



A Look Back at Four Decades of a Golf "Love Affair"

By Erv Graf

Editor's Note:

PERSONALITY PROFILE is a new feature in "The Grass Roots" that takes a look at some of the interesting people in our Wisconsin golf course industry.

It is fitting that the first of this new feature is an autobiographical article by one of the finest people to ever work in our business. We are going to miss Erv Graf; we can hope, however, he continues to attend an occasional WGCSA meeting for a game with friends and conversation with his many colleagues.

On January, 1990, I retired after 40-plus years of golf-related service. This decision was not an easy one for me to make. My long time obsession for golf was deeply implanted in every aspect of my life. My job as golf course supervisor for the city of Madison was now history.

In each of our lives, we look forward to a self-satisfied plan to provide retirement status. Each case scenario is different and certainly reasons for retirement are varied. In my case, at age 61, my health, more time with my family and my love of playing golf were prime factors in my decision to retire.

I must admit, though, that after a short post-retirement period, I'm not yet convinced that I made the right decision. I can only honestly answer the many who ask me about my new life. It's still too early to tell.

At a retirement party held for me, I reflected back upon particular highlights, individuals and accomplishments that were special during my career. With your indulgence, I would like to share with you a few of these observations.

A reporter from one of the Madison newspapers called and asked about doing a "human interest" story. A question frequently asked is about a person or persons who may have influenced me the most. Although there were many who came to mind, two people did stand out.

The first was my father, Ervin Graf Sr. Dad was superintendent at Nakoma Country Club in Madison, for many years. Erv "Sr.", in fact, worked for so many years at Nakoma that they lost count at 48 years or so.

Dad got me started at an early age, both as a player and later working for him at Nakoma. I remember Dad telling me to stay in golf, in one capacity

or another, as it would be a profession that I would be proud of later in life. How true that turned out to be. Before Dad died in 1983, I was able to express my thanks to him.

The second person who helped and gave me the opportunity to go into the golf field was James G. Marshall. Mr. Marshall was park superintendent for the city of Madison for many years. He was from a family with a golf background, and therefore golf was rather special to him. After two years of Army service during the Korean conflict, Mr. Marshall offered me the job as the first superintendent at the Odana Hills course in Madison. After eight years at Odana, the job of course superintendent at the new 36-hole Yahara Hills Golf Course was intrusted to me. James G. Marshall was instrumental in the purchase and development of both of these fine city of Madison courses.

I am most thankful that I was chosen to help build and be a part of the development of these courses. Along with Park Superintendent Jim Marshall, I would like to recognize Madison park planner Art Johnson. Art is well known throughout the state of Wisconsin for
(Continued on page 23)



The pace for Erv Graf this spring is a bit slower; he had time for a picture next to the sundial which honors his father at the Nakoma Golf Club.



Memorial Sundial at Nakoma Golf Club honors Ervin H. Graf, Sr.

