

Our Lady of Mercy School joins Coastal Roots Program

Our Lady of Mercy School is currently a participant of a project entitled, Coastal Roots: Seedling Nursery Program for Wetland Restoration.

Coastal Roots is a program for students in fourth grade through high school in south Louisiana. Students are taking part in this project by establishing plant nurseries at their schools. Students grow native restoration seedlings that they will plant in a coastal wetland restoration project in south Louisiana in the fall of 2003.

Participating students are working with seeds from the southern bald cypress, southern wax myrtle, black mangrove, red mulberry and hackberry. As one of the

four area schools participating in the project, Our Lady of Mercy students planted seeds for wax myrtle and red mulberry trees.

The garden, which was constructed in May, has an automated sprinkling system to maintain the nursery throughout the summer. Until the garden construction was complete, students had to physically move the plants into the sun and water them each day. The students who planted and tended the seedlings will take a field trip in the fall to plant the trees in an area that needs vegetation to help curb coastal erosion.

Louisiana loses over 50 square miles a year due to coastal erosion. The Coastal Roots Nursery Program will enable students to become well informed about issues of coastal stewardship, as well as actively participate in coastal and wetland restoration projects. The program goals and objectives are to assist students in developing an attitude of stewardship toward our natural resources and to provide them a constructive active learning situation in which they can explore strategies for sustaining our coastal ecosystem.

Students were provided background information on wetlands issues, and the final objective of the project will be to have students produce wetland plants that they can use in a hands-on restoration program.

This project is funded by Barataria-Terrebone National Estuary Program, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and Louisiana Sea Grant College Program. It is supported by Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, and LSU Department of Horticulture. Further information can be found at the Coastal Roots website at <http://lamerlsu.edu/projects/coastalroots/>.



Our Lady of Mercy students Patrick Talbot and Drew Maranto pitch in to help with digging for the nursery and automated sprinkler system. Photo provided by Our Lady of Mercy School



OLOM seventh-grader Kelly Connelly gets at ground level to help with the digging for the seedlings nursery. Photo provided by Our Lady of Mercy School