

# The Community VOICE



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## Laundry to landscape – grey water has a place



By Erin Axelrod August 3, 2012 12:00 am

Since 2009, Daily Acts has partnered with the City of Cotati on water conservation programs for Cotati residents. Together they have hosted dozens of community events, including water conservation presentations, sustainability tours, and workshops on creating water-wise households and landscapes. These programs empower citizens with simple solutions to do more while using fewer resources, and saving money.

Earlier this month, the United States Department of Agriculture declared the largest natural disaster in the nation's history due to the serious drought more than half of our country is experiencing ([www.examiner.com/article/largest-natural-disaster-u-s-declared-today](http://www.examiner.com/article/largest-natural-disaster-u-s-declared-today)). With imminent water shortages, it is critical we learn to implement simple, cost-effective ways to make better use of our water resources. When citizens understand and are inspired by how precious water is, we become more mindful of how it gets used in our homes and gardens. Greywater reuse is an affordable solution we can take to scale, today. On Aug. 11, join Daily Acts for a free workshop to learn how to install a laundry-to-landscape greywater system to reuse your washing machine water for irrigating your landscape.

Greywater is generated by your bathroom sinks, showers, baths, and washing machines, which are safe and beneficial sources of water for outdoor irrigation. A laundry-to-landscape greywater system is a great start because it is simple, affordable, low maintenance, and does not require a permit to install. The average family of four generates 9-15,000 gallons of water annually from doing the laundry. This water could be reused as irrigation, reducing your water needs, which saves money and the environment. Daily Acts is providing free materials for Cotati water customers who attend the Aug. 11 workshop and commit to install a greywater system at their home. Experienced installers provide guidance and expertise to Cotati residents over the course of the weekend.

This workshop is one of a series of workshops taught around the county. The cities of Santa Rosa, Windsor, Petaluma, Cotati, and Sonoma, in partnership with Daily Acts, have a goal to install 100 Greywater Systems by the end of September.

Installing and using my greywater system with the help of Daily Acts has extended beyond the laundry room. Installing my greywater system brought friends and neighbors together. Daily Acts is about conservation, education, community action and empowerment. Thanks to all of you at Daily Acts!" – Diane, proud Cotati greywater system installer

Transitioning your landscape from a thirsty lawn to a water-wise landscape, or reusing your washing machine water for irrigation, means more water left in streams and creeks for salmon, steelhead, and other aquatic wildlife. In 2009, Daily Acts partnered with Cotati Creek Critters and others to create the bountiful water-wise landscape of Pocket Park, on the bank of the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Located at the intersection of LaSalle and Loretto avenues, this edible water-wise garden has saved the city more than 120,000 gallons of water since its transformation from a lawn. The park also eliminates herbicide runoff into the Laguna, while also providing food, medicine and habitat for the local community of humans and wildlife. Visit Pocket Park and enjoy edibles like apples, raspberries, blueberries, figs, pineapple guavas, and artichokes, and herbs including yarrow and lemon balm to name just a few. Check out the sign at the park's entrance to learn more about its "food forest" features. Daily Acts will host a Fall equinox workday and potluck at the park on Sept. 23.

The mission of the Daily Acts organization is to transform our communities through inspired action and education, which builds leaderships and local self-reliance. For educational resources, 100 Greywater Challenge registration and the full calendar of workshops and tours visit [www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org) or call (707) 789-9664.

Erin Axelrod is Programs Manager for Daily Acts organization. In her spare time, she can be found at local farmers' markets or hiking and biking around the county.

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