

Gardeners offer tips for greening up the city

By **MONSY ALVARADO**
STAFF WRITER

PATERSON – The goal was to teach city residents how to improve the look of their neighborhoods by planting fruit, vegetable and flower gardens on their properties.

But Saturday's rains may have kept some would-be gardeners away from Eastside Park where City Green Inc., a Ringwood-based community organization, was holding a workshop.

Still, it was a start.

"It's a good effort, but I'm disappointed that there are no kids from Paterson here," said Leslie Agard-Jones, who lives near the park and works for the Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation, a Teaneck organization that funds City Green projects. "I would have liked to see more of our students here, but you have to begin some place."

The workshop, held at the City Green Learning Garden, was geared at teaching residents how to add more greenery to their neighborhoods, as well as to offer insight into how and when to

plant in their yards.

"We want to teach people how important it is for them to live side by side with nature," said Tom Fox, city gardening coordinator for the non-profit.

Since 2005, City Green has planted vegetable and flower gardens in several locations in the city, including the Paterson Free Public Library, the YWCA and at Straight & Narrow, a residential treatment program that helps adults recover from various addictions. Fox said the organization has plans to plant several more gardens throughout the area.

The projects are funded through grants and donations and rely on the work of volunteers.

The weather and the city's African Heritage Parade, which closed streets near the park, didn't prevent Mary Davatelis of 18th Avenue from stopping at the outdoor center. The 79-year-old lifelong Paterson resident said she wanted to learn more about gardening. Although she plants tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, zucchini, basil, chives, oregano and mint in her back yard every year, she said she had some questions

Get growing

City Green plans to hold more workshops for residents and is sponsoring the first annual "Greenest Block in Paterson" contest. Prizes will be given to blocks that have the most participation, the best use of color and vegetables, and are most creative, among other categories.

For information, e-mail City Green at info@city-green.org.

for the experts.

"I noticed mushrooms coming up and I want to know how to get rid of them," she said.

Four students from Kinnelon High School in Morris County stopped by to pull out weeds. They are members of the school's Habitat for Humanity organization and wanted to volunteer in the garden.

"I just think it's nice to help out in towns, other towns that are not Kinnelon," said 17-year-old Leah Koster, a junior.

City Green's largest garden



CARMINE GALASSO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mary Davatelis of Paterson surveying plants in the city's Eastside Park during Saturday's City Green workshop.

project is the one at Eastside Park, located behind the historic White House. The roughly 80-square-foot garden used to be strewn with tires, but in the past year it was converted into the learning center and filled with fruit and vegetable plants. Tomatoes, raspberries, eggplants, lettuce, pump-

kins, cucumbers and peppers are among the crops. Once picked, the produce will be given to children attending programs at the center and city residents in need, and also will be sold at the local farmer's market, Fox said.

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