

Carville Akehurst Award 2014

Steve Black Bio

How do you get from growing up on a horse farm in Ohio to searching for chemical and biological weapons in Iraq to being presented the Carville Akehurst award at the MNLA annual meeting at MANTS?

Just ask this year's recipient ... Steve Black

Having had his fill of farm life, Steve attended Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh where he majored in public policy and international affairs. His primary focus was on chemical and biological weapons arms control investigations and as a result, he spent most of the 1990's in Iraq searching for Weapons of Mass Destruction or WMD's as they are more commonly known.

His time abroad helped him realize that in his heart, he really is a farmer, but he had enough of horses and other livestock. Steve had always had an underlying interest in Horticulture and it was not long before this interest ignited a passion.

Steve read and studied everything he could find and he credits the vast resources and knowledge he gained from the relationship he has developed at the MD Extension for fueling his interests further. He is also a graduate of the Montgomery College Landscape Technology Program who he says was instrumental, especially in the early days, to help him problem solve. He credits his time in the foreign operations with helping him to get organized and set priorities.

Steve purchased Raemelon Farm, a former dairy operation, in 2004 and planted his first trees in 2005. Today, Raemelon is a wholesale B&B production nursery with

300 different tree types ranging from the most common commodity trees to a selection of rare varieties.

Raemelton regularly conducts or hosts cooperative research on improving and increasing sustainability production methods. He has worked and still works with the MD Extension on a number of research projects

In addition, he serves on the advisory boards for two USDA specialty crop research initiative projects and is an active member of the Montgomery County Cluster Advisory Board for environmental science and landscape technology. Steve serves on the MNLA Board, attends crop insurance improvement meetings and is involved in Invasive Plants policy development.

For his service to our country, his dedication to our industry, and many other reasons, I am pleased to present the 2014 Carville M Akehurst Award to:

Steve Black of Raemelton Farm