ELEVATING SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT: The University of Michigan Campus Landscape

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UM Grounds is working to promote native gardens and sustainable landscaping to strengthen campus biodiversity, protect water quality, reduce chemical usage, and create opportunities for education and engagement. By integrating native plantings into both naturalized and formal campus landscapes, we can demonstrate how ecological stewardship and thoughtful design work together to support a resilient and sustainable campus.

The primary factor in creating new sustainable campus landscapes has been choosing the appropriate location and type of landscape. Naturalistic seeded prairies were selected to replace unnecessary swaths of lawn on north campus while more highly designed native gardens have been used in foundation and raised planting beds in the central campus/ diag areas. New native plantings around the diag have the unique challenge of needing to promote change while not straying too far from the historic formal landscaping aesthetic.

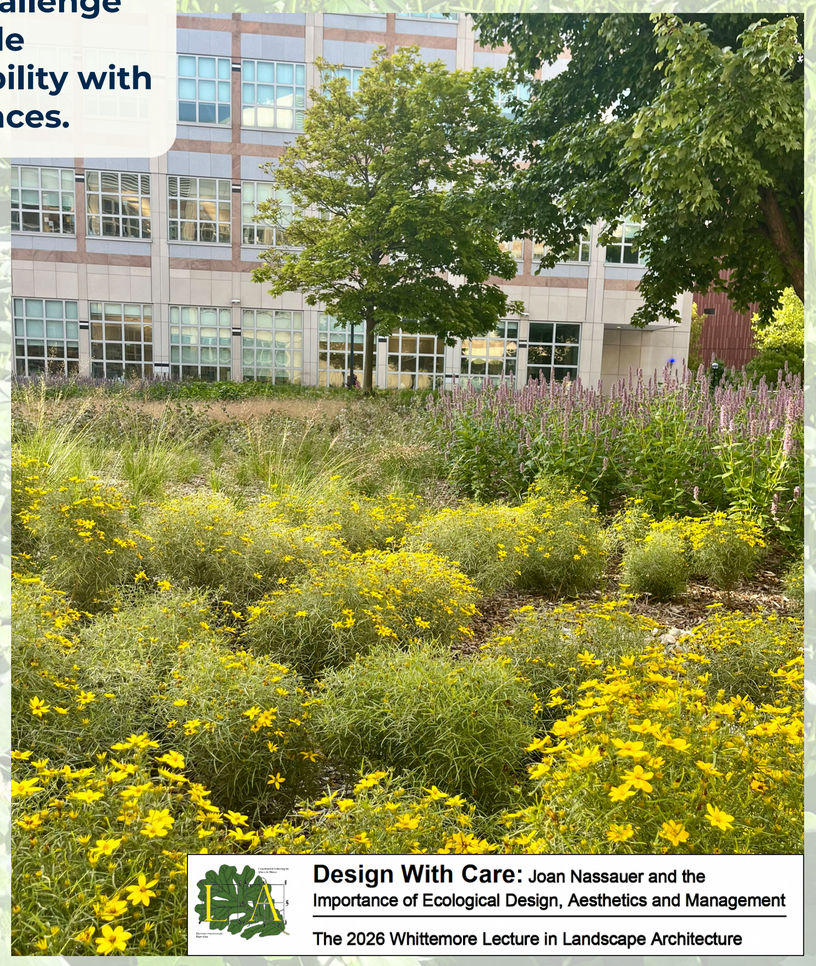
Utilizing recognizable elements such as defined borders, repetition, symmetry, and organized plant groupings helps people see native plants as an option for traditional landscape settings and has helped the new gardens we are installing around the diag to be accepted. We are aiming to make sustainable landscapes more approachable to a wider audience and, hopefully, encourage greater adoption.



With careful plant selection and design, native gardens can challenge perceptions of untidiness while demonstrating their compatibility with traditional landscape preferences.







Design With Care: Joan Nassauer and the Importance of Ecological Design, Aesthetics and Management

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