

# GARDEN PATH RENOVATION

Jessica Bonilla, Director of Horticulture

In August 2023, we embarked on an amazing journey to update the garden paths on the west side of campus. The project allowed us to realize two goals: continue to put into action our commitment to sustainability and bring back the historic red color of the paths in a safe and effective manner. In terms of sustainability, the impermeable black asphalt paths were replaced with a porous paving material called Porous Pave. This product is made of recycled rubber pellets and stone that creates spaces in the material for water to pass through. This reduces storm water runoff and erosion in the gardens. Porous Pave also comes in a variety of colors, for example “redwood,” which ended up being quite similar to the original color of the paths. Since the color is manufactured into the product there is no loss of traction, or the maintenance requirements associated with a painted walkway.



Black asphalt paths



Checking a color swath of “redwood”

Pivot Construction arrived onsite on August 21, 2023, and the first order of business was to remove the existing walkway. Using a jack hammer, wheelbarrows, and determination, the crew broke up and hauled out several layers of paving material along the 813 linear foot paths, even unearthing the original red coating. We were especially excited that the layers peeled away from the edge which then could be reused for the new paving material.



Demolition of the paths



Material removal

From there, the existing base of soil and stone dust was compacted and covered with a woven landscape fabric. A layer of gravel was then extended on top. The fabric keeps the layers separate and doesn't allow the gravel to push into the existing base. The gravel gives the water a place to go as it travels through the Porous Pave allowing time for the water to seep into the base layer. The gravel was also compacted to create a smoother finish for applying the permeable paving material.



Fabric being laid out over the existing base and covered with gravel



The newly compacted gravel

Finally it was time to put down the Porous Pave. Bags of pelletized rubber made from recycled tires was combined with stone chips and a binding material in a plaster/mortar mixer. It was then carted to the path and spread using trowels to refine the surface.



The plaster/mortar mixer used for the Porous Pave

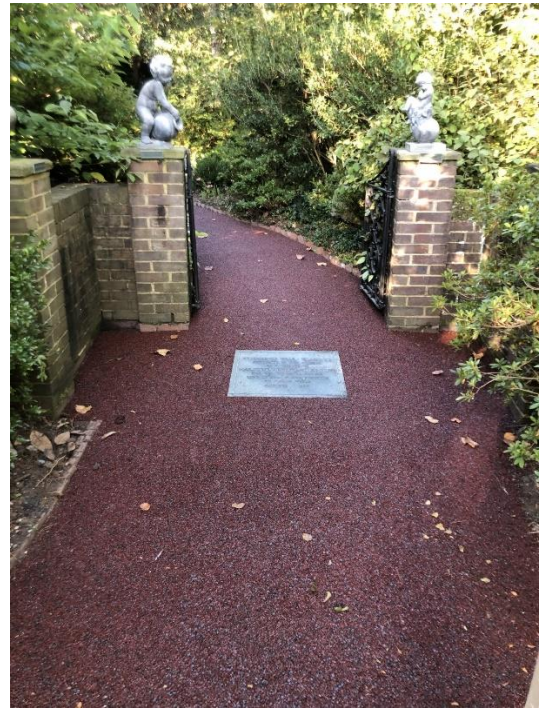


A team member spreading the paving material

Special attention had to be given to the plaque commemorating the Friendship Walk. Measurements were taken ahead of time to note the exact location of the piece as it was carefully removed from the path. After a big sigh of relief that the removal went smoothly, the base could be prepared, and everything put back with the new paving material.



Friendship Walk plaque removed to rep the base



Plaque restored with the new material

With one day of curing time, the paths were ready to be reopened to foot traffic and we could really see the final results. The color came out as expected and guests, staff, and volunteers are sure to notice that the rubber provides a pleasant walking experience.



Friendship Walk 1966



Friendship Walk 2023

At the same time, we added a piece of pathway at the Collections and Research Center. The new section completes the circuit around the bioretention pond and provides staff with a direct route to other parts of the building.



The Collections and Research Center – Before



The Collections and Research Center – After

The garden path project would not have been possible without the generous donations by our supporters now known as the Twenty-first Century Friends of Marjorie Merriweather Post. A plaque will be embedded in the path acknowledging their contributions and our gratitude.