

# THE NEXT STEP Toward a Healthier Future

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEBASTOPOL TOXICS EDUCATION PROGRAM



## Thank You For Your Feedback!

**Thank you to the 212 Sebastopol residents who sent in your STEP Survey cards.**

We appreciate hearing your thoughts about this newsletter, how you use it, and what articles you'd like to see in the future.

So, what were your responses?

■ **88% said that you find *The Next STEP (TNS)* newsletter helpful and interesting.** Reader comments included: "Thank you for your service to the community," "You have great ideas and present them well," "Please keep publishing the newsletter — it's great!"

■ Of those responding about pesticide use, **35% said you use pesticides at home or work** (down from 53% last year!). **Of these, 52% use only natural pesticides**, 7% use synthetic (down from 16% last year and 29% the previous year), and 41% use both.

■ We're delighted that **72% of you said that this newsletter has helped you reduce your use of toxics.** That really makes our work feel worthwhile. It's also valuable to know what information you found helpful, which included "finding safe alternatives for ant control," learning "where/how/what I can recycle," and knowing that you can dispose of pharmaceuticals at Safeway and CVS (because they don't go in the trash). Readers say that they're now using hydrogen peroxide rather than bleach, "more mulch and less weed

killer," and "lots more vinegar for everything." Two readers say that they share TNS information to educate others, while another reads labels now and thinks before buying certain products. Other readers appreciate that STEP highlights helpful resources, "raises issues and awareness," and "keeps the topic fresh in my mind." How wonderful!

**Congratulations to everyone who is finding ways to reduce or avoid using toxics.** With these choices, you're supporting a healthier environment for yourself, your family, and our community.

**Thank you for your many excellent questions and ideas for future articles;** you'll find answers already appearing in this issue, and in upcoming editions.

Also, as always, we appreciate your acknowledgment of our work. We're delighted to be of assistance.

**Please keep your feedback coming!** Your input helps us create a newsletter that's useful for you!

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"Thank you for the article on accidentally poisoning our pets and wildlife. This happened to my cat, who ate some of our plant chemicals. He survived, but lesson learned — no chemicals!"

*Kathleen Shaffer  
Sebastopol City Council*

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## STEP Update

You might have noticed that the City previously shrunk our two-page newsletter onto one page, which they did to fit added flyers in the water bill. The City is still exploring its approach to this, but in the meantime we've decided to temporarily go to a one-page format so that our information will be more readable and attractive for you! Regrettably, it does reduce the amount of content. We welcome your thoughts on these changes.

### Easy Actions

■ **Support proposed reform of federal toxics regulations (TSCA).** Citizen voices are needed to ensure that they truly protect our health and world. [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org).

■ **"Got a swarm? Call a bee-keeper."** This recent PD article lets folks know about this option to killing bees and describes bees' benefits. [www.pressdemocrat.com](http://www.pressdemocrat.com)

### Quick Toxics Tips

■ **To learn what everyday items are toxic and where to discard them,** see [www.recycle now.org](http://www.recycle.now.org) or the Yellow Pages Recycling Guide. Or call 565-3375.

■ **The next Sebastopol Toxics Collection Day** is August 3. Make an appointment at 795-2025, at least 24 hours in advance.

■ **The TNS Online Index** lets you look up past issues by topic, revealing what's toxic and the alternatives in everything from house-cleaning to pest control. [www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html](http://www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html)

## ABOUT STEP

The Next STEP (TNS) is published six times a year by the **Sebastopol Toxics Education Program (STEP)**. **STEP is a project of the City of Sebastopol**, implemented by local citizen volunteers. **STEP's mission** is to support city residents in reducing their toxic use and exposure, creating a healthier and safer Sebastopol for everyone.

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