



Anyone can conserve water and create a Rain Catcher! Here are simple tips:

- Locate a convenient downspout
- Use a barrel to collect water from the downspout
- Level the ground and place the barrel
- Have a bottom spigot and top overflow
- Divert overflow away from your house

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NORTH COAST CURRENTS



GIRL SCOUTS PLANT “BEE PATCHES” IN SONOMA COUNTY

It takes a simple idea, combines that idea with energetic youth, and then spreads the idea like wildflowers. Our program of “Bee Patches” relies on citizen and youth education, training, and community participation to achieve our objectives in protecting and enhancing pollinator habitat for sustainable agriculture. We foster partnerships between a specific youth group and a specific farmer/rancher to accomplish our goals of increasing pollinator habitat acreage and increasing knowledge of the need for pollinator habitat protection throughout a community.

In addition to the youth involved, we sought the involvement of their parents and other community members to help carry out the project, guided by one of our experienced volunteers.

Our “Bee Patches” program is designed to increase knowledge of the need for pollinator habitat protection and to increase pollinator habitat acreage. The one outcome leads to the second—greater public awareness of the importance of pollinators and the need for healthy habitat leads to more habitat plantings.

Studies have found that native bees and honeybees both benefit from the availability of year-round pollen and nectar, and that diversity in the pollen and nectar sources aids in pollinator population resiliency to disease and other stressors. The more healthy habitat, the greater the likelihood of healthy pollinators in our agricultural communities.

The Sonoma Valley 2015 Bee Patches project required the

scouts to develop a plan that addressed: essentials of pollinator habitat; ease of maintenance/long term survival of the Patch; and esthetics of the Patch for being pleasant and most appealing to the viewer.

In order for the scouts to have the tools for creating the plan, our Council’s volunteers met with each troop, ranging in age from junior troops to senior troops, and provided specific information to each troop. These sessions—which included our staff conservationist, a master gardener, and a beekeeper—were presented along with informational handouts to educate the scouts regarding pollinator biology and ecology. In particular, we emphasized that “Bee Patches” needed to provide healthy habitat for pollinators including seasonal flowering of pesticide-free

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FIND US IN THE UPTON BUILDING—SANTA ROSA!

Our non-profit is located on the third floor of the historic Upton Building in downtown Santa Rosa at 555 Fifth Street Suite R. Office hours are irregular, so email ahead to ncrcandd@sonic.net for an appointment.





*National Pollinator Week is
June 20 - 26, 2016*

*Our bees are struggling,
but everybody can make a
difference!*

Help bees yourself:

- *Plant multi-season blooms*
- *Encourage bee nesting with undisturbed ground*
- *Add a water bowl*
- *Avoid Pesticides*



“Bee Patches” (continued)

sources of nourishment. We informed the youth that plantings should include blossoms in each of the four seasons to allow year-round forage, and that the plantings should include bee-attractive flowering perennials as well as self-seeding annuals. We also wanted to make sure the Scouts addressed bee reproduction and included either undisturbed ground or bee houses as nesting for native bees;. Finally, every living creature needs water, and we ensured the Scouts were aware that their plans should provide a sustainable, year-round and reliable source of water for bees;

Our intent is to ensure that “Bee Patches” endure beyond one season, and required that the Scouts’ plans should address the likelihood of the area surviving (drought tolerance of plants, need if any for drip irrigation, likelihood of reseeding, tendency of plants to thrive in the ecosystem being planted, issues if any with invasive species overtaking plants, etc.); finally, we wanted the plantings to appear pleasing to the viewer, not be unkempt, and ideally should be sufficiently attractive that others will want to plant something similar on other properties.

Our Council’s previous program efforts over the past decade have demonstrated the successful linkage between OUTREACH on pollinator benefits and habitat needs and PLANTINGS of pollinator habitat with sound stewardship of the plantings. Educating both the



general public and the youth who will become the community leaders of tomorrow increases the impact and longevity of pollinator habitat protection. The educational element was emphasized in our planting preparations, and during the actual outdoor field work conducted

on the day of planting and on follow-up maintenance days. Our Next Bee Patches planting is in western Sonoma County this year in 2016.

If you wish to support more “Bee Patches” plantings through introduction of pollinator friendly plantings on your property, please contact us via email at nrcandd@sonic.net or call Oona Padgett by telephone at 707-293-8656 . You may also donate funds to support this project at:

www.nrcandd.org/donatenow.htm

Check out our new “Bee Patches” logo and our website www.beepatches.org



Do It Yourself Composting in Local Schools

The Council is working with local schools in Sonoma County to educate students on the value of composting food wastes using worms in a vermiculture composting system. Working with the Healdsburg-based **Compost Club**, a non-profit organization founded by Rick Kaye (shown in picture on the right with shovel), the Council has a grant from

the **Sonoma County Waste Management Agency**, the **Santa Rosa Sunrise Rotary Club**, and the **Crabbe Family**



Foundation to conduct educational outreach in our schools, and place worm bins in both the classroom as well as a few selected schools that are starting a large composting project. Dual bin worm composting systems are being placed at seven schools in the County, to transform food waste into a rich compost which can be used in school gardens.

