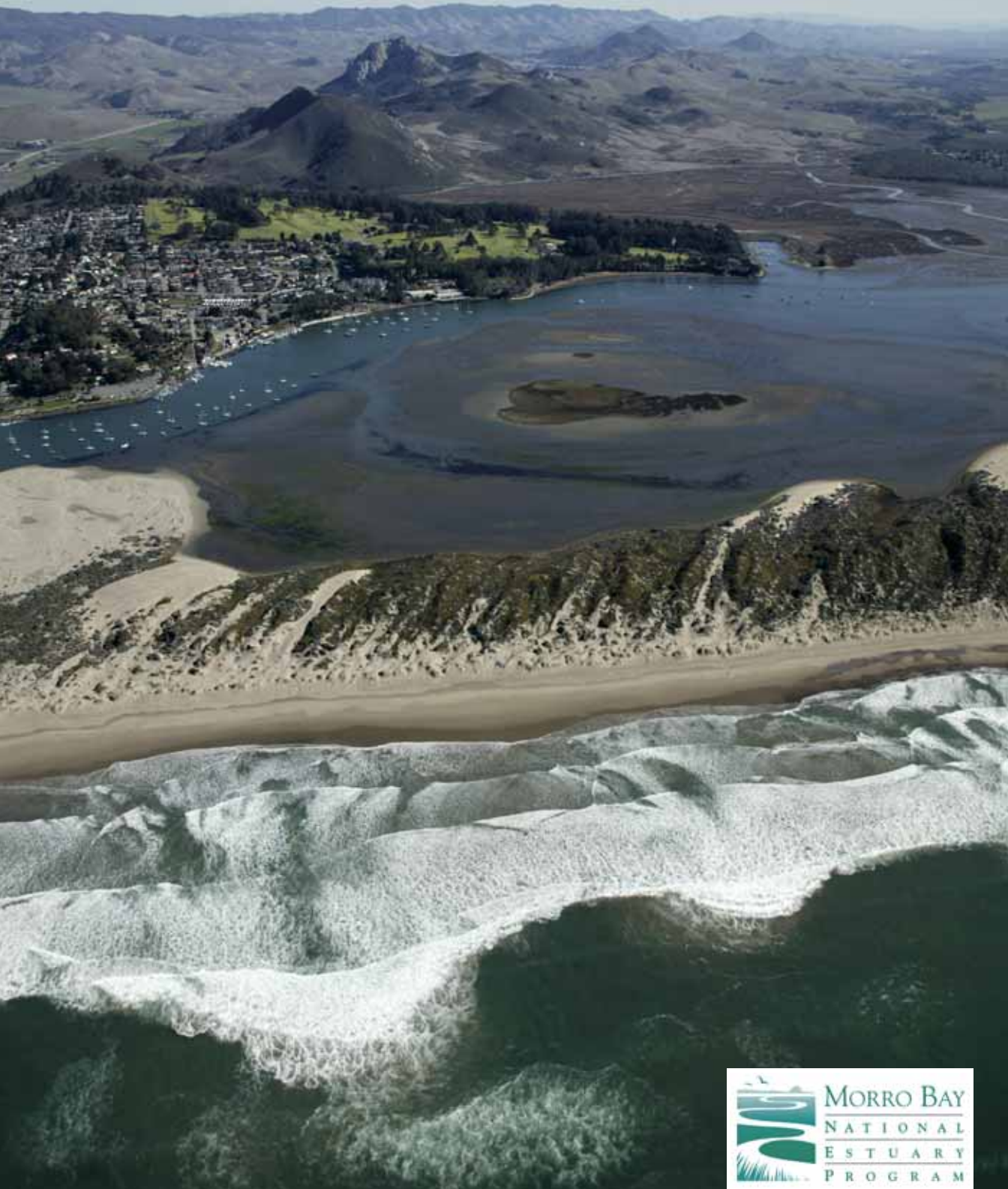


be a good neighbor to the morro bay estuary

# BAYSIDE LIVING GUIDE





# bayside living guide

This **Bayside Living Guide** offers simple and sensible tips on how to be bay and estuary friendly, every day.

It is our hope that you will keep this booklet in your home as a reference to guide you in everyday decisions that will keep the bay healthy and productive.

With your help, this unique environment will continue to be a natural treasure for future generations to enjoy.

The Bayside Living Guide was produced by the  
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with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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# table of contents

<b>The Morro Bay Estuary and Watershed</b> . . . . .	2–3
<b>Your Home</b> . . . . .	4–15
How to reduce water waste . . . . .	6
How to handle common household chemicals . . . . .	8
Make your own bay-friendly cleaning supplies . . . . .	12
How to maintain your septic tank . . . . .	14
<b>Your Yard and Garden</b> . . . . .	16–27
Fertilizers and the problems they cause in the bay . . . . .	18
Pesticides and herbicides: alternatives to dangerous chemicals . . . . .	20
Conserving water in your yard . . . . .	22
Creating habitat in your yard . . . . .	23
Where to buy native plants . . . . .	23
Popular native plants picture gallery . . . . .	24
Invasive plants to avoid . . . . .	26
<b>Your Automobile</b> . . . . .	28–31
Tips for washing your car without polluting the bay . . . . .	30
Maintaining your auto . . . . .	31
<b>Your Pets</b> . . . . .	32–35
Tips for dog owners . . . . .	34
Tips for cat owners . . . . .	35
<b>Your Parks and Preserves</b> . . . . .	36–37
Protecting parks and preserves . . . . .	36
Get to know our local habitats . . . . .	37
<b>Self Assessment Quiz</b> . . . . .	38–39
<b>References to Keep Handy</b> . . . . .	40

# morro bay estuary & watershed

Morro Bay is much more than a bay, it is also an estuary. An estuary is where freshwater creeks and rivers meet salty ocean water, making one of the most productive ecosystems known.

## Morro Bay is a 2,300-acre estuary that teems with life.

From salt marsh and mudflats to open channels winding through the pickleweed and eelgrass, the estuary provides significant habitat for many species, such as spawning fish and nesting birds. Over 100 species of birds that winter here migrate to places thousands of miles away, connecting our small estuary to the world at large.

The Morro Bay Estuary is a link to our past. Almost all of the wetlands and lagoons in California were filled in and developed before we understood their value and importance. The Morro Bay Estuary is one of California's few remaining coastal wetlands.

The Morro Bay Estuary is also a treasured part of the local environment, providing beauty and recreational opportunities such as kayaking, fishing, bird watching, hiking and more. Locals aren't the only ones who enjoy these activities, of course. Thousands of tourists visit each year, adding vitality to our economy.



**From watershed to estuary:** The health of the Morro Bay Estuary is directly tied to the quantity and quality of the freshwater that flows into it from the watershed via creeks, streams and stormdrains.





## the estuary's watershed

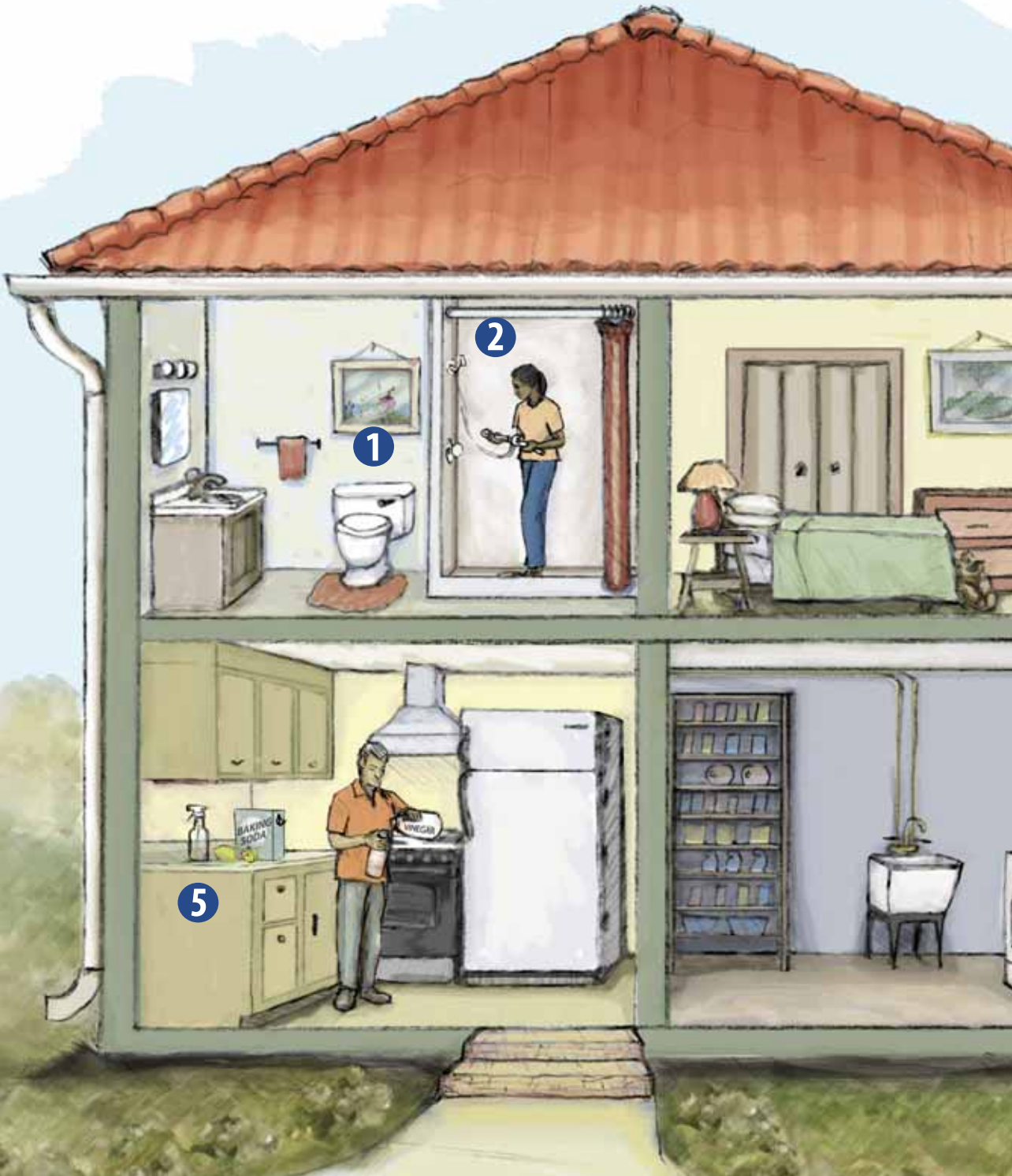
The Morro Bay Estuary watershed is 48,000 acres, from which rainfall and other water sources drain into the estuary. A network of streams and creeks feed into Chorro and Los Osos Creeks and drain much of the rainfall from the watershed. Stormwater from the bayside urban areas of Los Osos and south Morro Bay also drain into the estuary.

