Of special interest are the maps that are found beside line drawings that identify the Illinois counties in which each plant has been found. ■