

# **Annual Reporting for FY 2024-2025**

## **Regional Supplement for Training and Outreach**

### **San Francisco Bay Area Small MS4 Permit Implementation**

#### **Bay Area Municipal Stormwater Collaborative (BAMSC) Phase II Subcommittee**

**B A M S C**



September 2025

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**List of Attachments***Our Water, Our World Program*

- Our Water Our World Annual Summary Report (CASQA)
- Including: Home Depot Letter of Support

## Introduction

This report provides information on regionally implemented activities complying with portions of the Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) [Phase II Permit](#) issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board). The Phase II Permit covers stormwater discharges from 24 municipalities and special districts (Permittees) in the North San Francisco Bay Area. In June 2014, the Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA) sent a letter to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's Executive Officer on behalf of the Region 2 Phase II Permittees. The letter indicated that the Phase II Permittees would fulfill the outreach and education requirements within their jurisdictional boundaries through a combination of options including contributing to a regional effort through BASMAA. This report covers training and outreach activities implemented by BASMAA, now the Bay Area Municipal Stormwater Collaborative (BAMSC) and the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) related to the following Phase II Permit provisions:

- E.7.a.(ii)(c) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(c) Develop and convey a specific stormwater message that focuses on the following:
  - 1) Local pollutants of concern
  - 2) Target audience
  - 3) Regional water quality issues
- E.7.a.(ii)(d) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(d) Develop and disseminate appropriate educational materials to target audiences and translate into applicable languages when appropriate (e.g., the materials can utilize various media such as printed materials, billboard and mass transit advertisements, signage at select locations, stenciling at storm drain inlets, radio advertisements, television advertisements, and websites);
- E.7.a.(ii)(f) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(e) Distribute the educational materials, using whichever methods and procedures determined appropriate during development of the public education strategy;
- E.7.a.(ii)(g) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(f) Convey messages to explain the benefits of water-efficient and storm water-friendly landscaping, using existing information if available;
- E.7.a.(ii)(i) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(i) Develop and convey messages specific to proper application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers;
- E.7.a.(ii)(j) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(j) Within the Permittee's jurisdiction, provide independent, parochial, and public schools with materials to effectively educate school-age children about storm water runoff and how they can help protect water quality habitat in their local watershed(s);
- E.7.a.(ii)(k) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(k) Develop (or coordinate with existing, effective programs) and convey messages specific to reducing discharges from pressure washing operations, and landscape irrigation and for E.7.a.(ii)(k) only, organized

car washes and mobile cleaning;

- E.7.a.(ii)(l) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(l) Conduct storm water-friendly education for organized car wash participants and provide information pertaining to car wash discharge reduction;
- E.7.a.(ii)(m) Develop and convey messages specific to mobile cleaning and pressure wash businesses; and
- E.15.d Diazinon Total Maximum Daily Load TMDL: Conduct outreach to residents and pest control applicators on less toxic methods of pest control (requirement applies only to cities, towns and counties named in the TMDL and/or in Attachment G of the Phase II Permit).

One or more of the following three regional programs or projects conducted by BASMAA/BAMSC and CASQA addresses the following Permit provisions.

| Provision                        | Mobile Cleaner Training and Recognition Program | BayWise Website | Our Water, Our World Program |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| E.7.a.(ii)(c)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(c) |                                                 | X               | X                            |
| E.7.a.(ii)(d)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(d) |                                                 | X               | X                            |
| E.7.a.(ii)(f)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(e) |                                                 |                 | X                            |
| E.7.a.(ii)(g)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(f) |                                                 |                 | X                            |
| E.7.a.(ii)(i)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(i) |                                                 |                 | X                            |
| E.7.a.(ii)(j)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(j) |                                                 |                 | X                            |
| E.7.a.(ii)(k)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(k) | X                                               |                 |                              |
| E.7.a.(ii)(l)<br>F.5.b.2.(ii)(l) | X                                               | X               |                              |
| E.7.a.(ii)(m)                    | X                                               |                 |                              |
| E.15.d                           |                                                 | X               | X                            |

These regionally or statewide implemented activities are conducted under the auspices of BASMAA, now BAMSC<sup>1</sup> or through CASQA. Most of the 2024-2025 annual reporting requirements of the specific Permit provisions covered in this report are completely met by regional or statewide projects and programs, except where otherwise noted herein or by Permittees in their reports.

