



Less-Toxic Pest Management

Avoid Pesticides In Your Home and Garden

You may be surprised to learn that in the Bay Area, residents apply more pesticides than farmers. When it rains, the pesticides are carried from your home, garden and yard straight into storm drains that drain directly into our creeks and San Francisco Bay without treatment, harming fish, plants and wildlife that make the creeks and Bay their homes.

How Can You Reduce Pesticide Use?

Attract feathered friends: Consider adding a birdbath, birdhouse or feeder to your garden. A single swallow can easily devour large quantities of flying insects in just one afternoon feast. You can also purchase beneficial insects for your garden from your local nursery or garden store.

Prevent pests from entering your home: Trim plants and trees so they don't touch your house. Remove diseased plants, tree prunings, fallen fruit and leaves from around your house.

Choose less-toxic alternatives: Learn how to control common house and garden pests such as ants, snails and spiders the less-toxic way. If you must use pesticides, reduce the amount you are applying. Use only as much as needed by following the label instructions. Do not use them when rain is predicted or prior to watering your lawn or garden.

Never dispose of unwanted pesticides in the trash, storm drain, or sink. Instead, take them to a collection facility.

For Sunnyvale residents and businesses, contact the City's [recycling program](#) or call (408) 730-7262 for disposal information and details on household hazardous wastes.

For anyone living or working outside of Sunnyvale, contact the County Household Hazardous Waste program at (408) 299-7300 or at www.hhw.org.

Your home and garden are in a watershed (the land area that drains water to our creeks and Bay). By protecting the watershed, you are protecting the environment, creeks and Bay for yourself, your children, and future generations. For more information about less-toxic pest control and other ways to protect your watershed, call 1(866) WATERSHED or visit www.MyWatershedWatch.org.

Sunnyvale has adopted an Integrated Pest Management policy to protect water quality, and staff uses a hierarchy of least toxic methods to control pests in city owned facilities. That hierarchy is listed below and is recommended to residents for use as a guideline:

1. No controls (e.g., tolerating the monitored level of pest infestation, use of resistant plant varieties, or allowing normal life cycle of weeds)
2. Physical or mechanical controls (e.g., hand labor, mowing, etc.)
3. Cultural controls (e.g., mulching, disking, alternative vegetation, use of goats)
4. Biological controls (e.g., natural enemies or predators)
5. Reduced-risk chemical controls (e.g., soaps or oils)