

I recently attended the West Coast Green Expo, riding to Fort Mason in a biodiesel car with VALCORE Community Board Member Jacque Barsotti.

A list of exhibitors with direct links to their website is on www.westcoastgreen.com/sponsors. Over 175 green companies set up booths to promote new green products or expand on proven sustainable building practices. Here are a few of my favorites.

SAVING WATER:

In this drought year, companies featured their low water use products. Aquavision (www.aquavisioninc.com) and Sustainable Solutions (www.sustainablesolutions.com) sell low flow green faucets, shower heads, and toilets.

The Perfect Flush is a innovative toilet product from Brondell (www.brondell.com). This device can be installed on any toilet in less than an hour and gives you the choice of a full or half flush.

Atmospheric Water Systems (www.aws-h2o.com) has invented a way to capture water from the air and turn it into drinking water. The Dewpointe residential unit is about the size of a water cooler and can capture up to eight gallons of water a day depending on where you live. They are working on a solar powered unit for off-the-grid use.

There were companies selling solar hot water heaters, tankless water heaters, rain barrels and drip irrigation systems.

One interesting take on water conservation came from the company selling what we used to call astroturf. Field of Green (www.fieldofgreen.com) specializes in quality synthetic grass solutions. They install this grass on putting greens, sports fields (indoor and outdoor), and they offer a special K9 Grass for kennels, dog parks or home use.

BUILDING AND REMODELING:

Several organizations train and certify green builders and contractors. Check out the Green Contractor guide (www.greencontractorguide.com), the California Building Performance Contractors Association (www.cbpc.org) and Building Green (www.buildinggreen.com).

Two Marin county companies install green kitchen countertops including icestone (recycled glass and concrete), paperstone (recycled paper and resins), and concrete. Checkout Ceramic Tile Design

(www.ceramic tiledesign.net) and Bohemian stoneworks (www.bohemianstoneworks.com).

The oddest product, second to the Atmospheric Water Systems, was from a Japanese company called Blest Company (www.blest.co.jp). They manufacture a machine that converts used plastic bottles and packaging into oil to fuel boilers for schools and buildings. You can read about it on their website only if you read Japanese.

FALL PLANTING:

Fall is the time to plant cover crops. If you have a vegetable or annual flower garden, planting some green manure will keep that area weed-free throughout the winter while keeping the soil alive. Some legumes actually fix nitrogen in the soil so you will not need as much fertilizer for the next growing season.

I generally plant a combination of the following plants: common mustard, vetch, fava beans and winter wheat. For more information, visit www.VALCORErecycling.org and download that flyer on the composting page.

Seeds are available from these companies: www.bountifulgardens.org in Willits (707 459-6410), www.harmonyfarm.com near Sebastopol (707 823-9125), or Peaceful Valley Farm Supply in Grass Valley (www.groworganic.com, 888 784-1722).

There will be a plant exchange on Saturday, October 31 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the UC Cooperative Extension office located at 501 Texas Street in Fairfield. Master Gardeners will share seeds, plant cuttings, bulbs and small potted plants. The public is encouraged to bring in plants to share. For information call Jennifer at 707 784-1321.

LOCAL GREEN:

Kudos to the Benicia Vallejo Humane Society for greening their fund raising letter. They reduced their paper use and printing cost by one third by not using an outer envelope. Instead they folded a donation envelope inside their double sided appeal letter.

*VALCORE Recycling Board Secretary Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit www.VALCORErecycling.org.
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