## Training

### Mobile Cleaning Training and Recognition Program

This program addresses the following Phase II Permit provisions:

- E.7.a.(ii)(k) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(k) Develop (or coordinate with existing, effective programs) and convey messages specific to reducing discharges from pressure washing operations, and landscape irrigation and for E.7.a.(ii)(k) only, organized car washes and mobile cleaning;
- E.7.a.(ii)(l) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(l) Conduct storm water-friendly education for organized car wash participants and provide information pertaining to car wash discharge reduction; and
- E.7.a.(ii)(m) Develop and convey messages specific to mobile cleaning and pressure wash businesses.

BASMAA's long-standing [Surface Cleaner Training and Recognition Program](#) addresses the BMP and training aspects of the provision by focusing on the most common type of outdoor cleaning – cleaning of flat surfaces like sidewalks, plazas, parking areas, and buildings. Individual Permittees address the inspection and enforcement aspects of the provision.

Cleaners that take the web-based training and a self-quiz are designated by BASMAA as Recognized Surface Cleaners. BASMAA also created and provides marketing materials for use by Recognized Surface Cleaners. Cleaners can use the website to get trained and recognized for the first time or renew their training and recognition, as required annually. Recognized cleaners can also download marketing materials from the website. Potential customers, including Permittees can use the site to verify the recognition status of any cleaner, as can municipal inspectors. During the year 2024-2025, BAMSC continued to update some guidance materials. BAMSC plans to review this program FY2025-2026 to determine if any additional updates are needed.

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<sup>1</sup> In late FY 20-21, BASMAA dissolved as a formal non-profit organization and its members continued to meet as an informal organization under the name Bay Area Municipal Stormwater Coalition (BAMSC). Phase II BAMSC members jointly prepared this Regional Supplement for FY 23-24.

## Public Information and Outreach

### BayWise Website

This project addresses the following Phase II Permit provisions:

- E.7.a.(ii)(c) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(c) Develop and convey a specific stormwater message that focuses on the following:
  - 1) Local pollutants of concern
  - 2) Target audience
  - 3) Regional water quality issues
- E.7.a.(ii)(d) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(d) Develop and disseminate appropriate educational materials to target audiences and translate into applicable languages when appropriate (e.g., the materials can utilize various media such as printed materials, billboard and mass transit advertisements, signage at select locations, stenciling at storm drain inlets, radio advertisements, television advertisements, and websites);
- E.7.a.(ii)(l) and F.5.b.2.(ii)(l) Conduct storm water-friendly education for organized car wash participants and provide information pertaining to car wash discharge reduction; and
- E.15.d Diazinon TMDL: Conduct outreach to residents and pest control applicators on less toxic methods of pest control (requirement applies only to cities, towns and counties named in the TMDL and/or in Attachment G of the Phase II Permit).

BAMSC members use the information provided through the regional website [BayWise.org](http://BayWise.org) to assist with outreach efforts under these provisions.

## Pesticides Toxicity Control

### Our Water, Our World Program

The *Our Water, Our World* program: addresses the following Phase II Permit provisions:

- E.7.a.(ii)(c) and F.5.b.2(ii)(c) Develop and convey a specific stormwater message that focuses on the following:
  - 1) Local pollutants of concern
  - 2) Target audience
  - 3) Regional water quality issues
- E.7.a.(ii)(d) and F.5.b.2(ii)(d) Develop and disseminate appropriate educational materials to target audiences and translate into applicable languages when appropriate (e.g. the materials can utilize various media such as printed materials, billboard and mass transit advertisements, signage at select locations, stenciling at storm drain inlets, radio advertisements, television advertisements,

and websites);

- E.7.a.(ii)(f) and F.5.b.2(ii)(e) Distribute the educational materials, using whichever methods and procedures determined appropriate during development of the public education strategy;
- E.7.a.(ii)(g) and F.5.b.2(ii)(f) Convey messages to explain the benefits of water-efficient and storm water-friendly landscaping, using existing information if available;
- E.7.a.(ii)(i) and F.5.b.2(ii)(i) Develop and convey messages specific to proper application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers;
- E.7.a.(ii)(j) and F.5.b.2(ii)(j) Within the Permittee's jurisdiction, provide independent, parochial, and public schools with materials to effectively educate school –age children about storm water runoff and how they can help protect water quality habitat in their local watershed(s); and
- E.15.d Diazinon Total Maximum Daily Load TMDL: Conduct outreach to residents and pest control applicators on less toxic methods of pest control (requirement applies only to cities, towns and counties named in the TMDL and/or in Attachment G of the Phase II Permit).
- BAMSC permittees that are subscribers to the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) OWOW Program support the statewide activities like product lists, fact sheet updates, OWOW website and the development of an IPM advocate training program (See the attached *Our Water Our World Annual Summary Report* from the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) for details of the annual program accomplishments.

