

Bloomfield Community Garden group completes initial planting

Saturday, March 2, 2024

By Patti Danner, Editor



Bags of soil are spread into a large bed by Cullison, Erinosh, Riggs and Huang.

Photo by Patti Danner

A group of volunteers made up of county residents, representatives of community organizations that provide services to county children and families and researchers and others from Indiana University took part in the initial stage of the Bloomfield Community Garden project at the Bloomfield Library.

The project is an IU-Purdue Extension research study funded by a small planning grant provided by the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CTSI) of IUPUI.

Getting their hands dirty for the day were Project Manager Katherine Jochim Pope of the IU School of Public Health Bloomfield Public Library Director Jess McKamey, Library Literacy Coordinator and owner of Four Flags Farm Armonda Riggs, Family Life Center's Dianne Langer, IU Project Principal Investigator, Dr. Tope

Erinosho, IU med student and possible future pediatrician, Tien-Lu Huang, volunteer Wyatt Cullison, Greene County Master Gardeners President Brenda Hughes, Bloomfield students and volunteers Malia and Kendall Pischel, Tom and Kenda Jochim, Purdue Extension's Sean Huss and Bloomfield's own Jack Terrell.

The initial planting done Saturday began with group members first planning where to locate the two large planters built by Terrell and the five raised-bed planters provided using grant funds.

Once old hay bales and other brush and debris were cleared and plans were decided upon, all hands got to work, several volunteers working as a team to move the large beds, and groups of two setting the smaller beds into place, leveling them and then adding hay to the bottom of each container. After the hay, the shovels came out and a mound of dirt was divided between containers and shoveled in.

Next, each bed was given a generous layer of rich soil from bags purchased from local vendors.

With all containers readied, the volunteers began to plant.

Packets of seeds of a few varieties of lettuce, spinach, kale, radishes and herbs were planted in raised beds, as well as strawberry seedlings.

In other beds, neat rows of carrots, turnips and beet seeds began their journey to become nourishing, healthy food for the community. A row of sweet peas along one edge will grow skyward up a trellis yet to be installed.

More planting sessions are planned for spring, summer and fall produce and all participants will receive a share of the yield.

Young library patrons and their families will be offered a chance to get involved and get free education and experience in the coming months as the Community Garden takes root.

To volunteer and get your hands dirty, contact Katherine Jochim Pope at kjpope@iu.edu or contact Library Director Jess McKamey at the Bloomfield Public Library.