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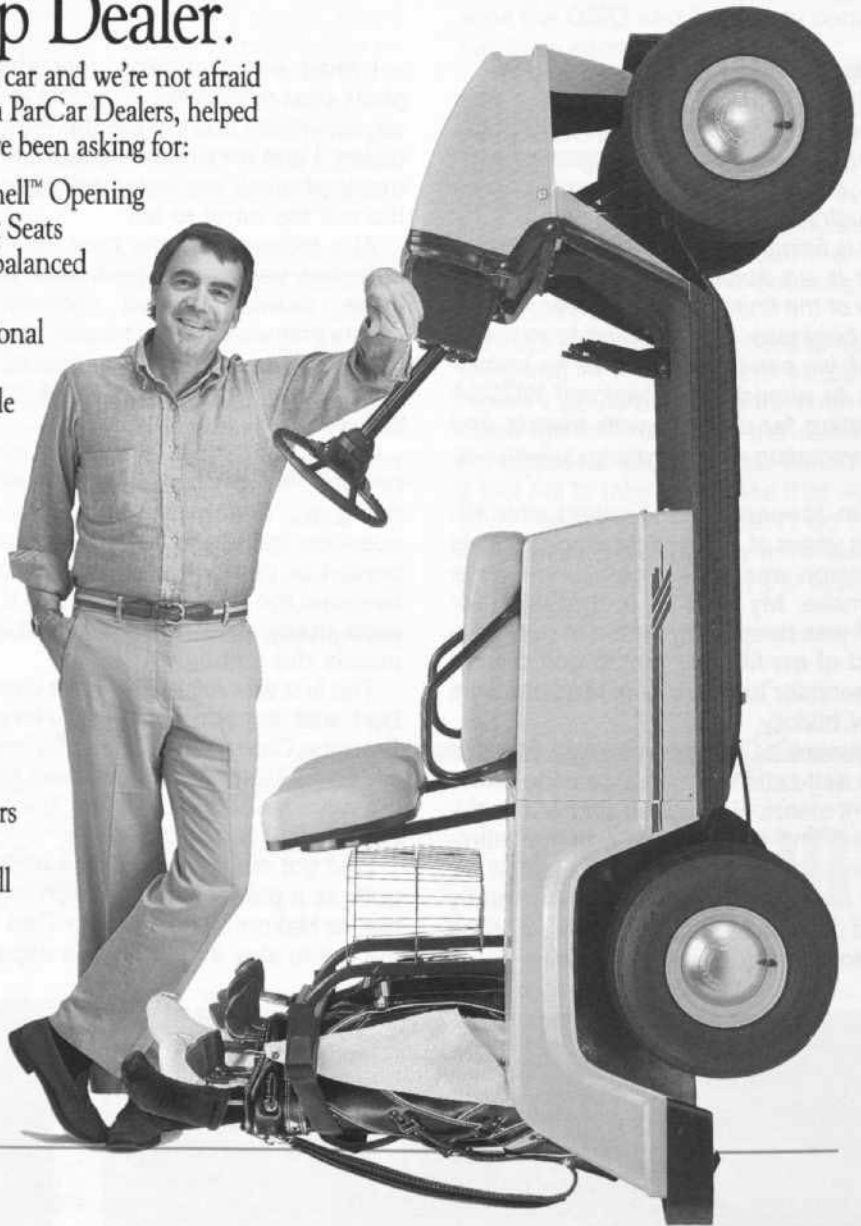
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(Continued from page 21)

his skills in golf course design. He helped and encouraged me with many projects over the years.

From 1975 to 1990 I held the position of course supervisor. This was a fitting and most rewarding climax to my career. This opportunity was provided by Mr. Dan Stapay, presently park superintendent of the city of Madison.

What highlights stand out in my years as course superintendent and course supervisor?

Being part of the planning, building and development of Odana Hills and Yahara Hills was a great experience. Both of these courses have become known as top-notch municipal courses.

Another highlight was being part of the renovation at the Monona and Glenway golf courses. Having grown up as a youngster next to the nine-hole Glenway course, I felt good about my input to provide improvements to that course.

Over a period of 35 to 40 years, there

are many highlights. The transition from walking greens mowers to the riders was a highlight. If you were mowing 37 greens, averaging 8,000 square feet, with walking mowers, would you not also welcome triplex units?!

I was asked about what I would consider the most satisfying aspects of my job over the many years. As I analyzed this question, two things stood out from the many things that were part of my love affair with golf. The first and utmost satisfaction was the many individual friendships that I had. People you work with, people you play golf with, fellow course superintendents you meet and have respect for make one's life very fulfilling. Many people with true professional skills and a willingness to help and work to make golf the great pasttime that it is, are valued colleagues. What else could be more rewarding and satisfying?

Secondly, a lot of self-satisfaction for me was knowing that I was part of building and developing golf courses

for the city of Madison. The fact that I was part of decision making that influenced golf programming for juniors, seniors and the many regular play golfers who play our courses was extremely rewarding.

It is a great feeling to know that my efforts added enjoyment to the many people who play golf.

Finally, I was asked if I could go back in time, would I like to do the same thing.

Without any reservations, I answered that I certainly would. I found that my father's early advice about golf and its rewards was so true. I had a very rewarding career indeed.

Picture yourself at the end of the day, sitting in front of your club house, or maintenance building. The sun is setting and your sprinklers are coming on. You experience that beautiful golf course setting, and are proud to know that you are part of that picture.



