

Riverside County Cooperative Extension



Semi-Annual Report – Jan 1-June 30, 2021

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Agriculture and Natural Resources

■ UC Cooperative Extension

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Riverside County**

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Cooperative Extension is an off-campus educational arm of the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. It came into existence when the Federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the nationwide Cooperative Extension at land-grant universities. The mission of UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) is to connect the power of UC research in agriculture, natural resources, nutrition and youth development with California counties to promote healthy people, healthy communities, healthy food systems, and healthy environments.

In Riverside, the University of California entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the County in 1917 to promote the vision of sharing UC research and science-based solutions to solve local issues and improve the lives of Riverside County residents by forming a strong partnership with Riverside County.

This report includes a summary of our programs with highlights, accomplishments and efforts from January to June, 2021. Thank you for reading!

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Visit our offices in Moreno Valley, Indio and Blythe, and let us know how UC Cooperative Extension in Riverside County can be of help to you.

For information visit us on the web at:

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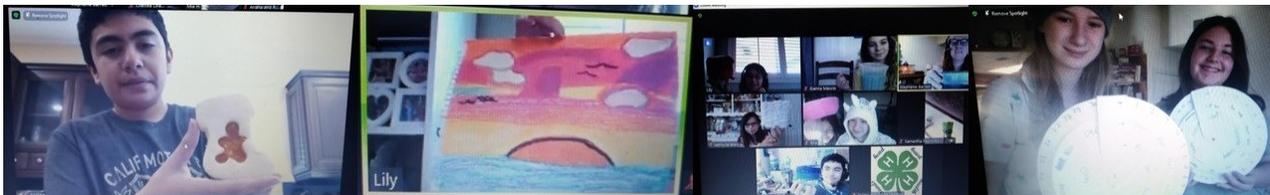
4-H Youth Development Program

Riverside County 4-H community clubs, camps, and in school, afterschool, and special interest programs provide positive youth development opportunities that enable youth in our county to reach their full potential as competent, confident, leaders of character who contribute and are connected to their communities. 4-H programs encourage leadership and responsibility and teach life skills and community involvement while the youth try new experiences. 4-H academics and staff, led by research-driven practices from UC ANR, train, develop, and empower youth and adult volunteers from all backgrounds and locations.

Activities

January 2021

Riverside 4-H adult volunteers and teens led **Winter Break Camp** workshop sessions for youth in the county. This helped teens practice their public speaking and demonstration skills and gave youth members educational, hands-on activities to participate in during their school break. Sessions included Introduction to Genealogy, All About Weather, Create Your Perfect Outdoor Park, George Seurat and Pointillism, Snowman Art, Make a Tote Bag from a T-shirt, Science of Sound, The Stars and Our Sun, Recycled Art Pencil Cup, Hot and Cool Art, Coding a Card, Make a Perpetual Calendar, and Stained Glass Cookies.



Youth showing their projects made in Winter Break Camp.

February 2021

4-H Youth celebrated **#EngineeringWeek** by designing, building, and testing a motorboat! Kits were mailed to the youth homes where they worked on their boat during the week. The week culminated in an online event where youth shared their process of design and their final product.

On the last Friday of every month, 4-H teens from all over Riverside County meet on Zoom to play games and have fun. The County Teen Ambassadors plan each **Teen Game Night**. This recurring event helps adolescents stay socially connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

March 2021

SW Riverside 4-H clubs and a Norco 4-H club held **Local Presentation Days** to give youth the opportunity to practice and refine their public speaking skills.

The 4-H teens on the **Camp Committee** began to prepare for **Summer Camp**. With the uncertainty of COVID, they decided to hold a day camp and began planning and organizing for the event.



4-H Youth Development Program

April 2021

Every 4-H member is encouraged to give a presentation each year. A 4-H presentation can be a demonstration, include audio-visual aids, and involve problem solving. Through their presentations, youth learn to research a subject, organize their ideas into a logical order, and practice public speaking skills. This year 34 youth participated in **Virtual Presentation Day** and gave 51 separate presentations.

The 4-H sponsored **Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival Horse Show** was held at the Yucaipa Equestrian Arena. The show was adjusted to allow for social distancing so that it met all COVID requirements.



Youth building a motorboat for #EngineeringWeek



Murrieta Mustangs 4-H Club Tractor Supply Paper Clover Campaign display

May 2021

4-H clubs created displays to set up in Tractor Supply stores to showcase their club work and encourage paper clover donations. The Murrieta Mustangs 4-H Club was a national display winner in this year's **Tractor Supply Paper Clover Campaign** display contest.

