



DATE: May 12, 2016

TO: Programs & Administration Committee
Planning & Organization Committee/Recycling Board

FROM: Wendy Sommer, Executive Director

BY: Kelly Schoonmaker, Program Manager

SUBJECT: New Regional Lawn to Garden Website

SUMMARY

On behalf of the Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management (BAIRWM) group, StopWaste recently developed and launched an online Lawn-to-Garden Marketplace. The website is a one-stop shop that provides resources on sheet mulching for home gardeners and landscape professionals. At the May 12 meeting, staff will provide an overview of the website and associated activities the Agency is undertaking as part of a regional grant.

DISCUSSION

Since 2011 StopWaste has been a member of BAIRWM and has collaborated with water agencies, cities, and counties to jointly apply for California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Prop 84 funding. In 2015, DWR awarded StopWaste with a grant to regionalize the existing countywide sheet mulch stakeholder/vendor network and develop the Lawn-to-Garden Marketplace, which directly supports lawn conversion rebates offered by water agencies. Additional grant deliverables include in-store training for partner sheet mulch vendors and workshops for landscape professionals.

While many water agencies offer rebates to replace lawn with drought-tolerant planting and efficient irrigation, they do not specify the method of lawn conversion. As a result, many home gardeners and landscape professionals rip out the lawns, sending 87 tons/acre of sod to the landfill and leaving compacted, unhealthy soil to support new planting. Sheet mulching (the application of cardboard, compost and mulch) smothers the lawn in place without herbicides and creates drought-resistant soil through the addition of compost and mulch along with the decomposing lawn itself.

Visitors to the Lawn-to-Garden Marketplace can learn how to sheet mulch, identify rebates and discounts on materials, get inspired by examples of local lawn conversions, and use a searchable vendor list to find cardboard, compost, mulch and more. The website went live in March 2016. Project partners are promoting the Lawn-to-Garden Marketplace in stores, through rebates applications, and at local events.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.