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Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: John Stufflebean

SUBJECT: CURBSIDE COURIER
SPRING/SUMMER 2009

DATE: 05-05-09

Approved

Date

5/6/09

INFORMATION

The Spring/Summer issue of the *Curbside Courier*, the semi-annual newsletter of the Recycle Plus Program, is being distributed as a garbage bill insert to over 185,000 single-family residents during May and June, and to new residents in the Welcome Packet distributed by the Customer Contact Center.

The feature article focuses on how residents can help the city achieve its Green Vision Zero Waste goal. Other articles provide environmentally friendly spring cleaning tips, an explanation of why reusable bags should be used instead of paper and plastic grocery bags, and information on how to properly recycle oversized household items such as TVs. Of special note is the new "Green Heroes" section which recognizes San José residents who take measures in their daily lives to preserve the environment.

Attached you will find copies of the Spring/Summer newsletter. The *Curbside Courier* is also posted on the Environmental Services Department Web site at www.sjrecycles.org. Spanish and Vietnamese versions will be posted to the Web site in June.

JOHN STUFFLEBEAN
Director, Environmental Services

For more information, please contact Adriane Mertens, Communications Division at (408) 975-2561.

Attachment: *Curbside Courier* Spring/Summer 2009

curbside courier

News You Can Reuse

Spring/Summer 2009



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BREAKING DOWN ZERO WASTE

REDUCE. REUSE. RECYCLE. In San José, these all too familiar words are stepping stones to the City's Green Vision Zero Waste goal. "Zero Waste" literally means there will be little to no waste going into landfills by the year 2022, providing us with an overall cleaner and greener place to call home.

Eliminating waste throughout the entire city is no small feat, but San José is on track with a total current recycling rate of 62 percent. Pushing forward for more means taking a look at what is still being thrown away as garbage by residents citywide. The chart below shows the tremendous potential residents still have to reduce, reuse and recycle their way to achieving Zero Waste.

REDUCE: Use your purchasing power to keep non-recyclable waste to a minimum:

- Choose products that are reusable or recyclable
- Buy in bulk to minimize packaging
- Bring reusable bags when you shop in place of plastic or paper bags
- Purchase reusable or compostable diapers

REUSE: Value organics — don't trash them!

- Turn food scraps, coffee grounds, yard trimmings, and other organic materials into compost, the "black gold" that is a rich natural fertilizer for your yard and garden. sjrecycles.org/residents/home_compost.asp

RECYCLE: Take full advantage of San Jose's robust curbside recycling program.

- Review the Recycling Guide to make sure you're recycling everything you can
- Rinse food scraps from recyclable food containers before placing in cart
- Recycle your large, old electronics at curbside (refer to page 3 for details)
- Rinse and recycle plastic flower and vegetable pots after planting this spring.

What is in our garbage carts?



To request a free Recycling Guide, see page 4.



At 62%, San José has the fourth highest recycling rate in the nation for big cities, following San Francisco (69%), Long Beach (69%), and New York (64%).

— Figures based on 2007 recycling reports



Your Green Home: A Green Spring Cleaning

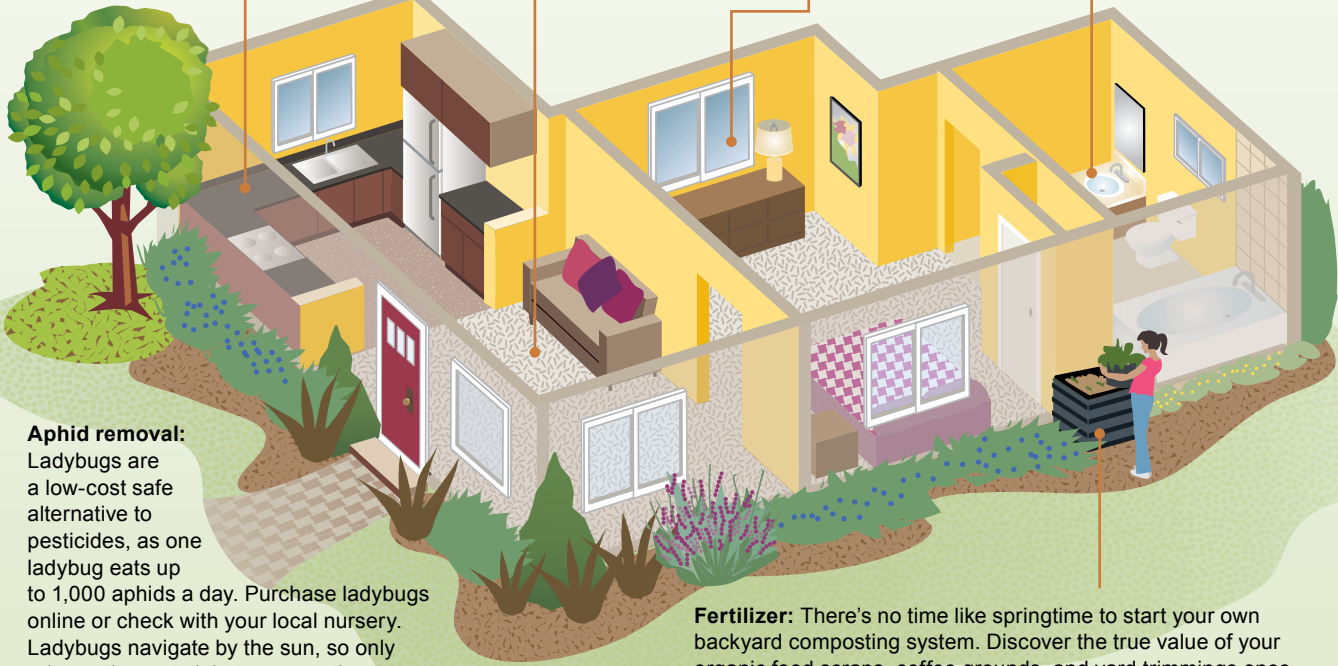
Spring cleaning with common household products prevents your family and the environment from being exposed to harsh chemicals found in many store bought cleaners, *plus* it keeps your home sparkling on a wallet-friendly budget!

