

Coventry science teacher will use award to raise trout

Peter Stetson's environmental science students at CHS have been raising fish since 1995

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COVENTRY — Coventry High School Environmental Science teacher Peter Stetson has received a grant to help him in purchasing equipment that will go towards raising fish in his class.

Stetson explained that during

the past 10 years his 11th and 12th grade applied environmental science classes have been raising trout. He added however, that this year they began by hatching the trout from eggs.

He said that he contacted Kim Sullivan from the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), who also

runs the Salmon and Trout in the Classroom program, to receive the eggs.

He explained that he then applied for a grant from Trout Unlimited, a national organization that supports trout fishermen and trout education in schools, and received \$1,500.

Stetson said that the money will go towards a chiller for

one of the fish tanks, which will allow him to extend the growing season for the trout. He added that the students usually start raising them at the end of October but because the warm weather this year they pushed it back to the end of November.

He explained that he owns two different tanks, one is a

450 gallon tank and the other is a 685 gallon tank, which he received from Koi Villa II Water Garden Center off Route 117. He said that he purchased these tanks through a grant from the DEM as well. He explained that once the fish are big enough, the students get to fill the big tanks with water and place the trout in

each of the tanks. He added that each tank runs off a different system so they operate differently.

He said that each class is divided into groups of four students. He explained that each group has a different assignment: one group handles the 685 gallon tank, one group

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handles the 450 gallon tank, one group handles the hydroponics plants and one group takes care of the greenhouse.

"The students get a chance to do the water quality testing on each tank and compare the difference," Stetson explained.

He explained that the small tank that the students hatched the eggs in is kept at 56 degrees and that the air in the room gets constantly circu-

lated from outside through a fan. He added that the temperature in the room stays between 30 and 40 degrees.

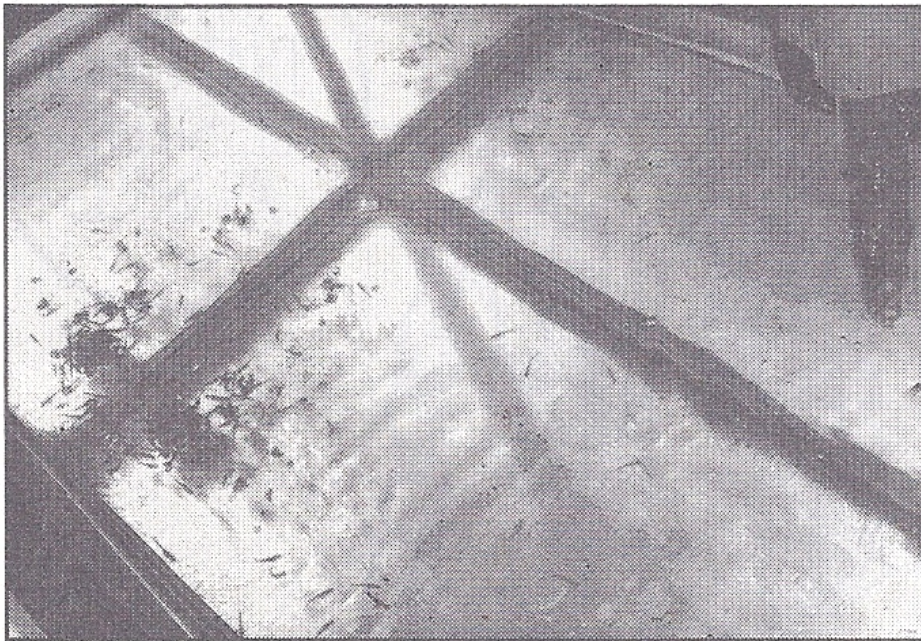
Stetson explained that before they began raising trout, back in 1995, his students used to raise tilapia. He added that during this time he had received a grant as well to begin his small fish farm.

He said however that, "if I'm trying to encourage my students to do this on their own, tilapia wouldn't be the fish to

do it with because it's a warm water fish and the heating costs in New England are higher than other places."

Stetson said he began researching other types of fish he could raise and came to the conclusion that trout would be the best because they were cool water fish and can survive in waters 60 degrees and below. He explained that early on in his trout raising career, the students would give the full grown trout to the culinary program to cook. He said that once the culinary program took off and became too busy however, he contacted the DEM and asked permission to release them into Carbuncle Pond.

Stetson said that once the new hatchlings this year become bigger he hopes to release them into Carbuncle Pond as well. He added that he plans to tag the fins of the fish before they release them. "We'll try and put signs up at the pond that tell fishermen if they catch a fish with the tag on it to contact the high school and let me know how big the fish is and where they caught it so I can keep track," he explained.



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In one of Coventry's environmental science classrooms at the high school, trout swim in a tank. They will eventually be released into Carbuncle Pond.