Welcome to the spring edition of your CVSan Pipeline newsletter. The Pipeline aims to provide you with timely information about upcoming events such as the annual CVSan Recycles Day, keep you abreast of ongoing improvements to the wastewater collection system and solid waste systems, and report on projects like the work of our Green Hearts volunteers. We also share tips that can help you reduce waste, which in turn makes our work at CVSan more efficient and the quality of life better for everybody in beautiful Castro Valley.

In this issue, you'll find a wealth of information on Bay-Friendly gardening with native plants that support wildlife, drought-tolerant lawn alternatives, and non-toxic remedies to combat weeds and pests. We hope you enjoy the newsletter and thank you for being a partner with CVSan.

Roland P. Williams, Jr.
General Manager
Thank You CVHS Green Hearts!

We would like to recognize and thank the Castro Valley High School (CVHS) Green Hearts Committee. Over the past 18 months, the Committee has been meeting with CVSan to work on waste reduction programs at CVHS, and has volunteered to help with other projects. In addition to monitoring recycling and composting stations at various events, the Committee most recently helped to assemble several hundred food scrap pails for distribution to Castro Valley residents. Thank you CVHS Green Hearts!

Come See Our New Bay-Friendly Plants

We have added native, drought-tolerant plants to CVSan office’s front landscape, inspired by Bay-Friendly practices that foster soil health and conserve water and other valuable resources, while reducing waste and preventing pollution. Come by to see the California Hummingbird Sage, Blue Bedder Penstemon, and Monkey Flower, and get some inspiration for your own garden!

What Are California Native Plants?

California native plants are naturally occurring and have adapted to local climates. Many require less water than non-native plants, saving the gardener time, money, and — of course — water. Unlike non-natives, native plants have co-evolved with native animal and insect species, providing vital habitats and food sources for these creatures. For example, native oak trees support more than 500 species of caterpillars, but imported ginkgo trees only support five. In turn, those caterpillars feed birds, like chickadees, that need to eat more than 6,000 to raise one brood of chicks. Incorporate California native plants in your home garden to support our local ecosystem.

Lose Your Lawn

Effective March 1, 2018, China’s Ministry of Environmental Protection finalized a quality standard of 0.5% contamination for imported recyclables. What does that mean for the CVSan community? Please prepare your recyclables so that they have the best opportunity to be recycled! Here are a few tips:

• Rinse food out of plastic, glass, and metal containers
• Keep food out of the recycling – compost food scraps and food-soiled paper in the green organics cart
• Shred documents and put shredded paper in the green organics cart (bonus: it absorbs fats, oils, and grease, and controls odor)
• Toss recyclables loosely in the blue recycling cart – don’t bundle recyclables in plastic bags

Homemade Remedies for Pests and Weeds

An infestation by pests or an onslaught of weeds can make even the most dedicated home gardener want to reach for harsh pesticides and herbicides. But those quick solutions can be toxic to humans, pets, and wildlife, including beneficial insects. They can even alter ecosystems, by poisoning our soil and polluting our water.

The good news is that homemade, non-toxic pesticides can be very effective in controlling mites, aphids, whiteflies, and unwanted beetles. One example is soap spray: simply mix ½ teaspoons of mild liquid soap with 1 quart of water, and spray the mixture directly on the infested surfaces of the plants in the evening or early morning.

To control weeds the non-toxic way, try pouring boiling water on them or spraying the leaves with a mixture of 10 ounces of Borax dissolved in 2.5 gallons of warm water. Regular white vinegar or a solution of one part table salt to eight parts hot water can also be effective.

For details and more recipes, visit www.SelectMyPath.org, and click on “Home & Gardening.”