

July/August 2026

Just The Dirt

Custodial & Grounds Newsletter



A message from Hayley Briggs AVP-CGS

As I begin my journey with Custodial & Grounds Services. I want to take a moment to express how excited I am to join this outstanding team.

Every day, the work performed by our custodial and grounds professionals has a direct impact on the University of Michigan experience. Whether maintaining beautiful outdoor spaces, ensuring clean and welcoming facilities, supporting special events, or responding to the unexpected, your efforts help make our campus both beautiful and safe for everyone who learns, works, visits, and heals here.

One of the things that drew me to this organization is the pride, dedication, and professionalism demonstrated across the team. The work you do is often behind the scenes, but its impact is visible everywhere.

Over the coming months, I look forward to meeting more of you, learning about your operations, and partnering together to continue building on the strong foundation already in place. Thank you for everything you do to support the University community.

I am honored to be part of the team and excited for what lies ahead.

~Hayley



Spotlight

Hayley Briggs

A little About Me-

I have been with the University of Michigan for over 16 years, most recently serving as the North Campus Region Manager within Maintenance Services. Throughout my career, I have been passionate about building strong teams, removing barriers for employees, and creating an environment where people have the tools, support, and accountability needed to succeed.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, gardening, being outdoors, and spoiling my two Great Danes, Gunther and Bruno. I am excited to get to know each of you and learn more about the people who make Custodial & Grounds Services such a special organization.







Common Stinging Insects on Campus

By July, many wasp and hornet colonies on campus are fully established and activity increases. While these insects play an important role by pollinating plants and helping break down organic matter, nests located near entrances, walkways, or work areas can create safety concerns.

Paper Wasps

Black and yellow wasps that build small, open umbrella shaped nests under overhangs, window frames, and building eaves. They are generally the least aggressive but will defend their nest.



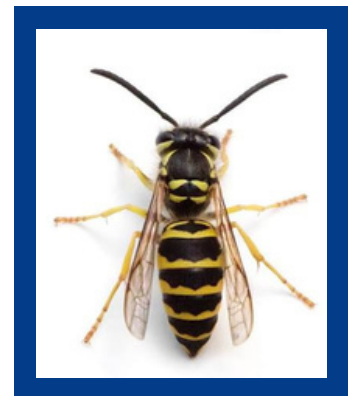
Bald Faced Hornets

Black and white insects that build large gray paper nests in trees, shrubs, and on structures. They aggressively defend their nests if disturbed.



Yellow Jackets

Bright yellow and black wasps that often nest underground, in wall voids, or inside landscape features. They are highly defensive and are responsible for many sting incidents during late summer.



Pollinators on Campus

The University of Michigan is a certified Bee Campus, and you may see more pollinators around the growing presence of native plantings and pollinator gardens. Foraging pollinators are focused on collecting nectar and pollen and are generally not aggressive if left alone. Pest Management does not treat for foraging pollinators.

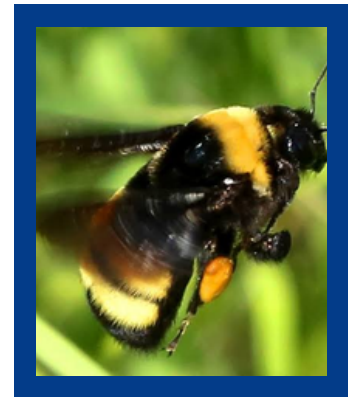
Honey Bees

Golden brown bees that live in large colonies. They are excellent pollinators and are commonly seen visiting flowers throughout campus.



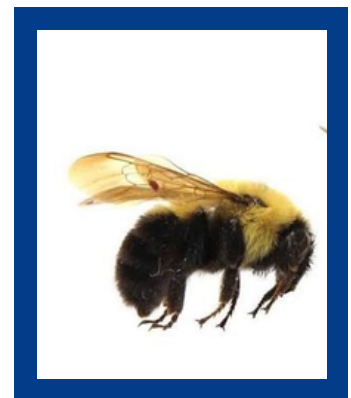
Bumble Bees

Large, fuzzy black and yellow bees that are important native pollinators. They are typically gentle and rarely sting unless their nest is disturbed.



Carpenter Bees

Large bees that resemble bumble bees but have a smooth, shiny black abdomen. They often nest in untreated wood and are valuable pollinators. Males may hover nearby but cannot sting.



If you discover a bee or wasp nest in or around a building, or in an area where it poses a safety concern, do not disturb it. Contact U of M Pest Management through the Facilities Service Center at 734-647-2059 to report on the location and request an inspection.



Big 10 Grounds Conference

Recently, Rob, the Grounds Services Manager, along with a few supervisors and Horticulturalists (left), took the opportunity to visit the University of Iowa for the 2026 Big Ten and Friends Landscape Managers Conference

Like the University of Michigan, the University of Iowa participates in the Bee Campus USA program. Throughout the campus, there are numerous native planting beds that support pollinators and promote biodiversity.

Nate shared that the University of Iowa has significantly fewer groundskeepers than the University of Michigan. As a result, the campus features less intensive landscaping that requires less maintenance. This approach helps accommodate staffing and funding limitations while still maintaining an attractive and welcoming environment. Although the University of Iowa's campus differs in appearance from the University of Michigan, it is beautiful in its own way.

See several photos provided by Nate Watson.



