



OUR WATER – OUR WORLD

Marin Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program Our Water Our World

Store Partnership Program Report

July 2025 - June 2026

Contract# 32600616 for Plant Harmony
prepared by Suzanne Bontempo

Program overview

Our Water Our World (OWOW) is a public outreach program designed to reduce the use of toxic pesticides and to reduce pesticide pollution in urban run-off. OWOW uses a point-of-purchase approach that educates and encourages retail nurseries, hardware stores, and home improvement stores that sell pesticides, to provide less-toxic, eco-friendly products for their customers. In addition, the OWOW program provides Integrated Pest Management (IPM) educational Fact Sheets for the public. Promoting the use of less toxic products around the home and garden can lead to a reduction of pollutants in our local creeks, and local waterways, as well as a healthier environment for the public.

The OWOW program meets the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit requirements that require municipalities to have a program in place to educate the public on IPM.

The Marin Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTPPP) sponsors the OWOW program to 16 retail business throughout the Marin County.

1) Building Supply	Point Reyes Station
2) Chase Ace	San Rafael
3) CNL Nursery	Mill Valley
4) Fairfax Lumber	Fairfax
5) Goodman's Building Supply	Mill Valley
6) The Home Depot	San Rafael
7) Jackson's Hardware	San Rafael
8) Marin Ace	San Rafael
9) Pini Ace Hardware	Novato
10) Pini Ace Hardware, San Marin	Novato
11) Sloat Garden Center	E. Blithdale, Mill Valley
12) Sloat Garden Center	Kentfield
13) Sloat Garden Center	Miller Ave, Mill Valley
14) Sloat Garden Center	Novato
15) Summer Winds Nursery	Novato
16) Toby's Feed Barn	Point Reyes Station

Contract Deliverables

Summary of Tasks Completed for this Contract:

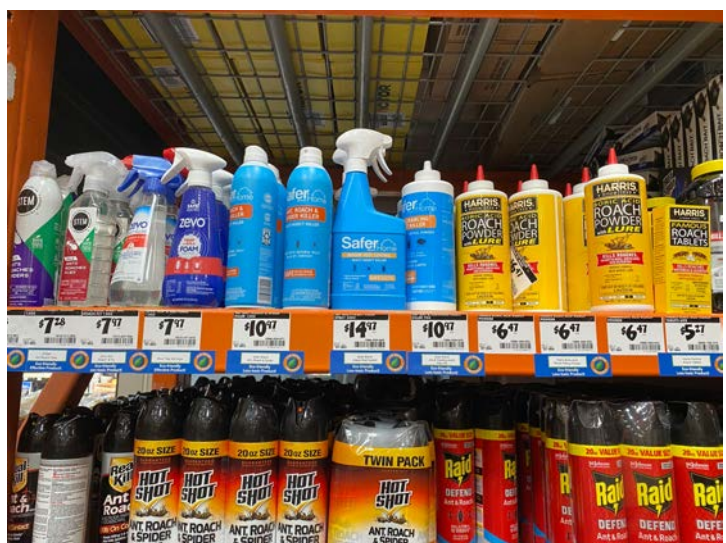
- A total of 94 store visits were provided.
Each retailer received at least 4 store maintenance and mentoring visits, and several received up to 7 store maintenance and mentoring visits.
- Engaged with no less than a total of 59 customers during these store visits.
- OWOW shelf talker tags are placed to identify eco-friendly products at these retailers.
- Stock the OWOW rack with the 18 fact sheet topics, including topics in Spanish.
- The OWOW fact sheet QR Code poster is accessible to shoppers to us.
- Provided 13 OWOW training with a total of 39 associates who attended.
- Provided 16 in-person public outreach events, engaging with no less than 556 people.
- Provided 1 webinar, 12 attended the live webinar, with 91 views of the recording as of June 30th, 2026.

OWOW tasks throughout the year

Store Set-up:

OWOW shelf talker tags are placed to identify the eco-friendly products sold at each OWOW retail partner. Throughout the year tattered shelf tags are replaced with new tags. The activity at the Home Depot Stores is the highest, so the shelf tags need frequent attention. The activity at the other retailers is rather stable, not moving products or remerchandising often so the shelf tags stay in place for longer durations.

