

# An Environmental Affair

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The City of Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Department was established in 1990 to advise the city on environmental issues and provide a centralized source of environmental information. The Environmental Affairs Department seeks to protect and enhance the environmental quality of life for residents, workers and visitors in the City of Los Angeles.

## Indoor Air Mold

Because of the heavy rains earlier this year, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) has received numerous calls inquiring about indoor molds and their health threats. While molds themselves are not toxic, a few do secrete a toxic substance. However, the majority typically produce allergens and irritants that may cause some people to react adversely to their presence.



Mold covers an entire ceiling.

Sensitive individuals who inhale or touch mold or its spores may develop allergic reactions such as sneezing, runny nose, skin rash, eye irritation, respiratory problems, nose and throat irritation, nasal congestion, and cough. Molds can cause asthma attacks for people with asthma. These allergic reactions may be triggered immediately, or the effects can be delayed.

According to the California Department of Health Services (DHS), mold spores primarily cause health problems when they are present in large numbers. The reaction of individuals can vary greatly depending on the person's susceptibility and the amount of mold present. However, if the indoor mold contamination is very high, there also will be persistent exposure to airborne spores. Steps need to be taken to eliminate the source, which is essentially addressing the issue of moisture control.

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Classified as fungi, molds can live practically everywhere in the natural environment, acting as parasites and as saprophytes (organisms that decompose organic matter). They thrive in damp environments and reproduce by spores, which become airborne and are invisible to the unaided eye. These spores then attach to surfaces that are wet, and new growths called colonies may then form if the right conditions remain present. These ideal conditions include high humidity (usually over 65% relative humidity) or moisture content. Ideal temperature range for mold growth is between 50 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Mold cannot grow without moisture. When the spores settle on a surface and begin to germinate, they produce a branching network called hyphae. The mold then begins digesting the surface that they are growing on in order to survive.

Mold colonies can be seen or detected by scent. Mold appears in discolored or cottony patches or speckled growth on walls. The smell is typically described as a musty or earthy smell. With the concern over 'toxic mold' on the rise, many City residents worry that the types of mold they see growing are deadly.

*(Indoor Air Mold...Continued on page 3)*

being healthy and resource-efficient.

*An Environmental Affair* is produced monthly by the EAD to inform residents about environmental issues and activities in Los Angeles. For questions, or to update or cancel your free subscription, call the Environmental Information Center Hotline at (213) 978-0888, send an e-mail to: [eadinfo@mailbox.lacity.org](mailto:eadinfo@mailbox.lacity.org), or visit our website at <http://www.lacity.org/ead>. TDD (213) 978-0899. You can also reach us by fax at (213) 978-0893. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services and activities.

## Sustainable Interiors

Environmentally sustainable interiors and green building materials make use of currently proven technologies and techniques to greatly improve the efficiency of resource use. They also greatly reduce the amount of trash entering the waste-stream, and they can maintain and conserve renewable resource systems, like topsoil, fisheries, forests, and water supplies. Remodeling or designing with sustainability in mind can stabilize the overall consumption of resources, with the focus on "better" and "enough" (quality), rather than "more" (quantity). An environmentally friendly home interior also means giving business to companies who meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.



Glass tiles for this kitchen countertop have been made from recycled glass.

While there are many conventional building materials to choose from, selecting green building materials can have the added bonus of being healthy and resource-efficient. The benefits of these materials

can be having a healthier home, with better indoor air quality; lowering utility costs, month after month; and have a more durable home interior, as most environmentally preferable materials are designed to stay in use for decades. In comparing the costs of using conventional materials with 'green' materials, the overall expense is about the same.

