

## Preschoolers get the hang of botany May 6, 2008

Terry Organ Miner Staff Reporter



TERRY ORGAN/Miner

Kingman Academy of Learner preschooler MacKenzie Cathey prepares to add another plant once classroom assistant Lori Snow tamps down soil in the hanging basket each p.m. preschool child made Monday. Children in a.m. preschool classes are to make hanging baskets Wednesday.

Children in four p.m. preschool classes at the Kingman Academy of Learning learned a little about botany Monday.

Nina Brackett, extension program assistant/school gardening and 4-H development with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Service, visited the school with members of the Cerbat Garden Club. They showed the children how to make hanging baskets to beautify the school playground as part of a project funded by the State forestry department's Community Challenge Grant and the Kingman Clean City Commission Arbor Day & Community Beautification Scholarship.

"We have volunteers that will help the children transplant the flowers, hang them on the playground fence, water them and teach them how to care for them," Brackett said. "The baskets will be here three weeks, then the children take them home for the summer.

"We want them to bring back the baskets in the fall and we'll recycle and use them again as part of another science lesson for kindergarten children."

Each basket contained four types of flowers. Dianthus is a member of the carnation family, pink in color and edible. Strawberries also were planted that should harvest edible fruit in the summer.

Non-edibles included red Salvia and blue Lobelia.

Preschool teacher Sayrs Morris said 32 p.m. preschool children from four classes engaged in the activity Monday. Another 32 children from a.m. preschool will participate Wednesday.

"We're doing this project in recognition of Earth Day," preschool teacher Carrie Garfield said.

"We'll encourage the children to save the baskets and bring them back for recycling. With care the flowers should last all summer. The children have just learned about plants."

Several other plantings in Kingman are scheduled this week as follows: 2 p.m. today for Karen Kopecky's second-graders at Cerbat Elementary School; 3:45 p.m. today for Cerbat fourth-graders taught by Robert Pope and Claudia Rozelle; and 10:30 a.m. Wednesday for a.m. preschoolers at KAOL.

On May 19, lessons on herb growing and cooking will be given at Kingman High School to students of chef Mike Gaul, English teacher Loretta Messer and Future Farmers of America adviser Sean Wright.