Clubs combine in the name of cross country

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Pitchforks and leather gloves in hand, the Forestry Club and Horticulture Club joined forces in the name of the ISU Cross Country Team. The challenge was mulching nearly 200 trees that had been planted around the perimeter of the course and the opponent was the clock.

The NCAA National Cross Country Championship Meet would be held at ISU in two weeks, and the clubs were challenged to spruce up the landscape for the big day.

Nearly 15 Hort Club and Forestry Club members met at the course on a chilly November morning. After a sugar-packed snack of donuts and juice, the crew gathered tools and hit the trail.

Splitting up into groups of Haulers and Spreaders, club members worked together to get the job done. Two pickup trucks were used to haul mulch from a nearby pile and drop it near deciduous and evergreen trees.

The Haulers had the most fun by far. Their work consisted of getting as much mulch in the back of the pickup as quickly as possible. After several trips to the mulch pile, they began to devise new methods of moving mulch into the pickup bed. One of the most notable was having several people climb to the top of the pile and proceed to roll down - dislodging mulch as they rolled and causing it to land in the truck bed.

While the Haulers were careening down hills, the spreaders were hard at work with spades. The layer of sod around the circumference of the tree was turned under to prevent future weed growth. The spreaders then distributed a thick layer of mulch around each tree.

Jackets and hats were quickly discarded as club members made their way around the 3.xxxxxx mile course. About two and a half hours later all-200 trees had been mulched. Returning to the head of the course, the crew set out a few chrysanthemums to greet spectators as they entered the course.

The trees now had a ring of protection from mower blades and the cross country course was in fine form. It was up to the ISU Cross Country team to finish out the race!