



Quarterly News & Events June 2024

San Mateo and San Francisco Counties

Leslie Jensen, Elkus Ranch Coordinator Retires

Leslie Jensen, our much loved Elkus Ranch Coordinator, retired April 26th after 24 years of caring service. It is estimated that Leslie positively impacted close to one hundred thousand visitors during her time here in delivering environmental education programs to Bay Area youth and their accompanying adults. Leslie first began her career at Elkus in 2000 as a Community Educator taking on the roll of Ranch Coordinator in 2006. Her two decades of leadership defined Elkus Ranch: the educational programs as well as Ranch operations bear witness to Leslie's dedication, professional attitude, and boundless patience.

Among Leslie's many remarkable qualities, the most prominent is her unending commitment to "figuring it out," making sure that the Ranch continued delivering programs no matter what went wrong on any given day: a broken fence, a bus stuck in the mud, a sick animal, or staff member, or even a collapsed bridge. For over twenty years, Leslie made sure that the animals were well, the Ranch remained open, and that our visitors got to experience the wonder of Elkus for themselves, no matter what. [READ MORE...](#)



Advisor Highlights

Human-Wildlife Interactions

Carolyn Whitesell, our Human-Wildlife Interactions Advisor is excited to announce the upcoming launch of a new mountain lion research project in San Mateo County! It will focus on mountain lions that are using the area east of highway 280 within the county and is a collaboration between herself (as a UCCE Advisor), [UC Santa Cruz's Puma Project](#), and the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#). It is known that mountain lions do use the area east of 280, but surprisingly little is known about the number of individuals utilizing this region or information about their movements and behavior. There is little open

space in that region and when mountain lions enter residential areas there is a high potential for real or perceived conflict. This project will help shed light on mountain lion behavior in this system and hopefully will further their understanding of vehicle-strike risk for mountain lions that cross 280.

Do you live east of 280 and are interested in contributing to this research? We'd appreciate your help!

- If you have any camera footage of mountain lions on your property from 2024 and any time going forward, please share the images with me via email at cawhitesell@ucanr.edu
- In the unlikely event you find a fresh deer carcass on your property that may have been killed by a mountain lion and would be willing to let me collect data at the carcass, please call me immediately at 650-224-4679.



Thank you!
Dr. Carolyn Whitesell



Come see 4-H in action at the San Mateo County Fair June 1st-9th, 2024



4-H'ers will be exhibiting crafts, projects, and animals at the San Mateo County Fair. Come see what our youth have been working on all year! Visit the barn, watch a pig judging contest, or see all the arts and crafts entries. Guess the weight of the 'pen pride' lambs and win prizes!

4-H Life Skills Day

San Mateo's incredibly talented 4-H'ers came together on April 28, 2024 to exhibit artwork, crafts, sewing projects and cooking projects. The Fashion Revue showcased stuffed animals and dresses. Artwork included fun ceramics and beautiful paintings. 4-H'ers created novel snacks for the 'Snack Attack' Challenge, and attendees were able to make some leather crafts or try launching a rocket!



Animal Field Day and Open House

Despite being rained out the previous day, many 4-H families and members of the community came to Pacifica 4-H Farm for Animal Field Day and Open House on May 5, 2024. People learned about everything from biosecurity, to how to shear a sheep and how to compost. The

baby bunnies stole everyone's hearts!



Nutrition



CalFresh Healthy Living UCCE is enjoying the transition into summer! As the school year wraps up, so do most of our cafeteria produce promotions where we've recently sampled local items including strawberries, blackberries, and cherries in schools across San Francisco and San Mateo Counties and students loved the chance to try these in-season fruits! Our more traditional class-based lesson implementation also winds down in parallel with the school year.



The summer gives us a chance to stretch our creativity and continue focusing our efforts on other programs. Notably, we have plans to staff physical activity and gardening education in summer schools and summer camps. As always, our work with early childhood education centers is ongoing. We're also hosting workshops with adults around nutrition and resource planning.

One exciting note, we are in the process of growing our team with an additional full-time and part-time community nutrition educator. Stay tuned for more!

*Pictured here: Community Nutrition Educator Marisela Ceron leading a **Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)** lesson with students at the Mission Bay Head Start.*

Master Gardeners



2024 Spring Garden Market – A Bounty of Benefits

By MG Volunteer Catherine Magill

On a cold and rainy Saturday morning in mid-April, over eight hundred customers came to the **San Mateo County Event Center** to attend the SF/SM County Master Gardener's Spring Garden Market. They came to purchase this year's seedlings for their vegetable gardens and learn from the many speakers that gave talks throughout the morning. This is the

largest fund-raising event for our chapter and this year the chapter took notable steps to increase its impact by adding credit card sales, increasing the number of plants and plant varieties and increasing the number of speakers.



