

## **Meadow Renewal**

As part of a program aimed at improving the health and appearance of the trees, lawns, meadows, etc., on the Institute campus, funded by the Leon Levy Foundation, the landscape architect Patrick Chassé has recommended sowing native grasses and wildflowers and reducing invasive species in a number of the Institute's meadows. Native grasses and wildflowers are better able to inhibit weed invasion, control erosion, and reduce flood potential, and they benefit local wildlife. An initial trial is being conducted on a one-acre area in the field bounded by Maxwell Lane, Einstein Drive, and Battle Road Circle.

- Because of the extensive first year mowing, and because native wildflowers usually need two or more seasons to mature, wildflowers will not be evident in the first year. In the second year after seeding, some perennial grasses may begin to show and it is typical for the first wildflowers to establish their presence. In the third and succeeding years, more wildflowers will appear. The grasses will also have matured by this time, providing a stable, weed-suppressing backdrop to the wildflowers.

- Using the services of Larry Weaner Landscape Associates, the transition process will begin on or about June 22, 2011 with the application of a broad leaf herbicide that will not harm the existing grasses, leaving them in place through the summer. The field will be mowed two to three weeks later.

- After a second herbicide application in September to eliminate the existing growth, the site will again be mowed two weeks after that application. Planting of native grasses will occur in October. A temporary grass nurse crop, germinating quickly, will provide a presentable appearance through the winter and early spring, after which meadow seedlings will germinate.

- The herbicides chosen for application have a short residual effect and are considered ecologically benign by restoration ecologists. Nonetheless, warning flags will be posted at approximately 30-foot intervals along the perimeter of the field during at least the first 72 hours following application. To ensure full coverage, the herbicide will be tinted with a photosensitive blue food grade dye that will disappear shortly.