

Drought Having Far-Reaching Effects

Another Miserable Day

By MARY GANZ

Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — It hangs above the Pacific Coast like an ominous invisible cloud. Californians peer through it every morning as they awake to another miserable day of dazzling sunshine.

Weathermen call it the Pacific high. In normal winters it wanders up and down the coast, bringing the occasional sunny, dry weather that, most years, is a welcome part of the California lifestyle.

But for the second straight winter, the Pacific high has hung steady, its center about 200 miles northwest of San Francisco. Weathermen say it causes the cold and snow that soaked the East this winter as well as back-to-back dry years in much of the West.

"The winter cold in the East is going to be forgotten a lot sooner than the drought out West," says J. Murray Mitchell, meteorologist with the National Oceanographic

and Atmospheric Administration in Washington.

The prolonged dryness certainly will mean higher food and energy prices — how much higher remains to be seen. Bank of America economist Eric Thor says the drought could push the national consumer price index up as much as one percentage point, raising the inflation rate from the 5 to 6 per cent predicted earlier for the year to the 6 to 7 per cent range.

"There'll be a major impact on consumer confidence," he said. "The drought is changing lifestyles. Jobs are being lost. There will be a definite effect on spending — a domino effect, with people holding back from credit and holding back from buying the new car they maybe should have bought this year."

Ray Williams of the National Weather Service in Redwood City, Calif., explained the weather phenomenon
SEE BACK PAGE

SC Nurserymen Worried

By PEGGY RUDNICKI
Sentinel Staff Writer

Two years ago — when people actually complained about the rain — it was common for a gardener to walk into a nursery and buy \$15 worth of flower and vegetable seeds.

This year, people are coming in and asking for one tomato plant and a pot, said a local nursery owner.

The lament is a common one among local nursery owners and operators who expect their business to drop

10 to 30 per cent this year.

With the threat of drought looming around the corner, many residents are hesitant about buying plants or installing a new lawn, they say.

No one wants to lose a \$30 rhododendron because they can't water it, said one nurseryman.

Yet common sense, and a few water conservation tricks, can help one ease their garden through the drought year.

One of the biggest offen-

ders of water waste is a lawn, say many local nurserymen.

"I'd have to be honest," said Skip Antonelli of Antonelli Begonia Gardens in Capitola. "I wouldn't suggest planting a new lawn this year.

According to the Associated Press, it is estimated state residents waste a total of 88.4 billion gallons of water on their lawns during an average year.

That amount is enough to water 90,000 acres of agri-

cultural land, according to Don Engdahl, a planner for the state Department of Water Resources.

Engdahl estimated that eliminating all lawn watering in the state would provide enough water to serve the needs of 272,000 households for one year.

The Santa Cruz Lumer Home and Garden Center plans to stop selling lawn seed and fertilizer this year in order to encourage residents to conserve water.

SEE BACK PAGE

Weather

Mostly Fair
With Variable
Clouds And Fog
Details Page 2

Santa Cruz Sentinel

Sunday
Morning

Drought Worries Area Nurserymen

FROM PAGE 1

Watering a lawn on ¼ acre lot can require up to 100 gallons of water per minute, said Herb Senft, manager of the garden center.

That water can better be used on fruit trees or vegetable gardens, he said.

Senft said that even if a lawn isn't watered during the worst drought months, it can recover in three to four months.

A fruit tree, however, would take four years to recover from a long period of dryness, he said.

Fertilizing lawns now so that roots are strong enough to outlast the drought was suggested. Louis Dioszegi, owner of the Green House Nursery in Soquel.

The state suggested that lawns be watered infrequently, but deeply to allow the water to penetrate into the soil.

One technique involves turning the water on and off for five minute intervals — for a total of 25 minutes — according to Cindy

Chandler, spokesman for the California Assn. of Nurserymen.

That allows maximum penetration of water in the soil and minimizes the amount of runoff, said Chandler.

Allowing lawns to grow a bit longer also helps the lawn to retain more water, she said.

Most lawns need not be watered more than once a week, said Chandler.

Most local nursery owners and operators suggested, however, that residents forget about lawns and concentrate on shrubs and vegetables.

Even so, care should be taken that each drop of water counts, say many.

Antonelli recommends hand watering — a process that is being done on his 16 acres of gardens in Capitola.

Watering by hand stops the waste of water that comes from running water down furrows from plant to plant, he said

Or, he suggested, save your bath water for use in the garden on indoor plants.

Most plants will tolerate bath water, he said.

Just put the water in a bucket or barrel for a few days and wait for the soap scum to rise to the top.

Skim off the soap and you have water for the garden, he said.

Buying native plants — such as iceplant, California Lilacs, Scotch Broom and Snapdragon Brush — will mean your plants will probably last through a drought year, said many owners.

