

How does your garden grow?

Leominster planting workshops cover conservation, soil practices

By Michael Hartwell

mhartwell@sentinelandenterprise.com

LEOMINSTER — Gardeners from around the area came to The Trustees of Reservations' Doyle Center this weekend to gain advice and insight on improving their plots.

Saturday morning was the second annual Gardeners' Gathering, which is a collaboration between The Trustees of Reservations and the Growing Places Garden Project.

About 100 people attended, up from a turnout of 78 the year before.

"This is to get people excited about vegetable gardens," said Joanne Foster, executive director of Growing Places.

"We're bringing together gardeners from all across North Central Massachusetts," said Josiah Richards, program coordinator for The

Trustees of Reservations.

Foster and Richards both said the event also served as an opportunity to recruit volunteers into their organizations.

The event featured four workshops, including an exploration on the mechanics and best practices of soil, water conservation and rain gardening and techniques for raise herbs. There was also a seed swap table and informational displays.

Paul Taylor of Growing Places gave an in-depth demonstration on building wooden frames for raised garden beds. He said the boxy structures need to be firm and solid to prevent soil from leaking out at the corners, but require less finishing detail as an indoor cabinet project.

Participant Janet Veino of Chelmsford has been gardening for 20 years.

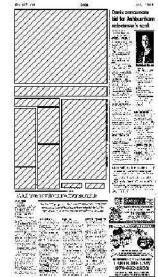
"This has been just excellent," she said. The biggest draw for her was the workshop on water conservation. She said she is concerned about environmental harm caused by using more water than necessary.

Edy Lopez of Haverhill has been gardening for six years and is part of a gardening group in Lawrence. He grows tomatoes along with hot peppers like jalepenos.

The herb workshop gave participants black plastic trays filled with soil and allowed them to cut off pieces of plants to regrow at home. He chose thyme, curry and a bay leaf.

"I loved getting information I can use right away," said Lopez.

Follow Michael Hartwell at facebook.com/michaelhartwell or on Twitter @Shartwell.





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Paul Taylor demonstrates the steps to building a wooden raised bed garden frame as he screwed two sides together during the second annual Gardners' Gathering at the Doyle Center in Leominster on Saturday morning.



Maria Natera of Lawrence assists Paul Taylor in building a garden bed frame.