Unfortunately, this rainwater doesn't travel alone. When it rains, stormwater flows over rooftops, roads, parking lots, driveways, lawns and gardens. As it flows, rainwater collects and transports soil, pet waste, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, litter and other potential water pollutants. This cocktail of chemicals and pollutants is delivered directly into our local creeks, bay and ocean.

In Morro Bay, some neighborhoods have stormdrains, also known as gutters. These pipes deliver rainwater to the bay, not to a wastewater treatment plant. Therefore, nothing but rain should go down the stormdrains.

# THE BAY-FRIENDLY HOME

What you do in and around your home has an impact on the bay.





Every day you have the opportunity to choose simple actions that can promote a healthy and beautiful bay. From conserving water to careful handling and disposal of chemicals like cleaners, paint and batteries – what you do in your home can ensure a safe and clean home for plants and animals in the bay.

Save water and reduce pollution:

- 1 **Check the toilet for leaks.** Place food coloring in the tank. Don't flush for 15 minutes; if color shows up in the bowl you have a leak. Replace with a low-flow toilet . . . . . page 6
- 2 Save water and save money with **low-flow shower heads.** Low-flow shower heads use about 3 gallons of water a minute, whereas outdated shower heads use 5 to 10 gallons a minute . . . . . page 6
- 3 Save water and money by only running **full loads of laundry.** Energy- and water-efficient front loading washers use 25 gallons a load, while most top loading washers use 45 gallons . . . page 6
- 4 Be careful what you put in the trash. Some household products are **toxic** and are considered **hazardous waste** . . . . page 8-9
- 5 **Reduce chemicals** in your home by using cleaners made with everyday kitchen ingredients . . . page 12-13



# HOW TO reduce water waste

Water flows from the tap as if the supply were endless. The truth is that even though water is constantly being cleaned and recycled through the earth's water cycle, people use fresh water faster than it can naturally be replenished. Water conservation is simply sharing water with others, including wildlife in and around the estuary.



**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

## bathroom

- Don't let the water run** when you brush your teeth or wash your face. If you shave, save water by filling a sink with water instead of leaving the water running
- Does your toilet have a secret leak?** Test it by putting 10 drops of food coloring in the tank. Don't flush for 15 minutes. If the colored water shows up in the bowl, the tank is leaking
- Don't use the toilet as a trash can.** Gum wrappers, cigarette butts, spiders, diapers and other bits of trash do not belong in the toilet. Use a wastebasket instead, and you'll save gallons of water that would otherwise go down the drain.
- Trick your toilet into using less water.** Fill a plastic bottle with water and pebbles and put it in the tank, keeping it away from the flushing mechanism. This reduces the tank's capacity and the amount of water used for each flush. Never put a brick in the toilet as it could disintegrate, causing expensive plumbing problems. The average home can save 10 or more gallons of water a day this way.

## Average household water use

Sustainable Building Sourcebook



- Install a low-flow showerhead.** These heads mix more air with the water, which can reduce water consumption by as much as 65%. They are specially designed to produce a forceful spray, so you will notice little or no difference from your old showerhead.

- Install low-flow faucet aerators** and you will notice savings on your water bill.

## laundry room

- Wash only full loads of laundry** to make efficient use of water. Most washing machines use 40 gallons or more, whether they are stuffed or almost empty. See if your washer can be adjusted for smaller loads.





## how much water do you use every day?

ACTIVITY	APPROXIMATE WATER USE	x / day = TOTAL	
Top loading washing machine	45 gallons per load		
Front loading washing machine	25 gallons per load		
Traditional or older dishwasher	12-15 gallons per load		
Water saving dishwasher	5-7 gallons per load		
Full bathtub	40 gallons per bath		
Half-full bathtub	20 gallons per bath		
Regular showerhead	10 gallons a minute x <input type="text"/> minutes = <input type="text"/>		
Low-flow showerhead	3 gallons a minute x <input type="text"/> minutes = <input type="text"/>		
Regular aerator in sink faucet	4 gallons a minute x <input type="text"/> minutes = <input type="text"/>		
Low-flow aerator in sink faucet	2 gallons a minute x <input type="text"/> minutes = <input type="text"/>		
Old flush toilet	Up to 5 gallons per flush		
Low-flush toilet (1993 or later)	1.6 gallons or less per flush		
<b>TOTAL DAILY USE</b>			

**Multiply gallons by the number of uses a day to come up with a daily total.**

For example, if two people in your family each take a 10-minute shower every day using a low-flow showerhead, multiply 3 gallons times 10 minutes times 2 people, for a total of 60 gallons for showers.

If you irrigate your yard, you will need to estimate your water use and add that to this figure.



### kitchen

- ❑ **Use a sink stopper** when washing fruits, vegetables or dishes.
- ❑ **Fill up your dishwasher before you run it**, because a normal cycle uses the same amount of water whether it's full or not. Most dishwashers use about 12 gallons of water per run.

### outside

- ❑ **Know where your master water shut-off valve is located.** If the water pressure drops and you suspect a broken pipe, turn the shut-off valve immediately. Most commonly, the valve is on the water meter near the street, or by your water heater or clothes washer hook-up. Be sure to show everyone in the family where it is and how to turn it off, even if you are renting the property.
- ❑ **Never use the hose to "sweep"** away dirt, leaves, or other debris. Instead, use a rake or broom to clean up paved surfaces.
- ❑ **Teach children to conserve water** and not to run the hose for fun. Instead, fill a bucket or mini-pool for them to play with.

### Use your water meter to seek leaks.

Record the water meter reading in the late evening and again in the early morning before any water has been used.

Compare the two readings to determine if there was any water leakage over that period.

# HOW TO dispose of household products

Your home and garage may contain dozens of everyday cleaning, polishing and painting products, as well as batteries and other items containing toxic chemicals. These can be hazardous to your health and to the environment if they are not handled correctly.

Look through storage areas, under your sinks in the kitchen and bathrooms, in your cupboards, in the laundry room and shed or garage to see if there are toxic chemical products that require special handling and disposal as hazardous waste.



This product is **hazardous waste** and must be disposed of at a household hazardous waste facility



This product **can be** placed in your trash



This product **can be** poured into a sink or toilet, but only in small amounts using plenty of water.

## checkmark any household chemicals you find:

✓	Household Chemical Product	Proper Disposal	✓	Household Chemical Product	Proper Disposal
Garage and Workshop			Kitchen and Bathroom		
	Antifreeze	☠		Bleach	💧
	Artist's paints and media	☠		Cleaners, ammonia-based	💧
	Auto body repair products	☠		Cleaners, solvent-based	☠
	Brake and transmission fluid	☠		Disinfectants	💧
	Car batteries	☠		Drain cleaner	☠
	Car wax, solvent based	☠		Floor care products	☠
	Contact cement	☠		Hair remover	☠
	Driveway sealer	☠		Nail polish and polish remover	☠
	Fluorescent bulbs and tubes	☠		Oven cleaner	☠
	Gasoline and other fuels	☠		Toilet bowl cleaner	💧
	Glue or epoxy, solvent-based	☠		Tub and tile cleaners	💧
	Glue, water-based	🗑️		Window cleaner	💧
	Motor oil and other oils	☠	Miscellaneous		
	Paint, oil and latex	☠		Insect spray	☠
	Paint thinner, turpentine	☠		Metal polish	☠
	Paint stripper	☠		Mothballs	☠
	Pesticides, herbicides, all poisons	☠		Furniture polish	☠
	Photographic chemicals	☠		Propane, non-refillable	☠
	Rust remover	☠		Shoe polish	☠
	Shellac, varnish, stains	☠		Spot remover	☠
	Wood filler	☠		Pharmaceuticals	🗑️

💧 If you have a **SEPTIC SYSTEM**, it is best not to dispose of these items down the drain. Share products or take your waste products to a Hazardous Waste Facility.



