

Orinda's Rain Trackers

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While they are quick to point out that their rain data are not official and may lack some precision, the three precipitation watchers have a pretty good handle on the local rainfall picture. Prager compiled his twenty years of data with the data from Trowbridge and Watson and compared it to rainfall records from East Bay Municipal Utility District, which has a gauge at the Orinda filter plant. [see chart] The data track closely, but there are some differences. And the rain trackers acknowledge that their rain experiences vary by location, Watson finds that the rain patterns by her home in south Orinda are more affected by the weather in Moraga. And although Prager and Trow-

bridge live in the same neighborhood, they have observed variations in both rain and temperature. "Oh yes," says Trowbridge, "It's much colder down where Allan lives."

Why do they do it? "We are interested observers," says Trowbridge, "What I really look at is the average rainfall figure. When it's cloudy out a lot, it can be misleading," she says. "And there's so much variability," adds Prager, "I like to follow what month it rains and how much." And all three agree that when a lot of rain falls in Orinda in a short period of time, problems arise. "I want to know if there is going to be a slide in the neighborhood," says Watson. "Rainfall impacts how you manage properties in

Orinda. The houses sit on hills, in valleys, and many are heavily populated with trees."

How do they do it? A rain tracker must be observant, curious by nature, interested in her surroundings, and compulsive—or at the minimum quite diligent. S/he must keep the rain gauge level and in an open area without any overhang from the building, trees, or other foliage and remember to take measurements daily. And it helps to know the rainfall lingo: meniscus (measure from the bottom), trace precipitation, fog drip, storm cells, etc., and that the standard rainfall calendar runs from July 1st to June 30th. ... continued on next page

Annual Rainfall In Orinda (July 1-June 30)

