

Growing a rain garden

By Matt Hutton

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MONMOUTH — Every good garden needs some rain — but sometimes rain needs a good garden.

As the culmination of his Green Initiatives course, Monmouth College Professor Bradley Sturgeon and friends planted a rain garden Monday night at the Monmouth Community Garden at the New River of Life Church.

A rain garden is a garden constructed to catch runoff from roofs or other non-permeable surfaces, such as parking lots, Sturgeon said. Runoff can leak nutrients, fuel spills and pesticides out of the soil or off hard surfaces and put them into the sewer system leading to pollution.

A rain garden is constructed to catch the runoff. By using drought-resistant plants with deep roots, it not only keeps the soil permeable but requires almost no maintenance.

"Water enters into the rain garden, percolates into the soil and replenished the ground water," Sturgeon said, adding the Monmouth garden had about 17 different types of plants.

The Green Initiatives course, which has been taught for about a year and a half, is part of Monmouth College's citizenship courses aimed to give students in all walks of life practical experience.

"A lot of my students were business majors," said the chemistry professor.

Sturgeon and his students applied for and received a \$500 state grant for the project.

The plants were provided through Simply Native Nursery of Alexis, with owner Kathy Hale-Johnson donating her time for both planting and designing the garden.

Sturgeon was grateful to volunteers who helped dig up the garden Sunday night, Tim, Elka, Stella, Hollis Narkiewicz, Al and Peggy Kulczewski and their grandson Spencer, and Jancie Tyree.

"This was 80 percent of the effort," he said.

<http://www.reviewatlas.com/news/x592691632/Growing-a-rain-garden>



(Center) Monmouth College Professor Bradley Sturgeon, his son, Zach, 10, and Kathy Hale-Johnson prepare the soil for planting a rain garden Monday night at the New River of Life Church.



(From left) Tara Sturgeon, Kathy Hale-Johnson and Kath Sturgeon work on the rain garden Monday night.