

P³ POLLUTION PREVENTION POST

YOUR NEWS AND INFORMATION SOURCE ABOUT: RECYCLING, POLLUTION PREVENTION, LESS TOXIC PRODUCTS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
SAN MATEO COUNTY



Protecting Our Health and Environment

Get Involved for Earth Day!

Earth Day happens each year on April 22nd - but the activities last all month.

Many organizations here in San Mateo County sponsor Earth Day events, from lectures and workshops

to neighborhood clean-ups and tree plantings. It's a great time to learn more, take action, and find others who share your interests.

For more information on Earth Day events, visit our Calendar at www.flowstobay.org/calendar.

APRIL 22ND, 2009



to neighborhood clean-ups and tree plantings. It's a great time to learn more, take action, and find others who share your interests.

Speak Up!

Take our survey and help us make the San Mateo County Pollution Prevention Calendar better.

Your ideas and opinions will help to ensure that we

can continue to provide this FREE calendar in the future to San Mateo County residents, organizations, and businesses.

Take the survey online at www.flowstobay.org or call 650-372-6214 to have one mailed to you.



Clean Car, Clean Conscience

Washing a car in the driveway is one of the most environmentally un-friendly chores we can do at home. The dirty, soapy runoff flows directly into stormdrains, picking up oil and other pollutants.

Unlike household waste water that enters a sewer treatment plant before it is discharged into the environment, the water that goes into a stormdrain flows directly into rivers, bays, oceans and lakes where it harms marine life and aquatic ecosystems.

The most water-friendly way to wash the car might surprise you. Washing the car at home might be cheaper and handier, but it is better to go to a commercial car wash, which uses less water and sends waste water to treatment facilities. If you must wash a car at home:

- Park your car on lawn or gravel, which acts as a natural filter for suds and grime.
- Use a nozzle for your hose or a bucket to minimize water use.
- Try not using any soap at all, or use an earth friendly detergent.
- If you use soap, try to soak up any puddles that remain after you are done. They contain toxic residues and can attract thirsty animals.



A home car wash is NOT eco-friendly.

New Rules for Home Sharps Users



Thousands of San Mateo County residents use sharps (needles, syringes, lancets) to manage medical conditions at home. A state law passed in September

2008 created new requirements for disposing of the millions of sharps used each year. For proper disposal:

1. Place the used sharps in an approved sharps container.
2. Bring it to an official collection center.

(continued on page 2)

CONTENTS

Clean Boating	2
Springtime Bees	3
Oil Filter Recycling	4
Drop Where you Shop	4

Clean and Green Boating

San Mateo County's nine marinas offer families and individuals the opportunity to explore our county's coastlines. Although boating provides hours of enjoyment, it also has the potential to add a variety of pollutants into the environment, including oil, hazardous waste, and marine debris. This pollution harms water quality and aquatic life. Earth911.org recommends the following tips for a clean and green boating experience:

1. Prevent oily discharges from the bilge.

Keep your engine well tuned to prevent fuel and oil leaks. Secure an oil absorbent pad or pillow in your bilge and under your engine where drips may occur. Dispose of them as hazardous waste at a marina or local hazardous waste collection center.

2. Spill-proof your oil changes.

For oil changes, use an oil change pump to transfer oil to a spill-proof container. Wrap a plastic bag or absorbent pad around the oil filter to prevent oil from spilling into the bilge.

3. Limit Fuel Spills.

Prevent fuel spills by filling fuel tanks slowly. Do not "top off" or overflow your fuel tank.

4. Do not add soap.

Never use soap to disperse fuel and oil spills. It increases harm to the environment, and it is illegal.

5. Minimize boat cleaning and maintenance in the water.

If possible, save maintenance projects for the boatyard. When performing work on the water minimize your impact by containing waste.



6. Reduce toxic discharges from bottom paints.

Minimize the discharge of heavy metals found in soft-sloughing antifouling paints by using a less toxic, or nontoxic antifouling paint. Use only non-abrasive underwater hull cleaning techniques to prevent excessive paint discharge.



7. Dispose of hazardous waste properly.

Dispose of paints, batteries, antifreeze, cleaning products, oil, oil filters and other hazardous wastes at a hazardous waste collection facility. Visit www.flowstobay.org/toxic for a list of local disposal location options.

8. Manage sewage wastes properly.

Never discharge sewage within 3 miles of shore. Use harbor pump-out stations and shore-side facilities. If you do not have an installed toilet, use a port-a-potty and empty it at a harbor dump station or bathroom.

9. Stow it, don't throw it!

Keep your trash on board. Never throw cigarette butts, fishing line, or any other garbage into the ocean. Take advantage of shore-side facilities to recycle plastic, glass, metal, and paper.

10. Reduce Greywater discharges.

Use a phosphate-free biodegradable soap to minimize the impacts of greywater on the marine environment.

Home Sharps (con't.)

The approved containers are red and include a bio-hazard logo on the side. They are available for sale at most pharmacies.

Health care providers are offering free collection at a limited number of medical offices to their patients. Check with your provider to locate the best location for you, and find out where to obtain free or low-cost containers.

If your health care provider does not offer collection, visit www.flowstobay.org/toxic to find free public collection locations.

Don't Be Afraid of Springtime Bees!

Berries, tomatoes, grapes, peppers, pears, cucumbers, chocolate, and more...did you know that one of every three bites you take of your lunch or dinner comes from a plant pollinated by wild pollinators? Bees are the most effective pollinators in the world, dramatically increasing fruit and vegetable production in agriculture, as well as the number of flowers on your ornamentals and the quality of home garden food crops. However, bees are in trouble, with scientists noting that bee populations have been declining world wide in recent years.