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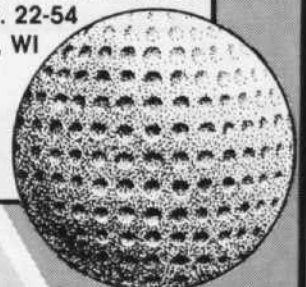
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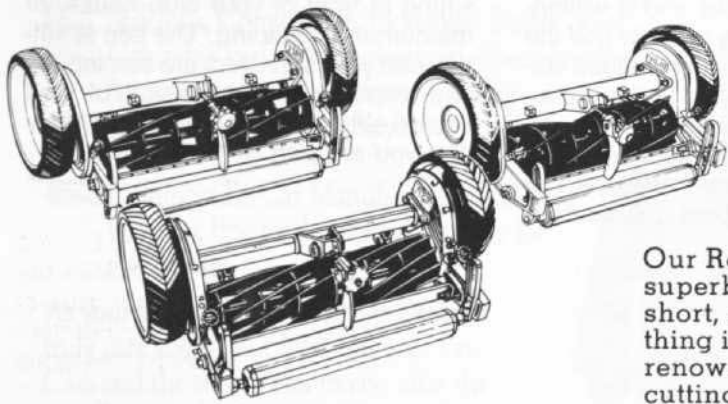


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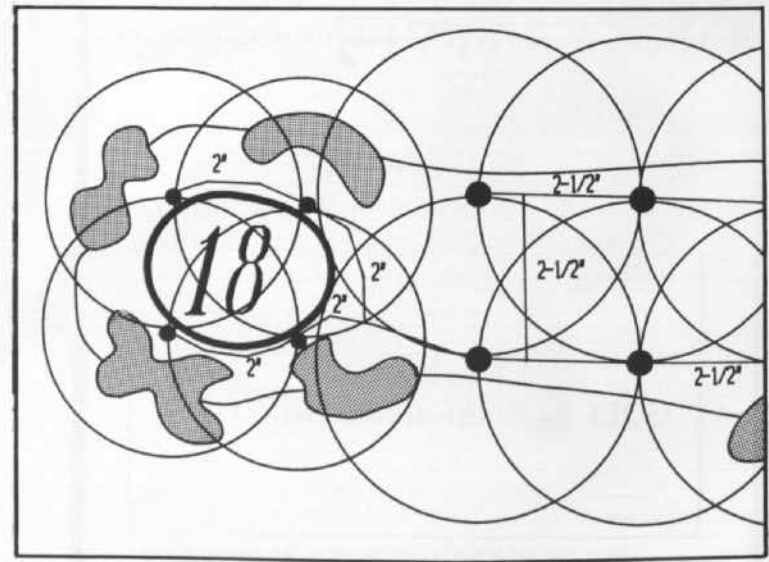


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NGF ANNOUNCED ANNUAL GOLF JOURNALISM AWARDS: "The Grass Roots" Included Again

Twelve publications have been recognized by the National Golf Foundation for overall excellence in local and regional journalism. Another 25 publications were selected to receive special merit awards.

The winners were selected from nearly 100 publications that were entered in the Harry C. Eckhoff Award Competition for 1989. Entries were judged on content, appearance and service to golf.

The Grass Roots received a special merit award.

It was a good year for Wisconsin golf publication in the NGF Eckhoff Award Competition. The WSGA received two special merit awards — one for the *Wisconsin Amateur Golfer's Newsletter* and one for the *Wisconsin State Golf Association 1989 Directory*. The newspaper *Wisconsin Golf* was awarded a special merit award also.

The letter notifying us of the award for *The Grass Roots* is presented here for you. Although the special merit award is a step lower than 1988, it is still a high honor, considering the vast number of golf publications in the country. And, of course, there is always the 1990 competition; it gives opportunity for a comeback.

In reality, an award like this is recognition for all the great writers who share, freely, their skills with us. We are better for their contributions.

The winners in the Eckhoff Award Competition, by category, are as follows:

Club Newsletter

Overall Excellence: *Moon Valley Newsletter*, Karsten Manufacturing Corp., Phoenix, Ariz.

Special Merit: *Hallbrook Country Club Newsletter*, Leawood, Kan.; *Riverchase Country Club Newsletter*, Birmingham, Ala. *The Shannopin (Country Club) Chieftain*, Pittsburgh, Pa.