Creating an environmentally friendly interior can include installing water-saving devices such as low-flow toilets and aerators on sink fixtures; maximizing energy efficiency in lighting, heating and cooling; using the least toxic building and cleaning materials; and employing green building techniques in maintenance and renovation practices. In renovating a house, here are some suggestions:

- Use wood products and flooring from forests that are certified as well-managed according to the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). FSC has developed a set of principles and criteria for forest management that are applicable to all FSC-certified forests throughout the world. There are ten principles and fifty-seven criteria that address legal issues, indigenous rights, labor rights, multiple benefits, and environmental impacts surrounding forest management. Companies also manufacture wood that is remilled from old structures, and from renewable resources like cork and bamboo.
- Use carpet made from natural fibers such as wool (expensive but durable), high-quality polyester fibers from recycled soda bottles (also used to make Polarfleece), or plant fibers such as jute, sisal, and even paper.
- Use paints, finishes, and stains that are free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Low VOC-labeled paints may contain ammonia and acetone. Use paints that are based on plant oils that contain benzene-free mineral spirits, or propylene glycol, a VOC that is relatively benign from a health perspective.
- Use water-based stains containing propylene glycol, or oil-based stains based on linseed oil, not petroleum products. Some stains can contain solvents that are toxic to humans.

To help residents with environmentally sustainable home renovations, the Environmental Affairs Department has published the Residential Rehabilitation and Sourcebook. These materials are available by calling EAD at (213) 978-0888, or may be viewed at [www.lacity.org/ead/EADWeb-Sustainable/sustainable.htm](http://www.lacity.org/ead/EADWeb-Sustainable/sustainable.htm).

*(Indoor Air Mold...Continued from page 1)*

Few molds produce mycotoxins, which are toxic substances. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the California Department of Health Services do not recommend testing for the mold type, as current evidence indicates that allergies are the types of diseases associated with the presence of molds. Sampling for mold can be expensive, as homeowners generally will need to pay a contractor if their insurance company does not cover the cost. Public health agencies do not provide testing. Also, there are few reliable standards set to determine what is an acceptable quantity of mold. CDC recommends a common sense approach to molds: if mold can be seen or smelled, or if it a resident experiences health problems related to mold contamination, the leaks should be repaired, and the mold should be removed immediately. If a homeowner does decide to pay for a sampling to determine the species of mold, criteria should be established with the consultant to interpret the test results. In advance, the consultant needs to tell the homeowner what they will do or what recommendations they will make based on the results.

Mold removal may be a delicate process and raises safety concerns. In cleaning, spore counts may be 10 to 1,000 times higher than before the mold-contaminated site was disturbed. An area of less than ten square feet may be handled by a homeowner, whereas a large contamination area of 100 square feet or more should be decontaminated by an experienced professional. Personal judgment should be used for areas less than 100 square feet.

The California Department of Health Services has general cleanup information for homeowners interested in removing mold. That information can be found by searching under "mold" at the website [www.dhs.ca.gov](http://www.dhs.ca.gov). Los Angeles County Department of Environmental Health Services recommends that if a contractor is hired to do the cleaning process, make sure that they are licensed with the State of California. The contractor should follow Environmental Protection Agency or American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) guidelines for mold removal.

It does no good decontaminating an area with mold unless the excessive moisture is eliminated. Building materials such as paper, paper products, cardboard, ceiling tiles, wood, wallpaper, insulation, drywall, carpet, fabric and upholstery can support mold growth if they become wet. DHS cautions against air cleaners designed to remove indoor mold, since some of these are designed to produce ozone, which is a known lung irritant.

Additional resources on mold issues, including cleanup, can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse at (800) 438-4318, or by visiting [www.epa.gov/iaq/molds](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds).

### **Tips on Preventing Mold**

- Common sources of indoor moisture include leaky roofs, sprinkler sprays hitting the house, plumbing leaks, overflow from sinks and sewers, damp basements or crawl spaces, steam from showers or cooking, humidifiers, and wet clothes drying indoors or clothes dryers exhausting indoors. Make sure that areas are well-ventilated to prevent condensation from appliances.
- CDC recommends keeping the humidity in the house between 40 and 60%; using mold inhibitors which may be added to paints; not carpeting bathrooms, cleaning bathrooms with mold-killing products.
- Tenants in rental/lease properties in the City of LA should contact their landlord if they have leaks of any kind in their units. If the problems persist and the landlord does not repair the leaks, residents should contact the Housing Department to report the complaints at (213) 252-2800.

