

## School's garden project expected to sow seeds of learning

### Mason Intermediate will plant a patch with help from the community.

By [Eric Schwartzberg](#), Staff Writer 3:50 PM Wednesday, September 8, 2010

MASON — Teachers, students and parent volunteers will get their hands dirty installing a community garden at Mason Intermediate School this weekend in an effort expected to do more than just grow vegetables.

The community garden serves two purposes, providing a resource to meet curriculum objectives and providing a community service project, according to fourth-grade teachers Patty Quill and Becky Roussos.

“We study plants for 12 weeks and things like life cycles, adaptations and parts of a plant, so we thought this is just a really wonderful, real-world, hands-on experience for the students to learn about plants,” Quill said.

The garden also will help with math objectives, such as measuring, estimating, data collection and graphing.

The project started when Paula Mangold of Whole Foods Market expressed an interest in helping to install a school garden. In July, Quill and Roussos met Mangold and Wes Duren of Marvin's Organic Gardens to decide on where the garden would go.

Funding for the project came from a 5 percent day at Whole Food last month, which raised more than \$1,400.

The garden is modeled after Whole Foods' garden at Cottell Park in Deerfield Twp. and will include eight raised beds, which are 4 feet long and 4 feet wide.

Most materials required for the garden came from the two Warren County businesses, with Marvin's Organic Gardens' donating mulch for a pathway between the crops to allow students enough space to tend to the garden.

Future funding will be sought through grants and donations.

Volunteers are scheduled to install the garden the morning of Sept. 11, and Duren and Mangold will be on hand Sept. 13 to help students plant the garden, which will include beets, spinach, lettuce, Swiss chard, radishes and kale.

The resulting crop is expected to go to an area aid organization, but the two teachers have yet to decide on a recipient, Roussos said.

And if the garden doesn't grow?

"They can learn from their mistakes and... hopefully next year we'll know what to do so that we can do a service project, as well," Roussos said.