State/Regional Professional Association Newsletter

Overall Excellence: *The Greenside*, Golf Course Superintendents of New Jersey.

Special Merit: *Carolinas Newsletter*, Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association; *The Grass Roots*, Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association; *Rub of the Green*, Hi-Lo (California) Golf Course Superintendents Association; *SCPGA News*, Southern California Section PGA.

State/Regional Amateur Association Newsletter

Overall Excellence: *Tee-to-Green*, South Dakota Golf Association.

Special Merit: *New York State Golf Association News*; *Wisconsin Amateur Golfer's Newsletter*, Wisconsin State Golf Association.

State/Regional Amateur Association Newspaper

Overall Excellence: *The Publinxer*, Michigan Publinx Golf Association.

State/Regional Unaffiliated Newspaper

Overall Excellence: *Golf Today*, San Carlos, Calif.

Special Merit: *Illinois Golf News*, Bensonville, Ill.; *Wisconsin Golf*, Madison, Wis.

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February 28, 1990

Mr. Monroe S. Miller
Editor
Wisc. Golf Course Superintendents Assn.
333 Bishops Way, Suite 104
Brookfield, WI 53005

Dear Mr. Miller:

We are pleased to inform you that your entry, *The Grass Roots*, has been selected for Special Merit in the State/Regional Professional Association Newsletter category of the 1989 Harry C. Eckhoff Award competition for excellence in golf journalism.

This year, the competition attracted nearly 100 entries in 12 categories. As in previous years, the caliber of entries continues to be excellent, indicating a continuing high standard in golf journalism on the local and regional levels.

We have enclosed a copy of the news release detailing all the 1989 Eckhoff Award winners. We are preparing your certificate and it will be forwarded to you in about 30 days, along with an Eckhoff Award logo for use in your publication.

Congratulations on your selection, and best wishes for continued success in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Kit Bradshaw
Manager of Media Relations

KB:kw
Enclosure

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Club Magazine

Overall Excellence: *American Golf*, American Golf Corp., Santa Monica, Calif.

Special Merit: *Club News and Divots*, Wilshire Country Club, Los Angeles, Calif.

State/Regional Professional Association Magazine

Overall Excellence: *Northern Texas Professional Golfer Annual*, Northern Texas PGA.

Special Merit: *New England Section PGA Yearbook 1989; Through the Green*, Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association.

State/Regional Amateur Association Magazine

Overall Excellence: *Golf Georgia*, Georgia State Golf Association.

Special Merit: *Amputee Golfer*, National Amputee Golf Association; *Arizona Golf Journal*, Arizona Golf Association; *FORE Magazine*, Southern California Golf Association.

State/Regional Unaffiliated Magazine

Overall Excellence: *Southern Links*, Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Special Merit: *Colorado Golf Journal*, Castle Rock, Colo.; *Florida Golfer*, Naples, Fla.

State/Regional Professional Association Directories

Overall Excellence: *Gateway Golfer Annual*, Gateway PGA, Maryland Heights, Mo.

Special Merit: *1989 Michigan PGA Roster/Media Guide; Southern Ohio PGA Annual Roster*.

State/Regional Amateur Association Directories

Overall Excellence: *1989 Arizona Golf Course Directory*, Arizona Golf Association.

Special Merit: *FORE Magazine Southern California Golf Association 1989 Directory of Member Clubs; Wisconsin State Golf Association 1989 Directory*.

Tournament Programs

Overall Excellence: *The International, Edition Four*, Castle Rock, Colo.

Special Merit: *The Fred Meyer Challenge Official Souvenir Program*, Beaverton, Ore.; *1989 U.S. Women's Open Program*, Birmingham, Mich.

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Plants for Golf Course Flower Gardens

By Dr. Lois Stack
University of Maine-Orono

Editor's Note: Although most Wisconsin GCSA members who were at the 1990 GCSAA Conference in Orlando heard Lois Stack's lecture on using annual flowers, many were unable to attend the conference. Her recommendations below are presented here for those who stayed home.

Ask anyone who did listen to Lois' presentation and they'll tell you she packed a tremendous amount of information into a very limited amount of time. She did an excellent job.