\$\$\$ FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES \$\$\$  
 Visit <http://www.lacity.org/ead> for more grant opportunities.

**Acorn Foundation Grants** The Acorn Foundation supports projects dedicated to building a sustainable future for the planet and to restoring a healthy global environment. The Foundation is particularly interested in small and innovative community-based projects, which preserve and restore habitats supporting biological diversity and wildlife; advocate for environmental justice, particularly in low-income and indigenous communities; and prevent or remedy toxic pollution. Grants are made in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range to grassroots organizations. For application information and guidelines, visit [www.commoncounsel.org/pages/foundation.html#acorn](http://www.commoncounsel.org/pages/foundation.html#acorn).

**The James Irvine Foundation** offers grants for engaging the California public in critical decision-making and governance. Specifically the foundation seeks to educate and motivate voters while promoting dialogue between underrepresented communities and public officials. Nonprofit organizations are invited to apply throughout the year. For more information visit [www.irvine.org](http://www.irvine.org).

**Lawrence Foundation Grants**

The mission of the Lawrence Foundation is to make a difference in the world by providing contributions and grants to organizations that are working to solve pressing educational, environmental, health and other issues. Grants are awarded twice a year. Letter or inquiry required. Letters of inquiry are open to any organization that wishes to be considered for a grant that meets the grant guidelines. For more information, call (310) 451-1567, visit [www.thelawrencefoundation.org](http://www.thelawrencefoundation.org) or e-mail inquiries to [info@thelawrencefoundation.org](mailto:info@thelawrencefoundation.org). For December grant cycle (two cycle periods), letters of inquiry are due **Monday, August 1**.

**Liberty Hill Environmental Justice Fund** This fund makes grants to grassroots organizations, which are working to decrease exposure to toxic substances in neighborhoods and workplaces, particularly in low-income areas and communities of color. Groups engaged in community organizing, applied research, policy advocacy, litigation, or popular education are eligible to apply. Awards range from \$7,000 to \$70,000. Applications are accepted from August to

November. For more information visit [www.libertyhill.org/ejf/](http://www.libertyhill.org/ejf/)

**Submit a Lesson Plan to the Chemical Education Foundation and Win \$1,000**



The Chemical Education Foundation (CEF) is sponsoring a You Be The Chemist (YBTC) lesson plan competition for educators in grades K-8. The Foundation will award \$1,000 for first prize and \$500 for runner-up entries in three categories: Scientific Inquiry, Structure of Matter, and Safety and Recycling. The six winning lesson plan entries and their authors will be published on the CEF Web site. Visit [www.chemed.org/](http://www.chemed.org/) or [www.chemed.org/Lesson\\_Plan.html](http://www.chemed.org/Lesson_Plan.html) for more information. You also may contact [comments@chemed.org](mailto:comments@chemed.org). The deadline is **Friday, October 21**.

**The National Science Foundation's Science and Society** grant considers proposals that examine questions that arise in the interactions of engineering, science, technology, and society. Funding takes place for the following categories: Science and Society Scholars Awards; standard research grants and grants for collaborative research; Science and Society postdoctoral fellowships; Science and Society professional development fellowships; doctoral dissertation research improvement grants; small grants for training and research; conference and workshop awards; other funding opportunities. Applications are due by **August 23, 2005**. More information on this grant may be obtained by visiting [www.nsf.gov/pubs/2005/nsf05588/nsf05588.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2005/nsf05588/nsf05588.htm).

**The City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant (NMF)** is a competitive matching grant program that awards funding of up to \$10,000 for beautification projects to community-based organizations. The next NMF funding cycle (C9-2005) will begin **July 10, 2005**. New applications, updated guidelines, and a new citywide workshop schedule will be available for download at that time at [www.lacity.org/bpw/ocs/nmf](http://www.lacity.org/bpw/ocs/nmf). The proposed due date for the C9 application will be late **October, 2005**.

## JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## EACH MONTH:

EAD recommends contacting event sponsor prior to event)



**Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed** is a groundbreaking exhibit that examines how human societies have recognized or ignored—and solved or failed to solve—key environmental issues, including those that concern contemporary global society. A dynamic collage of images, graphics, and live interviews asks the visitor to consider the environmental challenges facing Southern California, and how decisions today may shape its future. **Collapse?** exhibits at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, located at 900 Exposition Boulevard in Los Angeles. For more information, call (213) 763-DINO, or visit [www.nhm.org](http://www.nhm.org). Ends **January 16, 2006**.

**Baldwin Hills Hikes** are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Sponsored by the LA Audubon Society, for more information visit [www.LAAudubon.org](http://www.LAAudubon.org) or call (323) 876-0202.

**Sundays at the River!** Join Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) on the third Sunday each month through November. "Down by the River" walks are non-strenuous and open to all ages. Tours are free to FoLAR members with a suggested contribution of \$5 for non-members. Rain cancels. For

more information call FoLAR at (323) 223-0585, or visit [www.folar.org](http://www.folar.org).



**Pavilion of Wings at the Natural History Museum** The Robinsons-May Pavilion of Wings is open and will run through Labor Day, **Monday, September 5, 2005**. Enter a world of free flying butterflies and stroll through a beautifully landscaped temporary exhibit housed at the Museum's South Lawn. See a giant swallowtail, monarch, American painted Lady or even a California dogface - California's state butterfly. Over the summer, thirty different butterfly and moth species will call the pavilion home. Discover how butterflies interact with the plants and gain a new understanding of various environmental issues. Special ticketed admission applies: \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors and students and \$1 for children ages 5 to 12. Tickets are sold in half-hour time slots throughout the day. The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is located at 900 Exposition Boulevard in Los Angeles. Call (213) 763-DINO for more information.

## ROAR

**ROAR** presented by the IMAX Theater at the California Science Center. An epic drama unfolds in this new giant screen film from National Geographic. Witness the powerful story of a lion king who must wage the battle of his life against a young nomadic lion

The EAD website, located at [www.lacity.org/EAD](http://www.lacity.org/EAD), contains updated information on this month's events. To ensure your event is included in our monthly newsletter, submit information to the editor by the 10th of each month prior to publication. After the 10th, events can be entered into our website calendar only.

The EAD reserves the right to edit all submittals and does not necessarily endorse the events listed. All events are subject to change, so call listed event contacts to verify information.

determined to oust him from his throne. At stake is a valuable waterhole deep in Botswana's Kalahari Desert, a precious pool of water in a stark and thirsty land. Here the lion king reigns, with two lionesses and his litter of cubs, whose fate lies in the outcome of this struggle between two Kalahari giants. Call (213) 744-7400 for IMAX Movie times. The California Science Center is located at 700 State Drive in Exposition Park.

## THIS MONTH:

EAD recommends contacting event sponsor prior to event)

**River Dreams**

A conceptual model-building charrette (a final, intensive effort to finish a project, especially an architectural design project, before a deadline) investigating the structure and potential of the Los Angeles River. This exhibition shows at Gallery 727 Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from noon to 6 pm until June 18th. Gallery 727



**THIS MONTH:**  
(continued)

is located at 727 South Spring Street in Los Angeles. For more information, visit their website at [www.gallery727losangeles.com](http://www.gallery727losangeles.com), or call (213) 627-9563. Free.

**Fri and Sat, Jun 17-18**

**Sleep With The Fishes**



Grab your sleeping bag - it's a sleep-over at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium

(CMA). Explore animal behavior after dark with CMA Education staff. Watch films in the auditorium and learn about the nocturnal marine environment. Breakfast is included. Reservations are required. Friday, June 17, 6:30 pm through Saturday, June 18, 8 am. Fee is \$35. To find out more, visit [www.cabrilloaq.org](http://www.cabrilloaq.org) or call (310) 548-7562. The Aquarium is located at 3720 Stephen White Drive in San Pedro.

