Facilities projects planned for Spring 2022:

With supply chain issues still affecting our ability to obtain parts, equipment, and building materials, the Facilities department is focusing on landscaping for our Spring 2022 projects, while continuing with work orders, repairs, and day-to-day operational support.

The Grounds department is focusing on targeted updates to our landscaping in Spring 2022; all new plantings will be low maintenance (not requiring the use of chemicals, fertilizers, or regular irrigation), and native plantings with substantial ecological value will be used whenever possible. We’re committed to a thoughtful, low-impact approach to landscaping that leaves our wooded margins throughout campus a bit wild, to allow for the amazing variety of native plants that call our campus home a chance to thrive. And we are maintaining our policy of “letting milkweed be”, even if it looks a bit untidy. Our campus is a wonderful haven for monarch butterflies, and we wouldn’t have it any other way.

Kern Meadow Maintenance

Maintenance of the meadow adjacent to the R.W. Kern Center has not followed best practices, resulting in the decline of the originally seeded species. The meadow plantings will be rejuvenated in Spring 2022.

The Kern meadow area (roughly 1 acre total) will be divided into four sections of about 8,000 square feet each, with “alleys” mown between each section to allow for monitoring and enjoyment of the meadow plantings. The four sections will all be managed differently, allowing for a study of naturalized plantings best practices:

Section 1:
The existing meadow (where some species, including lupine, have established) will be high mown at a height of 6 inches up to 3 times during the 2022 growing season, to limit the establishment of invasive species.

Section 2:
Section 2 will be double-tilled, planted with an annual cover crop of oats, and then seeded two weeks later with Prairie Moon Nursery’s “Pretty Darn Quick” seed mix, which can be expected to yield blooms in Summer 2023:
This seed mix was selected to provide faster results, at the potential cost of less biodiversity.

Section 3:
Same as Section 2, but the cover crop seeds will be spread *after* the wildflower seeds.

Section 4:
The wildflower seeds will be “sown into lawn”, after the existing plantings are close mown.
FPH Torrey Courtyard:

The Torrey courtyard is home to a number of treasured specimen plants, including pear trees that are loved by students, faculty, staff, and squirrels alike! One of the planters in the courtyard has become overgrown; a specimen shrub (we’re thinking a mountain laurel, but are open to suggestions as they can be a bit fussy) will be planted here, along with pollinator-friendly ground cover.

Arts Village Targeted Landscaping

The Arts Village and solar canopy area provide an academic center for campus with a strong sense of place. However, the current landscaping detracts from the area more that it enhances it, and fails to highlight great elements like the sculpture between ASH and the FPH parking lot.

Solar canopy garden

This garden has beautiful, healthy shrubs, but is prone to being colonized by invasive species. Variegated hostas will be added to this planting, to provide interest and weed-smothering cover.

Music and Dance Building:

Inner (solar canopy) side:
Mulch will be touched up and hostas will be planted at an interval of roughly 4’ (depending on cultivar size), to fill in the area and provide natural weed control over time.

Outer (graffiti wall) side:
The shrub plantings on the back of Music and Dance have largely failed, allowing overgrowth to occur that impedes egress.

The back slope of Music and Dance) will be seeded with a low-maintenance, slope stabilizing mix of native low-growing grasses. Limited irrigation may be needed for the plantings to establish in their first year, but the mature plants will be drought tolerant. These grasses will provide seeds to birds and small mammals, a crucial source of food during the winter months. As these grasses are of limited value to pollinators, we will include targeted plantings of pollinator-friendly native plants here (asters, goldenrod, butterfly milkweed, and joe-pye weed) in this work as well.

Arts Barn/Center for Design:

Inner (solar canopy) side:

Hostas and lilies will be added in the shady areas adjacent to the building. Weed control will be employed in the brick courtyard, to keep the area safe and functional.
Outer side (by Lemelson):

This area features lovely specimen shrubs on the level, but the back exit stairs have seen better days! This area will be cleared of invasive species, the mulch will be refreshed, and the outer stair railings will be moved to provide a safer entrance; low-maintenance annual planters will be added and planted with nasturtiums (great nectar plants for bees, wasps, and even hummingbirds!).

Outer side (by Center for Design/parking):

Invasive species and scrub brush have overrun the back slope, though there are some solid low shrub juniper plantings. This area will be cleared of scrub brush, brambles, and invasive species.. Due to its very steep slope, nature’s indestructible plant, spiderwort, will be used to fill in bare spots. Spiderwort’s light pollen is of limited nutritional value, but it blooms during a time in the calendar where there is little forage available, so it is valuable for pollinators. It should not be mixed with other plants as it likes to take over, but this makes it a great solo act for difficult spots like this.

Film and Photo:

The courtyard plantings will be weeded to give our existing perennials a chance to thrive. The back slope will be weeded (clumps of invasive species, which are beloved by pollinators but crowd out native plantings, have taken hold) and the mulch refreshed, giving the existing low growing shrubs a chance to thrive.

ASH:

The courtyard plantings will be weeded to give our existing perennials a chance to thrive, and supplemented with additional clumps of native plants (like bee balm and coneflower) to fill in any bare spots.

Cole Science

The planting beds around Cole Science are home to a variety of specimen plants of scientific, historic, and sentimental interest. We are committing to maintaining these beds, protecting these plants from invasive species. A small bed near the accessible entrance was disrupted a few years ago by folks harvesting the perennials and planting them elsewhere (hey, please don’t do this!), so we’ll be enriching the soil there and replanting it with iris and lily divisions during an alumni service day in April.