

Progress Report - Campus Sustainability Fund

May 2023 – Native Plant Gardens

Email:

egornish@arizona.edu

Project Manager Name:

who is submitting this project?

Elise Gornish

Project Name:

Native Plant Gardens

Project Subaccount Number:

2242324

Project Summary Snapshot:

Please copy and paste the "Summary Snapshot" you provided in your project application.

Response

UArizona student members of the Ecological Restoration club, HydroCats and Compost Cats will install native plant gardens across campus to replace water hungry lawns and bare spaces that contribute to the urban heat island effect. These gardens will enhance campus sustainability by reducing water and energy use while providing critical resources to local pollinators and beautify campus. Signage at the gardens will educate students about their value and a newly developed CURE (course-based undergraduate research experience) will provide opportunities for data collection across the gardens.

Requested Metrics:

Please report your project's metrics and their most recent number or response in a list format.

Response

Total number of gardens planted: 8 Total number of plants installed: 186 Number of unique groups assisting in plantings: 5

Project Accomplishments :

Please describe what aspects of the project have been accomplished. Be as descriptive and specific as possible. Examples of a accomplishments could include: Held 4 public meetings totaling 130 attendees; Transitioned 300 square feet of dirt into usable garden space and signed on 14 community garden volunteers. Other examples of accomplishments could include sharing a confirmed schedule of events, the connections/contacts that have been established, etc.

Response

We installed five more garden sites in the spring! Two of these also involved modifications to irrigation (extending irrigation to reach newly installed plants). The UA restoration club, students for sustainability and a group from GALS (Girls on outdoor Adventure for Leadership and Science) assisted in the installations. Two outreach events have been planned. Augmentation to one of the gardens is in the works. Myco Cats (student group that is interested in mushrooms) would like to install a mushroom garden. Gornish knows nothing about mushrooms (beyond them being delicious), so we are in discussion with UA mycologist Dr. Barry Prior to think about this a bit more. Compost Cats is currently testing their compost for deployment. Currently in discussion with Alexandra Almli from the FM sign shop to start producing signs.

Next Steps:

Response

1. Once compost testing outcomes arrive, they will be sent to Sandra for approval. Once this is complete, we will spread compost over half of our existing gardens. We plan to spread the compost to approximately 1 inch thick, based on resources provided by Compost Cats (e.g., https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.compostingcouncil.org/resource/resmgr/documents/compost_use/Increasing-the-OM-in-Soil-7-.pdf and <https://www.compostingcouncil.org/page/HowUseCompost>)
2. We need to figure out what the signs at each garden say. All signs will include a QR code to the website, but we would like some input from the funder to figure out a relevant title on each sign.
3. We are planning 3 more gardens for the summer (to be planted in late summer after monsoons start). Possible locations that have already been discussed with FM include Life Sciences South/West, DeConcini, McClelland West and the Campus Farm.
4. Complete planning of outreach events and schedule them for fall.
5. Gornish is currently writing a blog post for EcoRestore listserv (newsletter with 1500 subscribers interested in native AZ plants and planting)

Challenges Faced:

Please identify and describe any obstacles/roadblocks you or your team have experienced, and detail how you've managed them/ will manage them. Should your project already be completed, please note what challenges you faced and what you would do differently.

Response:

As usual, FM has been hot and cold. They are helpful usually but then we will walk by an old garden and it's clear that it has been 'weeded' by natives. I let FM know when these events happen, but they continue. We hope that the signs, once installed, will be a deterrent to this undesirable management.

Project Support:

Can the CSF support you in addressing any roadblocks you've encountered? How else can the CSF support your project?

Response:

I would love to know what CSF would like on signage. I think it would be cool to just have something simple like 'Office of Sustainability pollinator garden #1' OR 'Student pollinator garden #1' but I'm open to suggestions. I thought about including the student group that helped on each sign, but then the signs might get crowded?

Photo Upload:

Please upload or provide links (below) to relevant photos.

Response:

- math-insallation-2.jpg [https://sustainability.arizona.edu/system/files/webform/csf_progress_report/341/math-insallation-2.jpg]
- math-installation-3.jpg [https://sustainability.arizona.edu/system/files/webform/csf_progress_report/341/math-installation-3.jpg]
- math-installation.jpg [https://sustainability.arizona.edu/system/files/webform/csf_progress_report/341/math-installation.jpg]
- mclelland-installation.jpg [https://sustainability.arizona.edu/system/files/webform/csf_progress_report/341/mclelland-installation.jpg]

Photo Link {Empty}

Photo Link:

Please copy hyperlinks to photos here should you not be able to individually upload photos.

Response:

{Empty}

Media/Links:

Please include links to any media coverage or events information (e.g. news, social media, websites, interviews, etc.)

Response:

There have been several postings on the world-renowned Instagram of Gornish: <https://www.instagram.com/restorecal/>.