The following universities were in attendance:

Illinois State University
Indiana University
Marian University
Michigan State University
Penn State University
Purdue University
Rutgers University
Ohio State University
University of Illinois
University of Illinois Chicago
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri
University of Nebraska Lincoln
University of Northern Iowa
University of Oregon
Western Michigan University
University of Iowa-Host



The university of Iowa has a Anne Frank Tree. This tree is a sapling that was propagated from the original Amsterdam horse chesnut tree that Anne Frank viewed for the secret annex. This tree is a monument of resilience and hope.

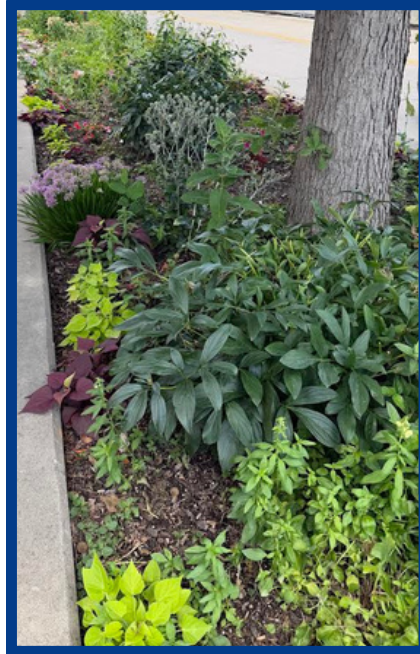


University of Iowa Dancer's Garden

three views same garden



Bee campus gardens at university of Iowa



Native gardens below



“Ktigaanig enji-maawnjidiying-the garden where we come together”

Through a collaborative partnership with the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) and the Native American Students Association, a new Indigenous Garden has been designed and installed in the Diag, just west of Hatcher Library. The space features an ADA-accessible crushed granite patio, gabion-style benches, and planting beds containing more than 500 plants.

Created with an emphasis on species native to our region and plants with historical and cultural significance to Indigenous communities, the garden provides a place for education, reflection, and connection. The thoughtfully selected landscape supports pollinators and other wildlife while highlighting the ecological importance of native plants.

This project demonstrates how intentional landscape design can honor Indigenous heritage, promote biodiversity, and strengthen the connection between people, culture, and the natural environment.

Information and photos provided by Alyson Oostdyk-Natural Areas Specialist



Happy Anniversary

AHEARN, DONALD
AHMED, ANISA
ALANIZ, EMMANUEL
ALFARO, ESPERANZA
AMAYA-GONZALEZ,
YESSICA
ARCE, ELEAZAR
BALDUS, JEFFREY
BARRY, HAWA
BAZAN, JOSE
BECK, KELLY
BESTER, JACODI
BEUSCHLEIN, KATHERINE
BOKETSUBOLANGA,
NADINE
BOWRING, TAYLOR
BRACEY, JEFFREY
BRAMAN, LORI
BRECKEN, DANIEL
BRIGGS, HAYLEY
BROWN, DOMINIQUE
BROWN, KENNETH
BROWNE, LACUIEA
BURGENS, RICHARD
BURKEEN, JEREMIAH
BUTLER, JAMI
CHAMBERS, KENNETH
CHISOLM, PAUL
CLOUD, JESSICA
COOK, DONNELL
CUELLAR MILLER, FRANCY
CUSTER, TIMMOTHY
DANIEL, COREY
DAVIS, WENDELL
DEL VALLE, MENARD
DODGE, JOSEPH
DOUTRE, ERIC

DRESSER, BRADLEY
ESCOBAR-PONCIANO, MARIA
FAGBEDJI, MATTHIEU
FRYMAN, DANIEL
GOMEZ, JUAN
GOODWIN, YOLANDA
GRANDERSON, NINA
GROTT, NANCY
GUTOWSKI, MICHAEL
HEARING, DANIEL
HERNANDEZ RAMOS, JAIRO
HORTON, ADAM
HURLEY, LORA
IBARRA HERNANDEZ, DORA
JACKSON, ANTONIO
JANICEVIC, NICKOLAS
JIMENEZ-PORRAS, JARON
JOHNSON, JENNELL
JUDGE, AMY LOU
KAREEM, MAHA
KIRKLAND, THOMAS
KOCOVSKA, KAROLINA
LAMB, KATHY
MABIALA-NKENGUE, MALENE
MAURER, MORGAN
MCALLISTER, ESAI
MCGEE, JALECSA
MCLEAN, ELIJAH
METO, BARNABAS
MOJICA, ELENA
MOORE, LIANNA
MORALES, MARIA
MOSLEY, QUANZA
MUKHTAR, FARHIYA
PATTILLO-DEWS, RAVON
POE, BRIAN
PRAY, BRENDA

ROSALES, GUILLERMA
RUGAMAS, GUILLERMO
RUSS, LISA
SAYLOR, SUE
SCHMIDT, ELIZABETH
SCHULZ, DAWN
SEKLECKI, MARIUSZ
SIMS, LORI
SOLOMON, VIOLET
SORAH, EMILY
SOUMAH, MOHAMED
STOVALL, RAYMOND
TARTT, RODRECUS
TAVAREZ, JOSE
TAYLOR, KIRK
TAYLOR, PERRY
THOMAS, KHALIL
VAN HORN, DEBORAH
VEGA, GUILLERMINA
VENTURA, NUEVEM
WALLACE, ERICA
WALTER, TAMMY
WARD, LESLIE
WILLIAMS, MARCUS
WRIGHT, DESHAWN
ZAVALA, JOSE

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

**Cover photo provided by
Donnell Cook.**

**Please read your monthly
emails from Hayley.**