CNL nursery and Toby's do not have shelftalker tags. CNL and Toby's only sells eco-pesticides, and have requested no tags.



New shelf tags at Fairfax Lumber (photo left) and new shelf tags at the Home Depot Store (photo above)

Fact sheets:

OWOW fact sheets are made available at each retailer in print form and/or digital form accessed with the QR code signage. These fact sheets provide information for less-toxic pest management based off the information found on the UCIPM website. The OWOW fact sheets provide user friendly, accessible, easy to understand tools and techniques for pest management. The OWOW fact sheet rack is in the pesticide aisle at all sixteen retailers. In addition, OWOW QR Code posters and signage is made accessible for the public to scan the fact sheets.

This is the current list of fact sheet available:

- Controlling **Ants** in Your Home
- Controlling **Aphids** in Your Garden
- Keep **Bed Bugs** Out of Your Home
- Keep **Cockroaches** Out of Your Home
- Keep **Fleas** Off Your Pests and Out of Your Home
- Planting a **Healthy Garden**
- Tips for a Beautiful, **Healthy Lawn**
- Protect Your Garden from **Moles, Voles and Gophers**
- Controlling **Mosquitoes** Around Your Home
- Hiring a **Pest Control Company**
- Keep **Rats and Mice** Out of Your Home
- Growing Beautiful **Roses**
- **Snails and Slugs** in Your Garden
- **Spiders** – The Helpful Hunters
- **Pesticides** and Water Quality
- Pesticide **Use and Disposal**
- Controlling **Weeds** in Your Garden
- Controlling **Yellowjackets** Around Your Home



OWOW literature rack at Jackson's Hardware

QR codes for digital fact sheets:

The QR codes for the OWOW website and fact sheets have been developed as a poster and/or as signage to place on display on or near the OWOW rack and/or in the pesticide aisle for consumers to access with ease. In each associate training, I review how to access the OWOW and UCIPM websites in both English and Spanish by



QR code signage at Sloat, Novato

using the QR code signage so that associates feel comfortable and familiar using them with ease.

Retail Store Mentoring and Maintenance Visits:

A total number of 94 program store mentoring and maintenance visits were provided for the year.

- Building Supply: 4 visits
- Chase Ace: 7 visits
- CNL Nursery: 6 visits
- Fairfax Lumber: 7 visits
- Goodman's Building Supply: 6 visits
- The Home Depot: 6 visits
- Jackson's Hardware: 7 visits
- Marin Ace: 7 visits
- Pini Hardware: 4 visits
- Pini San Marin: 4 visits
- Sloat, E. Blithdale: 7 visits
- Sloat, Kentfield: 7 visits
- Sloat, Miller Ave: 5 visits
- Sloat, Novato: 7 visits
- Summer Winds: 6 visits
- Toby's Feed Barn: 4 visits



Mentoring staff at
Sloat, E Blithdale

Store mentoring and maintenance activities throughout the year:

- Replenish fact sheets
- Update shelf talkers on new products
- Ask associates if they are hearing of any new or unusual pest problems from their customers
- Mentor associates about the current pest problems and IPM strategies for the pests
- Mentor associates on how less toxic active ingredients work
- Answer associate pest and product questions
- Guide customers to less-toxic solutions in the aisle
- Follow up with emails and phone calls on pest questions from associates, as well as customers
- Mentor buyer and manager at each retailer about new eco-friendly product on the market
- Focus on the pest of the month calendar
- Bring the quarterly UCIPM Retail Newsletter to each retailer
- Remind associates about the resource on the OWOW & UCIPM website
- Demonstrate how to use the UCIPM website for pest problem assistance
- Demonstrate how to access fact sheets through the QR code poster



Mentoring staff at
Chase Ace, San Rafael

This year I provided each store with support around assorted seasonal pest, such as aphids, spiders,

whiteflies, ants, black spot, powdery mildew, and gophers, along with a lot of fire blight questions this year due to an unusually hot and then cool, rainy spring season. Weeds, rats and mice continue to be the most prevalent pest issues customers ask about.

I provide each retailer with timely resources for pest prevention, such as sealing up cracks and crevices around the home, keeping plants healthy with proper care, how to efficiently water plants that reduces water usage, and the benefits of planting regionally appropriate plant material.

