



### Points of Interest

- Solving Ant Problems
- Billing & Customer Service
- Free Thermometer Exchange
- Tip of the Season: Earth Day

Volume 3, Issue 2  
March/April 2007

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

## GOT ANTS?

The Argentine ant is a frequent invader in California homes. Although they can be pests, ants provide an ecological cleansing and fertilization service of considerable importance. For example, they kill many pest insects, aerate the soil, and recycle dead animal and vegetables. Because of these beneficial aspects, it is undesirable (and probably impossible) to eliminate ants from their outside habitat. The best approach to ant management is to try to keep them outdoors.

### Detection

Look for individual scouts or long lines of ants in or around the house near food or water. Distinguish Argentine ants from Carpenter ants by size.

Argentine ants are small (1/8"), and their queens are slightly larger. Carpenter ants are 1/4" or larger and require different management techniques from those listed below for Argentine ants.

### Less-Toxic Controls: Inside the House

- Kill the scouts so they can't call in the hordes when they find a tidbit.
- Use ant baits because they use a minimum of insecticide and confine it to a very small area.

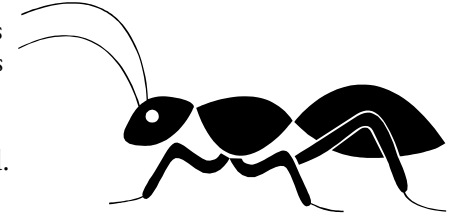
- Use insecticidal dusts such as diatomaceous earth (DE) in wall voids and cracks before they are sealed.
- Use a hand duster to apply DE and wear a dust mask and goggles. DE has little toxicity to humans or pets, but kills insects by absorbing their outer waxy coating, causing dehydration and death.

### Outside Your Home

- Use sticky barriers around the trunk of a tree or bush to prevent ants from protecting aphids and other insects. Prune any branches that touch walls, fences or the ground.
- *Ant Baits:* If you can find the spot outside where ants are entering the building (this is often hard to do), place bait stations there; otherwise use baits only inside. Outside, rain and sprinklers can wash baits away.

### Prevention

- Store food in containers that seal tightly or in the refrigerator when you notice ant activity.
- Keep things clean and dry and fix leaking faucets and pipes (ants need food and water).
- Caulk cracks where ants are entering the house. Weather-strip doors and windows.
- Put pet dishes in a soapy



moat. Partially fill a wide, shallow container with soapy water and place pet dishes in the water.

### More Help

Our Water, Our World is a regional program that encourages the use of less-toxic home and garden products with helpful information and fact sheets. Use the free Ask the Expert feature on the web at [www.OurWaterOurWorld.org](http://www.OurWaterOurWorld.org). They will help you solve your pest problems in a way that is healthy for your family and pets.

### District Manager

Ron Matheson

### Board of Trustees

Anthony Intintoli, Jr.

Tony Pearsall

Gary Cloutier

Gerald Davis

Tom Barte

Hermie Sunga

Stephanie Gomes

John Silva

# BILLING & CUSTOMER SERVICE

Great customer service is critical to the success of our billing program. When customers call (707) 644-8976, we try to answer questions or resolve issues with a single call. Our goal is to respond to calls within one business day.

Billing customer service is available during the Cashier's Office hours of 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday except holidays, and anytime on the website at [www.VSFCDD.com](http://www.VSFCDD.com).

The District uses a combination of telephone and cashier customer service, has forms and information available at the District and on the website. We often review



our current payment method options, and may expand options where feasible. We also utilize the front of our bills to highlight services available, and we review feedback on the quality of service.

Our website contains

customer service information, FAQs, links to other websites, and downloadable forms. Now available both in-house and on our website are a series of four customer service information brochures:

- *Customer Service & Sewer Billing*
- *Billing and Collection Information*
- *About Sewer Rates*
- *Rental Properties and Sewer Billing*

Drop us a line. Let us know how we are doing by completing the customer service survey card included or e-mail us at [eBill@vsfcd.com](mailto:eBill@vsfcd.com).

We look forward to hearing from you.



## Tip of the Season

Join us on Saturday, April 21 at the Vallejo Farmers' Market on Georgia Street from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. to celebrate Earth Day.

You'll find all kinds of fun activities, less toxic garden information, composting classes, pick up some native plants, learn about our watershed, visit the many community tables, enjoy kids' crafts, and much more!

### NEW OPEN SPACE

Mark your calendars for the opening of Lynch Canyon to the public. Check out the Solano Land Trust's website for details at [www.SolanoLandTrust.org](http://www.SolanoLandTrust.org).



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

# FREE THERMOMETER EXCHANGE AT VALLEJO'S EARTH DAY

Bring your old mercury thermometer to Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District's booth at the Vallejo Farmers' Market on Saturday, April 21 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and receive a free digital thermometer in exchange (while supplies last)!

Mercury thermometers are made of glass and are about the size of a straw, with a silvery-white liquid inside. Mercury fever thermometers have been used for decades as a first step in caring for someone who feels sick. But, ironically, the

mercury thermometer can be a risk to the health of families and communities. Mercury is a toxic substance that can harm both humans and wildlife.

Many families have had a mercury thermometer in their medicine cabinets for years without breaking it. But mercury thermometers are very easy to break and very difficult to clean up. To function properly, mercury thermometers must be "shaken down" before use, creating a frequent high potential

for breakage. Public health officials across the country report a steady stream of concerned calls about broken mercury thermometers.

Mercury affects the human brain, spinal cord, kidneys and liver. It affects the ability to feel, see, taste and move. Wildlife populations are already exhibiting effects of mercury poisoning.

Help us keep mercury out of your home and environment by trading in yours on Earth Day!