



# Diversions

Spring 2006

A Publication of the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority

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Hazardous Wastes Don't Belong in the Recycling Cart

## Keep it Clean When Recycling

Items such as pool chemicals, drain cleaners, batteries, pesticides or medical waste, including needles and "sharps," are NOT acceptable in your recycling cart. These materials are dangerous to workers sorting the recyclables. Please collect needles and sharps in a well-sealed, puncture-proof plastic or metal container and place in your garbage cart. Chemicals and other household hazardous wastes must be taken to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in Martinez. Call 1-800-646-1431 for more information.

## New Collection Rates Effective March 1st

Beginning this billing cycle, most CCCSWA service area residents will see a modest increase in their bills for solid waste services, which include recycling, yard waste and garbage collection, as well as two Reuse & Cleanup Days per year.

The county and each city determines if a rate adjustment is necessary in its area by evaluating factors such as increased fuel and local service costs.

Although you may be paying more, you're also getting more. Since the last rate increase, the CCCSWA has implemented single-stream recycling and expanded the Reuse & Cleanup Days program to include electronics and a winter pickup.

However, you can lower your rate by reducing your garbage cart size or by becoming a CCCSWA-certified home composter.

Detailed rate information will be available at [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) starting March 1st.

## Mini-Grants Available for 2006 Hurry! Applications due by March 10, 2006.

Once again, the CCCSWA is awarding grants of up to \$10,000 per recipient for innovative programs that increase waste prevention, reuse, or recycling in the CCCSWA service area. Available program funds total \$50,000. For details and an application form, visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) or call 925-906-1807.

### Reuse & Cleanup Days 2006

Unincorporated County	Feb & Aug
Danville	March & Sep
Walnut Creek	April & Oct
Orinda/Moraga	May & Nov
Lafayette	June & Dec

If you need more information about the Reuse and Cleanup Days program, visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) or call 925-906-1807.

## The Waste-Cutting Edge

How Practicing the 3 R's Helps Slow Global Warming

## Recycling Is Cool. Really Cool.

Some benefits of reducing, reusing, and recycling are obvious. For example, less material to the landfill means less land sacrificed to bury our garbage. But cutting down on waste also reduces greenhouse gases—the stuff that warms our atmosphere, makes glaciers melt, and contributes to extreme weather conditions.

How so? Take soda cans: to produce aluminum, bauxite ore has to be extracted from the Earth, transported and processed. This requires large amounts of energy—the equivalent of some 1,740 gallons of gasoline for every ton of aluminum.

When gasoline or other fossil fuels are burned, carbon dioxide—the most common greenhouse gas—is released into the atmosphere. In contrast, making one ton of aluminum from recycled material uses only the equivalent of about 90 gallons of gasoline—an obvious score for the climate.



Making new products out of recycled materials uses a fraction of the energy needed to make them from virgin sources. This savings in energy use helps slow down global warming.

### Landfills actually generate greenhouse gases.

But wait, there's more! Landfills themselves actually generate greenhouse gases. When organic materials, such as paper and food scraps, break down in landfills over time, they emit methane, a gas with 23 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide. Luckily, there is a simple remedy: recycling paper and composting organic materials!

Speaking of paper recycling, the more recycled paper we all purchase, the fewer trees need to be cut down. Instead, these same trees continue to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turn it into oxygen, another climate cooling process.

Of course, making new goods from recycled materials still requires some energy and creates some greenhouse gases. That's why reducing and reusing are truly the coolest of the 3 R's.



Danville Residents to Chart Course for the Region

## Food Scrap Recycling Pilot Coming

By 2007, Central Contra Costa residents could be sending leftovers and kitchen scraps to a composting facility rather than the landfill—that is, if a trial program in Danville this March goes well.



In February, Danville residents will receive a convenient kitchen container to collect food scraps and food-soiled paper. Residents simply empty the scraps from the container into their yard waste carts for their regularly scheduled pick-up. Detailed instructions will be distributed with the pails.

For more information, call Valley Waste Management at 925-935-8900. Also, see this issue's "Ask the Authority" on page 2.



## Central Contra Costans Send Warm Wishes South



Thank you, residents of Orinda and Moraga, for responding to the call for blankets, sleeping bags, linens and towels. This special request was part of the first winter collection in the Reuse and Cleanup Days program. In December, a truckload of donations was sent to Biloxi, Miss. to benefit 500 families.

"Everybody wins," says organizer Brent Smith (shown above) of One Family, a reuse program partner. "Central Contra Costa residents get rid of unwanted stuff, it stays out of the landfill, and people affected by Hurricane Katrina have extra warmth this winter." Smith networked and located Rev. Paddy Mockler, a motivated Catholic priest in Biloxi, who had the need and the ability to accept and distribute the donations to his parishioners.

One Family has helped distribute many goods donated through the Reuse and Cleanup Days program over the years, including sending bicycles to Afghanistan. For more information, visit [www.onefamily.org](http://www.onefamily.org).