**new laws** State regulations have recently changed, and several **household products** are now correctly considered to be **hazardous waste**. It is illegal and bad for water quality to throw any of these items in the trash:

Fluorescent tubes and fluorescent bulbs, HID (high intensity discharge) bulbs, metal halide, sodium, and neon bulbs.

Electronic devices such as televisions, VCRs, computers, printers, computer monitors, cell phones, telephones, radios, and microwave ovens.

Aerosol cans that contain hazardous materials such as paint and flammables like butane (a propellant).

Electrical mercury switches found in smoke alarms, some chest freezers, older washing machines, sump pumps, electric space heaters, clothes irons, silent switches, car hood and trunk lights, and ABS brakes.

Pilot light sensors found in some gas appliances such as stoves, ovens, clothes dryers, water heaters, furnaces and space heaters.

Gauges containing mercury, including thermometers, barometers, manometers, thermostats, blood pressure and vacuum gauges.

Mercury-added novelties including greeting cards that play music when opened, athletic shoes with flashing lights in the soles (pre-1997), and maze games.

**Recycle rechargeable batteries locally,** including Ni-Cd and the newer Ni-MH. Call 1-800-822-8837 for the dropsite nearest you.



Non-rechargeable alkaline batteries must now be disposed of as **hazardous waste**. **IMPORTANT:** Securely tape over both terminals before you store it with other 'dead' batteries to avoid reactions.

## WHERE TO get rid of hazardous waste

Household hazardous waste should never be thrown in the trash or poured down a drain. These environmentally dangerous chemicals must be taken to special local collection sites:



### Cold Canyon Landfill

Highway 227 just south of San Luis Obispo  
Friday and Saturday 11 am to 3 pm, [549-8332](tel:549-8332)

### Morro Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant

160 Atascadero Road, across from Morro Bay High School (follow signs on Atascadero Rd for drop-off location) Saturday 11 am to 3 pm.

Questions about Hazardous Waste Disposal? Call the SLO County Integrated Waste Management Authority at [1-800-400-0811](tel:1-800-400-0811) or visit their website at [www.iwma.com](http://www.iwma.com).

## Question How do you know what is hazardous?

Most household cleaners and products should not be dumped down the drain or on the ground as a method of disposal. If you are wondering why some products *can* be poured down the drain and others are considered dangerous hazardous waste not fit for your trashcan, here is a basic explanation.



### caustic chemicals – acids and bases

A product that is a mild acid or base usually can be washed down a drain and successfully neutralized by the large volumes of water in a wastewater treatment plant. Examples include ammonia-based cleaners, drain cleaner and most window cleaners.

Unfortunately, a septic system can be harmed by an acid or base because the microbes that break down the waste cannot withstand the change in pH. Therefore, if you have a septic system, extra care is required and these products should be used up, shared, or taken to a Household Hazardous Waste dropsite (page 9).



### toxic chemicals – dangerous for wildlife and people

Products that contain toxic chemicals simply cannot be treated by any wastewater system. Instead, the chemicals are passed into groundwater, creeks and the ocean. Examples include automotive fluids, oven cleaner, insect spray, shoe polish and more.

The only way to ensure that these chemicals can be contained is to take them to a Household Hazardous Waste Facility, where they are handled carefully and taken to a special landfill.

Because our household trash is taken to a landfill where chemicals can leach out of the system, placing toxic wastes in the trash is not the solution. Doing that may not only harm wildlife, but can also endanger our community's garbage disposal employees, and affect water resources, including groundwater.



Take a pass  
on the poison



# HOW TO reduce harmful chemicals in your home

The easiest way to reduce the amount of harmful chemicals in your home is to avoid buying products that contain toxic chemicals. These days, this is easier than you might think. There are many alternatives to using cleaners and other household products that are dangerous to your health and the environment.

✓  
**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

## Follow these tips to reduce chemicals at home:

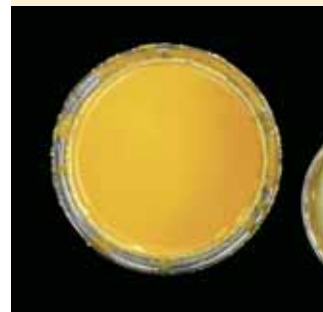
- ☐ **Read labels.** Even if you aren't a chemist, you can get a feel for a product's toxicity by looking for how the product is labeled: "warning" means moderate toxicity. "Danger" and "poison" mean extremely toxic.
- ☐ **Consider non-toxic alternatives for household cleaning chores.** You don't always need a harsh chemical to gain a little sparkle. Many stores now offer natural cleaners, or you can make your own and save money in the process. Review the list of environmentally friendly substitutes on [pages 12-13](#).
- ☐ **Purchase only as much as you will need.** Larger containers may seem like a better deal, but if you don't use the extra product, it can be costly to both you and the environment.
- ☐ **Share extra products.** If you find you have extra product that is still in its original container, and you don't anticipate using it, think about giving it away or selling it in a garage sale.

## remove these toxic chemicals from your home:

This list may look like alphabet soup, but it is worth the time to check products in your home for these toxic ingredients, and to avoid purchasing them in the future:

- ☐ **Degreasers:** Trichloroethylene (TCE), toluene, methylene chloride.
- ☐ **Disinfectants:** O-phenylphenol, phenol chlorobenzene, diethylene glycol.
- ☐ **Spot Removers:** Carbon tetrachloride, 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA), trichloroethylene (TCE).
- ☐ **Toilet Bowl Deodorizer:** paradichlorobenzene.

Quick, soak  
up that spill!



Clean up paint and other outdoor spills quickly with an absorbent material like cat litter or sawdust.

# HOW TO make cleaning bay-friendly

These alternative cleaning products are better for the bay, and for you and your family. You will find they are strong on cleaning power but low on toxicity.

## all purpose cleaner

Add a cup of vinegar to a pail of water and mix. Add liquid castile soap and baking soda (or borax) in equal amounts. Use more soap and soda for tough jobs, less for light cleaning.

## abrasive cleaner

Rub area with a lemon half dipped in borax, and rinse. Simple baking soda also works.

## disinfectant

Dissolve a cup of borax or baking soda in a gallon of hot water. For meat-cutting boards, shower stalls, or moldy areas, mix a cup of bleach with a gallon of water.

## drain cleaner

Mix 1 cup each of baking soda, salt and white vinegar. Pour into drain, wait 15 minutes. Flush with boiling water. Or use a manual drain snake to clear the plug. Use a drain strainer to prevent future clogs.

## floor or furniture polish

Use 1 part lemon juice, 2 parts olive or vegetable oil. Revitalize old furniture with linseed oil.

## linoleum/vinyl floor cleaner

Mop with 1 cup of white vinegar mixed with 2 gallons of water to remove dull greasy film. Toothpaste removes scuff marks.

## Basic nontoxic cleaning supplies

- Baking Soda
- Borax
- Castile Soap
- Club Soda
- Cornstarch
- Lemon Juice
- Salt
- Olive Oil
- Mineral Oil
- Vegetable Oil
- White Vinegar



### mildew remover

Combine lemon juice (or white vinegar) with salt.

### oven cleaner

Mix 2 teaspoons of borax and 2 tablespoons of liquid soap in a spray bottle of water and scrub. Or try baking soda and steel wool.

### pesticides

Combine 2 teaspoons of liquid soap with 1 cup vegetable oil in a gallon of water for garden pests. For roaches and ants, apply boric acid dust to cracks and entry points (do not use in open areas and keep children and pets away).

### silver polish

Soak in boiling water with baking soda, salt and a piece of aluminum.

### stainless steel polish

Use baking soda or mineral oil for shine.

### tub and tile cleaner

Try a cup of baking soda, 1 cup vinegar, 1 cup ammonia and 1 gallon of water.

### toilet bowl cleaners

Combine 1 cup borax in 1 gallon of water for cleaning and deodorizing. Clean frequently with baking soda. Or try liquid castile soap and borax with a toilet brush.

### upholstery and rug cleaners

Clean spills immediately by blotting with club soda. Or mix 1 quart warm water, 1 teaspoon mild liquid soap, 1 teaspoon borax, and a splash of vinegar. In a pinch, just sprinkle with cornstarch, then vacuum.

### Make it smell nice

A few drops of pure citrus, lavender or rose oil add a nice scent to mixtures that use oil or lemon juice.



