

The University of Utah's Independent Student Voice Since 1890

# THE DAILY UTAH CHRONICLE

## Professor urges students to garden

Isabella Bravo

Staff Writer

Published: Monday, February 9, 2009

Updated: Monday, February 9, 2009

Fred Montague said everyone in the world, but especially people living in the United States, should have a garden.

Montague, a U biology professor, spoke to an audience of about 70 students, staff and community members about gardening Friday at the Utah Museum of Natural History.

Montague drew a picture of the earth divided into five sections. As he pointed to the section of land in the Northern Hemisphere that represented more developed countries, he said people are using more than their fair share of resources, which raises a population consumption issue.

"Population increase has nothing to do with soil erosion, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, the increase of carbon dioxide in the air or global climate change," Montague said. "Most of humanity has nothing to do with (any of this). This is serious and it isn't fair. Part of what we can do is we can garden."

Kinley Cahill, a senior in biology, said Montague's lecture affected her.

"Knowing the huge impact even a garden can have (is) more of a push to have one," she said.

Montague emphasized the importance of a garden for college students in restoring their relationship with a natural environment. "When you say as a student you are feeling disoriented when you sit in a room with fluorescent lighting in front of a LED computer screen, it's perfectly natural to feel like an animal out of it's habitat, because you are," he said.

Montague said that people need to grow food where they live.

"Part of your ecological identity is that you are a killer," he said. "Mealtime is a sacrament. Say 'Thank-you, Earth.'"

Montague made recommendations for gardening in Utah's dry climate. He said garden beds should be 3 feet by 6 feet and well mulched to protect the plants from drying out. He also said compost is essential for having an organic garden and is a means of reconnecting with and restoring the land.

"Compost beds become refuges for biological diversity on a small scale," he said. "We want all the spiders, centipedes and beetles in the garden."

Both Zach Ruble, a freshman in environmental studies, and Nick Rosenberger, a freshman in biology, said Montague has inspired them to start gardens as soon as they have space.

i.bravo@chronicle.utah.edu



College Publisher powered by mtvU and MTV Networks