## This Spring, Lots of Chances to Enjoy Nature

**Contra Costa Home and Garden Show**  
**Concord Pavilion**  
 April 7, 8, 9  
 Fri 12-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 10-6

**Earth Day Celebration,**  
**John Muir Historical Site,**  
**Martinez**  
 Sat, April 22  
[www.johnmuir.org/martinez](http://www.johnmuir.org/martinez)

**Bringing Back the Natives**  
**Garden Tour**  
 Sun, May 7, 10am-5pm  
[www.bringingbackthenatives.net](http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net)

**2nd Annual Green Home Tour**  
 Sun, June 4, 10am-5pm  
[www.builditgreen.org](http://www.builditgreen.org)



## Ask the Authority

Dear Authority,

I heard that Danville will be testing a new food scrap recycling program. How do you recycle food scraps? I don't think I'd want to eat whatever the end product is!

Dying-to-know in Danville

Dear Dying-to-know,

We call it "recycling" to make the process easy to understand, but technically, much of the food waste



Valley Waste Management will bring food scraps and yard trimmings to large composting facilities such as the Newby Island facility in Milpitas. In this photo you can see the large compost piles, called windrows.

will be composted. While the concept is the same as the composting you do in your backyard—organic materials breaking down into fertile soil—it will happen on a much larger scale. This will enable you to compost bones, shells, dairy products, food-soiled paper and other items that are not recommended for backyard composting.

In the next issue of Diversions, we will explain in more detail how exactly these large-scale composting operations work and what happens with the finished product.

Sincerely,  
 The Authority



A Rossmoor resident gives back an old mercury thermometer in exchange for a new digital one.

## Residents Trade In Mercury for Safer Alternative Thermometer Exchange Fever Grips Rossmoor

The mercury was rising, quite literally, at a thermometer collection event in Rossmoor on November 16. Central Contra Costa Sanitary District counted 541 residents who turned out to trade in their old mercury thermometers for safe digital ones. Rossmoorians dropped off other items containing mercury, too. "I used to play with this stuff when I was a kid," said one resident as he handed over a full jar of the silvery liquid.

Of course, we now know that mercury is toxic and accumulates in the body, causing a wide range of health problems. To safely dispose of mercury-containing household items such as thermometers, barometers and certain thermostats, contact the Central Contra Costa Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility at 1-800-646-1431.

Get Back to Nature

## Composting is Fun!

Take a **FREE** workshop to learn the basics.

### Basic and Worm Composting

Mar 7	7-8:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Gardens at Heather Farm
Mar 25	9-10:30 am	Orinda – McDonnells Nursery
Apr 8	11 am-Noon	Walnut Creek – Ruth Bancroft Gardens
Apr 11	7-8:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Heather Farms
Apr 22	9-10:30 am	Danville – Hap Magee Park
Apr 29	1-2:30 pm	Moraga – Moraga Lumber & Hardware
May 13	9-10:30 am	San Ramon – Crow Canyon Gardens
Jun 17	1-2:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Lindsay Wildlife Museum
Sep 16	9-10:30 am	Moraga – Moraga Lumber & Hardware
Sep 23	9-10:30 am	San Ramon – Crow Canyon Gardens
Oct 7	11 am-Noon	Walnut Creek – Ruth Bancroft Gardens
Oct 10	7-8:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Heather Farms
Oct 21	9-10:30 am	Danville – Hap Magee Park
Nov 18	9-10:30 am	Orinda – McDonnells Nursery

### Basic Composting and Soil Health

Feb 7	7-8:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Gardens at Heather Farm
Mar 18	1-2:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Lindsay Wildlife Museum
Apr 11	10:30-Noon	Walnut Creek – Lindsay Wildlife Museum
May 20	1-2:30 pm	Lafayette – Orchard Nursery
July 11	7-8:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Heather Farms
Sep 23	1-2:30 pm	Lafayette – Orchard Nursery
Oct 14	1-2:30 pm	Lafayette – Orchard Nursery
Nov 11	1-2:30 pm	Walnut Creek – Lindsay Wildlife Museum

## Are You Beyond a Beginner?

## Become an Advanced Composter!

**Three weeks • Three Classes • No Charge**  
**Course starts May 9**

Participants are encouraged to volunteer with the CCCSWA. To register, or for more information, call the Home Composting for Busy People hotline at 925-906-1806.

## Contact information

**CCCSWA** . . . . . **925-906-1801**  
**fax:** 925-906-1805 . . . . . **web:** [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org)  
**email:** [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org)

**ALLIED WASTE SERVICES** . . . . . **925-603-1144**  
**(formerly Pleasant Hill Bayshore Disposal)**  
**fax:** 925-685-8153  
**web:** [www.alliedwasteofcontracostacounty.com](http://www.alliedwasteofcontracostacounty.com)

*For questions concerning billing, special cleanups, vacation hold requests, computer & TV collection, new service or your blue garbage cart.*

**VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT** . . . . . **925-935-8900**  
**fax:** 925-935-1617 . . . . . **web:** [www.valleywaste.com](http://www.valleywaste.com)  
*For questions concerning the service of your burgundy recycling or green yard clippings carts, to request motor oil disposal containers, for recycling cleanups or information on the Walnut Creek Recycling Center.*

**CONTRA COSTA RECYCLING HOTLINE** . . **1-800-750-4096**  
**HOME COMPOSTING/GRASSCYCLING** . . **925-906-1806**  
**HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE** . . . **1-800-646-1431**  
**REUSE & CLEANUP DAYS** . . . . . **1-707-746-6067**