# HOW TO maintain your septic tank system

When you buy a car, you are given an owner's manual containing instructions on how to care for your car. Septic systems often cost as much or more than cars. Unfortunately, nobody gives you a manual when they are installed or you purchase a home with one.

As a result, many septic systems fail unnecessarily. An improperly functioning septic system can damage water quality, be a public health threat, and be very expensive to repair or replace. Fortunately, there are some highly effective, inexpensive steps you can take to extend the effective life of your septic system.

  
**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

- Be careful what you flush or pour down your drain.** While a properly functioning septic system can treat waste to reduce nutrients and bacteria, a septic system can not treat or filter out most toxic chemicals. Examples of toxic chemicals that don't belong in your septic tank include paint, medicine, pesticides, photographic chemicals, etc. For more information see [page 8](#).
- Use liquid detergents instead of powdered detergents.** Powdered detergents contain non-biodegradable fillers that can plug your drainfield.
- Don't use septic tank cleaning compounds.** Although these products are marketed as good for your system, the starter enzymes and yeast kill bacteria which naturally break down solids. Additives can also damage septic function by breaking up the sludge and scum layers, causing solids to flush out to the infiltration bed and cause clogging.
- Limit use of your garbage disposal.** Eliminating the use of a garbage disposal can reduce the amount of grease and solids entering the septic tank and possibly clogging the drainfield. A garbage disposal grinds up kitchen scraps, suspends them in water, and sends the mixture to the septic tank. Once in the septic tank, some of the materials are broken down by bacterial action, but most of the grindings have to be pumped out of the tank, at your expense.
- Be on the lookout for signs of septic failure.** These include visible ponding or muddy soil around your system, strong odors, green spots on the lawn or backing up of drains or toilets. Promptly fix all problems on your property and report problems on your neighbors' properties to them or the SLO County Environmental Health Department at [781-5544](tel:781-5544).



## how does it work?

A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield (leachfield) and the soil.

### Septic Tank:

The septic tank is a buried, watertight container typically made of concrete, fiberglass, or polyethylene. It holds the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle out (forming sludge) and oil and grease to float to the surface (as scum). It also allows partial decomposition of the solid materials. The outlet from the tank prevents the sludge and scum from traveling into the drainfield area.

### Drainfield:

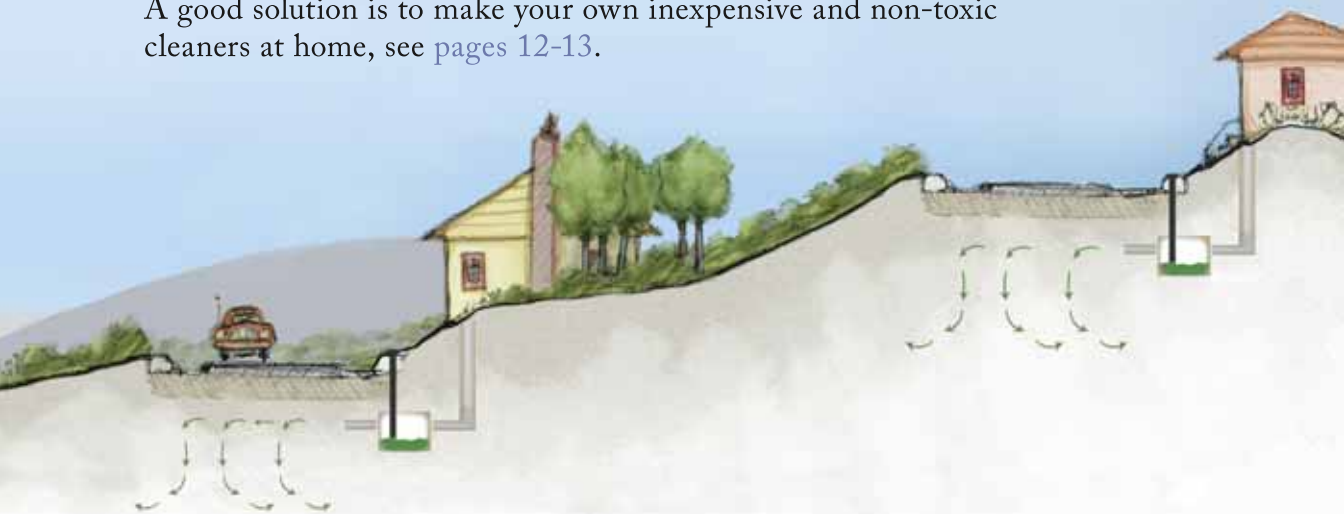
Wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drainfield. The partially-treated wastewater is pushed into the drainfield every time new wastewater enters the tank. If the drainfield is overloaded with too much liquid it will flood, causing sewage to flow to the ground surface or create backups in plumbing fixtures.



### Soil:

Septic tank wastewater flows to the drainfield, where it percolates into the soil, which provides final treatment by removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients. Suitable soil and separation from groundwater is necessary for successful wastewater treatment.

❑ **Don't use harsh household cleaners and anti-bacterial soaps.** Remember that your septic system contains a living collection of organisms that digest and treat waste. These microbes are sensitive to disinfectants, bleach, anti-bacterial soaps and many household cleaners. For the most part, your septic system's bacteria should recover quickly after *small* amounts of household cleaning products have entered the system. A good solution is to make your own inexpensive and non-toxic cleaners at home, see [pages 12-13](#).



# THE BAY-FRIENDLY YARD & GARDEN

What you do in your yard and garden has a big impact on the bay.





Our yards can be great places to reconnect with the outdoors. But have you thought about how your yard interacts with wildlife? Some products used to keep landscape plants looking lush can be harmful to the natural environment. Luckily, there are ways to keep your yard beautiful while being a good steward of the estuary.



## Great Garden Ideas:

- 1 Use mulch** to smother weeds and reduce watering needs . . . .page 22
- 2 Avoid broad spectrum pesticides**, instead ID a pest before treating the problem . . . . .page 21
- 3 Pull weeds before they go to seed** and avoid herbicides that can wash into creeks and the bay . . .page 21
- 4 Compost** green waste and enrich your soil with this natural fertilizer . . . . .page 19
- 5 Plant native plants** that resist pests and don't need lots of water or fertilizer . . . . . page 23-25
- 6 Sweep your paths and driveway** instead of using the hose to save water . . . . page 7

# TIPS ON Feeding your plants

Applying extra fertilizer won't make your garden grow any faster, because plants don't overeat. Instead, extra fertilizer will likely find its way into waterways and cause problems for wildlife.

If damage to creeks and the estuary isn't reason enough to convince you to fertilize correctly, consider that every bit of wasted fertilizer is lost money, and who thinks it is wise to waste money?

✓  
**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

## Find out how much fertilizer you need to use

☐ **Dig up the truth** by having your soil analyzed so that you know what deficiencies you may need to correct. Simple kits are available at your local nursery.

## select bay-friendly fertilizers

☐ **Avoid synthetic and chemical fertilizers**, which are high in soluble nitrogen that results in a quick, but not necessarily healthy, growth in plants. A slow-release fertilizer with insoluble nitrogen will not only last longer, but will likely reduce the amount of unused nitrogen that can run off your yard and into the bay.

☐ **Kick the chemical habit.** Use slow-release products including animal manures, cottonseed oil, bone meal, fish emulsion or compost. These types of fertilizers contain lower concentrations of nutrients and they have the added benefit of increasing soil moisture retention and providing minerals and trace elements not found in chemical fertilizers.

☐ **Use compost** as another environmentally friendly option. Compost safely amends soil, with no harm to local watersheds, at little or no cost! You can buy or build your own compost bin, or just make a pile. Mix green and brown garden trimmings with kitchen scraps, but don't add meat or dairy. Water and turn the pile once or twice a season, then screen to remove bigger pieces. You'll end up with nutrient rich compost your plants will love.

Most people now realize it is important to use the least toxic garden products.





## Question What's the problem with garden fertilizers?

Fertilizers are made up of nitrogen and phosphorus, and that makes your garden varieties grow.

Unfortunately, these nutrients will do the same for plants in natural waterways. Once fertilizers enter natural waterways, including creeks and the bay, these compounds cause harmful algal blooms.



Excessive algal growth is not only unpleasant to look at, the floating green mats block the sun's rays and can kill valuable submerged aquatic vegetation (including eelgrass). Algal blooms also reduce the amount of oxygen in the water that fish and other animals need to breathe. The result can be massive fish kills.



## fertilize correctly and make your plants happy

- ❑ **Follow directions** and avoid over-applying fertilizers. Applying extra fertilizer won't help your plants and may cause fertilizer burn if you use a quick-release type.
- ❑ If needed, **apply fertilizer just twice a year**: once in the spring to help new growth, and once in the fall to assist with healthy root growth.
- ❑ **Be careful not to spill fertilizer** on the sidewalk, driveway or street. Spilled fertilizer is destined for the bay the next time it rains. It's also important not to over-water after your application and never apply fertilizer just before a rainstorm; your hard work will likely be washed away.



