

Horticulture and Small Farms



Program Highlights 2020–21:

- Delivered 14 virtual courses, classes, and field workshops providing 32 hours of training to 182 producers.
- Directly assisted 132 farmers in implementing sustainable practices including mulching, cover crops, and/or integrated pest management practices that reduce water use, conserve soil, and manage pests with fewer pesticide applications.
- Provided tools and assisted 34 new and beginning farmers to plan their new farm businesses, increasing the probability of success.
- Reached 61,519 producers with research-based information through our Foothill Farming website, blog, and Facebook.

Placer and Nevada County farmers produce a wide range of horticultural crops; including fruits, vegetables, nuts, and nursery crops. These crops are grown on small family farms, feeding the demand for high quality local produce.

The small scale of most Placer/Nevada farms creates challenges to economic viability and the stability of local agriculture. UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) helps growers meet these challenges. We develop and deliver training to area farmers and provide on-demand information on our Foothill Farming website and blog. We foster networking among producers and provide individual assistance to commercial producers through farm calls, as well as phone and e-mail consultations. Our programs train new farmers; help farmers build to scale; improve business and risk management skills; and help implement sustainable practices to manage soil, water, pests, and changing climate conditions.

We also conduct applied research with local growers to develop appropriate practices for the foothills. The Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor took academic sabbatical leave for six months in 2020–21 to study impacts of mulch in orchards. Our results show that mulch

- maintains soil moisture, reducing water use;
- reduces tree stress due to temperature fluctuations;
- reduces fruit drop and prevents yield loss;
- increases winter soil temperatures, providing frost and freeze protection;
- improves soil and tree root health.

These help mitigate current drought and variable weather conditions, leading to healthier and more productive orchards.



Contact info

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