



# 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 181 Sebastopol residents who sent in your STEP Survey cards.**

We appreciate you letting us know what you think of 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.** Your comments included: "Very good material! Thank you!", "Keep up the good work. I look forward to your newsletter," "Thank you for educating us," "Thanks for your hard work!", "Keep it up – great stuff," and "I love it all!" You also say that you save copies for reference and share the information with friends and clients. How delightful!

■ Of those responding about pesticide use, **35% said you use pesticides at home or work, a decline from last year's 47%! Of these, 41% use only natural pesticides, 29% use synthetic, and 30% use both.**

■ We were delighted that **53% of you said that this newsletter has helped you reduce your use of toxics.** That really makes our work feel worthwhile. It was valuable to hear the examples of what you found useful. Readers said, for instance, that you no longer spray toxic herbicides,

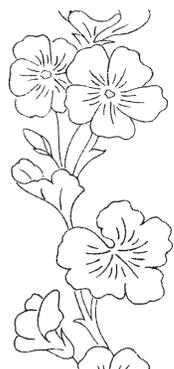
burn colored gift wrap, or use "weed & feed." You now use vinegar for blackberry stumps, "egg shells around plants to prevent snail attacks," baking soda to scrub instead of chlorine powder, and our other less-toxic alternatives for ants, weeds, mold, and household and oven cleaning. One reader said that TNS helped them "get rid of all toxic items in my household use, inside & out." Yay!! You also appreciate our educational articles (such as "Pharms in the Water"), and that we make it easier for you to "recycle properly."

**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!



## Answering Your Questions

■ **Email delivery of *The Next STEP (TNS)* newsletter?** Yes, that's available! Folks in or out of City limits can email that request to <STEP@healthyworld.org>.

■ **TNS back issues?** They're available online at <[www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html](http://www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html)>, helpfully organized by topic! There's also a link to the chronological list on the City's website.

■ **Proper disposal of everyday toxics?** For information about what's toxic and where to dispose of it, see the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency's information at <[www.recyclenow.org](http://www.recyclenow.org)> and in the Recycling Guide in your AT&T phone book (under "R" in the yellow pages). You can also call them at 565-3375.

■ **Upcoming Sebastopol Toxics Collection Day?** Community Toxics Collections are at different Sonoma County locations every Tuesday from 4-8pm. The next Sebastopol one is July 22. To make an appointment, call 795-2025. Also, the Household Toxics Facility is open Thurs. through Sat. at the central dump, near Petaluma.

■ **Electronics disposal?** One reader wanted "information on where to take old computer & electric appliances rather than trash." Yes, it's vital to keep these toxics out of our landfills! For our article about this, including drop-off sites, see TNS IV/5 (in our online index under "Electronic Waste").

■ **Old paint disposal?** For details and options, see the resources under "Proper disposal" above.

■ **Eliminating oxalis?** A reader asks how to "eliminate the yellow flowering oxalis weed that takes over everything!!!" Yes, we have tips for this, in TNS IV/4 (in our online index under "Oxalis").

"I live most of the principles in *The Next STEP* but I love the reminders and am proud to live in a city where these concerns are at the forefront of our minds. Thank you for your good work." ~ Edie Otis

## BOOK REVIEW

**Natural Remodeling for the Not-So-Green House**, by Carol Venolia & Kelly Lerner, 280 pages.

Green remodeling is a hot topic nowadays, but too often the focus is primarily on substituting new green products for conventional ones. But being green is much more than that! To truly reduce our shared impact on the earth (and be smart about costs), we need to step back and explore how we can green the project not just the products.

That's why I was so delighted to find *Natural Remodeling*, which lays out a step-by-step process for "bringing your home into harmony with nature." The benefits of this approach, they say, include increased satisfaction, more opportunities to green economically, and a restored connection to the living world.

From the outset, it's clear something different is going on here. An early page describes why, contrary to common thinking, renovating a current home is usually more green

than building a new green one, because it leverages the natural resources already used, existing community connections, and more.

The authors (two award-winning eco-architects) then lead you through a design journey that starts with your land. What are its natural rhythms, and how can you align with them to meet your specific needs? For instance, how can you work with the sun's patterns to get warmth, beauty, and illumination? Ditto with air and water flows.

What a lovely way to see your home and what it can be. And so your earth-centered plan begins to emerge, as you discover a sweet little spot to place a bench, and explore green ways to manage moisture and energy, use space efficiently, expand wisely, integrate your landscaping, and much more.

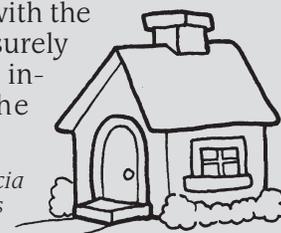
Now, with your plan sketched out, you're ready to consider building materials. Here, the authors offer an intelligent discussion of how to balance green criteria (such as

toxicity, performance, durability, embodied energy, and more) for your specific situation. There's even a reference table showing how common materials meet these criteria! (After all, green is a relative term; no material has zero impacts.) Then they help you fulfill your vision by planning the construction and managing the job site (including recycling your waste).

Throughout this full-color book you'll find beautifully-lush pictures, original and engaging text, useful information boxes, extensive case studies, personal stories, and unexpected perspectives such as "How Does Nature Create a Home?"

These rich details provide tangible support for aligning your home (and yourself) thoughtfully and joyfully with the earth. You'll surely find yourself inspired by the possibilities.

~ Patricia Dines



## Safer Pet Care

Is the warming weather calling your pet out into the wilds — thus bringing fleas and more back into your home? If so, be careful when choosing your pet care products. Many people are not aware that they can include toxics that can harm the health of pets, children, and other family members. For instance, childhood brain cancer has been associ-

ated with the use of flea collars and other household pesticides. Luckily, these toxics just aren't necessary. See the pet care options in TNS VI/1.

## True Cancer Prevention

What has caused the drastic increase in breast cancer rates since World War II? A new research report, summarizing more than 400 breast cancer studies, concludes that they are primarily the result of drastically-increased exposure to toxic chemicals and radiation during that time period. This suggests that a key way to prevent breast cancer is by significantly reducing our toxic exposures.

Report Editor Dr. Janet Gray, an endocrinology researcher at Vassar College, says that their goal with this report, "is to find ways to lower future incidence of breast cancer not only for adults but, most importantly, for our children and grandchildren."

The study notes that more than 80,000 synthetic chemicals are now used in the U.S., many known to remain in the environment and our

bodies for many years. Ones of concern include pesticides, bisphenol A, dioxins, animal growth hormones, metals, solvents used in manufacturing, and more. Many especially impact children's development.

*State of The Evidence: 2008*, was produced by San Francisco's Breast Cancer Fund, the only national non-profit focused solely on eliminating environmental and other preventable causes of breast cancer. For more information, see <[www.breastcancerfund.org](http://www.breastcancerfund.org)>.

## Questions For Our Readers

To make best use of our limited space, and avoid redundancy, we include in TNS references to timely information in past articles, which are available online. Is this useful to you?

Also, we know some people aren't readily online. Would you be interested in a print compilation of past issues, with a handy index, for a reasonable price? Please send answers to the email or mail address in our information box (to left). Thanks!

## 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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