# ON TAP

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2017

IN THIS ISSUE



## Eureka Ditch – Hazardous Tree Removal Project

Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) has been aggressively taking action to remove hazardous trees that could damage our facilities, including water tank sites and our 71 mile ditch system. The drought experienced these past few years has made trees in this region susceptible to epidemic infestation of the native bark beetles causing vast tree mortality throughout Tuolumne County and the Sierra foothills. As of November 2017, the District has removed approximately 1,670 hazardous trees from our tank sites and well areas, Section 4 ditch and the Soulsbyville ditch areas.

The next hazardous tree removal project is the Eureka ditch area that spans from Twain Harte to Tuolumne and is scheduled to begin in December, weather permitting. A licensed arborist has identified over 1700 hazardous trees that could potentially damage our Eureka ditch system. The tree removal costs vary depending on the accessibility for the licensed timber operator to remove the tree. The District's tree removal project costs range from $500 to $1,000 per tree, depending on location and accessibility. TUD was approved in February, 2016 for funding for hazardous tree removal projects through the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) program. (75% of the expenses for tree removal are reimbursable under this funding source.)

For property owners along the Eureka ditch area, please use caution while the licensed tree operators are in the project work areas. The District appreciates your patience and cooperation as we work to improve the safety of our infrastructure and ditch systems.

## When Cooking - Trap the Grease!

With the fall and winter holidays approaching, many Tuolumne County residents will be busy cooking in their kitchens. To avoid potential plumbing and sewer disasters, Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) would like to remind residents how to properly dispose of fats, oils and grease. Sewer blockages can cause backups into homes resulting in an unpleasant mess that can cost hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars to clean up.

**Listed below are safe disposal tips of waste fats, oil and grease to help you avoid a plumbing emergency:**

- *Avoid pouring fats or vegetable cooking oils down the drain because liquid fats solidify in the pipes and create clogs.*
- *After grease has cooled, scrape the grease into a container with a tight fitting lid. Solidify in the refrigerator before putting it in the trash.*
- *Never put hard to grind items in your garbage disposal, including poultry skins, egg shells, carrots, potato skins, celery, pumpkin pulp, banana peels or pasta.*

The Tuolumne County Solid Waste Division collects used liquid cooking oil, 10 gallons or less, by appointment only at their permanent household hazardous waste facility. This is available to residential customers only. Note that small quantities of grease solid at room temperature, such as lard & bacon fat, may be place in a sealed container and put in the trash. **Call (209) 533-5588** to make an appointment for disposal of residential **liquid** cooking oil.


## No Wipes – They Clog Pipes

Although a package may be marked as "flushable," that is not the case in most instances when it comes to traveling through a sewer system. The highly marketable premoistened personal wipes are causing problems for wastewater plant managers throughout the United States, including TUD's Regional Wastewater Treatment facility in Sonora.

David Boatright, Wastewater Superintendent at TUD, states "These flushable wipes can cause havoc and back-ups within the sewer system leading to sanitary sewer overflows, clogs at lift stations, and disruption within the treatment plant. It's been a challenge for our collection system and treatment plant dealing with this issue. We encourage all of our customers not to throw any type of wipe into the toilet."

Unlike toilet paper, which is usually made from natural or recycled cellulose fibers, a wet wipe may be made from cellulosic or synthetic fibers, depending on its intended use. Many studies have concluded that after 24 hours, most "flushable" wipes do not dissolve and remain in the sewer system.

TUD would like to ask all of our sewer customers to avoid flushing any type of wipe, "flushable" or otherwise, down the toilet. This will prevent costly clogs and environmentally damaging overflows.

## The Natural Look for the Holidays

*By Julie Silva is a University of California Cooperative Extension of Tuolumne County Master Gardener*

For many decades families have used natural decorations for the holidays. German immigrants brought the holiday tradition of an indoor tree to the US. In the early 1900's F.W.Woolworth introduced glass ornaments at their Five and Dime Stores. It took until after World War II before trees with lights became commonplace. Prior to that, candles or glass candle cups illuminated the tree on Christmas Eve. Other greenery included garlands of ivy, laurel, mistletoe, and holly that were hung from the roof, walls, and windows. Candle wax was used to suspend the greenery.

Natural decorations are becoming more popular every year. Decorations from nature have fragrance, interesting texture, and varied colors. Just about any plant may be used in your decorating theme. Even your existing indoor plants can become holiday decorations by wrapping their pots in holiday themed materials.

