

This church believes in rain gardens

MIDWAY CHRISTIAN IS ONE STOP ON THREE-DAY ECO-FRIENDLY TOUR

By Beverly Fortune

Contributing Garden Writer

MIDWAY — Midway Christian Church had water problems every time it rained.

Water gushed from a downspout, eroding a steep bank next to the building and washing mud over a concrete parking area.

Rather than taking on an expensive construction project, church leaders looked at installing an environmentally friendly rain garden to deal with the unwanted water. This was in keeping with the mission of Midway Christian, certified as a “green chalice congregation” by the Disciples of Christ. “That means we are more intentional at being eco-friendly,” said the Rev. Heather McColl, the church’s senior minister.

In 2010, the church asked Bluegrass Greensource for advice on where to place the garden, an appropriate size and what to plant. Church members and several civic groups excavated down about two feet, an area 18 by 18 feet.

Volunteers planted native varieties of monarda (bee balm), rudbeckia (black-eyed Susan), purple coneflower, liatris (blazing star), Queen Anne’s lace, columbine, milkweed, goldenrod, yarrow, royal fern and ginger.



Adele Dickerson weeded a rain garden Wednesday at Midway Christian Church. The spiky purple flower is liatris, also called blazing star.

The garden has been “wonderfully successful” at eliminating water problems while attracting birds, bees and other pollinators, Adele Dickerson said this week as she and her husband, Dan Roller, worked in the garden. A second rain garden has been installed on the other side of the building.

A rain garden, simply a shallow depression in the ground planted with deep-rooted native plants, captures runoff from impervious surfaces: patios, driveways, roofs and parking lots. The water soaks into the soil, where plant roots help filter out pollutants. Drainage is improved and flooding is reduced.

Midway Christian is among nine rain gardens in Central Kentucky open to the public next weekend to show how a rain garden can be an attractive addition to a yard, while slowing or eliminating stormwater runoff and improving water quality in area streams.

“We want homeowners to know the benefits. Rain gardens are a tool virtually anyone can use to manage runoff from their property,” said Kara Sayles, the rain garden project coordinator for Bluegrass Greensource, an organization that promotes environmental education.

Runoff sends trash from sidewalks and streets, pesticides washed from lawns, and grease and oil from driveways and commercial establishments into storm sewers that flow directly into waterways.

Bluegrass Greensource has promoted rain gardens for the past two years through a series of workshops. Next week’s three separate tours are a culmination of these efforts.

Tours will be in Midway on Friday, Berea on July 11 and Georgetown on July 12. Participants will visit several established gardens that vary in size and design.

Sayles will be the tour guide each day, giving information on location, construction, appropriate native plants and maintenance of a rain garden.

Each tour visitor who lives in Scott, Woodford, Bourbon, Clark, Jessamine and Madison counties will be eligible for one of 50 grants of \$250 each to create and plant their own rain garden.

Beverly Fortune is a retired Herald-Leader staff writer and a master gardener.

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IF YOU GO

Rain garden tours

Presented by: Bluegrass Greensource

Where and when: 6:30-8:30 p.m. July 10, Midway Christian Church, 123 E. Bruen St., Midway.

1-4 p.m. July 11, Union Church, 200 Prospect St., Berea.

1-4 p.m. July 12, Scott County Public Library, 104 South Bradford Lane, Georgetown.

Admission: Free

Online: BGgreensource.org

Call: (859) 266-1572.