## **Attachments**

### **Outreach Program Summary**

Our Water Our World Annual Summary Report



**California Stormwater Quality Association®**

*Dedicated to the Advancement of Stormwater Quality Management, Science and Regulation*

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# Our Water Our World 2025 Annual Report

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Prepared by the California Stormwater Quality Association

**August 2025**

## Acknowledgements

OWOW is funded by CASQA, the organizations implementing the program (see Table 1 in Section 2 of this report), and is sponsored by the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA).

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## Section 1. Introduction

Our Water, Our World (OWOW) is an award-winning partnership between municipal agencies, garden centers, and hardware stores that sell pest control products. Initiated in 1998, the program focuses on less-toxic, eco-friendly products and techniques, as many common pesticides harm sensitive species and ecosystems when they reach local creeks, bays, and the ocean.

OWOW started as a pilot project in 1998, in just a handful of stores, initiated by the Central Contra Costa County Sanitation District, the City of Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant, and the Marin Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program. The program quickly grew and was administered by the former Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association from 1999 to 2021. During that time, over 130 agencies in 16 counties implemented the program, working in approximately 239 stores. Starting in January 2022, the program was transferred to the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA), to provide statewide access to this important and successful outreach program.

From a stormwater management perspective, OWOW is an excellent opportunity and cost-efficient way to educate the public and reduce toxicity in waterways from current use pesticides. Several municipalities utilize OWOW to meet permit requirements, including the San Francisco Bay Area Municipal Regional Permit,<sup>2</sup> the Central Valley Region-wide MS4 Permit,<sup>3</sup> and the Phase II – Small MS4 General Permit.<sup>4</sup>

## Section 2. Program Elements

The OWOW program consists of several elements that are integral to its effectiveness.

### 2.1 INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) ADVOCATES

IPM Advocates are individuals who have been trained on how to engage with retailers and the public. They provide local implementation of the program on behalf of participating agencies. Local implementation generally consists of coordinating with participating retailers to offer in-store displays, shelf tags, in-store presentations and training for store employees, and advice to customers about pest management methods that are healthier for people and the environment.

### 2.2 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

In the store, consumers are directed to less-toxic products and techniques through:

- Fact sheet displays near pest products to educate the public on various pest management topics.
- Shelf tags to guide customers to less-toxic products.
- Display posters with QR codes linking directly to the [OWOW website](#) and fact sheets.

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<sup>2</sup> Municipal Regional Stormwater NPDES Permit, California Regional Water Quality Control Board – San Francisco Bay Region, 2022. Order R2-2022-0018, NPDES NO. CAS612008, as amended, CA.

<sup>3</sup> NPDES Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements General Permit for Discharges from MS4s, California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Central Valley, 2016. Order R5-2016-0040, NPDES NO. CAS0085324, CA

<sup>4</sup> NPDES Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements for Storm Water Discharges from Small MS4s, California State Water Resources Control Board, 2013. Water Quality Order 2013-0001-DWQ, NPDES General Permit No. CAS000004, as amended, CA.

On the OWOW website, consumers can view the following:

- All 18 fact sheets.
- Stores participating in the OWOW program.
- A database of less-toxic products and their active ingredients.

## 2.3 TRADE SHOWS

OWOW representatives provide exhibits annually at trade shows to educate store buyers on less-toxic products. Participation in these events helps ensure stores carry less-toxic products.

## Section 3: Partnerships

The program is administered by CASQA, and implemented by local cities and counties. IPM Advocates and University of California Statewide IPM Program (UC IPM) serve as collaborative partners.

CASQA manages and provides the central services necessary to operate and maintain the OWOW program, including the development of education materials (e.g., less-toxic product lists, label files, and active ingredient lists), creation and updates of outreach materials, operation and updates to the OWOW website, vendor (i.e., retail partners and pesticide distributors) outreach, preparation of an annual report, fulfillment of outreach materials orders, and program management and development.

