

SHOWCASE

that outfield fence!

by RON HALL / Senior Editor

Jeff Moser turns the outfield fence at the College of Wooster varsity baseball field into something special each summer.

By ringing an outfield fence with flowers, ornamental grasses and small trees, other schools and communities can showcase their top ballfields, too. The effort provides a functional and pleasing backdrop against which to highlight baseball or softball.

Moser is one of nine crew members on the staff of grounds superintendent Phil Williams. He and co-worker Leroy Boulton maintain the college's athletic fields. Other crew members maintain the school's golf course and campus.

The College of Wooster is a private college of 1578 students located in the heart of Amish country in north central Ohio. The campus is as neat and pretty as a picture postcard.

Here's how Moser, basically on a shoestring, perks up the outfield fence:

Each spring, he and Boulton run a string one-foot inside and outside of the outfield fence, and apply Roundup non-selective herbicide.

Then, when the college grounds crew picks up its 60 to 100 flats of annuals for the golf course and

campus, Moser sets aside 6 to 8 flats for the 5-foot-wide, 120-foot-long curve just outside of the baseball fence.

He began the project when he joined the staff almost seven years.

"Every year, I make it a little bit longer and add more plants," says Moser.

Because the ornamental grasses (a variegated miscanthus) that he planted around the fence grow so prolifically, he splits them often. This provides new plants as he expands the beds.

Moser says he and Boulton are so busy mowing and fertilizing the college's athletic fields in the spring, that they often have to wait weeks before rejuvenating the outfield fence, a project they do, basically, on their own.

It takes them about a day to pop out the grasses, rototill the beds, plant the grasses and flowers, and spread about two inches of shredded bark mulch. He says his most pleasing combination of flowers, to date, has been blue salvias massed with white sweet alyssum.

Although the spring baseball season is over by the time the garden looks its best, golfers—particularly senior citizen league golfers—really appreciate the view. The outfield fence is adjacent to the clubhouse and golf carts.

"Phil Williams has done wonders for the campus grounds for years. He's the one that deserves the credit for the things we do," says Moser. "He gives us some freedom to do these things as long as we get our daily tasks done." **LM**

Flowers make the outfield fence at the College of Wooster's varsity baseball field something special.