Keep the following recommendations on file; they'll serve you in future years, too.

| Botanical name ¹ | Common name | Cultivars — height, color |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Tall annuals (over 30" tall) | | |
| <i>Canna x generalis</i> | Canna | Many cvs — 36-48", various colors |
| <i>Cleome hasslerana</i> | Spider Flower | 'Helen Campbell' — 48", white 'Rose Queen' — 48" tall, rose pink |
| <i>Tagetes erecta</i> | African Marigold | 'Gold Coin' series — 36", golds, yellows |
| ² <i>Zinnia elegans</i> | Zinnia | 'State Fair' — 36", mixed 'Ruffles' series — 30", various |
| Medium-height annuals (12-24" tall) | | |
| <i>Achillea millefolium</i> | "Yarrow" | ³ 'Summer Pastels' — 24", pastels |
| <i>Coreopsis hybrid</i> | "Coreopsis" | ³ 'Early Sunrise' — 18", gold |
| ⁵ <i>Impatiens wallerana</i> | "Impatiens" | 'Super Elfin' series — 10", various |
| ⁴ <i>Nicotiana glauca</i> | "Flowering Tobacco" | 'Nicki' series — 24", red, pink, white |
| <i>Ocimum basilicum</i> | "Sweet Basil" | 'Purple Ruffles' — 20", dark purple lvs. |
| <i>Pelargonium x hortorum</i> | "Seed Geranium" | 'Orbit' series — 18", various 'Ringo' series — 18", various |
| <i>Tagetes erecta</i> | "African Marigold" | 'Inca' series — 18", golds, yellows |
| Low-growing annuals (under 12" tall) | | |
| ⁴ <i>Begonia x semperflorens-culorum</i> | "Wax Begonia" | Many cvs. — 8-12", pinks, white |
| <i>Catharanthus roseus</i> | "Annual Vinca" | 'Little' series — 10", pinks, white |
| <i>Chrysanthemum x superbum</i> | "Shasta Daisy" | ³ 'Snow Lady' — 10", white |
| ⁴ <i>Lobularia maritima</i> | "Sweet Alyssum" | 'Wonderland' series — 4", pinks, white |
| <i>Sarvitalia procumbens</i> | "Creeping Zinnia" | 'Mandarin Orange' — 10", orange |
| <i>Senecio cineraria</i> | "Dusty Miller" | 'Silver Lace' — 8", lacy silver lvs. |
| <i>Tagetes patula</i> | "French Marigold" | 'Boy' series — 8", golds, yellows |
| Perennials that add to annual gardens | | |
| ⁵ <i>Astilbe x arendsii</i> | "Astilbe" | 'Deutschland' — 24", white (July) 'Red Sentinel' — 24", red (July) |
| <i>Baptisia australis</i> | "Blue False Indigo" | none — 48", blue flowers (May-June) |
| ⁵ <i>Dicentra eximia</i> | "Fringed Bleedingheart" | 'Luxuriant' — 16", red (all summer) 'Zestful' — 12", pink (all summer) |
| <i>Iris sibirica</i> | "Siberian Iris" | Many cvs. — 24-48", blues, violets, white (June) |
| <i>Helenium autumnale</i> | "Helen's-flower" | 'Butterpat' — 36", yellow (Sept.-frost) |
| ⁴ <i>Hemerocallis hybrids</i> | "Daylily" | Many cvs. — 12-48", yellows, oranges (June-Aug.) |
| ⁵ <i>Hosta hybrids</i> | "Plantain Lily" | Many cvs. — 12-48", white, blue (June-Sept.) |
| ⁴ <i>Narcissus hybrid</i> | "Daffodil" | 'King Alfred' — 18", yellow (Apr.-May) |
| <i>Sedum hybrid</i> | "Showy Stonecrop" | 'Autumn Joy' — 24", pink (Sept.-frost) |

¹ All plants listed perform best in full sun unless otherwise noted.

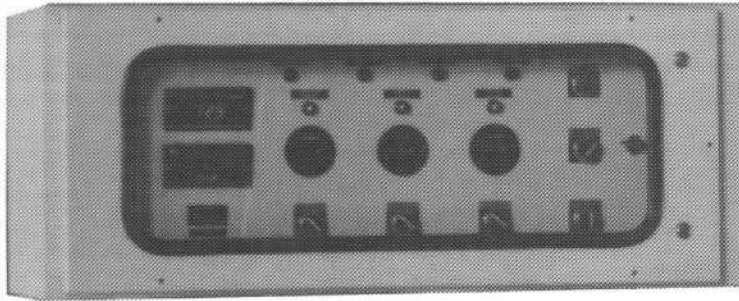
² Zinnia performs best when it is direct-seeded in the garden.