Counter stain remover: Clean counters by sprinkling with baking soda and scrubbing with a damp cloth or sponge. For tougher stains, knead baking soda and water into a paste and let it set for a several minutes before you remove. This also works great for stainless steel sinks, cutting boards, containers, refrigerators, stove tops, and more.

Carpet Deodorizer: Sprinkle baking soda or cornstarch on the carpet or rug, using about 1 cup per medium-sized room, and vacuum after 30 minutes.

Window cleaner: Mix 2 tablespoons of white vinegar with a gallon of water, and dispense into a spray bottle (clean and reuse an old one if available). Squirt on, and then scrub with newspaper, not a paper towel, which causes streaking. Remember to throw the soiled newspaper away in your garbage cart.

Disinfectant: Instead of using bleach for cleaning sinks, countertops, toilets, showers, and tubs, make your own disinfectant by mixing 2 cups of water, 3 tablespoons of liquid dish soap, and 20 to 30 drops of tea tree oil* in a large spray bottle (clean and reuse an old one if available). Apply to desired area and wipe clean with a sponge or cloth.



Aphid removal: Ladybugs are a low-cost safe alternative to pesticides, as one ladybug eats up to 1,000 aphids a day. Purchase ladybugs online or check with your local nursery. Ladybugs navigate by the sun, so only release them at night to ensure they stay put. Pre-water the release area because moisture on the leaves helps the ladybugs to “stick” to plants. For severely infested plants, drape a thin sheet over the plant and release the ladybugs underneath.

Fertilizer: There's no time like springtime to start your own backyard composting system. Discover the true value of your organic food scraps, coffee grounds, and yard trimmings once you convert them into rich compost for your yard plants. Learn how easy it is to get started by calling (408) 918-4640, or check out www.sjrecycles.org/residents/home_compost.asp

* Tree tree oil is a natural essence oil that can be found at most drugstores.

For details on these waste reduction activities, visit www.sjrecycles.org or call (408) 535-3500. Visit www.hhw.org or call (408) 299-7300 to schedule a free drop-off of all of your old, toxic cleaning supplies.



Did You Know ...

BRING YOUR OWN BAG

Plastic bags are no longer accepted in your home recycling cart. Plastic bags are expensive to recycle, require a tremendous amount of energy to produce, and are common litter items that threaten the safety of our wildlife and watershed.



Here's what you can do to help reduce plastic bag usage *and* keep them out of our creeks and landfills:

- Shop with a reusable bag or reuse your current stash of plastic bags for groceries
- Take back plastic bags to your local grocery store where they have special bins for plastic bag recycling

For more information on plastic bags, visit: www.sjrecycles.org/bags



WHAT TO DO WITH THAT OLD TV

Q: *The nationwide transition to digital broadcasting will be completed by June 12, 2009. What should I do with my analog (antenna) TV?*

A: Save resources and money by purchasing a digital-to-analog converter box that hooks up to your current analog TV. Besides costing much less than a new digital TV, you won't have to trash a perfectly working TV. Government-issued discount coupons are available to residents who want to purchase a converter box, meaning you can save additional money. For coupon information, visit www.dtv2009.gov or call the National Telecommunications and Information Administration at 1-888-388-2009.