Municipal agencies subscribe to OWOW through CASQA and implement the OWOW program in their local retail stores by contracting with IPM Advocates, using municipal staff, or other contractors. Implementation may occur by a single agency at stores within their jurisdiction or organized at a regional scale, where agencies combine resources to implement the OWOW program at select stores used by multiple jurisdictions. In addition, municipal agencies conduct outreach to inform residents about the OWOW program. Table 1 provides the list of agencies implementing OWOW as of June 30, 2025. Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA) continues to support the OWOW program as a sponsor.

IPM Advocates are trained individuals who support the local implementation of the OWOW program. They provide retail stores, nurseries, hardware stores, and garden centers with direct-to-consumer information, IPM tools, products, and practices. IPM Advocates are the link between the municipalities and the retailers where they reach consumers. The active IPM Advocates include Suzanne Bontempo, Julie Barbour, and Maris Sidenstacker.

UC IPM provides research and expertise on IPM practices promoted throughout the state and maintains a website of less-toxic IPM practices for nearly 1,000 home, garden, landscape, and turf pests. Karey Windbiel-Rojas, Associate Director for Urban and Community IPM, UC IPM has been involved with the IPM Advocate program since its inception and continues to assist with advocate training, technical resources on pest management practices, and as a liaison with the University of California resources.

**Table 1. Agencies Implementing OWOW**

**Bay Area and Northern California**

|                                                            |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alameda County                                             | City of Martinez            |
| Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation District | City of Menlo Park          |
| Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program                     | City of Mill Valley         |
| City of Alameda                                            | City of Millbrae            |
| City of Albany                                             | City of Milpitas            |
| City of American Canyon                                    | City of Monte Sereno        |
| City of Antioch                                            | City of Mountain View       |
| City of Belmont                                            | City of Napa                |
| City of Belvedere                                          | City of Newark              |
| City of Benicia                                            | City of Novato              |
| City of Berkeley                                           | City of Oakland             |
| City of Brentwood                                          | City of Oakley              |
| City of Brisbane                                           | City of Orinda              |
| City of Burlingame                                         | City of Pacifica            |
| City of Calistoga                                          | City of Palo Alto           |
| City of Campbell                                           | City of Petaluma            |
| City of Clayton                                            | City of Piedmont            |
| City of Cloverdale                                         | City of Pinole              |
| City of Concord                                            | City of Pittsburg           |
| City of Cotati                                             | City of Pleasant Hill       |
| City of Cupertino                                          | City of Pleasanton          |
| City of Daly City                                          | City of Redwood City        |
| City of Dublin                                             | City of Richmond            |
| City of East Palo Alto                                     | City of San Bruno           |
| City of El Cerrito                                         | City of San Carlos          |
| City of Emeryville                                         | City of San José            |
| City of Fairfield                                          | City of San Leandro         |
| City of Foster City                                        | City of San Mateo           |
| City of Fremont                                            | City of San Pablo           |
| City of Half Moon Bay                                      | City of San Rafael          |
| City of Hayward                                            | City of San Ramon           |
| City of Healdsburg                                         | City of Santa Clara         |
| City of Hercules                                           | City of Santa Rosa          |
| City of Lafayette                                          | City of Saratoga            |
| City of Larkspur                                           | City of Sausalito           |
| City of Livermore                                          | City of Sebastopol          |
| City of Los Altos                                          | City of South San Francisco |

**Bay Area and Northern California (Continued)**

City of St. Helena  
City of Suisun City  
City of Sunnyvale  
City of Ukiah  
City of Union City  
City of Vallejo  
City of Walnut Creek  
Contra Costa Clean Water Program  
Contra Costa County  
Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District  
Marin County  
Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
Marin Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program  
Mendocino County  
Napa County  
Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
Napa Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program  
Russian River Watershed Association  
San Mateo County  
San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program  
Santa Clara County  
Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program  
Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water)  
Solano Stormwater Alliance  
Sonoma County  
Sonoma County Water Agency  
The San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District  
Town of Atherton  
Town of Colma  
Town of Corte Madera  
Town of Danville  
Town of Fairfax  
Town of Hillsborough  
Town of Los Altos Hills

Town of Los Gatos  
Town of Moraga  
Town of Portola Valley  
Town of Ross  
Town of San Anselmo  
Town of Tiburon  
Town of Windsor  
Town of Woodside  
Town of Yountville  
Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District  
Zone 7 Water Agency