Rain Catchers In Your School

Our “Rain Catchers In Your School” program for water conservation has been expanding—from last years “Rain Catcher” placed at **Anderson Valley Elementary School** in Mendocino County (below) to two more systems being constructed this year in Sonoma County—“Rain Catchers” are growing in popularity. The work this year to install rooftop rainwater collection and storage systems is funded by the **Strong Foundation for Environmental Values** and the **Exchange Bank Foundation**. **The R. L Stevens School** in the Wright District of Santa Rosa and the **Guerneville Elementary School** in western Sonoma County are the new recipients of “Rain Catcher” systems and classroom educational outreach.

The purpose of Rain Catchers is to encourage collection of rainwater that is generated from impervious surfaces, such as rooftops, then either (1) conveyed to storage tanks, where the water can be stored for later irrigation use, or (2) directed to a rain garden or bog that can support hydrophytic plants.

Water conservation is key to community sustainability, especially at times of drought. While we currently are enjoying an El Niño winter pattern bringing increased rainfall to Northern California, the statewide drought is not over. Four years of sub-normal rainfall requires active and continuing water conservation measures. Conserving water use during drier months is critically important to people, fish, and wildlife in the region.



Rain Catchers also are suitable for large projects, at the watershed scale. The Council is working with **Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District** on landscape-scale “Rain Catchers” projects where stream diversions during the summer can be eliminated with off stream storage of water during the winter time for dry season use. Funded by the **California Department of Fish & Wildlife**, these projects will enhance fisheries in our coastal streams.

www.raincatchers.info

Everyone helps and everyone works during “Build It” Day



Our staff Water Conservationist guides the formation of a collaborative working group for the school installation, with key players including school staff and cooperating agency staff from the local **Resource Conservation District**. The Water Conservationist will seek consensus on a simple plan for installing a “Rain Catcher” system at the school, and seek agreements while doing a complete site assessment to determine the best location for a rooftop system, including storage tank and overflow discharge area. Rough dimensions of rooftop area for collection are estimated, and rough tank sizes are deter-

mined, along with the plan for use of the stored rain water, and any overflow water from a storage tank. The system will be collaboratively designed then once the design is finished, a day for installation is chosen and volunteers recruited from the school, partnering agencies, parents and students. The Council purchases everything to build the system, and most tank installations can be completed in a day with adequate volunteer support. The installation day will also be used as a learning opportunity for parents and volunteers who may wish to install a similar system for home use, with handouts of simple design instructions, including rain barrels rather than larger tanks. The instructions would be available in English and Spanish, and emphasize how “every drop counts” and show how each individual action makes a difference.



Build Your Legacy

The Council is seeking the donation of property with a building to serve as our long term office space and as an incubator for agricultural related businesses. We also wish to use the property to showcase demonstrations of our “Bee Patches,” “Rain Catchers,” and vermiculture composting programs.

If you have property that you wish to use to build a legacy supporting sound agricultural stewardship, we will work with you to provide tax advantages while transferring ownership of the property, and provide you with naming rights to carry your legacy forward to future generations.

We also can work with your attorney when you are revising your will, and wish to include us in your estate plans. We also accept gifts of stock. Contact us for further information at nrcandd@sonic.net

Place Mailing Label Here



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**North Coast Resource Conservation
& Development Council**

*Building a Better Future for
Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, and
Lake Counties.*

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Winter Newsletter of the NCRC&DC



*Another of our programs encourages new or expanded entrepreneurship for family farmers practicing sustainable use of agriculture. **Cultivating Commerce** is aimed at assisting entrepreneurs begin new farming ventures or add to their existing activities to create a value-added product which increases economic stability in their operations. Whether adding a niche marketing endeavor such as boutique honey production to an existing winery or pursuing a startup organic vegetable farm, entrepreneurs struggle in developing and implementing a viable business model in our rural area. **Cultivating Commerce** is designed to promote agrarian entrepreneurship while ensuring environmental protection of our natural resources.*

Find us on the web: www.ncrcandd.org & www.cultivatingcommerce.org

The cost of producing and mailing this newsletter has been donated to the Council—your donations will go to support our important work. Please visit www.ncrcandd.org to donate to support our important programs.