

## Cotati Critters offer lecture on 'going green'



Cotati is offering a qualified water efficient landscaper program and a 'cash for grass' program to encourage residents to replace their lawns with plants adapted to California's summer dry season.

Rate your personal environmental impact by evaluating how you manage your house and garden. What do you recycle, how can you better conserve energy and water, how can you reduce the waste you generate?

For ideas, information, inspiration and practical ways to explore different approaches to reducing your personal impact on the planet, come to the Ray Miller Community Center in Cotati August 1 at 10 a.m. Author Laurel Marcus will offer a range of tips and ideas for how to change your habits to support a less polluted, healthier home.

The workshop will also focus on your garden and how to eliminate the use of toxic chemicals for pest control, reduce fertilizer runoff to local creeks, and eliminate water-loving plants that are inappropriate for our California climate. She will describe how to select native plants for your site and care for them while also attracting wild birds to your backyard.

Marcus is a restoration ecologist with 30 years of experience in California and will be providing free copies of her 133-page color book, "The House and Garden Audit." It covers everything from cleaning to pest control, energy conservation to painting, recycling to remodeling, soil erosion to fire safety, and from gardening to creek care.

Sierra Cantor, Watershed Biologist from the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District will present the results of the Russian River First Flush study, a water quality monitoring program in which trained volunteers collect samples of the runoff from the first fall rainstorm. This first flush of pollutants can carry the highest

concentrations of toxins and shows the extent and type of a number of pollutants, so the results can mirror the health of an entire watershed, the land area that drains to a particular creek, stream or river.

A representative from Daily Acts, a nonprofit community group, will be on hand to speak about the City of Cotati's water conservation program. The City is aiming to conserve water by 20 percent this summer. Forty percent of our total water use each year goes to watering our landscapes. The city is offering free water use surveys, a toilet retrofit program, rebates on high efficiency clothes washers, a qualified water efficient landscaper program and a new "cash for grass" program to encourage residents to remove their water hungry lawns and replace them with plants adapted to California's summer dry season.

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