

May 15th, 2012

## **SAUSALITO WILL EXPAND COMPOSTING THIS SUMMER**

### **Free Composting Bins and More Pick-Ups Will Help Achieve Marin's Goal of Zero Waste**

Recycling food scraps is "the single most effective thing you can do" for the environment, according to Jared Blumenfeld, the Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency. The Sausalito City Council wants to make it possible for residents and businesses to do that by expanding the City's composting collection program this summer to include food scraps and non-recyclable paper.

The City is implementing the program in part to help Marin achieve its goal of zero waste to landfill by 2025. This goal was established by the Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Joint Powers Authority. Sausalito is a member of the Authority.

### **The Importance of Food Scrap Composting**

Food scraps, dumped into scarce landfill, damage the environment and contribute to global warming. Food in landfills creates methane gas, which traps twenty times more heat than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), according to the Environmental Protection Agency. About 25% of Marin's landfill trash is made up of food scraps.

When food scraps and plant trimmings are composted, it creates rich fertilizer that enhances the soil, conserves water, provides erosion control and improves the quality of crops. It also reduces the need to use petroleum-based fertilizers and pesticides.

### **How the Program Will Work**

Bay Cities Refuse Service, which provides refuse removal for the City, will give residents and businesses, at no additional charge:

- A large green composting collection bin for plant trimmings, food scraps and other compostables. Residences will also receive a small kitchen pail for food scraps that can be transferred to the large green bin for weekly collection.
- A large blue recycling collection bin for paper, bottles, cans and plastic.

Bay Cities will collect the compostables and recyclables weekly on your garbage day and deliver them to facilities for processing.

### **Bin Dimensions and Advantages**

You will automatically receive 65 gallon bins unless you specify otherwise to Bay Cities. The bins will be available in two primary sizes: 65 gallons (25 ¼"W x 26 3/8"D x 42 1/8"H) or 32 gallons (19"W x 22 1/4"D x 38 1/2"H). A smaller 12 gallon bin (14 ½"W x 18"D x 14 ½"H) will be provided to residents who have difficulty moving the larger bins to the curb.

All bins have attached lids and the larger two sizes have wheels. Due to their sturdiness and stability, they have been effective in reducing animal scavenging. The lids won't blow away and the bins are water and air tight which eliminates leaking and odors.

### **How to Compost and Recycle**

1. Place all food scraps and non-recyclable paper (such as wet, soiled or tissue paper) in the kitchen pail, another container or directly in the green collection bin, not in your trash that goes to the landfill. Empty the kitchen pail or container into the green composting bin along with your plant trimmings.
2. Place all paper, bottles, cans and rigid (hard) plastics in the blue recycling bin.
3. Place any non-recyclable, non-compostable material to be landfilled in your own trash can as before. City leaders hope that it will be a very small amount of trash.
4. Put the green composting and the blue recycling bins at the curb on your trash pick-up day. Your trash will be picked up from the current location, but also bringing it to the curb reduces fuel use, exhaust, traffic and collection costs. Apartment buildings and businesses should have composting, recycling and trash collected at one location.

Bay Cities has provided refuse services to Sausalito for many years and they know the City very well. They understand that some residents may be physically challenged with placing bins at curbside and will accommodate people so they can participate in composting and recycling.

### **Local Cities Are Participating**

With the addition of Sausalito, almost all the cities in Marin County and the Bay Area have food scrap composting programs. San Francisco alone is composting about 600 tons a day which is helping it advance toward its goal of zero waste by 2020.

### **Wide Support in Sausalito**

Over the past two years, the Sausalito Sustainability Commission delved into the food scrap composting process and provided the City Council and City staff with extensive information on how and why to implement a program in Sausalito.

Bay Cities and City staff studied the process and wrote a plan for City Council members to evaluate. The staff recommended the implementation and four of the five Council members voted to adopt the staff plan.

### **Costs and Benefits**

Bay Cities will increase trash collection fees by 9.5%. If you currently pay a monthly rate of \$33.70, that will increase by \$3.20 per month. The increase will offset costs of improved composting and recycling as well as other increased costs such as higher fuel prices.

Bay Cities will be investing substantial funds to provide bins to residents. The company will also be upgrading their collection vehicles and increasing the composting pick-ups from twice a month to weekly.

Some of The Benefits: Our ability to help provide a sustainable environment for our future; and our city pride in participating in a program that improves our air quality, enriches our soil, conserves water, provides erosion control and reduces the need to use petroleum-based fertilizers.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** Am I required to participate in the recycling program?

**A:** No. While some jurisdictions have made recycling and composting mandatory, it is voluntary in Sausalito. But you are strongly encouraged to fully participate.

**Q:** When will the expanded composting and recycling start?

**A:** It is scheduled to start in late July or early August. You will receive the bins and detailed information before it starts from Bay Cities.

**Q:** Where can I see the bins to help choose the size that is best for me?

**A:** The bins will be on display at City Hall. They will also be displayed at the Sausalito Sustainability Commission booth at the Caledonia Street Festival on Sunday, May 27 and at the first Jazz On The Bay concert on Friday, June 1.

**Q:** Can I choose a large blue bin and a smaller green bin or vice versa, depending on my needs?

**A:** Yes. Let Bay Cities know your choices. You can call them at 415-332-3646 or drop a note in your bill payment. You can also email Bay Cities at [BCRSGreg@aol.com](mailto:BCRSGreg@aol.com). <mailto:gregchristie@gmail.com>

**Q:** Where does the material in the green bin go to be turned into compost?

**A:** Bay Cities will deliver the material to Golden Bear in Richmond where they have a composting facility.

**Q:** What happens to the compost?

**A:** Golden Bear is developing markets to sell compost to landscapers, farmers and other compost users.

**Q:** I live on a steep hill and can't haul a large container down to the curb. What shall I do?

**A:** Bay Cities understands the idiosyncrasies of some properties and has expressed its desire to make sure every resident has refuse removal support. The workers know every property and will make every effort to accommodate any special needs.

**Q:** I heard that Bay Cities is going to charge for compostables beyond one 65 gallon bin and one large bag of green waste per week.

**A:** That is not correct. Bay Cities will provide unlimited containerized compostable pick up and is increasing the pick-up to a weekly service instead of twice a month.

**Q:** I'm worried about rodents and other animals getting into the green cart.

**A:** The bins have good tight lids, which should keep out the rodents.

**Q:** How do I keep my kitchen pail from smelling bad and getting gross?

**A:** Line the pail with newspapers, or wash it out after dumping the food scraps into the green composting bin. And the pails are dishwasher safe. You can also use an empty milk carton or ice cream container to collect the food scraps to be dumped into the large green composting bin

**Q:** What if I want to use my own kitchen pail.

**A:** No problem. Kitchen and hardware stores are now selling upscale versions

**Q:** Should I keep putting food scraps down the garbage disposal, or put these food scraps into the compostable green waste bin?

**A:** No, It is better to compost everything, as it creates fewer burdens on the overworked waste water treatment plant, it is better for your plumbing, and is better for the environment.

**Q:** What can I do with my old recycling garbage containers?

**A:** Contact Bay Cities and they will pick them up and recycle them.