Protect our Precious Coastal Waters: Reduce or Eliminate Pesticides

Are you polluting without even knowing it?

Did you know that your gardening practices and pest control methods may be polluting our ocean, creeks, lagoons, and even San Diego Bay?

Pesticides are the leading cause of water pollution in San Diego County. When it rains or when you water your garden or lawn, the runoff transports pollutants from your yard to the storm drain system. The storm drain system delivers the polluted water into creeks, lagoons, bays, and the ocean, where it can harm fish, marine mammals, birds, and their habitats. Pollution can even enter our drinking water supply!

It is important to realize that pesticides can have detrimental impacts on your health and the environment., and that what you do at home can affect water quality downstream. Whether your home is two blocks or twenty miles from the bay, you may be a contributor to water pollution.

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PROTECT OUR COAST AND OCEAN
California Coastal Commission's
Whale Tail License Plate Grants Program

Using integrated pest management strategies at home can help prevent polluted water from entering the bay and coastal waters. **You can make a difference protecting our precious coastal waters for future generations by avoiding pesticides.**

Some Important Ways to Reduce or Eliminate Pesticide Use

- **Healthy plants** resist pests and diseases. Proper watering, soil, and sunlight create the ideal environment for healthy plants.
- **Select plants** best suited for your soil and climate. Where possible, choose native plants, plants resistant to common pests, and drought tolerant plants.
- **Maximize the benefits of your surroundings** by considering your garden layout before planting. Know the sunlight/shade requirements of your plants. Encourage dense ground cover or use mulch for weed reduction.
- **Practice efficient watering habits –** receiving the right amount of water is vital to the health of a plant. Do not over water. Use a "cycling pattern" to encourage deep watering with less runoff. Water during cooler times of the day.
- **Use Alternatives to Pesticides –** they are easy to use, more effective, and usually cost less than sprays or repellents.
  - Beneficial Organisms – Many organisms actually help control pest populations. Identify the beneficial organisms living in your garden (e.g., ladybugs, bacteria and toads) and encourage them to stay by choosing plants that provide them with pollen, nectar, and shelter.
  - Physical Removal – These include removing larger insects by hand, spraying infested plants with a strong stream of water to remove small insects, using barriers (e.g., fencing, screens and copper tubing) to deter pests, and preventing weeds from going to seed.

The above information is excerpted from the Port of San Diego's brochure, *Preventing Stormwater Pollution: A Guide to Integrated Pest Management*. For the complete brochure, visit http://www.portofsandiego.org/sandiego_environment/integrated_pest_management.asp

Ice plant fails to hang on when the going gets wet

By Kate Breece
Helix Water District Public Affairs

Hillsides are always a landscaping challenge. However, recent rains have given us plenty of opportunities to observe what NOT to do.

One of the most common misconceptions is that ice plant helps retain soil and decrease erosion. Actually, the opposite is true.

Once the ground is saturated with water, ice plant "bloats" and becomes heavy with the weight of the water. Then its shallow roots give way, causing massive slides that bring large amounts of soil with them.

Worse yet, it then causes "bald" spots where further erosion from rain takes place.

Hillsides, especially those at 45 degrees or more, require more diligent plantings.

A combination of native plants, especially those with deep roots, seems to work best. Check the following websites for great planting tips: www.laspilitas.com/garden/howto/slope. html or www.thegarden.org.

Ice plant gathers in a clump after recent rains washed away its hold on a hillside.