³ These specific cultivars of these perennials flower well their first season, and are excellent when treated as annuals. They may overwinter, depending on location. Most other cultivars of these are perennials, and do not flower well their first season in the garden.

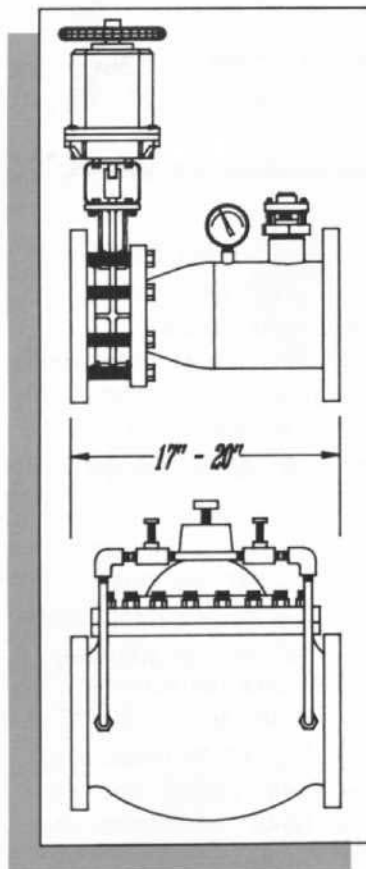
⁴ These plants do well in full sun or partial shade.

⁵ These plants perform best in partial shade.

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SECOND SEMESTER FINALS

By Monroe S. Miller

Wisconsin's golf course superintendents are probably almost as happy to see the second semester end as Wisconsin's college students are. After all, they form the bulk of our summer-time staff.

So, in a spirit of fairness, we offer WGCSA members a second semester final exam since many of our young employees are doing the same thing this time of year.

On the count of three, open your Blue Books, pick up your pencils and answer this issue's QUIZ.

One . . . two . . . three!

1. Who was likely the only Wisconsin golf course superintendent ever to play in the GMO Pro-Am?
2. One of America's very first municipal golf courses was built in Wisconsin.

3. Where did O.J. Noer hail from and where was he educated?

4. Who "invented" the classic "Lewis Line" ball washer?
5. Who started *The Grass Roots*? When?

Answers

1. Bill Sell played in the 1985 GMO Pro-Am in a group with tournament player Dan Pohl.
 2. The Washington Park golf course in Milwaukee was a six-hole golf course built in the 1904-1906 period with public money. This golf course was later the site of a zoo.
 3. O.J. Noer was raised on a farm near Stoughton and received his undergraduate and graduate education from the Department of Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.
 4. One of the founders of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association, Archie Schendel, according to an extremely reliable historian, developed the wooden paddle/rectangular bucket Lewis Line ballwasher. He was the golf course superintendent at Westmor Country Club. The ballwasher was made by Lewis Line for years in Watertown.
 5. *The Grass Roots* was started by Dan Quast when he was the golf course superintendent at Milwaukee Country Club. The first issue — Vol. 1, No. 1 — was dated April 1975.

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Tree Flowers

By Monroe S. Miller

Reference to a "well kept secret" is usually reserved for things like restaurants and vacation hideaways and even golf courses (Crystal Downs near Cheryl's hometown of Frankfort, Michigan is one of those). I reserve this phrase for that good used bookstore whose stock is fresh and varied and whose prices are low. And it seems to fit one of nature's least recognized yet most beautiful creations — tree flowers.

I make a distinction between "tree flowers" and "blossoms". It's a distinction of the obvious and has nothing to do with anatomy or taxonomy. Flowering crabapple trees have blossoms. Fruit trees like pear, plum, apple and cherry have blossoms. Lilacs and serviceberries have blossoms. On the other hand, oak and maple and ash and locust have flowers. That is probably a simple-minded distinction (which fits me to a tee!) to the serious botanist.

