

# 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.

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## 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. ■