

# Kunderts going green to save a green

Monroe couple are having a rain garden built to prevent runoff

By Kayla Bunge

kbunge@themonroetimes.com

MONROE — As avid golfers, Jack and Marian Kundert were worried the new development on their decades-old farmland might encroach on the Monroe Country Club golf course.

"I was concerned about water running onto the green," Marian said.

The Kunderts moved into their new house only about a month ago; the land was Marian's father's. It wasn't long before they noticed that their sloping backyard might cause a problem.

Their solution? A rain garden.

"Rain gardens ... are shallow depressions strategically placed to capture the rainwater or melted snow pouring from rooftops and driveways and return it to the ground," according to the Isthmus, Madison's free weekly newspaper, where Marian read an article about the eco-friendly landscaping.

Marian said she knew all it would take is one storm to put her beloved view from the second-story deck — the brilliant green of the golf course — in jeopardy.

"I knew that if we ever have a torrential rain, we would really have a problem," she said. "We're so close."

The Kunderts contacted Formecology, an Evansville-based landscaping firm, as it was listed alongside the Isthmus article. Marian said she talked at length with the company and was pleased with everything it had to offer.

She and her husband even convinced their soon-to-be neighbors, Joe and Marcia Donny, who share the bi-level duplex next to the golf



Times photo: Brenda Steurer

Formecology landscapers Nancy Schlapbach and Nick Smith place boulders and large rocks along the back of Jack and Marian Kundert's rain garden. The Kunderts' property borders the Monroe Country Club golf course, and they were concerned about water running onto the green. Their solution was to install a rain garden. The boulders and rocks will "hold up" the slope, preventing it from eroding into the would-be garden.

course, to install a rain garden on their side of the backyard.

Three Formecology landscapers set to work on the Kunderts' garden Wednesday. Theirs is not the first in the Monroe area; however rain gardens are not nearly as common here as they are in Madison.

The landscapers began by surveying the yard, determining how much stormwater comes into the ground from the roof, among other sources. That dictates the size of the garden.

The Kunderts' garden is small and located in the corner of their back-

yard, mere feet from the Monroe Country Club green.

"It was the best place based on function and aesthetics," Formecology Project Manager Eric Jacobsen said.

Jacobsen and his teammates, Nancy Schlapbach and Nick Smith, dug small trenches — what Marian calls "troughs" — in the ground that lead from the Kunderts' downspout to the garden area; they also installed PVC piping underground to aid with water flow to the garden.

The team dug out the corner of the

slope and placed boulders and large rocks at the back of the would-be garden, to "hold up" the slope and prevent it from eroding into and ultimately smothering the rain garden.

Over the next couple of days, they'll plant native wildflowers in the garden, creating "a habitat for butterflies and birds," among other creatures, Jacobsen said.

The wildflowers will also help break up the soil, allowing for continued optimum drainage, and they "do a much, much better job of soaking up water than your average

**"I knew that if we ever had a torrential rain, we would really have a problem. We're so close."**

— Marian Kundert

lawn grass," the Isthmus said.

"And it's going to look awful pretty," Jacobsen laughed.

Rain gardens have several benefits, he added. They keep toxic rainwater, full of sand, sediment and around-the-yard chemicals, out of local waterways — lakes, rivers and streams. They also prevent flooding and help to recharge the aquifers for ground water.

Marian can't wait for Formecology to finish her rain garden. Not only is she looking forward to the brightly-colored wildflowers and the garden's overall low maintenance, but she's happy knowing she's not putting her beloved links at risk.



## RAIN GARDEN

Monroe residents find interesting solution to backyard slope

Local, Page A3