Despite a light drizzle and slight chill, UMass students gathered on Saturday, October 13th, to plant daffodils around CHC quad, between the Sycamore and Elm residency halls.

Students were greeted University staff members with bags of daffodil bulbs, shovels, and a device to pull up soil. They spent the afternoon thoroughly covering the ground, ensuring that, come spring, the area will sport a blanket of yellow flowers.

Every year students across campus gather for daffodil planting, connecting with the natural space as well as with their peers. It provides a way for students to make the space their own, and for them to get a chance to engage with the environment.

Along with the general enjoyment of the outdoors, the planting provides many students with a lesson in gardening. For instance, they learn how to plant daffodil bulbs with the rounder side and roots facing down, as well as how deep to plant them (six inches). The bulbs should avoid being planted in full shade or where water runoff might drown them. Students will be able to view the same flowers they planted outside their dorms or anytime they walk to Roots Cafe or the Recreation Center.
“I was looking forward to it, I got the email and thought it would be really nice,” said freshman biology and public health major, Mia Crockett. “Then I was worried that the rain would put a damper on it, but everyone showed up and it’s been super fun ... I learned [that] I’m really good at digging holes, so that’s a great talent to walk away with.”

Arshia Kauer, a freshman majoring in microbiology, added, “It was a really good time, a nice Saturday morning thing. And now we’re ready for the rest of the day!”

When the daffodils bloom in the spring, the Honors College will host the second stage of the planting: the Daffodil Lecture. This is annual event covers topics related to the environment and conservation, and is designed to show the Honors College’s commitment to the environment. Last year Professor Paige Warren gave a lecture on biodiversity in cities and urban access to wildlife. She discussed domestication in urban environments and how the results can be mutually beneficial for both humans and wildlife. The lecturer for spring 2019 will be announced in March.

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