

Quarantine hits county

City, haulers offer free chrysanthemum pickup

By KATHY KREIGER
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SANTA CRUZ — Residents tossing their chrysanthemum plants because of the upcoming state-ordered quarantine period will get a break from local trash haulers this next week: free pickup of the plants.

The quarantine period runs from Oct. 1 to May 31. Residents should remove all chrysanthemum plants before then and should not replant until after it ends. Retail sales are also prohibited.

The target of the quarantine is chrysanthemum white rust, a fungus disease that threatens the state's \$5 million chrysanthemum industry. Santa Cruz County is the last of three counties to harbor the disease.

"We're very close to cleaning this up in California," said Allen Clark of the state Department of Food and Agriculture, which started the eradication program in 1990. "That's why we're looking at polishing this off."

The quarantine area runs from the city of Santa Cruz to the Monterey county line, including several miles inland:

The western boundary runs from Bay Street to Mission Street/Highway 1 to Highway 17, then cuts east at Carbonera Drive and goes to the end of that street. Then it heads north along Branciforte Drive to the Branciforte Fire Station. From there the boundary line heads roughly due east along a line from the Hally Valley Conference Grounds to Hazel Dell Road. From there it heads south to Mount Madonna Road, which becomes Casserly and then Carleton roads. It heads west along Riverside Drive to Highway 1 and then follows the county line to the ocean.

The quarantine area does not include the North Coast, the San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley or the Summit area.

The quarantine applies only to chrysanthemums. It does not include their relatives like Shasta daisies, marguerites, feverfew or paludosum daisies.

For those who can't bear to part with their 'mums, there is an out — although an expensive one: paying for fungicide treatments applied every 10 to 14 days by state Department of Food and Agriculture workers.

The department is not encouraging this option. Final fees haven't been set, but expect to pay about \$35 an hour for treatments that must be applied for the entire eight-month quarantine.

State agriculture officials — with photo IDs — will begin door-to-door checks next month.

They ask that you remove the plants, including their roots, and put them in a plastic bag for disposal at the dump. Do not compost the plants.

To qualify for free pickup, the yanked-up 'mums must be in separate bags labeled "mums." The bags cannot contain anything else. The free pickup period runs from Sept. 25 through Sept. 29 and is on your regular trash pickup day.

Trash haulers providing the free pickup include Waste Management, Capitola Disposal and the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

For more information, call the chrysanthemum white rust hotline, 454-3300.

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