

THE NEXT STEP Toward a Healthier Future

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEBASTOPOL TOXICS EDUCATION PROGRAM



Easy Answers

■ You can get answers to some of your survey questions about toxics and alternatives with **The STEP Online Index**, via www.healthyworld.org/STEP. All of our past issues are there. Just look up your desired subject to read what we've written on that topic. For instance, we have articles under these **bolded** words.

- Healthier **beauty products**, **housecleaning**, **gardening**, **painting**, and **home repair**
- Less-toxic approaches to **weeds**, **ants**, **snails**, **earwigs**, **fleas**, **weeds**, **rodents**, **poison oak**, and **whiteflies**
- Evaluations of specific toxics, including **Roundup** and **2,4-D**
- Evidence of human and pet **health problems related to toxics**, including **pesticides**
- Methodologies that avoid toxics, like **permaculture** and **IPM**
- The toxic impacts and solutions for **cigarette butts**
- **Local** news and options

■ **Anyone can get the STEP newsletter by email.** Sign up at www.healthyworld.org/STEP. Feel free to share this with others!

■ **The next Sebastopol Toxics Collection Day is Tuesday August 6**, from 4 to 8pm. To make an appointment, call 707/795-2025 or 877/747-1870 at least 24 hours before the event. **For more about local toxics disposal**, see the other side of this newsletter!

Thank You For Your Feedback!

Thank you to all the Sebastopol residents who took the time to send in your STEP Survey cards for our annual reader survey.

We appreciate hearing your thoughts about the newsletter, including how you use it and what articles you'd like to see in the future. We're interested in what's helpful to you! Plus, your participation supports this innovative and pioneering community project.

So, what were your responses?

■ 96% said that you find *The Next STEP (TNS) newsletter* helpful and interesting. Reader comments included: "Keep up the good work!", "Thank you!!", and "Thank you for TNS!"

■ Of those responding about pesticide use, 39% said that you use pesticides at home or work. Of those using pesticides, 70% use just natural/nontoxic pesticides, 4% use synthetic/toxic products, and 26% use both.

■ We're delighted that 83% of you said that this newsletter has helped you reduce or avoid the use of toxics, an increase from last year. That really makes our work feel worthwhile!

For instance, readers said that our information has helped you avoid toxics in candles and makeup; use alternatives for garden bugs; and less-toxically "[deal] with ants and household cleaning." A number of readers reported that you're now using vinegar on weeds, and one said,

"We don't use Roundup any more." Yay!

One reader said, "It has helped me find solutions to issues I was researching," and another that they appreciated our "many great suggestions."

Congratulations to everyone who's finding ways to reduce or avoid using toxics. With these choices, you're supporting a healthier and safer water supply, town, and environment for yourself, your family, and our community. What we do in our daily lives really does help to create our world!

Also thank you for your questions and ideas for future articles; you'll find answers already appearing in this issue, and in upcoming editions.

As always, we appreciate your acknowledgment of our work. We're delighted to be of assistance.

Please keep your feedback coming! Your input helps us create a newsletter that's useful for you!

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"My family and I love the STEP newsletter. I put [each new issue] in a centrally located place so we can all read it. We like how informative, organized, and well-researched the information is. Thank you!"

~ A STEP Reader

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Did You Know?

The Next STEP costs the City almost nothing. It's a bonus for you, created entirely by volunteer efforts, and with no added postage expense. Its small copying cost is a drop in the bucket of Sebastopol's \$19 million annual budget. Given the consistent evidence that common toxics are harming us all, this is a bargain for our shared health, now and long into the future.

Protecting Your Apples From Codling Moths

A reader asked how to control apple (codling) moths without toxics. While certainly we can sometimes cut around the holes to salvage moth-damaged apples, at other times the apples are just too far gone.

Thankfully, there are nontoxic remedies, even for backyard trees.

What you can do

1) Identify if the apples on your trees have had codling moths.

Did your apples have worm holes last year? Did they drop early and/or have holes that allowed rot? These are common codling moth signs.