I provided additional pest information sheets for thrips, powdery mildew, whiteflies, and for sheet mulching to prevent weeds. I also provided each with the CA Pest Alert 'Keep the Spotted Lanternfly out of CA', Asian Citrus Psyllid, and the 'Don't Move Firewood' campaign information.

In the spring, as irrigation systems start to turn on, I provide associates with the Marin Water schedule as a helpful resource. I also distributed the 'Good Bug Tub' and 'CA Plants for Native Bees' handouts, which were both popular.

OWOW Retailer Trainings

OWOW retailer trainings provided:

Date	Store	Number Trained
1/13/26	CNL	3
1/24/26	Sloat, Kentfield	6
2/17/26	Marin Ace	2
2/26/26	Sloat, Novato	4
2/27/26	Sloat, Kentfield	2
3/17/26	Fairfax Lumber	3
3/19/26	Sloat, Novato	1
3/24/26	The Home Depot	3
3/28/26	CNL	2
5/2/26	Sloat, Novato	1
6/8/26	Sloat, E Blithdale	3
6/9/26	CNL	4
6/12/26	Sloat, E Blithdale	5
Total associates trained:		39

The OWOW trainings are designed to educate the associates about stormwater runoff, where the local Household Hazardous Waste facility is located, the Retailer's role in reducing problem pesticide usage, the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), how to read a pesticide label, the less toxic pesticides their store sells, proper usage of pesticides, the current pest problems, and less toxic solutions for these problems for their customer. These trainings provide suggested alternatives for their customers to manager their gardens sustainably with the intent to reduce the toxic pesticides and fertilizers that so easily can get into the waterways.

A total of 39 associates received the training. Each associate received a training folder that is stocked with valuable reference materials, pest problem solving for the common seasonal pests they are asked about, OWOW Fact Sheets, Pest Identification key, and UCIPM Pest Notes for common pest problems. Pre & Post Training Surveys were provided to each attendee.

Topics covered in the training:

- An introduction to the OWOW partnership program
- Pesticides that are water pollutants of concern
- Where to dispose of local Household Hazardous Waste
- 'How less-toxic products' work
- How to read a pesticide label
- IPM principles & techniques
- How to safely mix concentrated pesticides, how to safely store pesticides, and how to safely clean a pesticide application spray tank.
- Beneficial Insect Identification
- Water Conservation
- Benefits of Compost
- Benefits of Mulch
- Water-wise plant choices for our area
- Pests highlighted: Aphids, ants, powdery mildew, citrus leaf miner, earwigs, fleas, gophers, rats & mice, snails & slugs, spider mites, whitefly, fungal diseases, codling moth, rose care without problem pesticides and how to address the many customer habits, such as how over fertilizing can increase pest populations. Also, the importance of adding compost to the soil and protecting the soil with a layer of mulch.
- Invasive pests: Asian Citrus Psyllid
- 'Keep Spotted Lantern Fly Out of CA' brochure.
- OWOW website, UC IPM website
- How to use the OWOW materials, including how to access fact sheets by using the QR code.
- How to access OWOW and UCIPM eco-friendly pest management for the Spanish speaking audience by using the QR code.



Training staff at
CNL Nursery

Resources provided to each OWOW training attendee includes:

- The Mac's Field Guide Good Garden Bugs of California
- Monthly Pest Calendar
- How to Apply Beneficial Nematode
- 'How Less Toxic Products Work' handout
- A specific to the Home Depot less toxic product list for the Home Depot Store training
- List of websites, books, and catalogs on a resource sheet
- Sheet Mulching instructions
- The CA DPR's 'How to read a pesticide label' handout
- Information on pest problem solving for the following pests: spider mites, lifecycle of grubs, whiteflies, spider mites, citrus leaf miner, codling moth, keeping



Training staff at
Fairfax Lumber

rodent out of the home and reducing their activity in the garden, Asian Citrus Psyllid, and the UCIPM Quick tips for Mealybugs & Powdery Mildew

- '10 Most Wanted Bugs for Your Garden' brochure
- OWOW pocket guides
- Marin-Sonoma Vector Control Program
- Yard Smart Marin brochure
- A one sheet informational handout on 'Protecting Landscapes in a Drought' and '10 Tips for Water-wise Gardening'.



