

5th District Supervisor Candidate Views - cont'd

Green Vision

By Dan Kahane

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the election process. In the tradition of our progressive West County ideals, and in the spirit of walking my talk, I am running a low waste, "low carbon" campaign. My campaign is fueled by green vision and values, not greenbacks. As far as we know, it is one of the first campaigns that dares to NOT send repeated mass mailings (aka Junk Mail), but get our message out instead by using carefully planned alternative strategies. It is possible to avoid paper waste — also saves water and energy — and to reduce our campaign's carbon footprint through the work of dedicated, hard-working volunteers and a candidate who is willing to meet people at every opportunity.

Spending time talking with people is the core of democracy. Talk to your friends in the 5th District about this race. Let them know that County Supervisors make important decisions about the way we spend our tax dollars and plan the future of our magnificent county.

Have you ever wondered how the endorsement process works? I will tell you about it from this candidate's perspective. Candidates for Supervisor seats are asked by different organizations to fill out "endorsement questionnaires," generally followed with an in-person interview with anywhere from two to ten interviewers. At one such interview with a major conservation organization, the interview committee chair commented on the strong quality of my resume and my environmental credentials, and then went on to say (I am paraphrasing here) that it was hard to conceive that I could win the race with a smallish budget and little or no mass mailing, and that their organization wanted to make sure their endorsement went to a candidate who stood a good chance of winning. So, right there I saw the catch-22: even though fresh, independent voices are needed now more than ever, there are many aspects of the existing political culture that get in the way of such change.



With your help and with you demanding more from your candidates, we can run clean, green campaigns. We can choose to run campaigns with integrity. To the best of our ability, we must forego political pollution. It is wasteful and inappropriate in this day and age. Mass mailings are not earth friendly. I will not run a campaign or a county budget predicated on waste.

As a candidate in this 5th District race, I want the means to match the ends. We can get our messages out the old-fashioned way, person to person, as well as with the broadcast, print and cyber media. I invite all of my fellow candidates to join me in making this a low-waste campaign. And I invite you to ask more of all the people in public office who work for you and spend your money.

I believe that the 5th District supervisor should be a voice for an unshakeable environmental ethic, a vibrant green economy and common sense government. If you do me the honor of electing me as the next 5th District Supervisor, I will work to forge consensus on our Board of Supervisors, and I will be a strong, clear voice for our progressive ideals. We live in an extraordinary place and there are critical decisions coming for Sonoma County that will profoundly determine our County's future. I am eager to work with you to ensure the wisest path forward so that our grandchildren inherit a county that is economically thriving, environmentally healthy and a safe home for all of us.

"Humans are tuned for relationship. The eyes, the skin, the tongue, ears, nostrils - all are gates where our body receives the nourishment of otherness." David Abrams,
The Spell of the Sensuous

Ask EcoGirl

By Patricia Dines

EcoGirl@askecogirl.info



© Copyright
Patricia Dines,
2007. All rights
reserved.

Creating a Healthy Garden from the Start

Dear EcoGirl: How can I setup my garden now so that it's healthy and abundant, and won't need toxic pesticides? *Signed, Cultivating in Cotati*

Dear Cultivating: How smart you are to plan ahead! Yes, for many of us, the first murmurs of spring bring thoughts of creating a beautiful garden, overflowing with luscious vegetables and flowers. What a joyful way to participate in (and share) nature's bounty.

Indeed, a great way to help make those dreams come true, without any need for toxics, is by starting your garden on a solid foundation now. Your rewards will be healthier food, fewer pests, and a safer world for all.

Just Follow These Easy Steps

(1) Weed your garden while the ground is still soft (though not muddy). The work will be much easier, and you won't need toxic herbicides. Invite a friend to share the fun!

(2) Loosen your soil. When plants can stretch their roots, they grow bigger and more plentiful. So dig or rototill your garden spot, at least 6" deep, to loosen compaction.

(3) Nurture with natural fertilizers. When your soil is healthy, your plants are stronger and less vulnerable to pests, and your food is more tasty and nutritious. Feeding the soil feeds you!

First identify the amendments your garden needs. Most soils benefit from organic matter (such as compost), especially if they're high in clay, as most are around here. Compost helps loosen the soil, improve drainage, and increase biological activity. Also consider adding an appropriate general fertilizer plus nutrients such as bone meal, rock minerals, or kelp.

For more specific advice for your situation, bring a soil sample to a nursery such as Harmony Farm Supply (823-9125, <www.harmonyfarm.com>). For more precision, consider a soil test for \$20-50. This can help ensure that you get the most from your gardening investments! For more amendment suggestions, see <www.extremelygreen.com/fertilizerguide.cfm>.

Be sure all products you use are natural (non-synthetic) and approved for organic farming (sometimes marked with an OMRI seal). Then you'll truly nourish your plants and avoid the toxics and heavy metals often found in mainstream fertilizers.

(4) Choose plants wisely. Whether you grow from seeds or starts, picking the right plant for the right spot helps ensure happy and non-toxic gardening. Aligning with nature makes life so much easier!

Look at your garden area at different times of day. Is it always sunny, sometimes sunny, or shady? Then find the right fit. For example, tomatoes, zucchinis, and peppers need lots of sun, while lettuces will bolt (go to seed) if hit by hot summer heat.

Consider getting companion plants, which some say help protect other plants — for instance, pairing marigolds with tomatoes. (Various books offer more specifics.)

Also, if you're new to gardening or including children, plant something that grows quickly, like radish seeds, so that everyone can see results right away.

Of course, choose organic plants and seeds. You'll be supporting growers who avoid toxics and starting your garden with strong plants that have been nurtured not poisoned.

(5) Plant well. Ask your nursery when they think the risk of freeze will likely be past this year, and when to plant what. Also, be sure to give each seedling enough room. Yes, squash really does grow that big!

(6) Garden organically, using less-toxic earth-friendly methods for keeping your garden happy.

For more information about all these steps, see the books and magazines at Harmony and Copperfields. Also check out <www.organicgardening.com>.

I hope you now feel ready and inspired to create a safe and healthy garden for you and your family — and that you enjoy many delightful harvests in return!

Ask EcoGirl is written by Patricia Dines, Author of The Organic Guides, and Editor and Lead Writer for The Next STEP newsletter. Email your questions about going green to <EcoGirl@AskEcoGirl.info> for possible inclusion in future columns. View past columns at <www.AskEcoGirl.info>. Also contact EcoGirl for information about carrying this syndicated column in your periodical. "EcoGirl believes that we can all be superheroes for the planet. Then she shows you how!"

© Copyright Patricia Dines, 2008. All rights reserved.

Live simply so that others may simply live.