

Eco-friendly rain collection means lower water bill

The steep hill behind Rebecca Koop's pottery shop in Kansas City's Northeast area produces volumes of water runoff, as does her roof.

This year Koop plans to capture that water to irrigate her community garden, and keep it out of the city's ancient combined sewer system.

"We're trying to be as eco-friendly as possible," said Koop, "and not have to pay for water."

Koop will use the water to irrigate St. John Gardens in the 3900 block of St. John Avenue, formerly a lot full of weeds.

Volunteers are working on a couple of rain gardens to col-

lect hillside water as well as planting fruit trees and painting a garden-themed mural for the side of Koop's business.

Last week Koop had a plumber over to help her install a system of nine 50-gallon barrels to capture rainwater from the roof of her business. It will be stored for gardeners to tap into during the summer.

Koop, who also is executive director of the Northeast Chamber of Commerce, adopted a policy of using recycled materials as much as possible in the community garden.

Concrete roofing shingles from the Habitat for Humanity Restore are used to create the

raised planting beds. Old tires will become small beds for tomatoes and beans.

Last fall Koop advertised in the *Northeast News* that she was accepting leaves for her compost bins, which also benefit from espresso grounds she gets from Starbucks.

Koop also grows her own worms to help with the decomposition.

There is plenty of room for more farmers in the lot, 100 feet by 150 feet.

"Being a gardener at heart with a tiny little lot that is all planted, I wanted a bigger yard and lo and behold I got what I asked for," Koop said, laughing.



MIKE RANDELL | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Last week, a rain collection system was installed by Rebecca Koop for a community garden. She discussed the project with Kyle Daily of Lexington Plumbing.