GREEN GARDEN TRIMMINGS



DRY BROWN GARDEN TRIMMINGS

**Compost**  
A bay-friendly way to fertilize and mulch your garden and landscape.



# HOW TO use pesticides wisely

Pesticides, like fertilizers, can be washed off plants by rain and sprinklers, out of your garden, and into waterways. These chemicals can cause unwanted impacts to wildlife and their habitats.

Even at low levels, pesticides are toxic to fish, frogs, turtles, mussels, waterfowl, and other wildlife. Incorrect pesticide use is one of many factors contributing to the decline of fish, amphibians and other aquatic species across the United States.

Protection of wildlife and water quality is possible when using pesticides – if they are selected wisely, applied safely, and used in combination with other pest-control measures – avoiding pollution of our surface waters and contamination of aquatic life.



**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

## encourage natural pest predators in your garden

Natural predators such as ladybugs, lacewings, and praying mantises will prey upon garden pests. You can encourage these friendly insects to make your garden their home by planting a variety of flowering plants. Their flowers will attract natural predators as well as beneficial insects such as butterflies and bees.



lacewings

## USE AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

The easiest way to reduce your use of harmful chemicals is to **plant disease-resistant grasses, shrubs and trees** (see pages 23–25 for details about native plants).

**Clean up** dead perennials and plants in the fall.

**Accept minor damage** to plants from disease and insects.

**Remove eggs**, larvae, cocoons and the adult larvae by hand.

## reduce the poisons in your life

Some people seem to think more is better, but who needs extra poisons in their life? When treating garden pests:

**Be sure the product is made for the specific problem** in your garden;

**Read labels** and use products with the least amount of toxins. Better, use natural products.

**Avoid products with diazanon**, a pesticide with potentially adverse impacts on the biotic communities of local waterways.





praying mantis

There are many less-toxic commercial pesticides available, including:

**Pyola** (*an insecticide for lawns*)

**Sluggo**, night-time **hand-picking** (*to eliminate slugs and snails*)

**Mole-Med** (*chases away moles*)

**WOW Plus** (*kills crabgrass*)

**Concern Fast-Acting Weed Killer**

## identify the pest or weed before taking action!

You wouldn't open your medicine cabinet and take cough syrup for a headache, so be sure to find the cause of the problem in your garden before you try to treat it.

**Do not use “Weed and Feed” products.** Broad-spectrum pesticides are not selective and also kill beneficial insects. All the bugs shown on these pages are beneficial insects. There are many others.

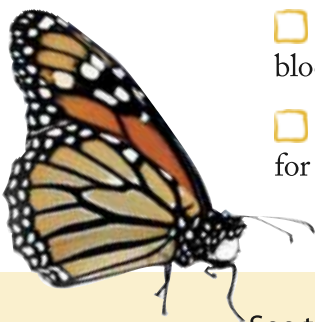
## HOW TO manage weeds

Timing is important when it comes to weed control. If you can **eliminate the weed before it goes to seed**, you will greatly reduce the chances of it coming back.

**Mulching** is an extremely effective aid in controlling weeds, especially for annual weed varieties. Mulching also provides the additional benefits of conserving soil moisture, keeping the soil at a more uniform temperature, preventing erosion, and creating a more attractive garden appearance.

**Approximately 2-4 inches of mulch** are needed to block the growth of weeds.

**Try a layer of cardboard under a thin layer of mulch** for a great low-cost approach to weed control.



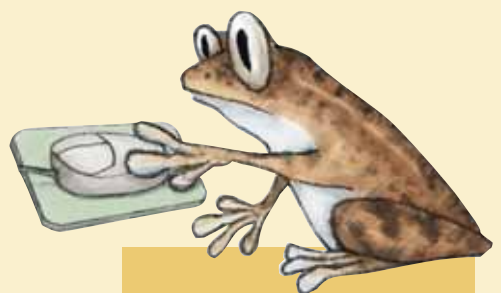
monarch butterfly

See the Master Gardener site and click on San Luis Obispo County to **identify and treat garden pests:**

[www.mastergardens.org](http://www.mastergardens.org)

781-5939

For more ideas and to **find less toxic garden products:**  
[www.ourwaterourworld.com](http://www.ourwaterourworld.com)





# HOW TO conserve water in the garden



**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

## use mulch magic

**Use mulch to cover open areas** with tasteful good looks. Mulch helps keep the ground from overheating, holds moisture that would evaporate, and discourages weeds. Two-thirds of the water applied to bare soil is lost through evaporation, but with a layer of mulch, only about 10% of the water evaporates.

## stay in touch with your sprinklers

**If you have an automatic sprinkler system, check the heads periodically.** Be sure they haven't shifted direction to spray water on the side of the house, driveway, or sidewalk instead of your plants.

**Use a sprinkler timer to make sure you don't waste water.** A timer that attaches to the end of your hose is more reliable than your short-term memory, and is relatively inexpensive.

## group plants by water needs

**“Hydrozoning”** avoids wasting water on plants that don't require it. A principle of water-wise gardening is to select plants that are appropriate for our climate and group them according to their water needs. Plants requiring routine irrigation should be placed together. Plants needing less irrigation should be placed in another zone, where they receive less water. The more drought tolerant plants you choose, the less water you'll use.

### Add a few natives to your yard.

You don't have to re-landscape to add habitat value to your yard. Just select a few native plants that fit your style.

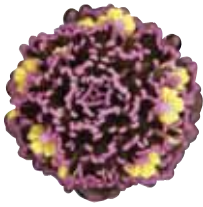




# HOW TO create backyard habitat

Plants that grow naturally in our area make great low-maintenance landscaping plants. Using Central Coast native plants in your yard creates habitat for a variety of wildlife, including butterflies, birds, insects and other species.

Traditional landscape ornamental plants do not provide much value to local wildlife. By selecting native plants, you can easily provide food, shelter and a place for local fauna to raise their young ... the essential elements of wildlife habitat.



owl's clover

## getting to know native plants

☐ A fun way to select native plants is to see what's growing in parks and preserves close to your home. As long as the soil type generally matches that found on your property, the plants you see can probably be grown in your yard with little effort, very little water, and with few inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides.

☐ If you wish, snap a few photos of the plants you enjoy and bring those photos to one of the nurseries listed in our resource section. The staff should be able to tell you more about the plant, including its space and water needs.

## where to learn about and buy native plants

For details about coastal natives, visit:

San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, El Chorro Regional Park  
*(Plant sales occur frequently. [www.slobg.org](http://www.slobg.org))*

Las Pilitas Nursery, Santa Margarita ([www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com))

Miner's Ace Hardware, Los Osos and Morro Bay

Los Osos Valley Nursery, Los Osos

Places to go to identify and learn more about native plants:

Montana de Oro State Park, Holloway Native Garden  
*(Just past Spooner's Cove)*

San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, El Chorro Regional Park

## What's so special about going native?

Plants native to the soils and climate of our area provide the best overall food sources for wildlife, while generally requiring less fertilizer, less water, and less effort to control pests.



# HOW TO add a few natives to your yard



**Sticky Monkeyflower**  
*Mimulus aurantiacus*



**Coast Dudleya**  
*Dudleya caespitosa*



**Golden Yarrow**  
*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*



**California Wild Rose**  
*Rosa californica*



**Fuchsia-flower Gooseberry**  
*Ribes speciosum*



**Hummingbird Sage**  
*Salvia spathacea*



**You don't have to completely re-do your landscaping** to add habitat to your yard. Just select a few natives from local nurseries and gradually add them to the landscape.



These beautiful native plants are drought-tolerant and provide food and shelter for wildlife. A wide variety of native plants are available at local nurseries (see page 23).



**California Poppy**  
*Eschscholzia californica*



**Coffeeberry**  
*Rhamnus californica*



**Manzanita**  
*Arctostaphylos sp.*



**California Everlasting**  
*Gnaphalium californicum*



**Sand Verbena**  
*Abronia maritima*



**Coastal Buckwheat**  
*Eriogonum parvifolium*



**Silver Dune Lupine**  
*Lupinus chamissonis*

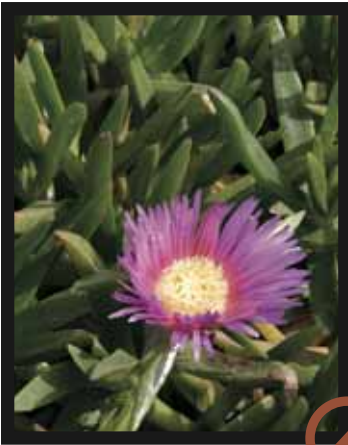


**Blue-Eyed Grass**  
*Sisyrinchium bellum*



**Wild Iris**  
*Iris douglasiana*

# HOW TO get rid of invasive plant species



**Iceplant**  
*Carpobrotus edulis*



**Periwinkle**  
*Vinca major*



**Scotch Broom**  
*Cytisus scoparius*



**Veldt Grass**  
*Ehrharta erecta*



**Jubata Grass**  
*Cortaderia jubata*



**English Ivy**  
*Hedera helix*

## don't plant a pest!

For more information about invasive plants and smart alternatives, visit the **California Invasive Plant Council** website at [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org).