Q: *I replaced my antenna TV with a new digital one. How do I get rid of my old TV?*

A: Recycle your old TV by calling (408) 535-3500 to schedule a pickup appointment. "Bulky" items such as your TV can be picked up at your curb for a fee of \$25. The fee covers the cost of picking up a maximum of three items at once and includes appliances, tires, mattresses or other furniture. You can take care of several "hefty" errands with one simple phone call.

Visit www.recyclestuff.org for additional ways to recycle your television and other unwanted items.

Spotlight: Taking Environmental Action

The West Evergreen Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) has worked hard to make San José's West Evergreen neighborhood more environmentally friendly. Since 1998, the group has held monthly neighborhood service days to spread compost under PG&E power lines and on city easements to prevent weed growth without the use of herbicides that are harmful to the environment. Herbicides have the potential to run off into waterways which can be toxic to fish and wildlife, and can pose a threat to public health. By using compost as a safe herbicide alternative, the West Evergreen SNI has converted an overgrown weeded area into a visually appealing and popular walkway.

An overwhelming community effort of neighbors — as many as 300 volunteers in one day — made these achievements possible. When asked what motivates members to get involved in the effort, Khanh Nguyen — a representative of the West Evergreen SNI — explains, "People get involved because they want to be a part of their community, to be connected to other people, to be a part of something greater than them."

We salute the West Evergreen SNI for their hard work in making San José a cleaner, more environmentally friendly place to live and play.

"People get involved because they want to be a part of something greater than them."

-Khanh Nguyen, Member of the West Evergreen SNI

KNOW A GREEN HERO?

Nominate a group or individual who works hard to spread the green message; improves recycling in the community; or leads an effort to beautify a neighborhood, and we will recognize them in the "Spotlight."

To nominate a green hero, call (408) 535-3500 or email greenheroes@sanjoseca.gov and include the name of the nominee and the reason why they are a **green hero**.

Members of the West Evergreen Strong Neighborhoods Initiative spread compost in the West Evergreen Neighborhood to prevent weed growth.



For **Recycle Plus** information, visit www.sjrecycles.org, or call the San José Customer Contact Center at (408) 535-3500.

To request a free City of San José Recycling Guide, visit www.sjrecycles.org and click on Customer Service or call the Customer Contact Center at (408) 535-3500.

Para recibir este boletín o un Guía de Reciclaje de la Ciudad de San José en español, visite nuestro sitio web en www.sjrecycles.org o llame a nuestro Centro de Atención al Cliente al (408) 535-3500.

Để nhận bản tin này hay Tài Liệu Hướng Dẫn Tái Chế của Thành Phố San José (City of San José Recycling Guide) bằng tiếng Việt, xin viếng trang mạng www.sjrecycles.org hoặc liên lạc với ban Dịch Vụ Khách Hàng (Customer Contact Center) tại số điện thoại (408) 535-3500.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, City of San José Environmental Services Department materials can be made available upon request in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, audiotape or computer disk. Requests may be made by calling (408) 535-3500 (voice) or (800) 735-2929 (California Relay Service).

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Environmental Calendar

WONDERS OF OUR WATER WORKS

Free bus tours of your wastewater treatment facility!

Explore the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant operations and learn about the adjacent Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. To schedule a tour, call (408) 975-2556 or visit www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/plantmasterplan



Ongoing Workshops

FREE COMPOST WORKSHOPS & BIN SALES

Residents will learn basic information on home composting and can purchase low cost compost bins. Workshops are offered monthly from February to November.

Workshops are from 10:00 AM. - 12:00 PM

Bin sales are from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

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| July 18 | Emma Prusch Farm Park
647 South King Road |
| August 8 | Almaden Community Center
6445 Camden Avenue |
| Sept. 19 | Emma Prusch Farm Park
647 South King Road |



For a full listing of workshop dates or to register, call (408) 918-4640 or email compost@pln.sccgov.org

THERMOMETER EXCHANGES

Mercury thermometers cannot be discarded in your home garbage or recycling cart. Instead, exchange your mercury thermometer for a **FREE** digital one.

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| July 15 | Camden Community Center, 3369 Union Avenue
San Jose (10:00 AM – 1:00 PM) |
| August 20 | Santa Clara Senior Center, 1303 Fremont Street,
Santa Clara (10:00 AM – 12:00 PM) |

For more information, please call (408) 945-3000 or visit www.baywise.org



*One drop of mercury contaminates up to 5 million gallons of water.
Exchange that thermometer for a FREE digital one!*

Get involved and make a difference! Check out upcoming community events, city cleanups, workshops, trainings, and facility tours that the whole family can enjoy! For a full listing of events, visit: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/calendar.asp>