



**MADISON
PARKS**

2025 Beautification Report

City of Madison Parks Division

The 2025 Beautification Report emphasizes the strategic planning and impactful efforts of the City of Madison Parks Division Ecology Team, supported by funds from the Olin Trust.

The John M. Olin Trust was established in 1924 for use by the City of Madison for improving, beautifying and adorning park spaces. The funds, as approved by the Board of Park Commissioners, improves the park system, and highlights the importance of philanthropy in our community.

These projects were made possible through the work of Parks ecology team, along with additional Parks staff and volunteers.



Kneeling: Megan McCrumb, Wilke
Standing: Scott Nelson, Laurel Franklin, Sarah Vaccaro

For many years, the beautification program primarily focused on relandscaping relatively small areas such as signature sign beds and pollinator patches. For the 2025 beautification season, the team took a different approach. Instead of several smaller projects, efforts were focused on a few large-scale native plantings. This approach allowed for the incorporation of more diverse species and provided meaningful ways to engage with local communities and volunteers during planting days. In recent years, the landscaping style changed by focusing on planting densely with native plugs with a 50% graminoid – grass, sedge, etc., matrix as the base layer. This design style mimics a healthy prairie and savanna ecosystem, helping the newly landscaped areas naturalize faster and reducing overall maintenance in years to come.

Garner Park

In early spring, the team assisted a volunteer group at Garner Park with a revamp of the park's identification sign bed located at 330 N. Rosa Road. The existing shrubs were overgrown and too large for the space. The team installed a few smaller shrub varieties along with a shortgrass prairie-style planting for year-round interest. Staff pruned a large north-side privet and prepared the approximately 325 sq. ft. area for plant renewal and future replanting.

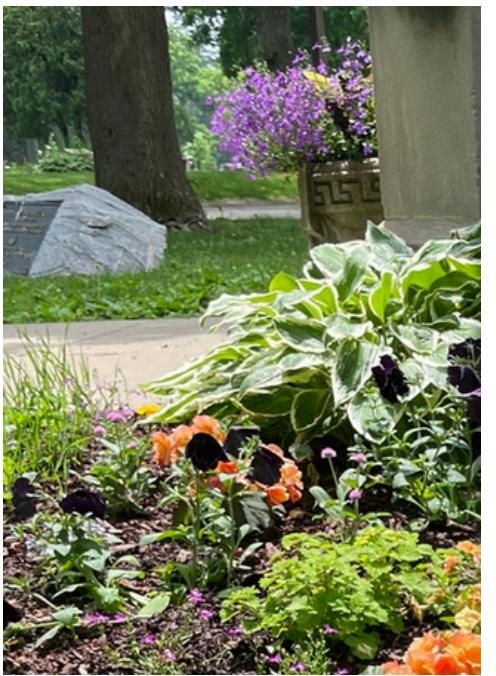


Britta Park

In late spring, the team installed an edible landscape patch and native pollinator garden at Britta Park, 4300 Britta Parkway covering approximately 1500 square feet in this 1.6-acre mini park. The area included a crushed stone path and patio installed by the Parks construction crew. This project began in fall of 2024 with the installation of three fruit trees - two serviceberry and one tart cherry, and four shade ornamental trees. In mid-July of 2025, a successful public planting day was held with Alder Figueroa Cole and more than a dozen volunteers helping to install native perennials and grasses. The crew installed native fruit shrubs - thimbleberry and black currants, edible native herb species, and several raised planters for neighbors to fill with annual vegetables.



Forest Hill Cemetery



Annual native plant installations continued at Forest Hill Cemetery, 1 Speedway Road and the Goodman Pool, 325 W. Olin Avenue.

Goodman Pool



Olbrich Park

In late September, the team installed a large shortgrass prairie planting framing the recently opened nature play area in Olbrich Park, encompassing approximately 2,700 square feet. Three public planting days saw a strong turnout, with volunteers from the Clean Lakes Alliance and the Friends of Olbrich Park. These plantings featured a serviceberry, bur oak, diverse native forbs and grasses, and slope stabilization by the large slide with path rush.



Tenney Park Beach

The final large project of the year happened at Tenney Park beach, 1330 Sherman Avenue. This work expanded on a planting installed in the fall of 2024 with the help of a dedicated volunteer group. This year, the team focused on enhancing the area under two large swamp white oak trees, providing a native understory and reducing soil compaction for the majestic oaks.

A diverse variety of sedges was used creating the matrix base layer, as well as part-sun-tolerant forbs and ephemerals. Three additional trees - a yellow birch, a bur oak, and a serviceberry were planted to increase structural diversity. Two volunteer planting days were hosted, both drawing strong community participation. Covering approximately 3,500 square feet, this area is certain to bring joy and seasonal interest to this iconic and popular park.



Rennebohm Park

In early November, the team completed a final small planting of approximately 200 square feet at Rennebohm Park near Eau Claire Ave. A small basin rain garden was constructed and will serve as a sink and natural filter for the shelter area and driveway runoff. The crew installed a wet-tolerant sedge matrix complemented by a variety of flowering plants.



2025 Highlights

Projects completed	5
Total square feet of native landscape	8,225
Number of native plants	7,745
Number of trees & shrubs	24
Volunteers engaged	63
Number of annuals installed	472

The Future

Several projects are planned for 2026, including:

- re-landscaping two beds at the Mall Concourse
- ongoing maintenance and native plantings at Goodman Pool and Forest Hill Cemetery
- a volunteer-led redesign of the signature sign bed at Mineral Point Park
- continued re-landscaping of the Garner sign bed
- an additional installation at Whitetail Ridge in collaboration with a neighborhood group
- a substantial native planting along the historic rowing house at Brittingham Park

Prepared by
Sarah Vaccaro, Landscape Maintenance Worker
Parks Ecology Team