2) If you're planting new trees, consider early maturing varieties, to try to skip a generation of the moths. Also, semi-dwarf trees are easier to manage, which can help reduce moth issues.

3) Fertilize every spring, after you see leaves and flowers. Use organic compost or fertilizer.

4) Set pheromone traps to identify if and when you have a moth issue, and to capture moths.

According to Harmony Farm Supply, Sebastopol usually gets three generations, hatching in approximately May, mid-July, and September.

Put a few traps up when trees are flowering and before petals fall. If those traps get 5 or 6 moths, put out more. Hang two or three in a

large tree, at 6' or higher. Replace when they're full or by eight weeks. If neighbors have apple trees, it can help if they use these traps too!

5) Thin apples when they're the size of a marble. Especially remove damaged fruit. Keep only two or three apples per fruit cluster. Avoid two fruits touching, which is a common larvae entry point.

6) Dispose of infected fruit correctly. Don't put them in your home compost or green can. Composting doesn't destroy all of them! You can feed them right away to chickens or pigs. Or boil them for half an hour and keep submerged for two days. Or put them in a black plastic bag in the sun for a month (called solarization). Or put them in a bag in the black can.

7) Collect dropped fruit weekly. Dispose of unripe and damaged apples per Step 6.

8) If the issue remains, try caterpillar trunk traps. In August, cut corrugated cardboard in 4" tall strips. Wrap these snugly around tree trunks, with the corrugation running up and down (vertically) and the bottom at least 18" off the ground. Staple closed. Check between November and January to see if caterpillars have spun their cocoons underneath. If you find cocoons, gather and destroy the cardboard, per Step 6.

9) Bump it up a notch. If these approaches aren't enough, consider buying Surround clay or botanical insecticides. Visit Harmony Farm Supply in Graton to discuss what you've tried and what options they suggest. You can also request their helpful moth information handout.

You can also improve your results by learning about the moth lifecycle, so your actions can be timed to best interrupt their reproductive stages.

And I invite you to let me know what methods work best for you!

For more about these and other methods, see: www.pesticide.org/moths_codling • www.planetnatural.com/pest-problem-solver/tree-pests/codling-moth-control • www.arbico-organics.com/category/codling-moth-control.

Announcing ... Zero Waste Sonoma!

In this newsletter, we often mention the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA) as a key resource for finding out where to dispose of specific toxics locally.

Its website and Recycle Guide make it easy to find information about disposing of paint, batteries, lightbulbs, and much more. It also runs the Household Hazardous Waste Facility and is developing a new community compost facility.

What you might not know is that SCWMA is collaborative effort of the County of Sonoma and its nine incorporated cities. Its mission is to divert waste from the landfill and help keep our environment clean.

And now change is happening at SCWMA. It's rebranding itself with a new public name: Zero Waste Sonoma! It's also created a new website address and design at www.zerowastesonoma.gov.

How exciting that the Agency has put such an ambitious goal right in this name ... to aim to avoid all landfill waste! It says that its intention is to help us all "preserve our county for the next generation."

Oh, and to help avoid any confusion ... yes, there have been two similarly named community groups, Zero Waste Sonoma and Zero Waste Sonoma County. They've both happily allowed the Agency to use this name, and will continue their work under different names.

So now, for more about local toxics disposal ... see www.zerowaste-sonoma.gov. Or call 707/565-3375.

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- **Got a pest problem?** •
- **Or a toxics question?** •
- **The STEP Online Index can help!** It makes it easy to look •
- up your topic of interest and •
- find our well-researched, con- •
- densed, and useful information •
- — to help you get up-to-speed •
- and into action. It also makes it •
- easy to share this information! •
- **www.healthyworld.org/STEP** •
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ABOUT STEP

The Next STEP (TNS) is published six times a year by the **Sebastopol Toxics Education Program (STEP)**. **STEP is a project of the City of Sebastopol**, implemented by local citizen volunteers. **STEP's mission** is to support city residents in reducing their toxic use and exposure, creating a healthier and safer Sebastopol for everyone.

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