I also think of it this way: woody ornamentals we plant primarily for a one-time show in spring have blossoms and all other woody ornamentals (except evergreens) have tree flowers.

Why so few people talk about tree flowers has always baffled me. Most of them, when asked about tree flowers, almost always reply, "Oh, you mean like lilacs and flowering crabs?" Lots are surprised when I show them tree flowers on the golf course — "never thought to look," they say. They associate "flowers" with annuals and perennials in the beds and borders at home and around the clubhouse grounds and on the golf course. They think of lilacs and flowering crabs because they are so overwhelming when in bloom. That's amplified in our town because the University of Wisconsin Arboretum has one of the finest lilac collections in the country.

I'd guess another reason so few people know about tree flowers is that they so seldom look up, especially when under a tree. They'll look skyward for a weather check, to watch an airplane or to gush over a rainbow. But not many

find a need to do any of those while looking up and through the crown of a tree.

Make no mistake — I love springtime blossoms as much as anyone. They help make each spring season unforgettable. I've always said that apple trees don't have to produce fruit to justify their existence. The site of an apple tree in full bloom with white or pink blossoms in clusters almost as big as apples themselves is quite enough for me, thank you. That is why we plant them on the golf course.

Tree flowers, on the other hand, are rather unexpected; they're extras of a sort. We plant trees because of their form, their autumn color, their texture, their size. Seldom are their flowers a consideration. But they are a real treat when spring comes around. Each year it is a fresh delight to see trees that produce flowers every bit as beautiful as flowers grown in a garden.

I have a list of favorites. It is almost impossible to rank them from first place to last place — there isn't really a last place. I wouldn't know what criteria to use. Suffice to say I simply like these nine tree flowers best of all.

Since none is first (or ninth, for that matter), let me begin with the one which appears the earliest — the maple tree flower. Understand that these are not the very first trees to bloom; that honor, on our golf course, usually belongs to the willows. There are a lot of species of maple, but I think the most beautiful flowers are on the red maple and the Norway maple.

The red and Norway flowers are small and delicate. I like to use a hand lens to look at them and really enjoy their beauty. The bark of these two trees adds to the impact of their flowers. When the bud scales are shed and the scarlet flowers of the red maple contrast with the light gray bark, the only rival is the Norway's greenish yellow flowers against the dark, nearly black bark. Each tree is like a huge glowing bouquet, despite such small flowers. The mass impact comes because the garnet-red and pale green

flowers bloom in clusters. If pressed to choose between these two flowers, I'd probably pick the red maple because red isn't a spring color and that makes their crimson clouds seem more vivid.

It is easy to understand why *Cercis canadensis* is called the redbud, although neither the bud nor the flower itself is really red. At first the bud is almost red, but when the flowers are at their prime, they are definitely pink. The bud, which looks something like the sharpened end of a wooden pencil, is darker and gives birth to a purplish pink flower. The flowers appear in clusters held tightly on almost all of the branches. They appear before the leaves are out and really give a beautiful sight. We have several at the club, and when I landscaped around our house ten years ago, I planted a redbud right next to the front door. These tree flowers are welcome when they arrive between late April and mid-May.

Just about the time the pink redbud tree flowers are fading away, the dogwood comes into full rapturous white bloom. The dogwoods are excellent landscape plants which are found in the countryside, too. They are beautiful in all seasons, but they are most conspicuous in spring when their flowers are fully open. Like the tree flowers I've described so far, this one is small. It might not appear so because they grow in clusters.

There is a legend about the dogwood and its flowers that certainly enhances my love of it. The tale says that at the time of Christ's crucifixion the dogwood was a large tree that rivaled the oak and that Christ died on a cross made from the dogwood. According to the story, Jesus sensed the distress of the wood over its cruel role. He told the dogwood it should grow slender and crooked so that it could never be used as a cross again and therefore would never again experience such sorrow and suffering. Christ also declared that the tree would bear flowers that were shaped like a cross with two long and two short petals. There would be a "crown of thorns" in the center of each flower.

The edges of the petals would forever after carry stigmata as brown as rust and blood so that each of us looking at the dogwood would remember.

Regardless of your religious convictions, there is a certain poignancy to the story that will help you recall it when you see the dogwood tree