Last spring, the San Francisco Chronicle interviewed Professor Gordon Frankie, an entomologist at UC Berkeley who compared the declining native bee population to global warming in terms of a potential ecological catastrophe. "We're losing our star pollinators," he said, "so it's important to try to do something on an individual basis. A lot of what people grow now is dependent on bees and other invertebrates, but people just don't see or know that these insects are providing a lot of free services."¹

The 1600 native bee species in California pollinate one-third of our vegetables, fruit and nut crops as well as almost all of our wildflowers. Native bees have lost habitat due to urban development and commercial

agricultural practices. These bees differ from imported honey bees as they make individual nests instead of living in a colony and do not produce honey. Even commercially managed exotic honeybee populations are declining due to the use of pesticides and parasitic mites.

Bee-friendly Strategies

You can encourage the survival of native bees in your own yard, helping to boost populations! Bees need pollen and nectar, and even a small area or containers planted with the right flowers can be beneficial.



Choose flowers with a variety of shapes and colors to attract a wide variety of bees. Different bee species have mouthparts adapted to different shapes of flowers; short-tongued bees can drink only from open flowers such as asters or daisies, while long-tongued bees can reach the high-energy nectar in deep flowers such as bluebells or lupines. Flower colors that are known to attract bees are blue, purple, violet, white, and yellow. Bees are also attracted to less manicured landscapes, allowing solitary native bees, to make their nests without disturbance. If you use mulch to control weeds, consider using 50% less, leaving 50% of the area you usually mulch as bare soil.

California Urban Bee Plants

- California Poppy
- California Buckwheat
- Germander Sage
- Goldmarie
- Lamb 's Ear Lavender
- Rosemary
- Scented Geranium
- Sunflower
- Toadflax

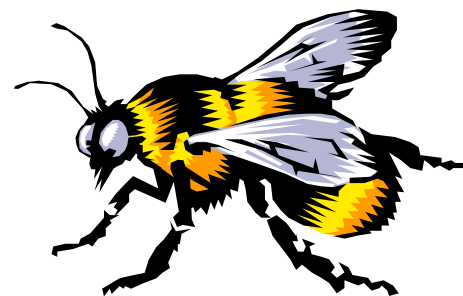
For a more extensive list and pictures visit:
www.nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens

Bees are also negatively affected by the use of pesticides in your yard or garden –so avoid using pesticides and use the least toxic method of pest control. Visit www.ourwaterourworld.org for more information.

Join the Hunt for Bees!

You can help local scientists gain a better understanding of which bees are declining where and what habitats they need to survive. Take part in the "Great Sunflower Project":

- Sign up online at www.greatsunflower.org and receive free sunflower seeds.
- Plant your sunflower in a pot on a deck or patio or in a garden.
- Time how long it takes 5 bees to visit your sunflower plant.
- Enter your data online or mail in your form.



Stinging— Facts vs. Fears

Contrary to conventional wisdom, bees are not aggressive. Most bees are simply too busy to take notice of human observers. Male bees are stingless. Female bees have stingers and spend most of their time on flowers. However, they rarely sting away from the nest, unless you step on them or swat at them with your hand.

1. "Bees on their Knees, Gardeners to the Rescue." San Francisco Chronicle. Alison Rood. March 3, 2007.

Oil Doesn't Wear Out, It Just Gets Dirty!

If you change the oil in your car yourself, it is easy, free, and convenient to recycle your oil and oil filters. Over sixty auto parts stores and service stations in San Mateo County accept used oil and filters from the public free of charge. Never throw oil and oil filters into the trash - they end up in landfills, which can leak and pollute the surrounding land and water.

Recycling prevents pollution and conserves two valuable resources: oil and steel. Oil does not wear out. It just gets contaminated by heavy metals, dust, and grime from your engine. When you take used oil to a collection center, it gets processed to remove contaminants from the clean base oil. Then the cleaned oil is blended to produce high quality re-refined oil that meets all American Petroleum Institute (API) standards.



It's as good as new! The steel in used oil filters is melted down and made into rebar. Kragen and Firestone stores are just a few of the centers that take both used oil *and* filters. To find a collection center near you, look for

the Used Oil Collection Center Sign, log on to earth911.org, or call 1-800-CLEANUP.



Used Oil Filters Recycled at a Collection Event.

Spring Used Oil Filter Recycling Events

Bring in your used oil filter and get one for **FREE** during the Used Oil Program's Spring Oil Filter Exchange Events!

Check www.flowstobay.org "Calendar of Events" for details on date, time and location, or email us at pollutionprevention@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Drop Where You Shop



Free and Easy!

Some day, you may have to make an appointment with the County's Household Hazardous Waste program (www.smhealth.org.hhw) for free drop-off of your leftover house latex paint, garden fertilizers, pool chemicals, and other "too toxic to trash" items.

But did you know that for a variety of items—used oil, electronics, household batteries, and fluorescent lights—dozens of local stores also offer you a convenient recycling option, at no charge? Find a list of locations at:

www.flowstobay.org/toxic



Ready to Bike to Work?

If biking to work is a new adventure for you, May 14th is the perfect day to try it. Local non-profits can provide you with a buddy/mentor, a bike tune-up clinic, and even bike route maps.

For information on the event and biking all year in the Bay Area, visit www.bicycling.511.org.

LOOK FOR THIS SIGN AT PARTICIPATING STORES