**Central Valley, Tahoe, and Inland Areas**

Butte County  
City of Ceres  
City of Citrus Heights  
City of Davis  
City of Dixon  
City of Elk Grove  
City of Escalon  
City of Folsom  
City of Galt  
City of Lathrop  
City of Lincoln  
City of Lodi  
City of Manteca  
City of Merced  
City of Modesto  
City of Newman  
City of Patterson  
City of Rancho Cordova  
City of Ripon  
City of Riverbank  
City of Rocklin  
City of Roseville  
City of Sacramento  
City of Stockton  
City of Tracy  
City of Turlock  
City of Woodland

**Central Valley, Tahoe, and Inland  
Areas (Continued)**

City of Yuba City  
El Dorado County  
Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District  
Mountain House Community Service District  
Sacramento County  
Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership  
San Joaquin County  
Stanislaus County

**Central Coast**

City Buellton  
City of Buellton  
City of Carmel-by-the-Sea  
City of Carpinteria  
City of Del Rey Oaks  
City of Goleta  
City of Guadalupe  
City of Lompoc  
City of Marina  
City of Monterey  
City of Pacific Grove  
City of Sand City  
City of Santa Barbara  
City of Santa Maria  
City of Seaside  
City of Solvang  
Monterey Regional Storm Water Management  
Program  
Monterey County  
Santa Barbara County

**Southern California**

City of Santa Clarita

**Sponsor**

Bay Area Clean Water Agencies

## Section 4. Annual Program Implementation

This section describes the OWOW outreach services conducted between July 2024 and June 2025.

### 4.1 IPM ADVOCATES

Several municipalities contracted with IPM Advocates to implement the OWOW program at local stores. IPM Advocates shared their knowledge with store staff and held educational events for customers.

During the 2024-2025 reporting year, demand from municipalities for IPM Advocate services exceeded availability capacity, limiting coverage of some retail locations. In response, CASQA has initiated a program planning initiative to improve support and guide future growth (see Section 5. Program Development for more information).

#### In-Store Coordination

An in-store coordination meeting was held in August 2024 to build on the progress made in 2023-2024 to begin sharing and memorializing in-store best practices, such as contacting prospective retail stores, onboarding retail stores, and setting up shelf displays. All OWOW Subscribers were invited to this in-store coordination meeting, including contractors that implement the in-store component of the OWOW program, to learn best practices for developing and maintaining store partnerships.

### 4.2 EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH MATERIALS

Educational materials include fact sheets on specific pests, gardening, and pesticide applications, shelf tags to identify eco-friendly products in stores, and the OWOW website that makes the materials accessible to the public. Examples of OWOW outreach materials are provided in Appendix A and all are accessible on the [OWOW website](#).

#### Fact Sheets

The OWOW program has 18 fact sheets. Between July 2024 and June 2025, the *Cockroaches*, *Aphids*, *Mosquitos*, and *Spiders* fact sheets were revised and translated into Spanish. Currently, 11 of the 18 fact sheets are available in Spanish, and efforts are underway to translate the entire fact sheet series. Additionally, QR codes were added to the revised and translated factsheets to help consumers easily navigate to the OWOW website.

In January 2022, posters with trackable QR codes were developed to encourage consumers to digitally access the OWOW fact sheets in pesticide aisles. These trackable QR codes record which fact sheets consumers view in retail stores. Based on the tracking data collected between July 2024 and June 2025, the three most viewed fact sheets were *Ants*, *Aphids*, and *Rats and Mice*. Table 2 presents a summary of QR code scans for each fact sheet. Additionally, Figure 2: *OWOW by the Numbers* provides an overview of engagement with our educational outreach materials, including total QR code scans, fact sheet views, and website activity.

#### Website

The [OWOW website](#) provides public access to fact sheets, the less-toxic product database, and the Store Finder, an interactive map allowing users to search for participating stores. Updates to the [Store Finder](#) are made quarterly. During the 2024 – 2025 reporting year, three stores were added to the OWOW program and made available on the Store Finder. Website visitors increased 9%, from 17,467 unique visitors between July 2023 and June 2024 to 19,076 unique visitors between July 2024 and June 2025. Figure 2 shows the monthly website visitor history since May 2021.

## Less-Toxic Pest Product Database

In August 2024, enhancements were made to both the less-toxic product lists and the OWOW website to develop an integrated less-toxic product database hosted on the [OWOW website](#). The database enhances accessibility for both IPM Advocates, who rely on the database to identify less-toxic products, and the general public, who can now easily search for products using their phones.

The store-specific product lists will continue to be updated as needed to support the printing of shelf tag labels. Each year, new products are reviewed, and updates are made in consultation with subject matter experts to ensure the information remains current and accurate.