Naturally the tree comes to mind first, then followed by poinsettias and mistletoe. The list must also include; boxwood, cyclamen, spruce, cedars, firs, junipers, ivy, laurel, holly, rosemary, azaleas, amaryllis, orchids, paper whites, maples and southern magnolias. Actually almost anything may be used.

Where to start? Look in your own garden. The greenery will be fresher, a great price (free), things you already like, and a better selection than what you will find commercially. Greenery is a relative term, green may range from the silver hues to almost black. Search out the fragrances that you enjoy. As you are gathering greenery remember you are pruning. Make your cuts correctly and leave the plant in a natural shape. If you scope out plant material at a neighbor's yard, remember to ask. Their dog might be in full protection mode on that spruce tree! If you see something you love, consider purchasing that plant for the future to grow in your own yard.

Keep your greenery fresh as possible. Prior to harvesting your decorations, have several sizes of pruners and make sure your blades are sharp. Bring along a bucket of water to immerse the fresh cut ends. Store your finds in an unheated garage until they are ready to be used. The evening prior to displaying your decorations do a new cut, soak the greenery in water by immersing it, and then allow it to dry completely. There are products you can spray on your greenery that will help the plant material hold moisture. Anti-transpirant spray will help hold the moisture. Place your decorations away from heat sources, direct sunlight, heater vents or candles. Also remember to use a protective covering under your decorations for your furniture. Some plants have a sticky substance that might damage wood.

Greenery is a great base from which to start. Searching your yard may bring finds like acorns; fruits, like lemons or limes; dried hydrangeas blossoms; magnolia pods, pine cones, rose hips and pyracantha. If you are looking for fragrance, choose lavender, common myrtle, boxwood, rosemary, thyme, or redwood branches. If you like a plant in your yard, you will like it inside your home too.

Holidays will have fragrance trigger points for all of us. Whether it is pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon and eggnog, those fragrances may take us back to those moments of sugar plums dancing and the sounds of reindeer hooves on the rooftop.

## General Manager's Corner *By Thomas J. Haglund, thaglund@tudwater.com*

### Infrastructure Improvements Continue Throughout TUD's Service Territory

The District is committed to infrastructure improvement for the long-term benefit of our customers and to ensure that the water we deliver is of the highest quality and that the wastewater we collect and treat occurs in an environmentally sensitive manner and in accordance with federal and state regulation. Though the District's infrastructure improvement projects are many, three of the projects highlighted below demonstrate TUD's efforts to maintain quality infrastructure in a cost effective way.

*TUD Accepts Grant for Tuolumne City Water Main Replacement*

The TUD Board of Directors recently authorized acceptance of a $400,000 grant from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) that will fund the replacement of 1,700 lineal feet of water main and 28 service connections along portions of Bay, Carter and Cedar Streets in Tuolumne City. The DWR grant represents our continuing effort to undertake infrastructure improvement projects in a way that preserves rate payer dollars and reduces costs. The District anticipates that this construction project will take place in the summer of 2018.

*Sewer Rehabilitation Project to Get Underway*

The TUD Board recently awarded a competitive bid for completion of a sewer pipe rehabilitation project to NorCal Pipeline Services. Over time, sewer mains suffer from deterioration, corrosion, and decay, but can be rehabilitated if the damage is not too severe. This project will use a trenchless technology known as cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) to rehabilitate sewer pipes that meet the required criteria. CIPP involves inserting a liner into the existing sewer mains and adhering that liner to the pipe to extend the life of the pipe by repairing imperfections, cracks and deterioration that occurs over time. The process is much more cost effective and much less inconvenient to the public than trenching, removing and replacing the sewer pipes. Approximately 1,756 lineal feet of sewer main ranging from 6 to 16 inches at various locations within the District will be rehabilitated with this non-intrusive technology.

*Columbia Clearwell Project Gets Underway*

In early October the Columbia Clearwell Project began which will remove and replace all of the interior and exterior coatings of the clearwell. A clearwell stores water as part of the treatment process prior to delivery to customers. In addition to reestablishing the internal and external coatings, the project will replace the roof structure to the clearwell with a steel welded bent plate technology that will facilitate the ability to perform future interior recoats, minimize future corrosion and maintain the structural integrity of the roof and clearwell. Proper care and maintenance of the water infrastructure is a crucial component of providing clean, safe water to our customers. This project was competitively bid and awarded to West Coast Industrial Coatings.

Columbia Clearwell Project

On Tap is published to keep Tuolumne Utilities District customers informed about issues and upcoming events. If you have any story ideas or suggestions, please mail them to Lisa Westbrook, at 18885 Nugget Blvd., Sonora, CA 95370 or email at lisaw@tuolumneutilities.com.