Training staff at Sloat, Kentfield (photo left), at Sloat, E Blithdale (photo middle), and at Sloat Novato (photo right)

OWOW trainings at Sloat Garden Centers

Every new employee at the Sloat Garden Centers, as a part of their companywide new-hire training, is required to watch an OWOW training VHS tape from the late 1980s. I have seen this video and it provides an introduction to the OWOW program, pesticides and water quality, choosing pesticides in a retail environment, how to read a pesticide label, and safe disposal. Though the content is older, it still promotes the current OWOW message.

In addition to the OWOW VHS training and the in-person OWOW training, the management teams at Sloat Garden Centers encourage associates to watch the recordings from our OWOW educational webinars that are archived on their website and on their YouTube channel. They refer to this as the **Sloat Garden Center 'Our Knowledge is Growing' Bonus Program**. Associates watch the recorded webinar then are required to write down 5 things they learned from the webinar, which resources they can use that relate to this program, such as OWOW fact sheets, the OWOW '10 Most Wanted' brochure, the UCIPM Quick Tips, and other Sloat resources.

Program Training Assessment

Compilation of Training Feedback 2025-26 contract year

The compilation of OWOW program training and associate feedback involves gathering data from various training sessions, completed training surveys, and on-site engagement to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Summary of Store Training Pre-Training Surveys

A total of 39 associates trained, 35 pre-training surveys were returned.
Here are the results of those surveys:

1) Are you familiar with the OWOW program?
a) Yes: 29% b) No: 71%
2) When does urban runoff occur?
a) When a sprinkler is broken & excess water is running into the street: 6% b) During & after a rain event: 14% c) From watering or irrigation overflows: 11% d) All of the above: 69%
3) Which of these pollutants can be carried into the waterways with urban runoff?
a) Motor oil & solvents: 3% b) Pet waste, debris & litter: c) Pesticides & synthetic fertilizers: 20% d) Household cleaning agents: e) All of the above: 77%
4) Storm drains, including the storm drains in parking lots & loading docks, flow directly to:
a) The sanitary sewer that goes to the wastewater treatment facility: 31% b) The nearest creek, river, bay, or ocean: 34% c) I'm not sure: 35%
5) Are pesticides removed at the wastewater treatment facility?
a) Yes: 29% b) No: 23% c) I'm not sure: 48%
6) What is the best way to dispose of unused household hazardous waste, including pesticides & fertilizers?
a) Bury them in the garden: b) Dump them into the trash: 3% c) Pour them down the sink or flush down toilet: d) Take them to the local HHW facility: 97%
7) Do you know where your local HHW facility is located?
a) Yes, I do know: 14% b) No, I don't know: 86%
8) Do your customers ask for eco-friendly solutions & less-toxic products that are safer for the environment?
a) Yes: 66% b) No: c) Sometimes: 34%
9) What is the highly effective, science-based strategy for controlling pests in the home/garden that also helps to protect our waterways from toxic pesticide pollutants?
a) Synthetic pesticide program: b) Homemade, D.I.Y. remedies & cures: 6% c) IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Principles: 51% d) I'm not sure: 43%

Summary of End of Training Post Survey

A total of 39 associates trained, 35 post-training surveys were returned.
Here are the results of those surveys:

1) Are you familiar with the OWOW program
a) Yes: 100% b) No:
2) When does urban runoff occur?
a) When a sprinkler is broken & excess water is running into the street: b) During & after a rain event: c) From watering or irrigation overflows: d) All of the above: 100%
3) Which of these pollutants can be carried into the waterways with urban runoff?
a) Motor oil & solvents: b) Pest waste, debris & litter: c) Pesticides & synthetic fertilizers: d) Household cleaning agents: e) All of the above: 100%
4) Storm drains, including the storm drains in parking lots & loading docks, flow directly to:
a) The sanitary sewer that goes to the wastewater treatment facility: b) The nearest creek, river, bay, or ocean: 100% c) I'm not sure:
5) Are pesticides removed at the wastewater treatment facility?
a) Yes: b) No: 100% c) I'm not sure:
6) What is the best way to dispose of unused household hazardous waste, including pesticides & fertilizers?
a) Bury them in the garden: b) Dump them into the trash: c) Pour them down the sink or flush down toilet: d) Take them to the local HHW facility: 100%
7) Do you know where your local HHW facility is located?
a) Yes, I know, named correctly: 100% b) No, I don't know:
8) How can you identify products that are less toxic for pest management in your store?
a) The OWOW shelf labels that identify eco-friendly products: b) The OWOW pest management fact sheets: c) The OWOW website at www.ourwaterourworld.org d) Talking with an OWOW IPM Advocate: e) All of the above: 100%
9) What is the highly effective, science-based strategy for controlling pests in the home/garden that also helps to protect our waterways from toxic pesticide pollutants?
a) Synthetic pesticide program: b) Homemade, D.I.Y. remedies & cures: c) IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Principles: 100%

