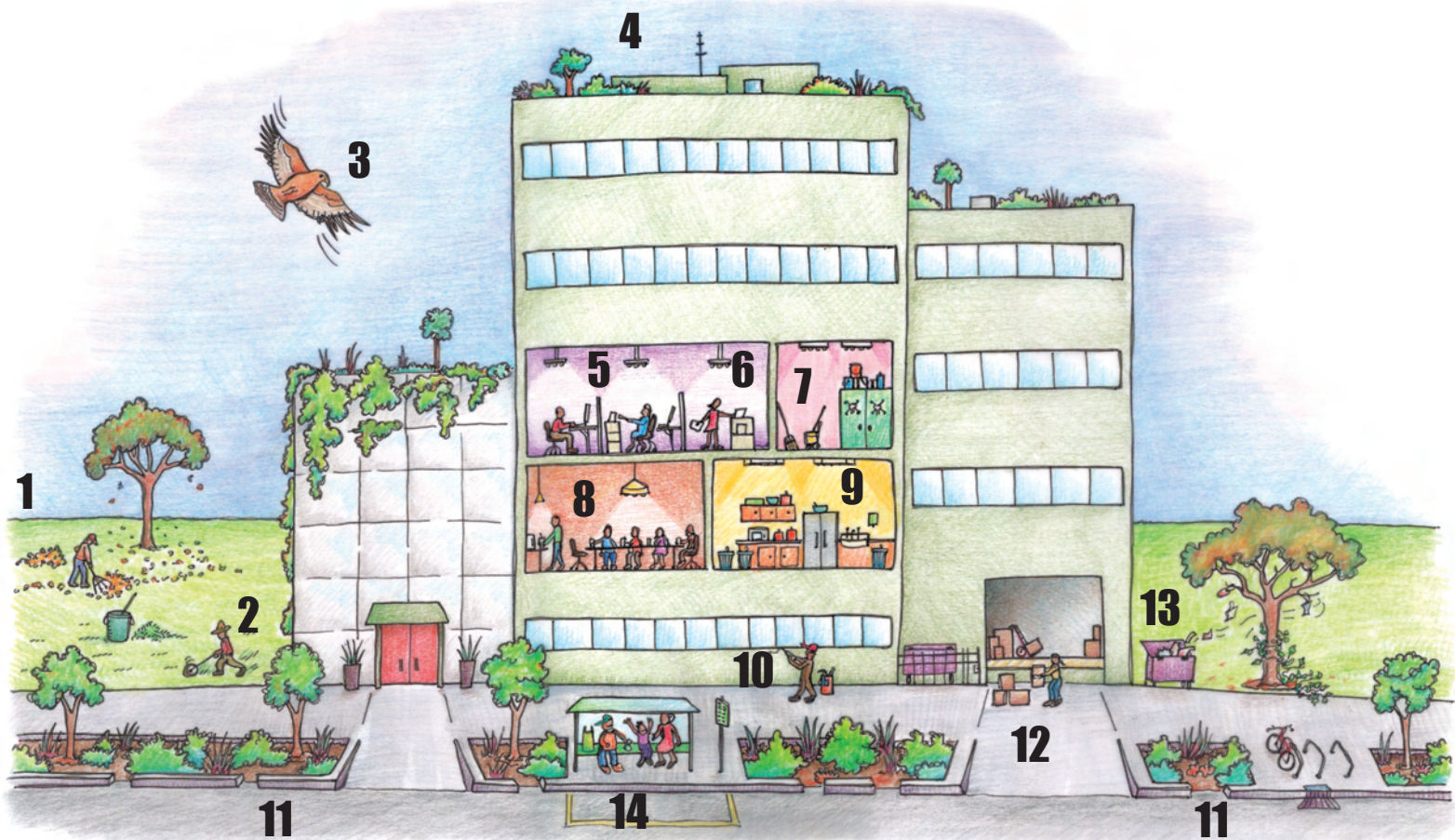


## Healthy Building/Healthy Bay



**W**ith a few simple measures, you can make your building healthier for workers, wildlife, and San Francisco Bay. Here are some tips on what to do.

**1** Leaf blowers pollute the air and contribute to climate change. Use rakes instead, and green waste bins or compost systems to dispose of landscaping trimmings and yard waste. Plant native and/or drought tolerant plants (see [www.stopwaste.org](http://www.stopwaste.org) or our green your garden fact sheet at [www.sfestuary.org](http://www.sfestuary.org)). Mulch to keep weeds to a minimum. Water during early morning, pre-dawn hours to reduce water loss from evaporation.

**2** Reduce or eliminate lawns—plant native grasses or groundcovers instead. Lawns need lots of water, fertilizers and pesticides, which can run off into storm drains and San Francisco Bay. If you must have a lawn, recycle clippings or leave them on the lawn (“grasscycling”) as natural fertilizer. Use hand- or electric- rather than a gasoline-powered lawn mower to spare the air.

