

Award-winning landscape management



A staff of about 22 at Illinois State University handles turf maintenance, tree and shrub care, snow and litter removal, brick and retaining wall installation, athletic field maintenance, annual and perennial gardens and others tasks on a college campus that is busy year-round.

Illinois State's Central Quadrangle

This complex campus was a 1998 Grand Award Winner for the Professional Grounds Management Society

Visitors and students know the Central Quadrangle of Illinois State University in Normal, IL, an eight-acre area of turf, harboring more than 400 trees of 80 different species. About 300 shrubs and more than 6,000 annuals (totaling 5,600 sq. ft. in the Quadrangle alone) also challenge the grounds crew. The Quadrangle itself includes several perennial beds and a native Illinois prairie garden.

Each tree receives annual fertilization, aeration, pruning and shaping, plus scouting for insects. Several varieties of annuals are grown in the Grounds Services' greenhouses. Plant varieties are labeled; watering and weeding is done by hand.

The staff keeps turf at a three-inch height throughout the season and IPM is used to control grubs and other pests. Turf is fertilized twice a year, with supplemental applications as needed.

A major element of this project was the redesign of campus walkways to replace existing asphalt ones with concrete, installed in a 5-ft. x 5-ft. pattern. Other renovations include landscaping to enhance pedestrian gateways, add attractive seating and encourage visitors to study and explore the trees and plantings.

Trees have been inventoried, cataloged and tagged by species and new species have been added. A tree map of the Quadrangle was developed for those taking a walking tour of the area.

Upcoming projects include "In Exchange," an 80,000-sq. ft. area nearby, combining sculpture, colored concrete and plant material on a seasonal theme.

For more information about this project, contact the Professional Grounds Management Society, 120 Cockeysville Rd., Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD 21030, 410/584-9754. Or contact ISU Dept. of Facilities Management, Box 9100, Normal, IL 61790, 309/438-2032.

Property at a glance:

Location: Illinois State University Central Quadrangle, Normal, IL

Staff: ISU Grounds Services

Category: Urban University

Year site built: 1857

Total acres maintained: 125 (total campus)

Acres of woody ornamentals: 20 (total campus)

Acres of display beds: 25,000 sq. ft. (total campus)

Total man-hours/week: 788



Recent major projects include replacing 128,000 sq. ft. of concrete surface, as well as walls and seating.

Maintenance Challenges

- ▶ Busiest spot for pedestrian flow on campus
- ▶ High-use area for public events
- ▶ Deteriorating infrastructure: How to preserve or repair existing structures without damaging 100-year-old trees?