**Table 2. QR Code Scans by OWOW Product from July 2024 to June 2025**

| OWOW Product            | QR Code Scans | OWOW Product               | QR Code Scans |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Ants                    | 196           | Bed Bugs                   | 70            |
| Rats & Mice             | 179           | 10 Most Wanted             | 64            |
| Aphids                  | 162           | Healthy Gardens            | 62            |
| Moles, Voles, & Gophers | 161           | Weeds                      | 53            |
| Cockroaches             | 145           | Yellowjackets              | 51            |
| OWOW Website            | 130           | Spanish Fact Sheets        | 29            |
| Mosquitoes              | 115           | Lawns                      | 27            |
| Fleas                   | 112           | Hiring a Pest Company      | 25            |
| Spiders                 | 98            | Pesticide Use & Disposal   | 18            |
| Snails & Slugs          | 92            | Pesticides & Water Quality | 16            |
| Roses                   | 74            |                            |               |
| Total QR Code Scans     |               | 1,879                      |               |

**Figure 1. OWOW by the Numbers**

## OWOW by the Numbers

### Fact Sheets



18 fact sheets  
11 fact sheets available in Spanish  
4 revised and translated in 2024-2025

### Website Activity



19,076 visitors in 2024-2025  
9% increase over reporting year 2023-2024  
3 new stores added to the store finder

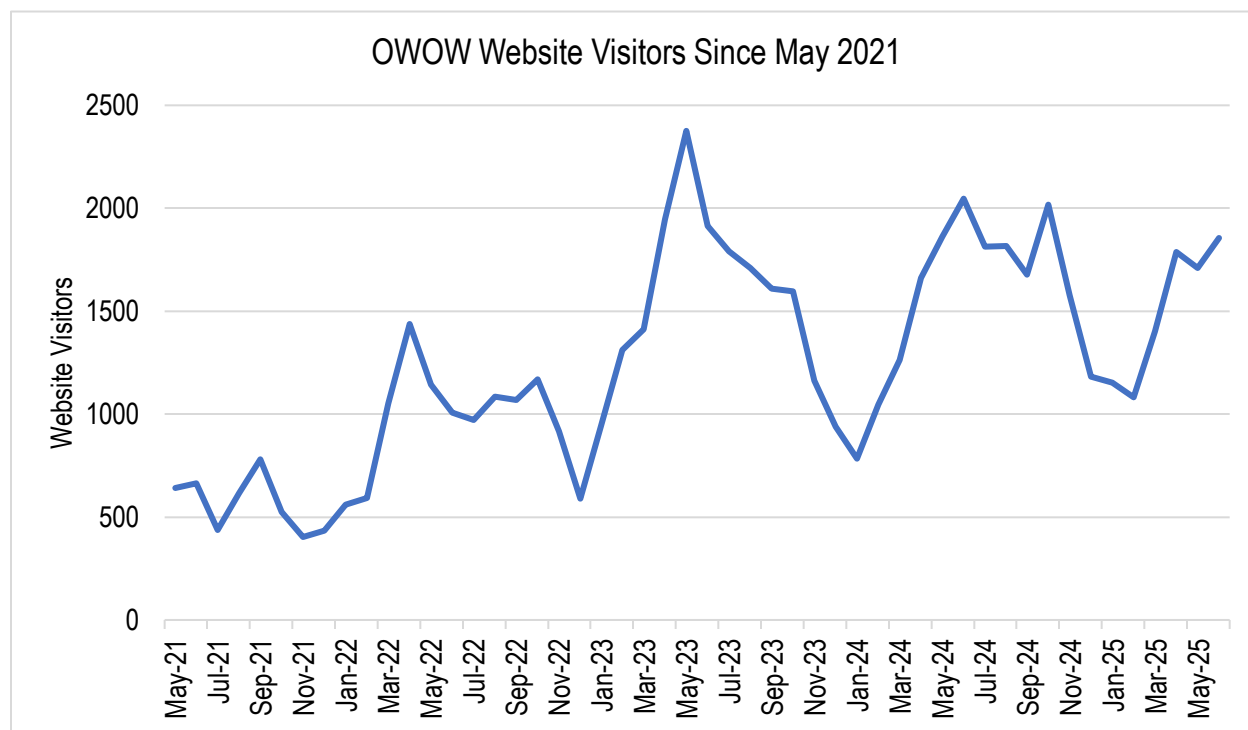


### QR Code Usage



1879 scans in 2024-2025  
Top 3 Most Popular Factsheets (scans)  
• Ants – 196  
• Rats & Mice – 179  
• Aphids – 162

**Figure 2. OWOW Website Visitors Since May 2021**



### 4.3 VENDOR OUTREACH

Education of vendors and retailers on less-toxic products is a critical step to ensure stores carry less-toxic products.

