

'Cityscapes' Display Is A Horticultural First For Pequea Ag Science Students

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KINZERS (Lancaster Co.) — It has a brick grill, a bench to sit on, is surrounded by flowers, and you can watch the city in the distance.

(No, it's not the balcony of a Park Avenue penthouse apartment or a corner suite at the Rittenhouse.)

Actually, it's a major ag science project, a first for Pequea Valley ag science students.

For the first time in their history, going by sheer planning, creativity, and wits, Pequea Valley High School students are planning (as one famous TV personality used to say) "a big show, a really big show," with their horticultural display at this year's Farm Show in Harrisburg.

The display, measuring 15 feet wide by 10 feet deep in the Family Living Section of the Farm Show, if approved, could showcase the work of horticultural students from the school.

The theme "cityscapes" was chosen, noted Clair Witwer, ag science instructor at the high school. "Ours is a rooftop garden," he said as he laid down an architectural rendering drawn by Pequea Valley High School stu-

dents.

The plans include a display featuring a brick grill measuring 27 inches square. "You can't fire it up, of course," said Witwer. The display will feature a fountain with annuals placed around it on a wooden deck.

The display will also feature a conifer and raised planter, iron railing, a four-foot bench, a table measuring 20 square inches, herb garden, social area, and other amenities.

"And this was our backup plan," said Witwer. "Our original plan was even neater."

The students, with help from electronic library resources and the Internet, checked out books such as "Balcony of Roof Gardening," "Small Yard," "Truly Tiny Gardens," "Container Gardens," and others to learn how to put it together.

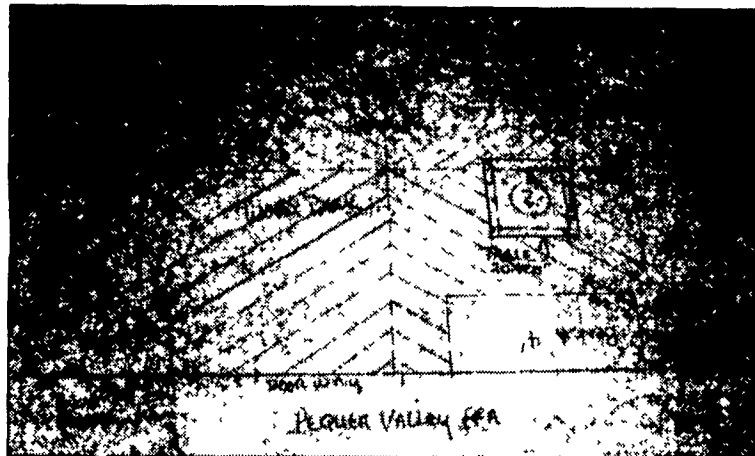
The project involves the students in a way that allows them to project their classroom living to visitors from the city to the Farm Show.

The work involves about 17 ninth through 12th graders at the school, as part of Witwer's horticulture class.

About 120 students from seven classes are enrolled in the ag sci-



The horticultural class at Pequea Valley High School stand at the sides of at the ebb and flood benches in the school's new greenhouse facility.



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Tenth-graders Ryan Eldridge, left, and Danielle Diem with biology and environmental science teacher John Celli at the school's woodlot.

ences curriculum at Pequea Valley, Witwer noted.

The horticulture project had an assist in a big way from the recent renovations and expansions at the school.

Work was finished in the fall last year on the renovated ag science laboratory, which also includes a new greenhouse.

The greenhouse measures 24 by 40 feet with a concrete floor. Tables are ebb and flood. The house is completely computerized.

Cost of ag renovations: from \$750,000-\$900,000, Witwer noted.

The greenhouse is used for propagating landscape and floriculture material. Some material has been planted at the school, along with landscaping done professionally.

Included are hanging baskets and container flowers.

The Farm Show project calls for annuals. The class has planted many flowers, including carnations, Alyssum, Sage, Salvia, marigolds, Celosia, and Balsam. Alyssum is arrayed on 288-plug trays. Bigger seedlings are arrayed in 72-plug trays.

Ag science students are also involved in other hands-on activities.

Just outside the school is a woodlot where biology classes toured, inspecting the flora and collecting "molds," noted John Celli, biology and environmental



Justin Heller, left, sophomore and George Feliciano look over material collected in the woodlot.

science instructor.

Rather than simply learning about fungus in the classroom, Celli believed it was important for students to see how the material grew outside.

Witwer's horticulture science

class brought out the anvil shears to prune away plant material.

Instructors are working to ensure the wildlife habitat remains intact as field study for students.



Daniel Lynch, wildlife education specialist and deputy wildlife conservation officer with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, in center with tie, spoke about some trees in a protected area of the school.