

Just The Dirt

Custodial & Grounds Newsletter

You are invited to
celebrate at the Berry Bash!

JUNE 25, 2026

6:30 am-8:30 am Midnight shift

10:30 am-12:30 pm Day shift

6:30 pm-8:30 pm Afternoon shift

Please RSVP by June 11, 2026



A note from the Manager

Summer Greetings, Everyone!

So happy I can finally say that! Although this spring has been colder than usual, the April showers have certainly brought May flowers. I hope everyone has had the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and appreciate the beauty around us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your hard work throughout the winter. Your dedication and diligence in keeping our campus clean and safe did not go unnoticed and are truly appreciated.

As many of you know, we have been working our way across campus, instituting the department cleaning program of MBC. We call it a reset. This program is about organization, inventory control, and removing barriers for our custodial staff. We use a process improvement approach called LEAN.

Lean is a structured approach and helps organizations remove waste, improve processes, and better serve people. Key goals of a Lean program include the 5 S approach of cleaning, organizing, and removing clutter and putting items where they belong using a labeling system.

1. Sort - All storage areas and systems
2. Straighten- Set up shelving, labels, and restock
3. Shine- Clean the rooms, equipment, CC, etc
4. Standardize- Train and coach all staff to ensure they understand the program and expectations.
5. Sustain- Understanding the program is not going away. This is our new normal

It's about reducing waste such as delays, rework, unnecessary steps, and excess inventory while improving quality and consistency. The Lean program focuses on training staff, identifying opportunities for improvement, measuring performance, and supporting teams as they redesign processes. The goal is not simply to cut costs, but to make work easier, faster, safer, and more valuable for everyone involved. Research also shows that clutter can contribute to anxiety and stress and negatively affect productivity and workplace relationships.

This program is built around a "we care about you" philosophy. It is being done for you, not to you. The focus is on creating an environment where you have everything you need and nothing you don't, so you can work more efficiently and effectively.

Colette Donner

Training and Development Manager

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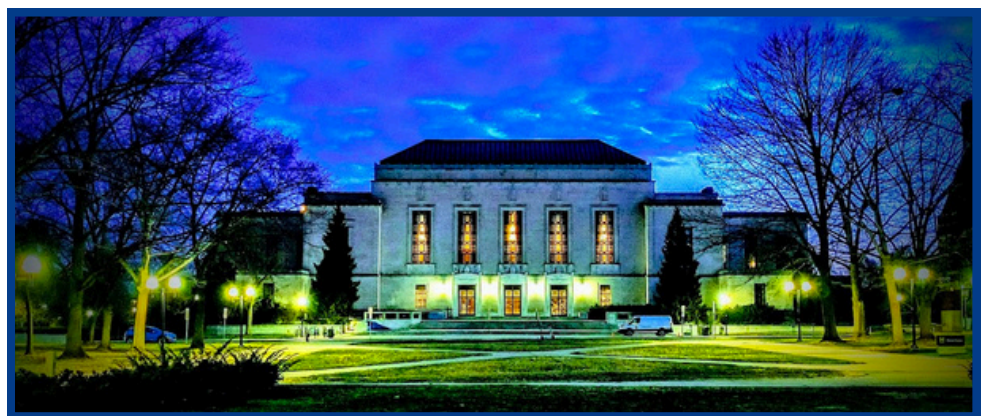
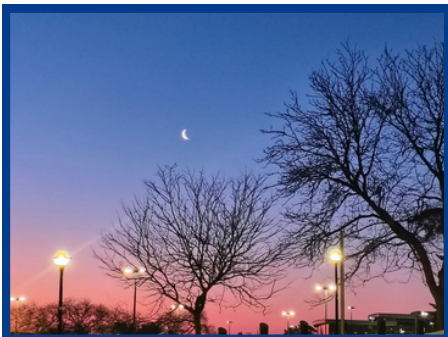
Spotlight

Grounds Horticultural Team

I'd like to take a moment to recognize a few individuals who consistently do outstanding work. Since I can't be everywhere on campus, I often rely on others to share what they're seeing and a few people regularly go above and beyond by sending photos.

