

Adding pizzazz to rain barrels

<http://www.gtowntimes.com/story/Adding-pizzazz-to-rain-barrels>

Article Content:

By Clayton Stairs

cstairs@gtowntimes.com

Nakia Keith and Caroline Stalvey work together to complete a garden design on a four-foot-high plastic rain barrel. They aim their brushes carefully to create flowers and green leaves bursting through a white fence.

Art students at Georgetown High School are painting designs on these barrels to make them attractive for area schools, businesses and homes.

The school is the first of four county high schools partnering with Wal-Mart to spread the word about recycling water and reducing storm water runoff.

They completed the rain garden with the assistance of Georgetown County and the Coastal Waccamaw Stormwater Education Consortium.

And now science teacher David Wylie is leading this new project to further reduce stormwater runoff, which pollutes our waterways.

He has asked the school's art students in Kelley Shelley's class to roll up their sleeves and give the plain white rain barrels some pizzazz -- a job they began Monday.

Colorful designs

Wylie found the four-foot-high plastic barrels with a diameter of about two feet at a Pepsi plant in Conway, which he purchased with money left over from the rain garden project.

Wal-Mart gave the school \$5,000 for the rain garden project, but Wylie only spent about \$4,000 in December, mostly for educational resources for the school.

He then purchased hoses, filters, faucets and connecting pieces for the construction of these devices that capture rain water and store it for re-use on lawns and gardens.

Colorful designs on the barrels are inspired by gardens, animals, the beach and the sun.

Senior Bridget Johnson, who was painting a surreal beach scene with a gigantic orange sun and yellow sky, said painting on the rain barrel was like having a huge canvas to fill up with vibrant colors.

"This is a cool new thing," Johnson said. "We usually only get a certain amount of space to paint, but these are big."

Saving money

Wylie said a half inch of rain over a roof of a typical-size home (2,000 square feet) produces 600 gallons of water.

"Since half of the water we use is for irrigation, these rain barrels will pay for themselves in no time." he said.

When complete, students will sell the rain barrels for \$70 to \$80, as opposed to \$130 at local hardware stores, Wylie said.

Next year, Wylie's students will teach other local high school students to create these rain barrels.

"This is an ideal situation," said Karen Fuss, coordinator for the consortium.

"The project has extended beyond science and it will soon spread to other schools and into the community."



Clayton Stairs/Times: Georgetown High senior Bridget Johnson creates a dreamy ocean scene on a rain barrel. The barrels, which help reduce stormwater runoff and reduce water costs, will be displayed at Wal-Mart in May, then sold to the public.

Article Comments:

0 comment found!