## avoid invasive plants like the plague they are

The landscape of California has undergone many changes due to development, but even our undeveloped landscapes have been altered with the introduction of non-native or “alien” plants from other areas of the United States and other countries.

Most non-native plants aren't a problem, but some species are true pests and invade ecologically or economically important areas. Invasive plants quickly grow out of control and literally take over the habitat of native plants, causing damage and degradation to local ecosystems.





# THE BAY-FRIENDLY CAR

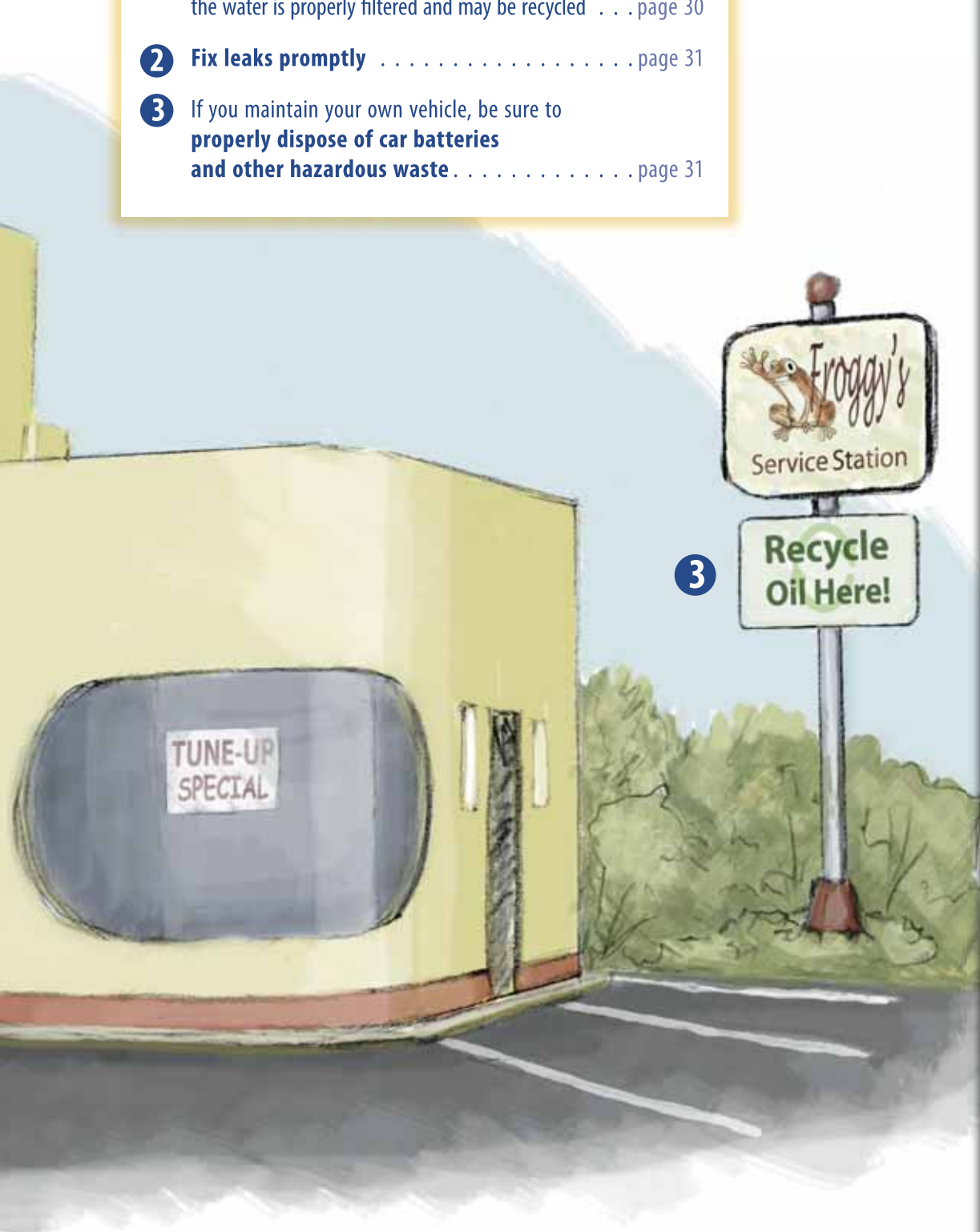
How you maintain your vehicle has an impact on the bay.



Your vehicle is an important part of modern life. These tips on how to care for your car or truck can make this necessity a lot more bay-friendly.

Take care of your car:

- 1 Wash your vehicle at a commercial car wash, where the water is properly filtered and may be recycled . . . page 30
- 2 Fix leaks promptly . . . . . page 31
- 3 If you maintain your own vehicle, be sure to properly dispose of car batteries and other hazardous waste . . . . . page 31



# HOW TO maintain your vehicle properly

Have you noticed that folks aren't washing their autos in their driveways anymore? That's because most people are aware that if runoff from washing a car reaches the bay, it can cause problems for local wildlife. Most soap contains phosphates that can cause algal blooms in creeks and the bay (see page 19). In addition, your wash water runoff probably contains oil and toxic chemicals.

  
**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

## Wash your car without polluting the bay

**Go to a commercial carwash** when your auto needs cleaning. You can help conserve water and reduce runoff pollution in the bay. At a commercial car wash your dirty, oily wash water will not be released into the bay.

Washing your automobile at home can produce polluted runoff, and it may not be long before it is illegal for such runoff to enter a stormdrain. If you must wash your car at home, use these tips to reduce water waste and water pollution:

**Use a trigger spray nozzle** to control water flow from the hose and reduce water waste.

**Select a special biodegradable soap** and use as little as possible.

**Wash the vehicle on the grass** or other porous surface (soil can filter out many pollutants, and microbes are effective at breaking down nutrients).

**Dump your bucket of soapy water in the grass or down the sink** to ensure some level of treatment before it reaches local waterways. Remember, many soaps contain phosphates that contribute to algal blooms, and subsequent low oxygen levels in water bodies.



### Stormdrains in Morro Bay

carry everything that enters them directly into the Morro Bay Estuary.



✓  
**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

## maintain a clean, green transportation machine

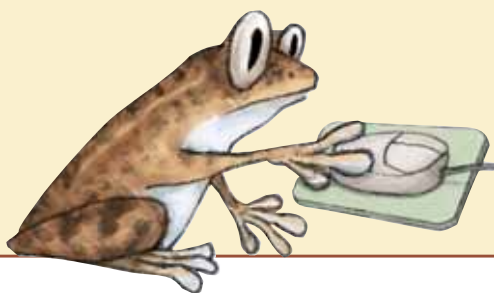
- ☐ **As soon as you notice a leak of any type of fluid, get it fixed promptly.** Each drop of oil or automotive fluid on your driveway and in the streets is washed into waterways by winter rainstorms. With all of the cars on the road, leaks add up to a big pollution problem.
- ☐ **If you change your own oil, be sure to dispose of the used oil properly.** Never dump oil or any auto fluids in your yard or a storm drain – they will end up in the estuary. Fully drain the old filter, and take it with your used oil to a recycling facility. The service is free, easy and available at many automotive shops. To find the closest used oil collection location call 1-800-400-0811, or visit [www.imwa.com](http://www.imwa.com).
- ☐ **When changing your oil, prevent spills** by placing a piece of cardboard under the oil pan. Clean up spills promptly with an absorbent material like cat litter or saw dust.
- ☐ **Treat used car batteries as the hazards they are.** Used car batteries contain both lead and acid, and should be disposed of as hazardous waste. Check out the household hazardous waste section in this booklet to find a disposal site (page 9).

## auto alternatives to consider

Automobiles and associated petroleum and chemical wastes are big problems locally and around the world. The fewer miles driven in automobiles, the cleaner our environment will be.

Here are some small and big ideas to consider:

- ☐ SUVs are losing popularity due to the financial and environmental burdens they carry. **When buying your next vehicle, selecting the most fuel efficient vehicle** to fit your needs is one of the most important decisions you make in regard to the environment.
- ☐ Petrol-fueled cars may soon be a thing of the past. Electric, compressed natural gas and even solar-powered vehicles and mopeds are now available. **Learn more about smart transportation choices** at [www.eere.energy.gov/afdc/](http://www.eere.energy.gov/afdc/).
- ☐ **Give your car a day off** by carpooling, biking or taking the bus to work or to run errands. You can find more information at [www.rideshare.org](http://www.rideshare.org) or call 541-2277.



Find the nearest location  
for **used oil collection**:

[www.imwa.com](http://www.imwa.com)  
1-800-400-0811

Find information about  
**public transportation**:

[www.rideshare.org](http://www.rideshare.org)  
(805) 541-2277

# BAY-FRIENDLY PETS

Your pets can have  
a big impact on  
the bay.



Our cats and dogs, if allowed to wander, place burdens on the wild ecosystems around us. You can protect the estuary's sensitive ecosystem by keeping your pets at home, keeping them leashed, and keeping them healthy.

