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Santa Clara County to Offer Green Gardener Certification Program

SAN JOSE, CALIF.— In an effort to promote better gardening practices that reduce pollution and waste in the valley, the County of Santa Clara is working with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and 13 cities within the Santa Clara Valley to offer a Green Gardener Certification Program. The program will provide Green Gardening training and certification to landscape maintenance workers, landscape contractors, and professional gardeners.

“We are very proud that Santa Clara County is one of the first counties in California to offer the Green Gardener Certification Program,” said Supervisor Don Gage, Chair of the County’s Housing, Land Use, Environment and Transportation Committee. “This is one example of the County’s effort to protect the environment and keep the County green.”

The Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener class will include ten 2-hour sessions and will be taught in English, but with class notes and materials also available in Spanish. The cost for the class is \$40 per person. Students who attend 80% of the classes and pass a final test will receive a Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener Card. They will also be promoted as Green

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Gardeners in public outreach materials by sponsoring cities, agencies and the County.

“Green gardening practices help to reduce storm water pollution and protect our health,” said Kristy McCumby Hyland, Environmental Specialist with the City of Sunnyvale. “We encourage the general public to ask their gardeners or landscape contractors to take this class.”

The class will provide key principles of Green Gardening, including:

- Healthy soil development
- Pruning for plant health
- Selecting the right plant for the right place
- Using Integrated Pest Management to reduce the need for pesticide use
- Irrigation techniques and scheduling
- Fertilizer use and grass-cycling (recycling grass into the lawn rather than picking it up for disposal as green waste)
- Using mulches and compost
- Air quality issues with equipment use

The classes will be held on every Thursday, 4:30 - 6:30 PM, from February 7 to April 17. For more information or to sign up for the class, gardeners can call the Metropolitan Adult Education Program at (408) 723-6450.

Background

The Green Gardener Certification Program was first developed by the City of Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency in 2000, which was funded by a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board. The goal of the program was to develop a curriculum that would educate and certify local gardeners in resource efficient and pollution prevention landscape management practices and could be adapted for use in other counties around the

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state.

As of August 2006, the Santa Barbara and Monterey County Programs together have certified over 900 landscapers. The County of Santa Clara is the third county in California to provide support for this training opportunity. It is funded through the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program, of which the County is a member.

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