

Green Thumbs work urban garden

By JO NUGENT
Of the Emerald

To some people, transforming the acre of wild, weedy soil behind Murphy's tavern into a productive and healthy garden might be a back-breaking chore, but to the University students working on the Urban Farm, it's an enjoyable and rewarding endeavor.

Jessica Deis and Kaki Rusmore, instructors in Landscape Architecture 406, Urban Farm / Spring Garden, are the unifying force behind this hodge-podge of enthusiastic students experimenting with gardening.

Of the 40-odd students enrolled in the class, few have had any gardening experience. Deis claims this doesn't seem to discourage students and goes on to say, "There is a lot of interest in communal gardening. I think everyone has a basic desire to grow things." Deis discounts the myth of the green thumb, but admits, "Some people make more mistakes than others."

The Urban Farm is a beehive of activity. Both communal and individual plots are cultivated. While some students plant beans and peas in one area, strawberries are already coming up in another. Many urban farmers vigorously attack densely weeded areas to make way for flower and herb gardens.

Biodynamic gardening is one of the experiments underway at the Urban Farm. In this process, manure, placed in a trench two feet below the seedlings, decomposes and creates heat, consequently enriching the soil. Deis claims that this method will yield "large quantities of food quickly and in a small space." Could this be the answer to the frustrated city dweller who dreams of gardening and has only a small porch or an accommodating windowsill? Deis, who never had a garden before she came to Eugene, laughs and says, "After all, you have to do it where you can!"

Although fertilizing, watering, weeding and loving are essential to the health and happiness of all green plants, Deis feels that gardening is an acquired skill and says that there is only so much you can learn from books and other people. "Practical experience is the key," she says.



Drawing by Becky Young

'Tar balls' hit Washington beach

NEAH BAY, Wash. (AP) — More than 200 gallons of old oil molded into solid "tar balls" washed ashore at Makah Bay Thursday, the Coast Guard said.

A spokesman said servicemen from the Coast Guard and Air Force stations here were able to pick up the hard oil balls individually. He said there was no damage to the beach, and no sea birds were harmed.

Source of the pollution, apparently localized at Neah Bay, was not known, the spokesman said.

Oil floated ashore along a two-mile area im-

mediately south of Cape Flattery. The part of the bay most affected is Sooes Beach, the spokesman said.

The oil had been at sea for a long period of time, the spokesman said.

The spill was the second in about two months in the area. Early in March, a spill of oil washed ashore at a half-dozen spots along the Washington and Oregon coast, killing more than 700 sea birds. Some estimated that the bird loss was as high as 50,000, but that was never substantiated.

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