### Proper Pet Etiquette:

- 1 **Do your "doody"** and pick up after your pet. Simply tie a baggie to the leash and you're set . . . . .page 34
- 2 **Make your pup an eco-dog** by walking him/her on-leash in preserves and other natural areas . . . .page 34
- 3 **Keep your feline inside** where he/she can't dine on birds, lizards, frogs and other native species . . . . .page 35





# HOW TO reduce your pet's impact on the bay

Across the nation, studies have shown that creeks, lakes, waterways and coastal areas have suffered from bacterial contamination from the feces of pets and strays. Additionally, native species of birds and mammals have suffered from being over-hunted by our domestic animals.

Unlike domesticated pets that receive plenty of food from their owners, native animals rely solely on what's available in the wild. Their numbers rise and fall accordingly, in keeping with nature's balance. Domestic animals, however, have no such controls and can create significant wildlife disturbances, estuary pollution, and damaged vegetation.

The good news is that by being a responsible pet owner, you can ensure the environment appreciates your pet as much as you do.

## TIPS FOR DOG OWNERS

  
**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

### do your doody

One of the most serious types of water pollution is bacterial contamination, and dog waste is a major source. Disease-causing pathogens, including Salmonella and Giardia, are present in dog waste. If the waste is not picked up, rainstorms wash the pathogens into the bay, making it unsafe for swimming and harming aquatic life.

**The job of cleaning up after your dog is simply part of being a responsible pet owner.** Pet waste should be promptly collected and disposed of, both on your property and in other areas where you walk or exercise your pet.

### walk the eco-walk when exercising your dog

**Keep your dog(s) on a leash** in natural areas where birds and other wildlife may be disturbed, not to mention plants that may get crushed and broken by your curious canine. You may think dogs don't do much damage, but keep in mind that there are thousands of dogs in our bayside community.

**Try a dog park.** Dog parks are becoming popular places to let your dog run and play. Support the development of new parks and use the already established parks in our county such as El Chorro Regional Park off Highway One across from Cuesta College.



# TIPS FOR CAT OWNERS

## please keep your cat inside

You may want to provide your cat with fun and freedom, but there are disadvantages to letting kitty outside. Outdoor cats eat native birds, reptiles, small mammals and amphibians whose populations may already be stressed due to habitat loss. Another problem is feline waste. Pets' waste contains pathogens that contaminate local creeks and bays, and pass disease onto local wildlife.



On the upside, there are many benefits to keeping your cat indoors:

- ❑ **Reduce disease.** Exposure to diseases and parasites are minimized or eliminated for indoor cats. Diseases such as feline leukemia, upper-respiratory disease, feline immunodeficiency virus and rabies can be serious and life-threatening. Common parasites picked up outdoors by cats include fleas, ticks and worms.
- ❑ **Lower your vet bills.** Besides not having to seek emergency attention for cats that have been in fights or hit by cars, keeping cats indoors saves money on treating diseases, fleas and worms.

## tips on transitioning your cat to the indoors

- ❑ **Slowly replace your cat's old routine of going outside with the new, exciting routine of staying in.** If your cat is outdoors most of the time, bring your cat inside for increasingly longer stays. Gradually shorten the length of time the cat is outside until you no longer let him or her outside at all.
- ❑ **Substitute outdoor excursions with periods of special play time.** Supervised trips out onto the patio can also make the transition from outside to inside a little easier. Human companionship makes cats happy, and an outdoor cat may welcome the indoors if he or she gets more love, attention and play.



## don't leave food outside

- ❑ **Bring extra cat food inside,** both day and night, to avoid attracting and supporting opportunistic feeders such as raccoons, skunks and starlings. Leaving pet food where wildlife can get it attracts these animals to urban areas, often causing conflicts or risky encounters, and supports an unnatural number of opportunistic feeders that can throw an ecosystem off-balance.

# HOW TO help protect our parks & preserves

Our natural parks and preserves are small remnants of the habitats where our towns and neighborhoods were built. These special areas are windows into our past and, if lost, they can never be replaced.

✓  
**Check mark**  
the changes  
you'd like  
to make:

When visiting parks, preserves, and open space areas:

**Bring a trash bag on your walks and help pick up debris.** In a perfect world you wouldn't have to clean up trash, but picking up a few pieces of unsightly and potentially harmful debris on the beach or trail is a great way to help the wildlife and the land you love.

**Stay on marked trails.** The person who decides to blaze his or her own trail destroys native plant life. If you are tempted to take a shortcut or enter an area that is closed for rehabilitation, stop and remember why you are there – to enjoy the beauty of the habitat.

**Use binoculars for viewing wildlife.** Repeated disturbances that make birds and other wildlife flee burns energy they need to find food. Migratory birds especially need rest during and after grueling migrations in spring and fall. Some birds have flown two thousand miles to get here. Let them rest.

**Don't feed wild animals, including ducks.** Not only does our food not offer proper nutritional value to wildlife, feeding wildlife upsets the natural balance of ecosystems.



Sweet Springs Preserve  
in Los Osos



# HOW TO get to know the habitats

“Habitat” means home. Our local habitats are home to plants and animals that have adapted over many thousands of years to the bay and the land around it. We live in these habitats too, but there are so many of us now that we must be vigilant and careful to preserve the natural areas that remain.

Most people now recognize the importance of clean and healthy habitats that support a rich diversity of species, including our own species. In this area we are fortunate to have three habitat types that have retained much of their natural state:



## Coastal dune scrub

Coastal dune scrub is one of the most endangered habitats in California. Much of Los Osos is situated in coastal dune scrub habitat. Dominant plants include silver dune lupine, mock heather, and coyote bush. This habitat is most common on relatively flat terraces near the ocean. Visit this habitat at Montaña de Oro State Park.



## Chaparral

Chaparral (*shâp ah rel*) is mostly Morro manzanita, a federally endangered plant found on north facing slopes in highly erosive sandy soil (center photo). Other dominant plants include chamise, coast live oaks, ceonothus, and sticky monkey flower. Visit this habitat in portions of the Elfin Forest in Los Osos.



## Oak woodland

Oak woodland habitat is named for the coast live oak trees with shiny, prickly, evergreen leaves. The “pygmy oaks” are a stunted, wind-pruned variety of coast live oak such as the amazing trees that grow in the Elfin Forest. Growing beneath the oaks is an understory of fern, gooseberry, wild blackberry, and poison oak. Visit this habitat at the State Parks Oak Preserve.

# where do you stand?

This quiz will show how well you're doing and what needs to change, to have the least impact on the bay.

ACTIVITY	LOW RISK (1 POINT)	MEDIUM RISK (3 POINTS)	HIGH RISK (7 POINTS)	TOTAL RISK
----------	-----------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------	------------

## keeping the water clean

Runoff in coastal areas is unavoidable, but its effects can be reduced by keeping harmful substances out of the runoff. This section will help you assess your personal contribution to water pollution.

<b>Washing a vehicle</b> page 30	Always go to a commercial car wash.	Wash on a gravel or grassy surface, biodegradable soap is used sparingly and the hose flow is controlled.	Wash on an impervious surface (such as a driveway), generous amounts of soap are used, and the hose is left running with no nozzle.	
<b>Maintaining a vehicle</b> page 31	Any leaks fixed and all spills or drips cleaned up promptly. Used oil/filters recycled; used batteries to proper HHW Facility.	Leaks captured with a pan or carpet scrap. Spills cleaned up. Used oil/filters recycled, used batteries to proper HHW Facility.	Used oil, antifreeze and other wastes are dumped into a stormdrain or on the ground. Spills are not cleaned up.	
<b>Dog &amp; cat waste</b> pages 34-35	Dog waste is always picked up and disposed of. Cats are kept indoors.	Dog waste is usually picked up, and cats are sometimes allowed outdoors and waste is not picked up.	Animal waste is left to decompose on a paved surface in a concentrated area such as a pen or run. Cats spend all time outside and waste is not picked up.	
<b>Yard and garden care</b> pages 16-27	Organic slow release fertilizers are used once or twice a year. Pests are identified and then treated with non-toxic methods.	Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are occasionally used. Least toxic pesticides are selected for specific pests.	Quick release, chemical fertilizers are used along with a broad spectrum pest control product.	
<b>Chemical use, storage and disposal</b> pages 8-9	Hazardous chemicals are rarely or never bought. All are stored in closed container in watertight area. Old or unused given away or taken to proper HHW Facility.	Hazardous chemicals are bought but stored in closed containers in watertight area. Most are taken to the proper HHW Facility for disposal, but some are trashed.	Some or all chemicals are stored outdoors or exposed to water. Old or unwanted chemicals are dumped down drains or on the ground.	

Add up all the points in this column and write the sum in the box on the next page.

## conserving water

How do your actions contribute to protection of our limited fresh water resources?

