



LOS TRANCOS WOODS & VISTA VERDE Newsletter – February/March 2018

Goodbye Rodenticide!

The Town of Portola Valley is moving towards banning rodenticides. To help the community move away from these toxic control methods for rodents (rats and mice), they sponsored a very informative presentation, which I attended. Since February is the peak season for rodent nesting, let's "cut them off at the pass." Here are some of the take-away messages I got.

Why not use rodenticides since it is an effective way to kill rats?

Effectively kill are the operative words here. Yes, rodenticides also effectively kill other animals. Each year 20,000 cases of rodenticide poisoning of pets and children are reported each year to the Poison Control Centers.

What other animal would eat rodenticides?

Other animals do not eat the rodenticide directly, but they eat the dying or dead rodent. Dogs, cats, owls, coyotes, bobcats, hawks, etc. are killed every year by just eating the rodents. Even higher up the food chain, rodenticide chemicals were found in 78% of the mountain lions surveyed in California.

Why is it so important to save these other animals?

Talk about nature taking care of itself – these animals are the natural predators of rodents. If they are not chased away by humans, they will eat away at your rodent population. Bon appetit!

What about the rodents in my house, basement or attic?

Those rodents in your house you will have to take care of. First rule of thumb – look around and see where they are getting in and block off those entrances. San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District will help you identify those areas. Call 650-344-8592 and request an appointment, or go online smcmvcd.org and fill out a request.

Why are the rodents coming into my house?

You like living in your house, right? Why wouldn't they, if you are providing them with food, water and shelter? Therein lies your answer. Take away the food and water, and prevent them from entering your shelter (see answer above). Outside, make sure you do not leave out pet food, unsecured lids to garbage cans, bird food, fallen tree fruit, etc. Pots standing in water or ground level birdbaths sure are inviting for a slurp.

Can I rid them from my yard?

Again, take away the shelter. If you have built up leaves in a corner of your yard or under shrubs or trees, ivy creeping over a large area, a ground level pile of wood, or any inviting hiding place, this encourages the rodents to take up residence.

Are cars parked outside a target home for rodents?

Have you ever opened your hood and wondered why there are so many sticks and leaves in there? Rodents like a cozy place and sometimes it is even warm. To discourage them, open the hood when you park the car or spray mint oil in the engine compartment.

Now that I have done all the prevention, how do I get rid of the rodents still hanging on?

Not with rodenticides, sticky traps, or fake spider webs which can also kill other unintended animals, and not very humanely either. Instead, isolate where the rodents are living and use the

old fashioned snap trap or the Victor Rat Zapper. Put them across the runways which are always near a wall or barrier. Rodents do not like to run out in the open.

Ready to sit down and take a break? You deserve it, but never let your guard down as the rodents will surely pick up on it and be back in a flash. Or you can put out the welcome mat for the natural predators, like owls. Install a great horned owl or barn owl nest box. Here are some sites for plans: scvas.org/pdf/cbrp/BuildingBarnOwlBoxes.pdf, nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/birds/barn-owl

Submitted by Linda Drey-Nightingale

Los Trancos County Maintenance District - Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Hear ye, hear ye! Wednesday, March 7th at 7:00 p.m. is the CAC's annual community meeting to be held at the Lee's, **40 Ciervos Road**. We want your feedback and input on the upcoming year's budget of over \$300,000 to be spent in our community on storm water maintenance projects, fire safety and lands maintenance, as well as review and feedback on last year's work. Last year was the first year of a 3-year plan that your valuable feedback helped inform.

The CAC exists to advise and offer feedback to DPW* and WFPD**, and the CAC informs and collects feedback from the community about LTCMD*** sponsored programs. **Please consider coming to the meeting on March 7th so that we can best represent the community.** As always, feel free to contact any of us on the CAC: Jerry Hearn, Ken Kormanak, Amanda Lee (Co-Chair), Claudia Mazzetti, David Smernoff, Bill Tagg and Tom Thayer (Co-Chair)

*Department of Public Works

**Woodside Fire Protection District

***Los Trancos County Maintenance District

Submitted by Amanda Lee, Co-Chair

Neighborhood Notes

- **Take photos, not wildflowers!** It is already feeling like spring and the flowers are bursting out. One can already see milkmaids(white), hound's tongue(blue), and Indian warrior(red) flowers. Flowers are for a reason, to drop their seeds so they can flower again next year. If you have company visiting that like to collect flowers, please educate them to living in a wildland/urban interface. Nature will take care of itself, if we take care not to meddle.
- Start doing your rain dances as Gene Hunner's rain gauge needs more rain in it. Here are Gene's **current rainfall figures**: December - .4", January – 6.1 ", season to date – 12.0".

2018-19 Community Resource Guide

It's coming, it's coming! Looks like we are extremely close to going to press with the new Guide. If you have not been contacted by anyone about updating your information in the 2016-17 CRG, please send your updates by 10 Feb. to Linda, 851-1787 or dreynight@aol.com.

Community Associations' Web Sites

The web site addresses are:

<http://lostrancoswoods.org/>

<http://www.vistaverdepv.org>

The group e-mail list is:

VistaVerdeLTW@yahoogroups.com

VistaVerdeCommunityAssoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Thank you, Jerry Jensen & Rob Kalman for maintaining web sites