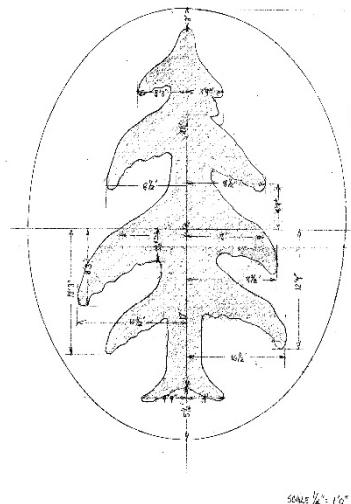


Annual Stanford Oval Marking

Originally a sunken water hole, the Oval was planted as a lawn in Stanford's early years, and sheep were used to keep weeds under control until the early 1930s. The raised flowerbeds at the Oval were added in the 1980s as a gift from a donor, and is now a favorite campus feature. Every spring, Grounds Services plant the flowers, but who plots out the bed design for planting?

Each year the bed is planted with one of four different designs, using red and white Begonia Semperflorens, reflecting correct Stanford colors. Usually in April, Galen Schmidt, Rob Donzanti, and Suman Prasad from LBRE Maps and Records, receive the year's design from Grounds Services and begin to mark out the design in preparation of new plant material to be planted there. The team takes approximately two to three hours to complete the design, based on the difficulty (the tree being the hardest). And they need to be quick about it, as dogs or kids can easily wipe out a whole morning's work! Sometimes, what's on paper doesn't translate to the ground. Often the team needs to use their own sense of placement and proportion. Galen and Rob use various measuring tools to ensure the design marked is to scale. After reviewing closely, the drawing points are then marked on the ground of the flowerbed. If all goes well, the two then paint out the design, using string line and good team communications, otherwise known as yelling, to be heard over the noise of visitors and traffic.



The Oval flowerbed is maintained over the spring and summer by Grounds Services, keeping the annual design bright. It is pulled in winter, to let the bed rest. The four designs rotate each year, with a special 125th Anniversary theme last year.

The Oval flowerbed is also a beloved tradition to the people that create and maintain it. Galen, Rob and Suman feel lucky to work on this project and look forward to participating each year. One of Suman's favorite things about this activity is sharing what they are doing, among other Stanford facts, with visitors as they walk by the Stanford Oval.