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Landscape Installation Project for HORT 444: Landscape Construction

Abstract

2006 was the second year students in the HORT 444 Landscape Construction course have installed a new landscape at one of ISU's research farms. In 2005, students completed an extensive project at the Ag Engineering/Agronomy Farm west of Ames. The project this year was installed at the Horticulture Station, Ames, IA.

Keywords

Horticulture

Disciplines

Agricultural Science | Agriculture | Horticulture

Landscape Installation Project for HORT 444: Landscape Construction

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Introduction

2006 was the second year students in the HORT 444 Landscape Construction course have installed a new landscape at one of ISU's research farms.

In 2005, students completed an extensive project at the Ag Engineering/Agronomy Farm west of Ames. The project this year was installed at the Horticulture Station, Ames, IA.

Methods and Materials

In consultation with the station superintendent, Nick Howell, a suitable site for the class project was selected and a landscape design developed. The area selected was the station entrance. The intent was to improve the appearance of the facility from the road, define the entrance more clearly, and provide a new and more visible location for the station sign. All of these improvements will enhance a visitor's initial impression of the facility.

Once the design was approved, necessary building materials were secured. New materials were used as well as materials that had been stockpiled at the station. The design included short, curved retaining walls on either side of the entrance to create new planting beds (Figure 1). Plant material was selected for its low maintenance and drought tolerance

characteristics. Some new plants were purchased, while a significant portion came from dividing ornamental grasses from the collection already at the station. Station personnel were instrumental in coordinating delivery of hardscape materials as well as initial site preparation and daily clean up of the construction area.

The project was installed during the weekly 2-hour lab sessions for HORT 444. Each week there were two lab sections with 11 students in each section. The installation project required five lab sections to complete, or the equivalent of 110 hours (Figure 2).

Future Plans

Additional project areas are currently being reviewed and developed in preparation for fall semester 2007 and beyond. The goal of incorporating installation projects located at the Horticulture Station into the HORT 444 course each fall is to provide students with beneficial hands-on learning activities. An additional benefit of this collaboration is that these projects will enhance the landscaped areas of the facility.

Acknowledgments

Appreciation for facilitating this important student learning opportunity is extended to Nick Howell and Mark Honeyman. Sincere thanks are given to Adam Wendt at the Horticulture Station for all of his help with the project.



Figure 1. HORT 444 Monday lab section students installing the final blocks of the retaining wall.



Figure 2. HORT 444 Monday lab section students and the completed east planting bed.