Interestingly, they are all part of our horticulture/grounds team: Rebecca Albaugh, Kelly Beck, and Donnel Cook. Through their lens, I'm able to experience the campus in a way I otherwise couldn't.

I'd love to share some of the photos they've captured, highlighting the beauty they encounter each day while caring for our campus.



Photos by Donnel Cook



Spotlight

Grounds Horticultural Team



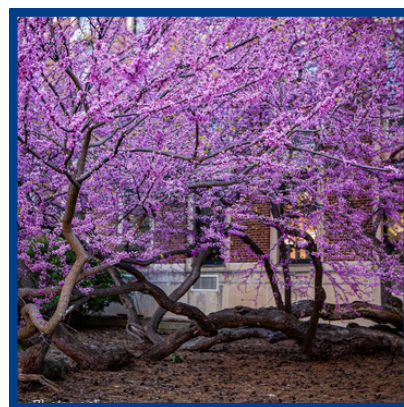
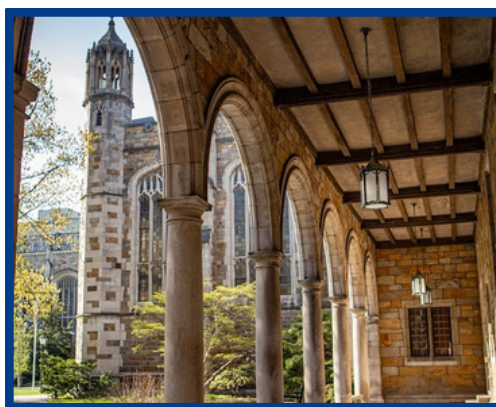
Photos by Becky Albough



Spotlight

Grounds Horticultural Team

Photos by Kelly Beck



U-M named Tree Campus Higher Education for 18th consecutive year

The Arbor Day Foundation has recognized the University of Michigan as a Tree Campus Higher Education institution for the 18th consecutive year. This recognition highlights U-M's commitment to effective urban forestry, environmental stewardship, and the maintenance of a healthy, sustainable campus environment, marking nearly two decades of consistent recognition for campus forest management.

This designation reflects a collaborative approach to campus stewardship led by Facilities & Operations Custodial & Grounds Services in collaboration with other university partners.

“This designation recognizes both the aesthetic and functional importance of trees to the U-M community, as well as the dedicated staff who work to keep our campus forest healthy and vibrant,” said Rob Doletzky, associate director for Grounds Services. To earn Tree Campus Higher Education recognition, institutions must meet five core standards:

- Maintaining a tree advisory committee
- Establishing a campus tree-care plan
- Allocating dedicated annual funding for tree programs
- Observing Arbor Day
- Sponsoring student service-learning projects

At U-M, these efforts are guided by the Campus Forest Management Plan. Grounds Services forestry teams support the long-term health of the campus forest through proactive



Students plant a tree during last fall's Earthfest as part of a service-learning project tied to the university's Tree Campus USA initiative. The planting was supported by Office of Campus Sustainability and Innovation and Facilities & Operations staff.

tree maintenance, strategic planting and species selection, and a focus on age and species diversity, while also preserving existing trees.

Campus Forester, Mike Rutkofske has also led the development and ongoing maintenance of a comprehensive tree inventory, which includes more than 18,000 trees across the Ann Arbor campus.

We are honored to be recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Campus Higher Education institution for the 18th consecutive year,” Rutkofske said. “Our team remains committed to maintaining a safe, diverse,



Tree Campus continued

“and sustainable campus forest for the university community.”

Rutkofske and his team continually track tree health and other indicators to assess risk and guide management decisions. This work directly supports the university’s sustainability priorities which emphasize reforestation, landscape stewardship, and carbon reduction as part of a more resilient campus.

“These efforts reflect how everyday operations contribute to U-M’s long-term goals,” Rutkofske said. “Our campus forest plays an important role in maintaining a healthy and welcoming environment for the university community.”