1. The growers provided over 4000 excellent quality plants (as usual), with an expansive array of tomato, squash and vegetable varieties and as well as herbs, pollinator plants, succulents and California natives.
2. The marketing team expanded our social media presence to achieve over 100 more customers than last year – many people waiting in the rain to get there early, for best selection.
3. Speakers covering topics such as growing tomatoes, pollinators, soil health, and pruning, were scheduled throughout the morning, with all 30 chairs being filled at every talk.
4. We even entered the 21st Century by offering payment by credit card. This specific roll-out was cumbersome but very popular so will be implemented again next year using a better interface.

All in all, truly a bountiful Spring Garden Market, showcasing this Chapter's strengths in all the best ways possible.

Master Food Preservers



The Master Food Preservers of San Mateo and San Francisco Counties

are very excited to announce the graduation of their 2024 class of Master Food Preserver Volunteers. After completing five months of training online and in-person at Elkus Ranch, we have ten new volunteers joining our ranks. We celebrated together on May 4 with student presentations, excellent food, and the awarding of MFP aprons and badges.

In addition to training new volunteers, the Master Food Preservers have been busy this spring in our community introducing children in the [Redwood City School District](#) to plant-based school lunch entrees and California-grown fresh produce during a lunchtime tasting program. We have also been teaching youth at the [San Mateo County Youth Services Center](#) food preservation skills such as making quick pickles and freezer jams. Master Food Preservers also participated in the Spring Garden Market hosted by the Master Gardeners providing lots of information on how to preserve your bounty of summer produce.

This summer, you can find the Master Food Preservers; on zoom for our free monthly workshops with the [San Mateo County Library system](#) and at [the San Mateo County Disaster Preparedness Day](#) on August 3. We will have lots of information on how to stock your emergency kit with safe and healthy food.

Pictured above: the MFP Graduating Class of 2024 along with seasoned MFP Volunteer Trainers.

Elkus Ranch



What's happening at Elkus?

As we near the end of the school year we have to say it's been a good one thanks to our wonderful visitors, staff, and volunteers! If you were unable to manage a visit this spring, we are booking program tours for next year now so plan ahead and book early!

Sheep to Shawl

June 8th, 10am to 1:30pm

Don't miss out on our biggest public event of the year!

Summer Camps: all six sessions are full up this year so if we were unable to accommodate you we apologize!

Introducing Calypso!

In addition to our new "kids" on the block (baby goats), we also welcomed a new horse named Calypso to the Elkus Ranch family. This 12-year-old Arabian mare joined us in April and has settled in smoothly. Calypso loves attention and scratches and is very curious about all the visitors at Elkus Ranch. She and Ivy, her fellow equine roommate, became best friends from the start and are enjoying life here to the fullest! Calypso was a generous donation to the ranch for which we are enormously grateful :-)



UPCOMING EVENTS..

- [San Mateo County Fair](#) | Jun 1-9, 2024 | San Mateo Co. Event Center
- [Dealing with Pests: Integrated Pest Management](#) | Jun 1, 2024 | Collective Roots Community Garden
- [Master Gardener Plant Clinic](#) | Jun 2, 2024 | San Mateo Arboretum in Central Park
- [Caring for Your Garden Tools](#) | Jun 3, 2024 | Elkus Ranch Environmental

- [All About Herbs and Edible Flowers](#) | Jun 8, 2024 | Flowercraft Garden Center |
- [Sheep to Shawl](#) | Jun 8, 2024 | Elkus Ranch Environmental Education Center | HMB
- [Houseplant Basics](#) | Jun 9, 2024 | San Francisco Botanical Garden – Bookstore
- [Integrated Pest Management](#) | Jun 9, 2024 | Civic Garden Club of San Carlos
- [MFP's Dehydration 101: Sweets- Treats & Healthy Snacks From Summer Fruits](#) | Jun 13, 2024 | Online
- [4-H Summer Camp](#) | Jul 21, 2024 - Jul 26, 2024 | YMCA Jones Gulch
- [Master Gardener Plant Clinic](#) | Jul 14, 2024 | San Mateo Arboretum in Central Park

UC Cooperative Extension Offices San Mateo / San Francisco Counties

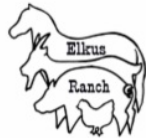
Main Office: (click for directions)
Located on-site at UC Elkus Ranch
1500 Purisima Creek Road
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Email: cesanmateo@ucanr.edu
Website: <http://cesanmateo.ucanr.edu>

Master Gardener Helpline:

Open for in-person, walk-in visits per below. See our [website](#) for more details or submit any questions via the following:
https://ucanr.edu/mg_helpline

- Monday: 10am-1pm | **HMB**
- Tuesday: 10:30am-1:30pm | **SFBG**
- Thursday: 1pm-4pm | **RWC**



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