Leader's Roundtable held every other month is a time for 4-H volunteers across the county to learn about 4-H policies and procedures, the latest youth development research, plan for county and state events as well as to connect and learn from each other's clubs experiences.

June 2021

4-H Clubs with Archery projects in Riverside County competed in the **County Archery Tournament** to showcase their archery target and knowledge skills. They were scored for accuracy and in their archery knowledge. Trophies and ribbons were awarded.

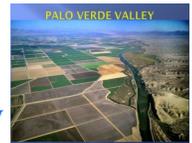
4-H Clubs held **End of the Year Events** to celebrate their year of activities and learning. Clubs held project work displays, parties, games, movie nights and other celebrations to end the 2020-2021 4-H year.



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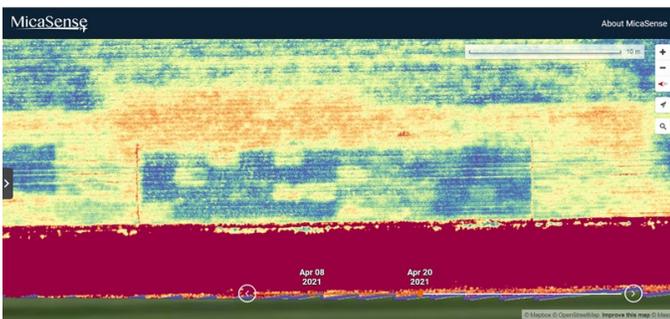


Crop Production and Entomology

Efforts in the Palo Verde are focused on crop production and various components, with an emphasis for the past 6 months on insects that affect forage production and biostimulants for dehydrator onions. Three (3) insecticide trials were initiated for controlling alfalfa insects, two (2) trials focusing on teff seed production (one insecticide, and 1 plant growth regulator trial to potentially reduce lodging), and three (3) biostimulant trials for onion production are on-going. In addition, a large scale trial is being conducted using a new application technique for an alfalfa fungicide. Secondary aspects of this study are to also collect data for California registration of this product already commercially available in other states. Information has been extended through several state-wide virtual meetings, a newsletter, and articles in other outlets.

Yield data for controlling blue alfalfa aphids indicated an increase of almost 0.7 tons/acre of hay for the best treatments, valued at over \$140/acre. Insecticide efficacy data indicated that a benefit was observed for higher insecticide rates for alfalfa needing longer than usual of blue alfalfa aphid control (3+ weeks).

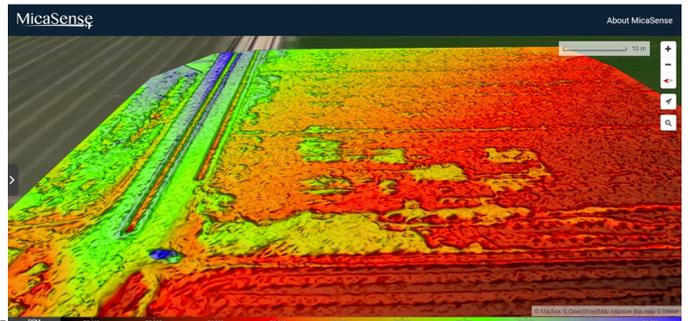
Use of drone imaging also was able to differentiate alfalfa stressed by blue alfalfa aphid feeding with blue areas showing insecticide control, and with orange areas showing feeding stress (and reduced yields) from lack of control.



Drone image of alfalfa plots with differing levels of stress due to blue alfalfa aphids and insecticide control

Lodging (plant stems falling over) is a serious problem for teff seed growers in the Palo Verde Valley as this results in slower, and potentially more, field operations and is thought to contribute to reduced seed yields.

A trial evaluating rates of application timings relative to crop growth stage noted success from several of the rates/timings, appearing as bright colored areas relative to the surrounding lodged teff seed crop (orange/red) which shows how widespread the lodging can typically be. The data being generated are highly important to product registration for usage in California.



Teff lodging/lack thereof due to application of plant growth regulators (Drone images courtesy of Agtegrity and BASF)



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Environmental Horticulture

The primary responsibility of the Environmental Horticulture program in Riverside County is to develop and extend research-based information on drought, heat and pest tolerant landscape plants to arborists, landscapers, and government agencies. Goals are to broaden the plant palette of suitable native and non-native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers and to reduce impacts of urban heat islands by enhancing tree canopies in underserved neighborhoods.

Education/Training

‘Trees for Tomorrow Start Today’ Zoom workshop on March 9, 2021 attracted over 300 municipal planners, community development directors, arborists, landscapers, wholesale and retail nursery personnel, Master Gardeners, and concerned citizens. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a framework to work together across professions to cool urban heat islands (especially in disadvantaged communities with historically lower canopies) by planting and properly maintaining heat and drought, and pest resistant landscape tree species identified in our research project and others. Topics included benefits of urban trees, liability issues resulting from improperly cared for trees, examples of successful projects, and breakout sessions in which attendees discussed challenges and opportunities moving forward.

