

# Food-Op program constructs 'cloche' on a pea-sized budget

By Tony Hazarian  
Of the Emerald

A greenhouse is a practical method of growing crops during unseasonal weather, yet many urban farmers shun the structure because it can be both costly and time-consuming to build.

That doesn't always have to be the case, as the Food-Op Outreach program showed Thursday afternoon by constructing a 5x20 foot greenhouse for a mere \$23 behind the Food-Op building, located near the corner of 15th Avenue and Agate Street.

Winter crops, such as lettuce, chard, beans and peas will be grown in the PVC (plastic pipe) framed bell-shaped structure and sold at the Food-Op, said Pat McGurk, director of the Food-Op Outreach program.

"It was the cheapest, most efficient way to farm during the winter," McGurk said. "And we'll be able to sell the food extremely cheap, which definitely helps students."

The small size of the greenhouse, referred to as a cloche by McGurk, makes it an impractical way to grow large quantities of produce, he said. But beyond the savings to students, the greenhouse will exist for another, more important reason, he said.



Photo by Bob Baker

Food-Op patrons can expect fresh produce next year, courtesy of Pat McGurk (at left) and Mark Espinosa.

"It will help in the education aspect, and that's our expectation," McGurk said. A sign and a step-by-step instruction board will be placed by the structure.

The Food-Op's cloche consists of a plastic pipe and wood frame covered by polyurethane. The sides can be lifted to water, weed and harvest the crops, and the ends can be opened.

decided to construct the cloche a few weeks ago after hearing of the success of winter-growing in Findhorn, Switzerland, where record-size crops have been grown in similar structures.

McGurk isn't concerned that the Eugene winter weather will destroy the cloche, even though it's anchored in soft dirt.

"It's fantastic and it will work," McGurk said.

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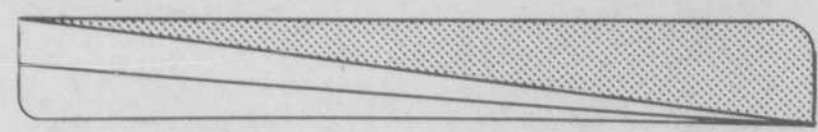
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