

## Spotlight on Ventura County

The mission of UC Cooperative Extension in Ventura County is to improve the lives of local residents by working with growers, families, volunteers, and partners to advance science-based solutions in agriculture, natural ecosystems, community health, and youth development. We work to support the economic vitality of local agriculture and promote healthy, safe, and resilient communities.



UCCE Irrigation & Nutrient Management Advisor teaching Ventura College students at a strawberry farm in Oxnard.  
Photo: M. Pierce

### Advisor-led workshops, trainings, and consultations

1202 growers, land managers, and agency partners attended 63 Advisor-led education events to increase their knowledge of and capacity to:

- Implement evidence-based irrigation and nutrient management practices
- Manage invasive weeds and pests using economical and ecologically sustainable practices
- Trial new crop varieties for increased economic or ecological resilience

UCCE works to increase the stability, efficiency, and profitability of agriculture and working landscapes.

### UC ANR Mission

UCCE is part of the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). Our mission is to cultivate thriving communities, sustainable agriculture, resilient ecosystems, and economic prosperity in California through development and sharing of equitable and collaborative science-based solutions that have national and global impact.

### By The Numbers

UCCE volunteers are trained in the latest science and supported by local Advisors and staff to extend proven solutions to protect our natural ecosystems and our health. Volunteers are Ventura County residents, bringing local context and local expertise to issues that matter in home horticulture, natural ecosystems, and positive youth development.

**1202**

Participants  
at Advisor-  
led events

**271**

UC  
Volunteers

**\$1M**

Value of  
Volunteer  
Hours



Strawberry field trial testing novel methods of production for disease resistance and yield.  
Photo: O Daugovich

**20%**

Greater yield  
than berries  
in untreated  
soil

### New approaches to disease resistance

Our Strawberry & Vegetable Crops Advisor is investigating new approaches to strawberry production using cultivar resistance, steam application, precision soil fumigation, and non-fumigant tools to develop a sustainable production roadmap for current and future industry needs. Recent trials indicate that using anaerobic soil disinfestation with dehydrated food waste shows significantly lower charcoal rot incidence and up to 20% greater fruit yields.

“There is no future in farming in Ventura County without the leadership of UC Cooperative Extension.”

Maureen McGuire, CEO  
Ventura County Farm Bureau

## 4-H Youth Development

4-H empowers young people with skills to lead for a lifetime. With 11 clubs across Ventura County, 4-H engages young people in diverse projects—from livestock and gardening to photography, cooking, and leadership—building skills and community in cities like Camarillo, Ventura, Ojai, and more.



324

4-H Youth

In a world full of change, 4-H youth grow up “Beyond Ready”.

76

Adult volunteers provided more than 9K hours of service to 4-H

## UC Master Gardeners

Master Gardener (MG) volunteers offer valuable services and outreach to the public through 10 demonstration gardens throughout the county. MGs teach home gardeners how to sustainably grow food and cultivate gardens to protect our natural resources. They are trained to customize gardening outreach for unique local landscapes and our diverse residents. New class offerings include Fire Wise Living in Ventura County, Hydroponics 101, and Grow a Mediterranean Garden. In February, the volunteers received an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Achievement Award from the CA Department of Pesticide Regulation for extensive outreach efforts and commitment to IPM practices.



189

Certified  
UC Master  
Gardeners

6764

Public Ed.  
Participants

Master Gardener Workshop Photo: Master Gardeners

In follow-up surveys (n=174), participants reported improved water conservation, food gardening, and pollinator-friendly gardening practices.



4-H at the 2025 Ventura County Fair  
Photo: J Garcia

## Sustainable Pest Management

Sustainable Pest Management (SPM) is a whole-system approach to managing pests in agricultural and other managed ecosystems that includes consideration for human health, social equity, environmental protections, and economic vitality. Our Entomology Advisor implements SPM programs in multiple crops, including citrus, avocado, strawberry, and brassicas. This includes research on Asian Citrus Psyllid control in citrus, impacts of nitrogen reductions on thrips damage in gerbera daisies, and pesticide resistance monitoring of Diamondback moth in cabbage.



96%

of Advisor  
Cohen's  
participants  
increased  
their  
knowledge

Gerbera Daisy Study at  
HAREC greenhouses led by  
UCCE Advisors Cohen and  
Volk

Photo: H Cohen

## UC Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center (HAREC)

One of nine UC ANR research and extension centers across California, HAREC provides facilities and support for research and educational activities. HAREC currently hosts an apiary in collaboration with CSU Channel Islands, a Master Gardener demonstration plot, and several research trials including nutsedge control in cilantro, sheet mulching and cover cropping, water and salt stress in strawberries, nitrogen optimization in gerbera daisy and vegetable transplant production and others. HAREC is led by Annemiek Schilder, PhD.