Welcome Hayley Briggs Assistant Vice President To Custodial & Grounds Services Congratulations

Hi Derek,
I hope you’re having a fantastic day! I just wanted to say a big thank you for helping me with the carpenter ants, It’s truly amazing- I haven’t seen any since your last visit! You’re the best!

Warm regards,

Bahareh

Congratulations

Hi Randi,

I wanted to write to tell you how happy we are with Brenda’s custodial work here at the Detroit Observatory. She’s completely turned the building around in terms of cleanliness.

We've have had tons of visitors and events in recent months, including catered affairs that wreak havoc (in terms of crumbs!) on the facilities here. But you wouldn't know it— everything is back in tip-top shape the following day. She also keep the historic building in perfect order. Brenda cares about the Observatory, and it shows.

I wanted to make sure her supervisors knew about the amazing work she’s doing here. We're really lucky to have her as a part of our team.

Best,

Greg

Hi Randi,

I wanted to share my gratitude for Brandon and Hunter. A DPSS community outreach officer was in the men's locker room today and said it looked brand new and very clean (completely unsolicited). Carl has commented on their hard work a lot lately as well. I've appreciated their positive attitudes, too.

Thanks,
Molly



Happy Anniversary

ADAIR, RACHELLE

AHMED, FAIZA

ALEXANDER, MARGARET

ALFARO, BLANCA

ALLEN, ADAM

ALLEN, TERESA

ARMSTEAD, SHANIA

AZHANE, MEREDITH

BAILEY, KIMBERLY

BALLA, VIKTOR

BEALL, MARCUS

BLACK, ERIC

BOCCIARDI, CHRISTOPHE

BROWN, DELMAR

BROWN, JERRELL

BROWN, SHAUNTAYIA

CALDWELL, NATHANIEL

CAMPBELL, GREGORY

COOK, MARK

CORL, KENDRA

COX, PAUL

CROLL, LORI

CRUGER, JONATHAN

CSIZMAR, TERRY

CURTIS, ANTOINETTE

DAVIS, DENISE

DAY, KIMBERLY

DEMERS, ANNETTE

DHAGANE, NIMO

DICKO, IBRAHIMA

EVANS JR, DAVID

FERRY, JASON

FLOWERS, NICHOLAS

FOWLKES JR, BILLIE

GABERT, MATTHEW

GAISHIN, CHERYL

GILES, PHILLIP

GOODELL, HEATH

GRANILLO, ANDREA

GRANTHAM, TIMOTHY

GUARDADO HERNANDEZ,

ROSA ELENA

GWINNER, ROOSEVELT

HOLEVA, JOHN

HOLZHAUSEN, CHARLES

HORRIGAN, STEVEN

HUDGINS, DONNA

JACKSON, LINDA

KABA, SARAN

KALAPAC, PETAR

KETCHUM, DOUGLAS

KINSER, DARRYL

LASTER, KARA

LEE, CONSTANCE

LOGAN, JANESEA

MANOR, ROBERT

MARSHALL, JACQUELINE

MERCADO, KATRINA

MINTER, RYAN

MOORE, DAVID

MYERS, CHRISTOPHER

OAKES, ERIC

OGDEN, ERIC

PEREZ, JAIME

POLEN, DAVID

PORTIES, DALVONTE

RAMIREZ, VILMA

RANSOM, BRIAN

RAU, JOHN

ROBERTS, LILLIAN

ROBINSON, BRENDESHA

ROBINSON, DONALD

ROLFES, DANIEL

ROOSEVELT, DARIUS

RUTKOFESKE, MICHAEL

SEKLECKA, DARIA

SHINN, MARY

SIDIBE, ISSIAGA

SMITH JR., BILLY

SMITH, GERRY

SMITH, SONYA

SONG, JIAN

SZENDERSKI, COLE

TOSTA, NATACHA

TRACEY, SAMUEL

WALTER, EMILEE

WATSON, NATHAN

WELTY, PATRICK

WILLIAMS, JAMICA

WOODARD, DAMON

If anyone has been missed, please contact Denise Krause so it can be included in the next newsletter.