A large number of these plants have attractive blooms.

And, if you really want to conserve water — turn to cactus, say John and Toni Wilcox, owner of the Scotts Valley Cactus Gardens.

Last year's dry spell and water rationing in Scotts Valley just about killed their bedding plant market, they said.

This year, they are dealing

mostly in cactus and are operating a mail-order cactus business.

Cactus sales have gone up, they said. Not because of the drought, but because "people are tired of taking care of their house plants."

Cactus "can stand neglect," said John Wilcox.

Del Farnham, a local farm advisor who concentrates on ornamental plants, said he expects most growers in the area won't lose many of their plantings because of the drought.

Most growers are on well water, he said. They should be able to withstand the dry year.

Those who rely on city water may be in for some trouble if the city decides to ration water, said Farnham.

Growers who use City of Santa Cruz and City of Scotts Valley water will probably be the ones affected, he said.

Water officials in the state are concerned whether publicity about the drought has curtailed water use.

According to the AP, water experts say this may be the worst drought year in history — exceeding the previous record dry year of 1924.

On the issue of water use in the home, state officials have broken down figures on the typical amount of water used in the home.

(The department figures 44 per cent of water consumption is used in outside watering and 56 per cent on inside home use).

SHOWER: Uses 12 gallons a minute under heavy flow. A low-flow showerhead can cut that to about three gallons per minute.
TOILET: Uses five to seven gallons per flush. A modern low-flush toilet uses three and one half gallons.

WASHING MACHINE: Uses an average of anywhere from 27 to 54 gallons per load. A well-designed, front-loading machine can use as little as 16 to 19 gallons.

DISHWASHER: Uses sev-



en and one half to 16 gallons.
KITCHEN OR BATH-ROOM FAUCET: Uses five

gallons a minute. With a flow-reducing fixture, it can use as little as one and a half

gallons.
TUB BATH: Uses 36 gallons for a full tub.

Another Miserable Day Of California Sunshine

FROM PAGE 1

that has left San Francisco with its third driest year on record:

"Basically the high pressure system blocks out storms that normally would be moving in from the Gulf of Alaska," he said. Instead the storms move north, where they pick up freezing arctic air; then, drawn by a trough of low pressure in the eastern United States, they swoop down on the Midwest and the Eastern Seaboard.

The result: The eastern third of the country digs out from under tons of snow while the West is dry, from Washington State south to central California and east past the Mississippi River.

While Easterners cut back their heat to conserve precious fuel supplies, millions of California residents are learning ways to get by with less water.

While Florida citrus growers try to rescue cold-damaged crops, farmers in fertile valleys in California,

Oregon and Washington are warned they will receive a fraction of their normal irrigation water.

Farther east, agriculture officials report the wheat crop in states like Kansas and Missouri may be damaged unless there are good spring rains.

The Pacific Northwest had a wet winter last year, but this year's rainfall in Washington is less than a third of normal. In Oregon and Washington, utilities are warning of power rationing if there isn't enough water behind dams to generate electricity.

Washington Gov. Dixy Lee Ray asked residents Saturday to cut back their use of electricity voluntarily. She said the drought could become "devastating."

The governor also said she is asking electric utilities to institute programs of "voluntary curtailment of electrical use."

"The Pacific Northwest region is experiencing a water crisis which is unique in its history," Gov. Ray said in a

statement. "The impact of extensive drought in the state of Washington already is great, and it could become devastating."

Northern California's largest utility, Pacific Gas & Electric, estimates it will run 25 per cent short of hydroelectric power this summer and is planning brownouts that will "roll" from region to region, dimming lights and slowing machinery.

All over the West, ski resorts and other recreation industries are affected. In Utah, the snowpack is only 16 per cent of normal, and officials estimate the ski industry has lost \$12 million.

Economist Thor estimates that already 5,000 Californians have lost jobs in weather-related layoffs. Some were employed in the hard-pressed ski industry, although most were laid off from auto assembly plants shut down because of delays in parts shipped from the snow-clogged East.

For farmers, the impact will be measured in the

billions of dollars — up to \$3 billion in California, according to one estimate.

Consumers are finding beef bargains at the supermarket as ranchers sell off their herds, unable to graze on the parched, brown stubble that covers the ground. Prices are expected to rise again when ranchers, their breeding stock depleted, stop selling and try to rebuild the herds.

The alternative, for now, is to truck water and expensive feed out to the herds on the range.

In California's fertile central valleys, farmers are planning to cut back plantings and switch from water-hungry vegetable crops like tomatoes to grains and cotton that need less.

The cutbacks, in a state that grows 40 per cent of the nation's fruits and vegetables and 25 per cent of its food over-all, mean higher prices in the supermarket. Growers and canners refuse to speculate on just how much prices will rise, but they agree the trend is up.