



Special points of interest:

- Naturally Managing Garden Pests
- Washing Machines
- Frequently Asked Billing Questions
- Tip of the Season

**Sewer block or overflow?
Call us first at 644-8949**

Currents

NATURALLY MANAGING GARDEN PESTS

You want a green lawn and a gorgeous garden, right? You also want your family and pets healthy, and reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals. How can all these desires be met?

Through Integrated Pest Management, commonly known as IPM. IPM works by keeping your garden pests in a healthy balance, reducing the need for pesticides and herbicides. There are a wide number of useful products at garden centers and hardware stores, and a terrific website (www.ourwaterourworld.org) to help with the specific needs of your garden.

In general, a healthy garden filled with a wide variety of flowering plants will be more resistant to significant pest damage. A healthy, diverse garden will also attract beneficial creatures, such as dragonflies, ladybugs, lacewings, and syrphid flies, which feed on pests.

Attracting and Keeping Beneficial Insects

Reduce or eliminate the use of broad-spectrum pesticides in your garden. Bees and other beneficial insects are often far more sensitive to pesticides than the pests you might be trying to kill. Once pesticides eliminate the beneficial insects, pests are free to multiply without a natural check. As pest populations rise, you may be tempted to spray more frequently, but pesticides leave genetically resistant strains of pests to breed, creating an increasingly resistant pest population. The harder it becomes to kill the pest, the more you'll need to spray and the fewer natural enemies you'll have.

Provide food and water for the adult forms of beneficial insects.

Although many beneficial insects perform their pest control services only during an immature stage, the adult stage feeds on nectar and pollen. You can attract and keep a

wide variety of beneficial insects in your garden by including flowering plants that are rich in pollen and nectar.

Choosing the right plant.

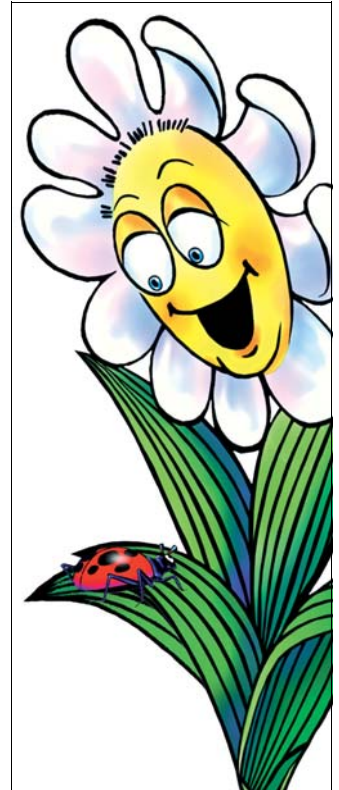
One of the most important preventive steps in the pest management process is selecting appropriate plants for a particular location. Usually we choose plants for their beauty, but to minimize pest problems, consider other plant characteristics and the site where it will grow. It's easier to plant a compatible species for your site than to try to alter the growing conditions.

Plant a diversity of species. Include native plants and plants from other Mediterranean climates. This ensures that a single pest problem will not devastate your entire landscape.

Helpful fact sheets (see list on page 2) on a wide range of garden challenges can be found at the Vallejo Home Depot store, all Orchard Supply Hardware stores, and online at www.ourwaterourworld.org The website has another

amazing feature as well ... free Ask the Expert advice! Just type in your question, and the expert will get back to you within 24-48 hours.

Look for this symbol next to garden products. The logo indicates that the product is less toxic for your family and your pets.



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WASHING MACHINE DISCHARGES

As odd as this may seem, here at the District one of the most common calls we get from concerned residents has to do with badly plumbed washing machines.

A typical call sounds like this:

“Pollution Control Department, how may I help you?”

“I’m calling about my neighbor. Every time he does a load of laundry, the dirty, soapy water runs down his driveway and into the storm drain in the street.”

“Please give me the address, and we’ll check it out right away.”

And the caller is right. The neighbor has unhooked his washing machine from its proper sewer connection. Polluted water runs directly from his machine either into the

street, or his backyard.

This is unfortunate for a number of reasons.

Storm drains lead directly to the Bay. Water flowing down streets does not come to the wastewater plant for treatment.

Instead, it flows untreated through storm drains to the nearest creek, which drains directly into local waterways and the Bay.



It is illegal. Federal regulations require that discharges from washing machines go to through sewer pipes to the treatment plant. Violators are subject to fines.

It is unhealthy and unsightly. Water from washing machines carries dirt, germs, pesticides, and soap. All these should go to the treatment plant, not the street.

What about graywater use?

Graywater is untreated shower and washing machine water from

houses. During the 1960s and 70s, it was a popular concept that graywater might be used to irrigate home landscaping.

This practice is illegal without a permit from the Solano County Department of Health. Few

graywater use permits are issued, and those are generally in rural, not urban areas. If you do not have such a permit, using graywater is a violation of clean water laws and regulations.



Tip of the Season

Free fact sheets on less-toxic gardening are available at Home Depot and Orchard Supply Hardware stores, or online at ourwaterourworld.org. Sheets are available in English and Spanish on the following topics: *Growing a Healthy Garden, Controlling Ants, Controlling Aphids, Keeping Cockroaches Out, Keeping Fleas Out, Tips for a Healthy, Beautiful Lawn, Keeping Mosquitoes Away, Tips for Wonderful Roses, Controlling Snails and Slugs, Living with Spiders, How to Control Weeds, Controlling Yellowjackets, Use and Disposal of Pesticides, Pesticides and Water Quality, and Finding a Pest Control Company.* If you can't find the sheet you want, call Jennifer Kaiser at 644-8949 ext. 292 and one will be mailed to you at no charge.



Currents is produced bimonthly by the Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District. For more information, visit www.vsfcd.com or call (707) 644-8949.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I can't afford my sanitation and flood control bill. What should I do?

The Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District offers a reduced rate program (RRP) for qualifying customers. The reduced rate is 90% of the standard residential sewer rate. Eligibility for the program is based upon customer participation in

the PG&E CARE program (California Alternate Rates for Energy). Please visit our website at vsfcd.com to learn more about the program.

Why is the rate flat instead of being based on consumption?

Simplicity, efficiency and economy. Roughly 90% of California sanitation

districts use flat rate for their residential customers. Consumption based billing would require every household to install an irrigation water meter to separate irrigation water usage from water flowing to the sewer. A household water meter installation costs approximately \$3,000.