Summary of End of Training Evaluation Form

1) You feel comfortable using the OWOW resources available in this store?
a) Yes: 100% b) No:
2) You understand a less toxic solution for at least one pest problem discussed today.
a) Yes: 100% b) No:
3) What type of support can the OWOW IPM Advocate provide you more of?
a) More print & online resources for less toxic pest management: 24% b) More information about seasonal pest problems and how to manage less toxically: 38% c) More OWOW training & product knowledge classes: 38%

What was the most useful thing you learned today?

'The most ecological way to treat fungi-pests'

'Distinguishing between products toxicity'

'IPM ideas, starting with environment before pesticide'

'How to prevent problems from happening down the road with different products before others'

'All was great!'

'Treating peach leaf curl'

'Copper fungicide is a preventative. A curative like Revitalize is better for rust'

'Effects/modes of action for the different fungicide and insecticidal soap'

'The difference in pest/fungus remedies and when to recommend which'

'The different types of pesticides'

'Where the HHW facility is located'

'Start with the least toxic pesticides if a pesticide is needed'

'The use of the bio-fungicide'

'Education around alternatives to pesticides for pest management'

'Eco-friendly solutions for rats'

'Learning about the risks of eco-friendly pesticides on beneficials and birds'

'Learning about IPM and how to manage a pest problem without pesticides'

'How to invite beneficial insects in to manage pests'

'How to be proactive with IPM strategies'

Additional comments:

'Excellent meeting'

'Very important education'

'More in person or zoom info seminars'

'Thanks so much!'

'Good Job!'

'How to properly use the chemical sprays and bottles and how to get the waste bottles out safely'

'Thanks! Informative as always'

'Super helpful to learn about the products we sell'

'Thank you!'

'Suzanne is amazing!'

'Very good knowledge to help the staff help customers'

'Very helpful for customer service questions in the store'

'These classes are always highly informative, always great'

Public education & outreach:

Provided 17 outreach events:

- 16 in-person public outreach events, engaging with no less than 556 people
- 1 webinar with Sloat - 12 attended the live webinar, with 91 views of the recording as of June 30th, 2026.

Date	Location	Number of people engaged with
9/27/25	CNL - tabling	28
10/11/25	Sloat, Kentfield – tabling,	42
10/26/25	Home Grown Habitat Nursery - tabling	110
1/13/26	Tiburon-Belvedere Library – 'Retain the Rain' presentation	22
1/14/26	Sloat 'IPM for Home Gardeners' – webinar	12 attended live with 91 views of recording as of 6/30/26
1/18/26	Sloat, Kentfield – tabling, Winter event	26
1/22/26	Marin UC Master Gardener's Help Desk - IPM class	25
2/17/26	Sloat Vendor Night, Kentfield - tabling	113
3/19/26	Marin UC Master Gardeners: IPM & Pesticides class	39
3/21/26	Sloat, Novato - tabling	18
3/28/25	CNL - tabling	20
3/28/26	Sloat, E Blithdale - tabling	23
4/4/26	Sloat, Kentfield – tabling	25
5/2/26	Summer Winds – tabling	20
5/2/26	Sloat, Novato - tabling	22
6/13/26	Summer Winds – tabling	23
	Total number of people engaged with:	556
	Total number of people to learn about OWOW through a webinar:	103
	Total number of people reached:	659

In-person public outreach events:

The OWOW outreach tabling events consisted of assisting people either at a plant sale, in the aisle at the retailer, or at a public destination venue. These opportunities allow me to reach the consumers to answer their pest and gardening questions, guiding each to a less toxic solution. The outreach tabling events consisted of setting up at the retailer's special event, engaging with customers, answering their questions, and guiding each to a less toxic solution. This engagement supports the consumer, guiding each towards solutions that are less toxic.