<b>Fixtures and toilets</b> pages 6-7	Low-usage toilets and faucets have been installed.	Some low-usage toilets and faucets have been installed.	No low-usage toilets or faucets have been installed.	
<b>Laundry and dishes</b> pages 6-7	Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes, or use a tub rather than running water to wash the dishes.	Try to wash full loads, but occasionally run small loads for convenience.	Wash numerous small loads for convenience and/or wash dishes by hand with the water running.	
<b>Faucet habits</b> pages 6-7	Do not let the water run while washing hands, shaving, brushing teeth, etc.	Occasionally let the water run while washing hands, shaving, brushing teeth, etc.	Usually let the water run while washing hands, shaving, brushing teeth, etc.	
<b>Yard and Garden irrigation</b> page 22	My yard is landscaped with drought tolerant plants that require little watering, which is delivered via drip irrigation.	Some drought tolerant plants are in my yard. Use both drip and sprinkler irrigation methods, but do not see water running off my property.	My yard is more than 60% lawn that requires frequent watering via sprinklers. Often see water running off my property and down the street.	

ACTIVITY	LOW RISK (1 POINT)	MEDIUM RISK (3 POINTS)	HIGH RISK (7 POINTS)	TOTAL RISK
----------	-----------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------	------------

## habitat protection & preservation

How do your actions contribute to healthy habitat for wildlife?

<b>Litter</b> page 36	Never litter; regularly pick up trash left by others in my neighborhood, open spaces, and beaches.	Never litter, but don't usually clean up after others who do.	Regularly drop pieces of trash or cigarettes butts.	
<b>Pets</b> pages 32-35	Obey leash laws and always leash the dogs at natural parks and preserves. Cats are kept indoors to prevent deaths of birds and other wildlife. All pets are spayed or neutered and fed indoors.	Usually obey leash laws, but do sometimes allow dogs to roam natural parks and preserves off leash. Cats are indoors at night, but allowed outdoors where they may hunt wildlife. All pets are spayed/neutered and fed indoors.	Have one or more outdoor cats and/or walk my dog off leash in natural parks and preserves. Not all pets are spayed/neutered. Food is left outside.	
<b>Trail and open space etiquette</b> page 36	Always stay on established trails and do not enter areas closed for restoration. Aware that local habitats are home to threatened and endangered species.	Usually stay on established trails, but occasionally enter areas that are closed and/or fenced, especially if I do not understand why the trail is closed.	Enter all natural areas regardless of the type of habitat, condition or location.	
<b>Habitat restoration efforts</b> page 36	Member and active volunteer with groups that do habitat restoration or clean-ups such as SWAP, Audubon, Surfrider, MBNEP, etc.	Member of group or groups that do habitat restoration but not very active. Will consider volunteering more time for important restoration projects.	Not a member of any local preservation groups.	
<b>Habitat in your yard</b> pages 23-25	Yard is planted with local native species, never use pesticides that can kill beneficial insects.	My yard is planted with mostly local or California natives.	Yard does not currently contain local or California natives. Didn't realize it was possible to create habitat in my own yard.	

Write total points here.



### how did you do?

Add up the points in the total risk column of each section and write the figure here. The lower the score, the better you are at taking care of household chores while also taking care of the bay and our precious, irreplaceable local habitat.

<b>BEST</b>	14 - 28	You're a champion for the bay!
<b>GOOD</b>	29 - 42	You're doing the right thing. Keep up the good work!
<b>FAIR</b>	43 - 56	You'll pick up some great tips here. Practice until it's a habit!
<b>NOT GOOD</b>	56+	Please make a change to help keep Morro Bay healthy.



Thank you for reading the book and taking the self-assessment. Please share this information and continue to practice good eco-habits. What you do really does matter!



# References to keep handy

## regulatory agencies

### POLLUTION EMERGENCIES ON THE BAY

CA Department of Fish and Game  
1 (888) DFG-CALTIP or  
1 (888) 334-2258

If you witness a poaching or polluting incident or any fish and wildlife violation, or you have information about such a violation, immediately dial the toll-free CalTIP number 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Offices of Emergency Services  
24-hour Spill Report 800-852-7550  
Report spills of toxic materials such as oil immediately.

City of Morro Bay Harbor Patrol  
(805) 772-6256

The Harbor Patrol polices the bay, public piers and docks, as well as collects fees for docking in Morro Bay. Call the Harbor Patrol for any emergency on the bay.

Environmental Protection Agency  
Septic Tank Management  
[www.epa.gov/owm/septic](http://www.epa.gov/owm/septic)

## waste disposal

SLO County Integrated Waste Management Authority  
1-800-400-0811 or [www.iwma.com](http://www.iwma.com)

## hazardous waste drop sites

Morro Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant  
160 Atascadero Road, across from Morro Bay High School Saturday 11am – 3pm

Cold Canyon Landfill  
Highway 227 south of San Luis Obispo Friday and Saturday 11am – 3pm

## stranded wildlife

Do not disturb marine mammals or wildlife.

**MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE**  
Marine Mammal Center  
415-289-SEAL

**BIRD RESCUE**  
Pacific Wildlife Care  
(805) 543-9453  
[info@pacificwildlifecare.org](mailto:info@pacificwildlifecare.org)

**DEAD SEA OTTERS**  
CA Dept. of Fish and Game  
(805) 772-1135

## volunteer groups protecting the bay

Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP)  
(805) 528-0392

These “weed warriors” meet the first Saturday every month from 9am to noon, at the north end of 15th Street, Los Osos to remove veldt grass, ice plant, thistles and ivy, and to control erosion.

Morro Coast Audubon Society  
[www.morrocoastaudubon.org](http://www.morrocoastaudubon.org)  
Morro Coast Audubon owns the Sweet Springs Preserve on Ramona near Pine Street in Los Osos. This small freshwater wetland offers abundant wildlife. Volunteers meet every second Saturday of the month at 9am.

National Estuary Program  
Volunteer Monitoring Program  
[www.mbnep.org/volunteer](http://www.mbnep.org/volunteer)  
or (805) 772-3834

Join MBNEP’s Volunteer Monitoring Program to test water quality, phytoplankton and beach debris. Training is provided, so no experience is necessary.

## gardening resources

**IDENTIFYING PEST OR PLANT PROBLEMS**  
San Luis Obispo Master Gardeners  
(805) 781-5939 or  
[mgsanluisobispo@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgsanluisobispo@ucdavis.edu)  
You can call or email your questions and photos of the problem.

**REDUCING CHEMICALS IN YOUR GARDEN**  
[www.ourwaterourworld.com](http://www.ourwaterourworld.com)

**INVASIVE PLANTS AND SMART ALTERNATIVES**  
California Invasive Plant Council  
[www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org)

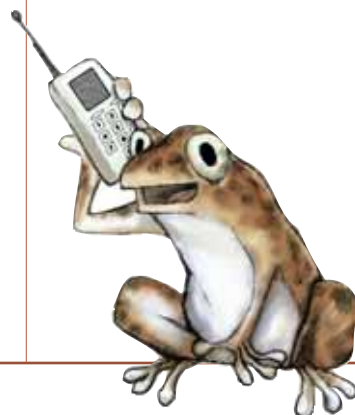
## open space and natural resources

Morro Bay Museum of Natural History and Adventures with Nature Walks  
[www.morrobaymuseum.org](http://www.morrobaymuseum.org)

San Luis Obispo County Parks  
[www.slocountyparks.com](http://www.slocountyparks.com)

California State Parks  
[www.slostateparks.com](http://www.slostateparks.com)

Morro Bay National Estuary Program  
(805) 772-3834 or [www.mbnep.org](http://www.mbnep.org)





## INSIDE BAYSIDE LIVING GUIDE

Everything you ever wanted to know about real ways to reduce your impacts on the bay.

- ☑ Proper disposal instructions for more than 40 household cleaners and products
- ☑ Color photos of native plants that will attract wildlife to your backyard, and where to buy them
- ☑ A quiz to help you assess how bay-friendly you are
- ☑ More than 40 websites and phone numbers to help you learn more

This is **Rana Aurora**, a red-legged frog who lives in the freshwater wetlands around the Morro Bay Estuary. Her species is endangered, so Rana has a special interest in keeping the bay clean and healthy. You'll find Rana Aurora throughout the **Bayside Living Guide**, pointing out references and tips.





The Morro Bay National Estuary Program is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural resources of Morro Bay and its watershed. The Estuary Program is a cooperative program of government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, property owners and interested citizens.

The Morro Bay Estuary was established as a National Estuary in 1994. The National Estuary Program is administered by the US Environmental Protection Agency, but the Estuary Program is operated locally and is non-regulatory.

The work of the Estuary Program and its partners is diverse. Projects include habitat protection and restoration, pollution reduction strategies, public education, water conservation measures, and monitoring the health of the bay with help from many local volunteers.

The Estuary Program's work is guided by a plan called the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The plan was written over several years with much input from the community. Committees provide ongoing assistance to staff and program partners. The CCMP outlines priority problems and over 60 action plans to address threats to the estuary.

To learn more, go to [www.mbnep.org](http://www.mbnep.org) or come to our Nature Center on the Embarcadero in Morro Bay.

**Morro Bay National Estuary Program**  
**601 Embarcadero, Suite 11, Morro Bay, CA 93442**  
**(805) 772-3834 [www.mbnep.org](http://www.mbnep.org)**