

Becoming sustainable, one step at a time.

A partnership between Newhall Land Company and Agromin. (Page 1 of 2)



“Sustainability” is our latest buzzword. But sustainability is more than just a buzzword. It is a great opportunity for companies, cities, and individuals to explore fantastic avenues for self-sufficiency, creating a healthier environment, and increasing profitability.

As the city of Santa Clarita is quickly moving in a green direction, many companies are following suit by offering sustainable opportunities for their clients. People are becoming more environmentally and economically conscientious.

A partnership between The Newhall Land and Farming Company and Agromin has created a sustainable operation right here in Santa Clarita, in the form of green waste recycling.

Bill Camarillo, president of Agromin at the Santa Clarita plant, says, “Over 10 million tons of green waste and 2.5 million tons of urban wood waste enters the waste stream in California. We can now keep this huge amount of waste out of the landfills, and recycle it.”

By recycling this previously overlooked trash, Agromin and Newhall Land are able to reduce the waste that goes to our dumps by approximately 30 percent.

Clean green waste consists of leaves, grass, lumber, branches and yard trimmings. It does not include plastic, kitchen waste, cardboard or other recyclables.

Once you've put these non-green things in your trash, it is difficult and costly to get them out of the system. When you purchase garden soils, you expect them to be clean and free of plastics, rocks and non-biodegradable trash. You can do your part by keeping those things out of your green waste container.

So what happens to all this green waste when it goes to Agromin? Green waste from the Santa Clarita Valley comes to the site every day.

It is cleaned by hand and machine, removing non-green trash materials. Once the green waste is clean, the company grinds it, screens it, composts it and then screens it again.

The yield is rich mulch, ready for farm and garden. These products are safe, organic, recycled waste, taking us all one step closer to sustainability.

Agromin's products are used by landscapers, homeowners, and California's farmers. California growers use approximately 40 percent of Agromin's products.

Newhall Land uses the mulch, integrating it into the soil to improve soil fertility and reduce water evaporation. Newhall Land's agricultural operations are also using it in their orchards as a thick layer of mulch on top of the soil, which helps prevent weed growth.

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Newhall Land has also put together an environmental education program for local school children called "Carrots for Kids," which has educated Saugus Union School District second-graders about sustainability. Kids learn about green waste recycling, keeping the earth healthy, and growing their own food. Now, that is teaching our kids real, healthy, personal sustainability!

In addition to the kids' carrots kit, the program also offers salsa kits, pesto kits and kitchen herb kits. Check them out online at www.agromin.com.

Problem soils are caused by overuse of pesticides, herbicides and natural erosion of topsoil. Using recycled green waste leads to healthier plants, less use of pesticides and herbicides, conservation of water, improvement of soil fertility, reduction of the amount of nitrates leaching into our groundwater, reduction in erosion and addition of organic matter to the soil.

Another plus to having Newhall Land working directly with Agromin is that everything stays local here in the Santa Clarita Valley. There are no major trucking operations anywhere.

Agromin's finished products are used locally by Newhall Land's citrus orchards, as well as other local outlets. Keeping everything local means no long-distance trucking, and virtually no carbon spewed into the air by long truck hauls.

Agromin has also joined the Climate Action Registry and has agreed to voluntarily track and report greenhouse gas emissions.

Agromin receives 250,000 tons of green waste annually. That is probably 40 percent of our total waste stream. Imagine all that stuff being recycled instead of going into our landfills!

By recycling this green waste, we also reduce the amount of greenhouse gases from landfills.

Agromin and Newhall Land have definitely found a way to go green by taking something that would normally go into the landfill and turning it into something useful. Their work helps to bring us all one step closer to sustainability.

Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel is a Santa Clarita Valley resident, volunteer and leader of the SCV Community Hiking Club. Her column represents her own views, not necessarily those of The Signal.