

## COLCHESTER

# St. Michael's to celebrate opening of teaching gardens

The teaching gardens of St. Michael's College will be presented to the community at an opening celebration at 3 p.m. Monday.

The gardens, named Books in Bloom and Native Plants of Vermont, are between the McCarthy Arts Center and St. Edmund's Hall on the campus.

Students of botany and of children's literature will give tours of the gardens, and the St. Michael's College Chorale will sing garden songs.

Three years of planning, planting and caring for the gardens have resulted in blooming displays that represent plants important to works of children's literature in the Books in Bloom garden and Native Plants of Vermont in the other. The plants are labeled, and together they become a teaching tool for education students and botany students, who worked together to select plants.

Mark Lubkowitz of Huntington, assistant biology professor who specializes in botany, and Valerie Bang-Jensen of Burlington, assistant education professor, created the project and then looked to their students to bring it to fruition.

"It's really a dream come true," Bang-Jensen said. "It's



*Photo courtesy of St. Michael's College*

**Mark Lubkowitz, assistant biology professor, and Valerie Bang-Jensen, assistant education professor, planned the teaching gardens of St. Michael's College.**

a vision Mark and I had when we arrived here together six years ago, and so many people at the college have made it come true — the president, the physical plant, the gardeners, the faculty council."

Once they learned about privet hedges, education students thought of the street, Privet, where the Dursely family in the Harry Potter series resides. They consulted with the botany students to find out if privet would survive a Vermont winter and planted two hedges of it in the garden.

In "Miss Rumphius" by Barbara Cooney, flowering lupine are seeded all over a Maine hillside, clearly a cold-climate plant. Thus beautiful spiked blue lupine were planted. A book named "Chrysanthemum"

by Kevin Henkes provided an obvious choice, once the botanists discovered a viable species. The book "Klara's New World" by Jeanette Winter features gentian.

Biology students made floral suggestions to match the education students' literary discoveries. The plants are labeled to enhance the educational function of the project, which is designed to be an aid to biology students and teachers of children's literature.

The two gardens join a third project, the St. Michael's Arboretum, in which botany students have during the past three years cataloged and labeled more than 50 tree species on the college campus.

— Source: St. Michael's College