#### Retail Partners

The OWOW program added three new retail partners during the 2024–2025 reporting year. However, due to store closures and a reconciliation of the list of participating stores, the total number of active stores decreased from 288 to 281. The Home Depot Corporate continues to be a model retail partner and OWOW strives to replicate this partnership with other retailers and vendors. In January 2025, The Home Depot Corporate delivered an internal memorandum to California store managers to facilitate OWOW collaboration in The Home Depot stores (see Appendix B). In addition to The Home Depot, OWOW retail partners include Outdoor Supply Hardware, Ace Hardware, and independent hardware and garden centers throughout California.

#### Trade Show Booths

Attending trade shows provides an opportunity to meet pesticide buyers and vendors, learn about the new products coming to the California marketplace, answer questions, and provide mentorship to the retail pesticide buyers and vendors. In 2024 – 2025, OWOW representatives attended the following trade show event:

- BFG Marketplace Expo, Reno, NV, October 2024 – Retailer Show

#### 4.4 TRAINING AND OUTREACH FOR RETAILERS AND CONSUMERS

IPM Advocates and local municipal agency staff/consultants conduct OWOW outreach activities to educate pesticide retailers and consumers at the local level. Local OWOW implementation activities vary between agencies. Many agencies receive tailored OWOW reports from their contracted IPM Advocate with a summary of their local OWOW data (for example, the number of trainings, the number of staff trained, and/or the number of fact sheets distributed).

IPM Advocates and local municipal agency staff/consultants provided OWOW services to approximately 281 participating retailers throughout California. Table 3 provides a summary of outreach activities between July 2024 and June 2025, which were funded by local municipalities' stormwater programs

**Table 3. Summary of Outreach Activities**

| Audience  | OWOW Outreach Activity                                                             |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Retailers | 281 retailers participated in the OWOW program                                     |
|           | 48 trainings conducted                                                             |
|           | 266 retail staff trained                                                           |
| Consumers | 30 in-person classes, presentations, or workshops<br>(1,025 persons in attendance) |
|           | 130 public outreach events                                                         |
|           | 6,296 person interactions                                                          |

IPM Advocates and local municipal agency staff/consultants conducted 48 trainings and trained 266 retail store staff. The training topics include IPM and strategies for managing pest problems with less-toxic and eco-friendly products. Additionally, of the 136 public outreach events to consumers, 30 were classified as in-person classes, presentations, or workshops, reaching a combined total of 1,025 attendees. The remaining consumer outreach, most often in the form of tabling at public outreach events, included 106 reported events, with 6,296 person interactions.

#### 4.5 RETAILER E-NEWSLETTER

After receiving training, retail store associates can opt into the OWOW Retailer e-Newsletter. This biannual newsletter is emailed at the beginning of spring and fall and contains information on seasonal pest problems and eco-management solutions. These newsletters help store staff, including managers, stay current on pest problems that might be affecting their customers. Many of the managers print the OWOW newsletter and post it for all staff to review. The newsletter is delivered to 301 retail associates.

## Section 5. Program Development

To support a growing demand for OWOW outreach material and IPM Advocates, efforts are underway to advance the OWOW program.

### 5.1 UPDATES IN PROGRESS

#### Fact Sheets

In 2025, the *Moles, Voles, and Gophers*, *Finding a Pest Control Company*, and *Snails and Slugs* fact sheets are being reviewed by subject matter experts and a public communications specialist. Additionally, these fact sheets will be translated into Spanish and made available on the OWOW website. Once these fact sheet updates are complete, 14 of the 18 OWOW fact sheets will have Spanish translations. While not considered part of the fact sheet series, the 10 Most Wanted brochure will also be updated and translated into Spanish.

#### Program Planning

To support statewide scalability and long-term sustainability, the OWOW program is currently undergoing a structured planning process. This effort includes a Subscriber Survey and market research to inform the development of a comprehensive Program Plan that defines the program's goals, strategies, and implementation tactics. The Program Plan will also outline priority actions to guide execution. This program planning initiative is expected to be completed in early 2026.

The primary objective of the Program Plan is to promote consistency and uniformity in OWOW program implementation while increasing flexibility to support diverse implementation across California.

