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Scrubbish takes Earth Day theme to heart daily

by HILLARY SCHULER-JONES

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Warren Bishop, left, owner of Scrubbish cleaning service, works his environmental magic with employee Troy Ware.

The hazards of water runoff are well-documented in San Diego. As rain passes over streets and sidewalks, it picks up germs, debris and chemicals that are deposited in local bodies of water like Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean by way of storm drains.

What few people realize is that the trashcans they place on the street every week to dispose of their ordinary household garbage are contributors to this contamination, according to sanitation experts.

In order to mitigate this pollution, Point Loma entrepreneur Warren Bishop has created Scrubbish, a service that uses a mobile, self-contained cleaning system to sanitize “wheelie bins,” as the Australian native describes them.

Bishop started the company less than two months ago and already has 300 customers. He said the service has been available in the United Kingdom and his native Australia for more than a decade, but the cleaning technology wasn’t widely available in the U.S. when he started.

He had to design his own sanitation system when he realized that the units currently on the market didn’t meet his hygiene standards.

“My problem with the existing units is that many of them will use one tank ... they’ll wash the bins, and that water goes back in the same tank, so they end up washing the bins with the same water they’ve washed the others with. I found that pretty disgusting because I don’t want my bin washed with the next-door neighbor’s dog’s residual,” Bishop said.

Bishop’s mobile trailer is equipped with two tanks: one for fresh water and one for water captured during the cleaning process. He sprays each wheelie bin with biodegradable degreaser and sanitizer, lifts the bin into the trailer, then pressure washes the receptacle to remove additional debris. That water is captured in a second tank, and Bishop said he either treats the water at his facility so it can be reused once, or he disposes of the water through his sewer system. Since no water flows into the street during the process, none of the



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contaminants from the bin end up in storm drains.

Bishop is also concerned with water conservation. On average, the cleaning process uses about two gallons of water for the first cleaning and about a half-gallon for subsequent scrubs. When people clean the bins on their own, they typically use five to 10 gallons, he said.

The service also helps protect people from harmful germs and pests within the bins. Bishop said he originally touted the sanitization benefits to sell the service, but he has since discovered another threat: brown widow spiders, a relative of the dangerous black widow.

“They’re in just about every second bin that I’ve got — big, nasty, brown spiders that stick their nice little claws out — because there are so many crevices they can hide in,” Bishop said. “They lay their eggs in there and they have their little baby pods and everything in there, so that’s just freaking people right out.”

Scrubbish offers a monthly cleaning for \$7.95, as well as a quarterly service for \$9.95 and a one-time scrub for \$19.95.

A full list of services, as well as information about the cleaning process, can be found at www.scrubbish.com.



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