**Sat & Sun, Jun 18-19**

**Festival of the Horse**



Celebrate the heritage of the horse in the American West, from the Native Americans of the Great Plains to the cowboys, vaqueros, and charros of the Southwest. This two-day Festival of the Horse promises entertainment for the entire family, including riding demonstrations, historic reenactments, pony rides, music, arts and

crafts, and the Singing Cowboy/Charro Film Festival in the Wells Fargo Theater on Saturday, from 11 am to 1 pm. Participants include the Vaquero Heritage Foundation, the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign, the Western Music Association, and a special performance by famed cowboy comedian Sourdough Slim. Free to the public. The event takes place at the Museum of the American West and in Griffith Park on both days, Saturday from 11 am to 4 pm, and Sunday from 1 pm to 4 pm. The Museum is located at 4700 Western Heritage Way in Griffith Park. Call the Museum at (323) 667-2000, or visit [www.museumoftheamericanwest.org](http://www.museumoftheamericanwest.org).



**Chinese Food Festival**

A weekend outdoor festival spotlighting Chinese food and culture at the northeast corner of North Broadway and College Street, adjacent the Chinatown Metro Gold Line station. Tickets \$8-\$4. Discount for Metro riders with proof of train or bus travel to the festival: \$2 off the ticket price when you pick up your tickets. The event takes place Saturday, from 2 pm to 8 pm, and on Sunday (Fathers' Day) from 11 am to 6 pm. Sponsored by the Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council. For more information about the festival, visit [www.chinesefoodfestivalla.com](http://www.chinesefoodfestivalla.com), or call the Business Council office at (213) 680-0243.

**Fri and Sat, Jun 24-25**

**Theodore Payne Foundation's Summer Plant Sale** Hundreds of varieties of California native plants will be on sale. The nursery grounds encompass many di-



verse plant sections such as shrubs, vines, and berry sections and the propagation

area. There's a sales/information booth to help with native plant questions and choices. For more information, call the Foundation at (818) 768-1802, or visit [www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org). The Theodore Payne Foundation is located at 10459 Tuxford Street in Sun Valley.

**Sat, Jun 25**

**What is GPS?** Find out what Global Positioning System (GPS) units are all about—how they work, what's available and how to use them to make your hike safer and more interesting. Following a brief discussion with GPS user Burt Elliott, participants will go on the trail for a short outdoor GPS adventure. GPS users can bring their GPS units along. Meet at Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa at 10 am until noon. Sponsored by the National Park Service. Contact the park service for directions at (805) 370-2301. Free.

**Sat, Jul 2**

**Storm Water Pollutants Talk**

Gina Scachetti, Storm Water Inspector with the City of Torrance, will explain her work and guide participants through the



Madrona Marsh Preserve. The Marsh receives all of its water from rain and street runoff due to storms, car washing, and lawn watering, which provides the water for this wetland habitat. Free. The talk takes place from 10 am to noon at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, lo-

cated at 3201 Plaza del Amo in Torrance. Call the Center at (310) 782-3989 for more details.

### Tues, Jun 28

**Volunteer Open House with the Children's Nature Institute (CNI)** Learn about walks for families and underprivileged children throughout LA County, volunteer opportunities for adults and kids, and CNI's history and impact in Los Angeles. This open house is for their six-week training course, which will begin July 12. More about CNI can be found at their website at

[www.ChildrensNatureInstitute.org](http://www.ChildrensNatureInstitute.org), or by calling (310) 860-9484. The Open House will take place from 10 am to noon at the Sooky Goldman Nature Center, located at Franklin Canyon Park, 2600 Franklin Canyon Drive in Beverly Hills. Free.