### 5.2 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

#### IPM Advocate Training Program

In 2022, CASQA began developing an outline for the IPM Advocate Training Program. In September 2023, CASQA met with Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) representatives to discuss collaboration and funding opportunities for the OWOW program. The development of an IPM Advocate Training Program will require outside funding support and collaboration with partners such as UC-IPM. Work on advancing the IPM Advocate Training Program is on hold pending the outcomes of the Program Plan, which is currently in development.

## Appendix A: Example Outreach Materials



Figure A1. Trackable QR Code Poster in Store Aisle

# EFFECTIVE ECO-FRIENDLY PEST CONTROL • LESS-TOXIC PRODUCTS

# CONTROLLING ANTS

## IN YOUR HOME

| ANT CONTROL IS EASY AS 1-2-3!                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Seal the source                                                                                                                    | 2. Bait them                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 3. Monitor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store food in sealed containers</li> <li>• Caulk and weatherstrip cracks and gaps</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use bait stations and sticky traps, which are more effective than sprays</li> <li>• Choose a bait station with borax (tetraborate decahydrate) or hydramethylnon</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After ants are gone, watch for new ant activity</li> <li>• To avoid a new ant invasion, spread desiccating dust in areas where you see ants</li> <li>• Avoid sprays, which only temporarily get rid of ants</li> </ul> |

Argentine ants are frequent invaders in California homes. Their small size (1/8 inch) allows them to enter the home through cracks and crevices. They typically arrive a few at a time at first (the scouts), and then in long lines, following scent trails to a food source.

### A QUICK FIX FOR AN ANT EMERGENCY

1. Find what ants are after (usually food or water) and where they are entering the room (usually through a crack in the wall).

2. Spray lines of ants with soapy water and wipe up. Clean up any food or spills.
3. Block entry points temporarily with a smear of petroleum jelly or a piece of tape.
4. If you can't find an entry point, place a bait station in an out-of-the-way spot on the line the ants have been following. Remember to remove the bait station when the line of ants has disappeared so you don't attract more ants into the house. (See *Tips for Using Ant Baits*.)

### TIPS FOR USING ANT BAITS

Bait stations are much safer for humans, pets, and the environment than sprays. Ants carry small quantities of bait back to the nest to share, reducing the local ant population.

- Use baits with active ingredients borax/tetraborate decahydrate. Bait stations with hydramethylnon should be enclosed.
- Argentine ants change their food preferences frequently. If one bait is not working, try another type. Wait at least a day to see if ants take the bait.

- Place bait stations out of reach from children and pets. Do not spray insecticide around the bait; it will repel the ants.
- Baits may take several weeks to kill the ants. At first you may see more ants coming to the bait, but after a few days to a week you should see fewer ants.
- When ants are gone, remove the bait so you don't attract more ants. Return enclosed bait stations to the original box to save and use again. Put the box inside a sealed plastic bag, and store away from children and pets.



Choose eco-friendly products for your home and garden. Look for this symbol before you buy.

Figure A2: Ants Fact Sheet (Front)

## Appendix B: The Home Depot Support Letter



### Interoffice MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 6, 2025

**TO:** California Store Managers, D28 ASMs and Department Heads

**FROM:** Candace Rodriguez

**CC:** Steve Knott, Scott Jacobson

**SUBJECT:** Our Water Our World Training

OUR WATER, OUR WORLD is a coalition of organizations whose purpose is to encourage consumers to use environmentally-preferred pest controls in and around their homes. They specialize in retail friendly education. Their goal is not to alienate consumers by telling them what they can't use, but instead their information focuses on environmentally-preferred pest management and ties into products currently on our shelves.

An Our Water, Our World (OWOW) representative will be in your store to help train employees and label environmentally-preferred products with shelf-talkers. The representative may also schedule a tabling event to educate consumers. This ties in well with "How-to" weekend events. The representative will display a sampling of excellent environmentally-preferred and Eco Actions products off our shelves. They will provide free informational literature and a wealth of knowledge and experience. Please enjoy this additional help in your store.

An OWOW representative will contact you before the training or demonstration date to arrange details. Please contact Joseph Draper of the California Stormwater Quality Association at (559) 492-7507 if you have questions.

Thank you,

*Candace W. Rodriguez*

from the desk of.....  
Candace Rodriguez  
Senior Director - Sustainability  
THE HOME DEPOT USA, INC.  
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(770) 384-3544

INTERNAL USE