Topics discussed at these tabling events include:

- Managing rats and mice, both indoors and outdoors
- Flying insects; flies, mosquitoes, yellowjackets
- Gophers, vole, and moles in the garden
- Ground squirrels and tree squirrels
- Crawling insects in the home, and around the perimeter
- Common pests of houseplants
- Weeds in the garden – mentoring each about the different tools such as mulch, as well as the eco-herbicides.
- Fruit Tree care, Citrus care, Rose care, Vegetable Garden care
- Aphids, whiteflies, cucumber beetles, and other common garden pests
- Plant diseases; fire blight, powdery mildew, peach leaf curl, black spot, rust
- Best fertilizers to feed plants.
- How to water
- Fire-safe landscaping
- Integrated Pest Management for home gardeners
- Benefits of planting California native plants
- Safe pesticides application, storage, and disposal

Each person received a corresponding OWOW fact sheet when available, OWOW & UCIPM website information, the '10 Most Wanted Good Bugs' brochure, and the 'Healthy Gardens' fact sheet.

OWOW Programs for the Public:

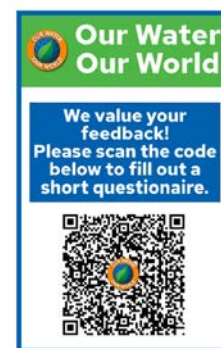
The OWOW programs are an opportunity to introduce the OWOW program with more detail, the relationship with MCSTOPPP, the impacts of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers on our local waterways, and how our choices can have a positive difference. I provide a relevant topic per the host's request that always includes



Tabling at the Sloat, Kentfield Harvest Event

information on how to reduce pesticide usage by increasing the health of the environment, either in the home or in the garden. A dynamic question and answer session for the attendees follows each program. Using visual aids and structured content help to convey the importance of the program's goals and what simple actions the audience can take. The feedback I receive from attendees has been very positive, that the content of my programs was relevant, easy to comprehend, and a few noted that they were unaware of those direct connections with pollutants getting into the waterways through runoff. The attendees seem to feel encouraged and inspired by my presentations.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the outreach efforts can be difficult to assess whether goals of the program are being met and how to improve my efforts to meet these goals. In April I created an evaluation questionnaire for those who I engage with at outreach events. Here to the right is the QR code signage for the questionnaire I created.



One guest I engaged with did provide feedback while tabling at the Summer Winds Garden Center:

Subject or issue	Behavior Change	Comment	Location of guest
How to attract more pollinators to my garden	Will – increase the health of the garden, invite more beneficial insects and birds to the garden	Suzanne Bontempo is awesome!	Novato

The Marin UC Master Gardeners invited me to teach their 'Help Desk' volunteers and their IPM and Pesticide class for the new class of UC Master Gardeners.

The 'Help Desk' class was an advanced level deep dive into the pests question they receive where I share best practices for managing each pest problem. I closed by noting that it is a rare occasion that any home gardener ever needs to use a pesticide.

For the UC Master Gardeners IPM and Pesticide class, I walked the class through practical IPM strategies for home gardeners. I also created a relevant comprehensive list of the common pesticide active ingredients used by consumers, focusing on the eco-friendly products. Included in my curriculum was when they would recommend each pesticide discussed, the different applications approaches, the risk and unintended consequences of each. I stayed after during the breaks of each program to answer additional questions.

I hope to teach another class for the Marin UC Master Gardeners this next year. I am currently looking for new organizations who would benefit from an OWOW program and am looking forward to joining several in-person outreach opportunities throughout Marin County in the coming contract year.



Teaching the UC Master Gardeners 'IPM & Pesticides' Class

Public Webinar Events:

In partnership with Sloat, I provided 1 educational webinar

- **1/14/26: 'IPM for the Home Gardener' – 12 attended** live, with 91 views of this recording as of June 30th, 2026.

Each registrant received an email from Sloat that included a program outline, and a 'Helpful Gardening Resource' page that includes links to the OWOW and MCSTPPP websites.

