



## COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES.....KEITH DEVORE, Director  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING Phone: (916) 874-6851  
827 SEVENTH STREET, ROOM 301 Fax: (916) 874-8693  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

WARREN H. HARADA, Administrator  
Public Works Agency  
STEVE PEDRETTI, Director  
County Engineering & Administration  
ROBERT F. SHANKS, Director  
Water Quality  
JOHN W. NEWTON, Director  
General Services  
KEITH DEVORE, Director  
Water Resources  
TOM ZLOTKOWSKI, Director  
Transportation  
DAVID PELSER, Director  
Waste Management and Recycling

### News Release

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Contact: Jessica Langston

Department of Water Resources, (916) 874-1515

For Immediate Release

#### **Changing Your Pest Control Practices Can Protect Sacramento Waterways**

**Sacramento, CA** – Summer is here and as the temperature continues to rise you may find yourself thinking about those bugs and weeds that appear in your garden. Many homeowners look to pesticides to solve their insect problems, but since the use of chemical products poses risks to people, pets, and the environment, unnecessary uses should always be avoided. . The Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership, as part of its mission to protect local waterways, actively promotes safer alternatives to harmful chemical pesticides.

Pesticides that are applied to the urban environment, or deliberately washed down or dumped into local storm drains frequently cause problems in Sacramento creeks and rivers. Previously, the pesticides diazinon and chlorpyrifos were regularly used around parks, schools, and homes. Just one teaspoon of either chemical is enough to make millions of gallons of water toxic. A past study indicated that tens of thousands of pounds of such pesticides were applied outdoors every year causing many creeks to reach unsafe levels for aquatic life. Recently, almost all diazinon and chlorpyrifos sales have been phased out by the U.S. EPA, due to their potential danger to children. However, the risks of the new products replacing them, such as pyrethroids, are not completely understood, and they have the potential to cause similar problems in our creeks.

The Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership encourages the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices by professional landscapers and the general public. IPM practices attempt to use environmentally sound methods of pest control that will be safer for you, your family, and Sacramento waterways. Under IPM, the use of chemical pesticides is not excluded, but according to the University of California IPM Program (UCIPM), “Pesticides are used as a last resort when careful monitoring indicates that they are needed according to pre-established guidelines. When treatments are necessary, the least toxic and most target-specific pesticides are chosen.”

To promote cleaner creeks and rivers in Sacramento County, you too can adopt the following IPM practices:

- Plant pest resistant or well-adapted plant varieties like native plants
- Make sure you really have a problem before you take action. The presence of an insect, even a pest species, does not mean there is a problem. Many bugs never cause harm, and many others cause harm only under limited conditions.

- Discourage pests by modifying the way you design, irrigate, fertilize and manage your garden
- Alter the garden or home environment to deprive pests of the food, shelter or other requirements they need to thrive
- Keep pests out of the home and garden using barriers, screens and caulking
- Squash, trap, wash off or prune out pests
- Rely on good bugs in your garden to eat pests, thereby eliminating the need for insecticides that may end up in our waterways (By killing off the good bugs, pesticides can cause more problems than they solve)

If you must use pesticides, consider the following tips:

- Identify your pest problem and choose the least toxic pesticide that targets your pest and achieves the results you want
- Before you choose a product, find out about the risks for your family and the environment. You can find very useful information at [www.pesticideinfo.org](http://www.pesticideinfo.org). Determine the right amount of pesticide to purchase. Purchasing exactly the amount you need for the application eliminates the need for storing unused pesticides and saves you money
- When you apply any type of pesticide, be sure to read the label and apply it properly
- Apply pesticides only where needed. Do not overspray. Use spot treatments whenever possible
- Do not apply just before it rains and do not over-water after applying pesticides.

The Stormwater Quality Partnership teaches the public about IPM techniques through the Water Wise program, which is a partnership with the Master Gardeners and the University of California IPM Program (UCIPM). To find additional recommendations visit our Water Wise carts found in nurseries throughout the county, call the Master Gardeners at (916) 875-6913, or visit our website at [www.sacstormwater.org/wise/index.html](http://www.sacstormwater.org/wise/index.html).

Not a do-it-yourselfer? The Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership promotes local landscaping professionals who adopt IPM practices through our Clean Water Business Partner Program. To find a list of participating Landscape Businesses in your area call program director Patrick Sanger at (916) 808-1726 or visit our website at <http://www.sacstormwater.org/cwbp/cwbp-landscapers.html>

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