**3** Raptors can die from eating rodents that have ingested pesticides. Prevent infestations by sealing potential entry points and eliminating food and water sources that attract these pests. Use snap traps, not poisons: sick rodents can escape from bait

boxes and be preyed upon by raptors. Snap traps are preferable to glue traps, which are inhumane and often kill birds and other animals. Position traps carefully in areas where they will kill only the targeted pest.

**4** Go from gray to green: Install a green roof or green wall to absorb and slow rainfall and provide habitat for pollinators. This keeps more runoff out of the storm drain system—and San Francisco Bay! Green roofs also keep buildings cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

**5** Properly dispose of used fluorescent light tubes and bulbs. First, designate a secure

place to store them so they do not break (the mercury vapor in them can evaporate), and then visit [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com) to learn where to take them for recycling.

Recycle batteries (see [www.rbc.org](http://www.rbc.org) for information about free battery recycling). Designate a storage area for this waste until you can recycle it to make sure it is recycled and not put into the garbage.

**6** Recycle used copier toner and ink jet cartridges. Donate electronic equipment for reuse (not just recycle). If it cannot be reused, take it to an “e-steward” for responsible recycling ([www.ban.org/#ThePledge](http://www.ban.org/#ThePledge)). You can also call [earth911.org](http://earth911.org) for information about recycling or disposing of computers, cell phones, pagers, and other office equipment. Find information on hundreds of environmentally preferable products in over two dozen categories at SF Approved <http://www.sfapproved.org/>. Look for products that are certified by GreenSeal, EPEAT, Energy Star and other credible rating systems. For ratings on thousands of consumer products, consult <http://www.goodguide.com/>

**7** Avoid using toxic substances: check Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and labels for all cleaning products, building maintenance materials, pesticides, and fertilizers you use. Identify safer alternatives. Avoid products with labels containing Prop. 65 warnings. Dispose of any hazardous waste at your local Household Hazardous Waste Program.

Keep only as much leftover paint and/or solvents as you will need for touch-ups; take the remainder to a hazardous waste collection site, donate it to an anti-graffiti program, or return it to the contractor or manufacturer.

If supplying tenants with janitorial supplies, purchase paper towels, toilet paper, tissues, toilet seat covers, garbage bags, and recycling bins that contain recycled content.

**8** Serve food at office events in reusable serving dishes and serve water in pitchers—not individual bottles. Eliminate the use of polystyrene, such as Styrofoam, in beverages and food service ware.

**9** In the lunch/break room, replace disposables with permanent items (e.g.,



**Stormwater planters on San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito. Photo by Lisa Owens Viani**

mugs, dishes, utensils, towels/rags, coffee filters, etc.) and use refillable containers for sugar, salt, and pepper, etc. to avoid using individual condiment packets.

Eliminate or reduce pesticides by using Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which involves good housekeeping, making physical changes to keep pests out, and using less or non-toxic pesticides. Use one or a few low-toxicity multipurpose cleaners, rather than many special-purpose cleaners.

**10** If pest control is necessary, use barriers (such as caulking/sealing holes), traps, and lastly, less toxic pesticides (such as soaps, oils, microbials, and baits). Apply only as needed (rather than on a routine schedule). Be “EcoWise”: If you contract with a pest control operator, choose one that is EcoWise Certified ([www.ecowise-certified.com](http://www.ecowise-certified.com)), or specify in the contract that IPM and methods using non-chemical pest prevention and pest exclusion be used. Do not allow any outdoor perimeter spraying

**11** Urge your city to install green stormwater facilities like the stormwater planters pictured on this page. They green the street, improve property values, and filter urban pollution before it flows into

San Francisco Bay. Or create a rain garden on your property that takes runoff from your roof. See our rain garden guide at [www.sfestuary.org](http://www.sfestuary.org).

**12** Remember, only rain in the storm drain! The storm drain system is separate from the sanitary sewer system (unless you are in San Francisco). Pollutants that enter these drains flow directly into creeks and San Francisco Bay without treatment. Educate maintenance workers and contractors and ensure their activities are not letting contaminants enter storm drains. Prevent erosion during all landscaping, construction, or other activities.

Post reminder signs at loading docks, dumpster areas, outdoor working areas, and storage areas. Train staff in how to prevent pollution when cleaning equipment, tools, and vehicles, and when painting or power-washing outdoor surfaces. If using water to clean parking or other outdoor areas, hire a BASMAA-certified mobile cleaner ([www.basmaa.org](http://www.basmaa.org)) and require that they collect and dispose of wash water in the sanitary sewer.

**13** Trash is an epidemic in our Bay. Keep dumpsters covered, not overflowing, impermeable to rainwater, and locked behind a fence if possible, so that trash does not blow out of them or attract pests. Keep dumpster and parking areas clean.

**14** Encourage the use of public transit and carpooling; provide secure bicycle parking for tenants and visitors in outdoor parking areas.

*With thanks to the Bay Area Green Business Program's Resource Conservation & Pollution Prevention Checklist for Property Managers*



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