Sloat has over 21 OWOW webinar recording in their library. The virtual education for the public provides a reach beyond what we can with an in-person tabling event. As mentioned earlier in this report, they encourage their employees to watch and complete a questionnaire about the content of each webinar as part of their continuing education. It's been incredible to have this opportunity to deliver the OWOW message to such a broad reach.

OWOW's Retail Influence

OWOW Program Evaluation

Fact Sheets Displayed:

- All OWOW retailer partners have a fact sheet rack and/or fact sheet QR code signage on display for their customers to reference.
- **40% noted:** The **print copies** of fact sheet **are very helpful**; people reference them.
- **50% noted:** The QR code with **digital access** to the fact sheets was **more effective**.
- **100% noted:** **Both print and digital** facts sheets are preferred because it depends on their customer.

Shelf Taker Tags:

- **100%** of the retailers who have the shelf tags noted that the **shelf talker tags are very effective**, they really help us identify the eco-friendly products we sell.

OWOW Retailer Trainings:

- **100%** of the retailers noted that the **OWOW trainings are very valuable**, feel that they are an important addition to staff enrichment and would like them more often when possible.
- Though due to the unusual winter and spring weather, scheduling trainings was more difficult. A few of the retailers noted that they appreciated my flexibility with last minute cancelations and rescheduling.

OWOW Outreach Events:

- **100%** of the retailer who have had OWOW join an event they host noted that they appreciate the support and feel that the OWOW presence is very valuable.

Overall challenge for the year:

Building relationships with each retailer and keeping the OWOW program relevant is my continuous goal. When speaking with the management teams and associates, they each express how much they appreciate the OWOW parentship, the educational support, and understand that this support helps their employees better assist their customers.

The challenge of this contract year was the winter and spring unusual weather that led to an unpredictable spring retail season. The retail garden industry is driven by pleasant, mild, sunny spring-like weather. The unexpected dry, hot January kicked the season off with a bang when retailers weren't expecting a spring rush so early. This rush slowed to a normal pace when the February rains arrived, only to continue with this pattern through May, finishing with a cooler than usual June.

Providing OWOW Services Beyond the Retailer

As an Integrated Pest Management and Garden Educator, I share the OWOW message beyond the retailer in several capacities. My commitment of expanding my knowledge as an outreach educator inspired me to seek out courses and commitments that help me grow. This has inspired me to be a board member for the Sonoma County Beekeepers Association. As the VP of Gardening, I provide sustainable gardening articles for their very popular newsletter each monthly, advocating for pesticide reduction, beneficial insects, native bees, and how to garden without the harmful impacts of chemicals. I also volunteer as a Xerces Ambassador providing invertebrate conservation education at outreach events around Marin, Napa, and Sonoma counties.

I continue to work closely and learn from the team at UC IPM and their regional advisors, learning science-based, less-toxic best practices for pest management, so that I can uphold the integrity of knowledge I provide the retailers and the public I engage with. I believe that the OWOW program has been a strong influencer in reducing problem pesticides the consumers use because of the invaluable relationship with UC IPM and by the dedicated efforts the trained IPM Advocates provide.

With the OWOW program and the other organizations I am involved with, throughout the 2025-26 fiscal year I have collectively engaged in-person with over 4276 people with eco-friendly pest management support. It is a huge privilege. I'd like to thank the members of the MCSTPPP for the opportunity to provide OWOW services to the community. I appreciate being able to reduce pesticide pollutants by sharing IPM knowledge, by offering support around stressful pest problems, and by being available to guide people to less toxic, sustainable pest & gardening solutions.

Closing comments:

Thank you for the opportunity for another successful year providing the Our Water Our World services to the retailer partners and the communities on behalf of the MCSTPPP. The retailers are great to work with. The department supervisors and garden teams see the value that OWOW program brings to their store and appreciates the attention I provide to their employees and their customers. The associates that I meet with are open to learning about the new eco-products they sell, tips for less toxic pest management, and how to better support their customers. Eco-friendly pesticide categories continue to grow, continue to trend, and the people I engage with know that they have alternative choices that enhance the environment and protect the waterways.

I'd like to thank the Marin Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program for the opportunity to provide OWOW services to the community. I appreciate being able to provide education for reducing pesticide pollutants by sharing IPM knowledge, by offering support around eco-friendly pest management, and by being available to guide people to less toxic, sustainable pest & gardening solutions.

Thank you so much for allowing me to contract with you.