### Tues, Jul 5

**Blue Whales Lecture at the Aquarium of the Pacific** Learn about the behaviors of blue whales from research biologist John Calambokidis. Offering insight into the underwa-



ter world of these gentle giants, Calambokidis will share recent findings from his research. He will present pioneering discoveries on the movements and migrations of blue whales, as well as offer a unique perspective on their dive, feeding, and vocal behaviors. Presented in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Program, the lecture will also feature footage from the National Geographic's Crittercam. The Aquarium of the Pacific is located at 100 Aquarium Way in Long Beach. Visit their website at [www.aquariumofpacific.org](http://www.aquariumofpacific.org), or call (562) 590-3100.

## City of LA Obtains New CNG Street Sweepers—Thanks to MSRC

The City's Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services has just received fifteen new compressed natural gas (CNG) street sweepers. Consistent with the City's long-standing promotion of the use of the clean fuel vehicles, these street sweepers will contribute to keeping both the air and the streets of Los Angeles clean. The City's Environmental Affairs Department was awarded funding from the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) to assist in the purchase of these CNG street sweepers. The City of Los Angeles operates the largest CNG sweeper fleet in the western United States. The City plans to continue supporting clean fuel vehicle technology through future purchases of alternative fuel vehicles for its fleets.

## The Big Tree Register



Did you know that California has a "Big Tree Register", one that provides an opportunity to locate trees of significant size? If you are one of those with a sharp eye and interest in big trees, you can help locate California's heritage stock.

If you have knowledge of a special tree that you believe is the largest of its kind within California, visit the CA Big Tree Register to see if you might be a heritage tree locator. For more information, see <http://www.ufe.org/bigtrees/bigtreelist.lasso>.

## Congratulations, Chris!

The Environmental Affairs Department would like to congratulate and say good-bye to Christopher Koontz, who recently completed the position of Student Professional Worker with the Department, and who received his Master's Degree in Urban Planning from the University of Southern California. Chris has been with the Department for two and half years, and was instrumental in the areas of public outreach and environmental legislation.

Chris left EAD in May to take up a new position with the City of Malibu's Planning Department.



### **HOTLINE CONNECTION**

The Environmental Information Center (EIC) serves as a referral source to the community. Our hotline connection offers a list of the most frequently requested numbers. If the number you need is not listed, please contact the EIC at **(213) 978-0888**, or toll-free in Los Angeles only at **(800) 439-4666**. You can also visit our website at <http://www.lacity.org/ead> and click on *Environmental Information Center*.

#### **Air Quality**

*Calidad del aire*  
South Coast Air Quality Management District  
(800) 288-7664

#### **Asbestos**

*Asbestos*  
Environmental Hygiene  
(626) 430-5440

#### **Bulky Item Pick-up**

*Recogida de articulos grandes*  
L.A. City Bureau of Sanitation  
(800) 773-2489

#### **Hazardous and E-Waste Disposal**

*Desembolso de materiales peligrosos*  
L.A. County Dept. of Public Works  
(888) 253-2652  
L.A. City Bureau of Sanitation  
(800) 988-6942

#### **Housing and Building Complaints**

*Las quejas del construccion y albergar*  
Housing Code Enforcement  
(213) 367-9411

#### **Illegal Storm Drain Dumping**

*Depositos en los drenajes de desagües*  
Stormwater Management  
(800) 974-9794

#### **Indoor Air or Mold Concerns**

*Aire interior ó preocupaciones de moho*  
Environmental Hygiene  
(626) 430-5440

#### **Lead Poisoning**

*Veneno del plomo*  
National Lead Information Center  
(800) 424-5323

#### **Leaf Blowers**

*Sopladores de hojas*  
Leaf Blower Complaint Line  
(800) 996-2489

#### **Mosquitoes**

*Infestaciones de mosquitos*  
L.A. West Mosquito Abatement  
(310) 915-7370

#### **Recycling**

*Reciclaje*  
City of L.A. Public Works Dept.  
(800) 773-2489

#### **Smoking Violations**

*Infracciones de fumar*  
Office of the City Attorney  
(888) 333-0730

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