Master Gardener Program

Janet Hartin provided oversight for developing the syllabus and taught several of the classes during the 18-week Zoom class.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Agriculture and Natural Resources
COMMUNITY RESOURCES Better TOM Living
INLAND EMPIRE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

‘Trees for Tomorrow Start Today’ Workshop
 Goal: To increase tree health and reduce impacts of urban heat islands by properly selecting and caring for trees today to ensure a greener tomorrow
 Tuesday, March 9, 2021
 Via Zoom
 Register here: <http://ucanr.edu/ucfm?id=264>

8:15: Welcome and Workshop Overview: Rose Epperson (Executive Director, Western Chapter ISA), Elizabeth Skratz (Executive Director, Chino Basin WCD), Mandy Parkes (District Manager, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District), Tamara Hedges (Executive Director, UCR Palm Desert) and Janet Hartin (Environmental Horticulturist, University of California Cooperative Extension)
 8:30: Benefits of Landscape Trees and ‘Best Practices’ for Their Selection and Care (Janet Hartin)
 9:15: Are Your Trees Safe? Tree Risk Assessment/Case Studies (Jeremy Rappoport, Certified Arborist, Certified Arborist Expert Witness, Registered Consulting Arborist, Tree Risk Assessor, President, Rappoport Development Consulting Services LLC)
 10:00: Break
 10:15: Working Together Across Professions ‘Success Stories’: Hector Ramirez, Cal State San Bernardino; Dave Roger, retired, City of Claremont; Greg Fazio, West Coast Arborists; Angela Johnson, Coachella Valley Water District; Mandy Parkes, IECD; Ryan Stendel, Director of Community Development, City of Palm Desert; Greg Monfette, former WCSA President, retired Asst. Chief Forester, City of Los Angeles.
 12:00: Questions/Discussion with Morning Speakers
 12:15: Lunch
 1:00: Roundtable Discussions: Challenges and Opportunities to Increase Tree Canopies and Tree Health (small group discussions across professions including city planners, community service directors, arborists, landscape architects, landscapers, water districts, HOAs, golf course superintendents, nursery growers, UC master gardeners, citizens, etc.)
 2:00: Reports from Roundtable Discussions (Group Leaders)
 2:45: ‘Next Steps’ (Workshop Organizers)
 3:00: End of Workshop

COACHELLA VALLEY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 UCR PALM DESERT
 PLANT CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE
 PALM DESERT
 Waterwise Community Center
 WATER DISTRICT

Research/Extension

UC Cooperative Extension (Janet Hartin, Jim Downer, Alison Berry) and US Forest Service (Greg McPherson, Natalie Doorn, et al.) scientists are partnering on a 20 year ‘Climate-Ready Landscape Trees’ project at UC Riverside to measure the drought, heat, and pest resistance and overall performance of 12 underplanted species of native and adapted non-native landscape trees. The project is in its fifth year.

UC Cooperative Extension (Amir Haghverdi, Don Merhaut, Janet Hartin) scientists are measuring the growth, performance and health of several species of groundcovers and turf species under several levels of irrigation at UC Riverside (third year).



Janet Hartin
 Area Environmental Horticulture Advisor,
 UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles Counties.
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Unshaded Parking Lot in Palm Springs in June, 2021.



Master Gardener Program

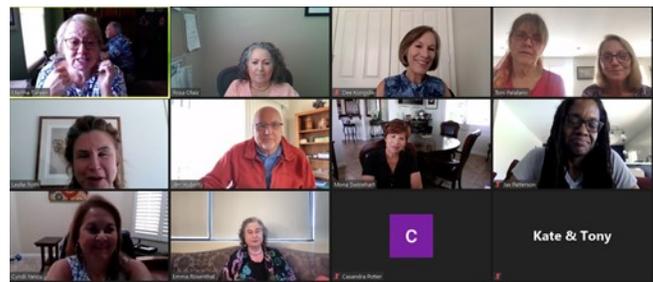
Riverside County pioneered the establishment of a Master Gardener volunteer program and has become instrumental for the expansion of the program throughout the state. Since its inception in 1980, we have disseminated over 1,500 Master Gardener graduates into the community with knowledge to extend environmentally safe and economically efficient gardening and landscaping.

Riverside County Master Gardeners offered five virtual **Home Gardening Basics (HGB) Sessions**. Each session offers three to four classes. The topics were selected based on evaluation results from the participants in previous classes. The Home Gardening Basics classes were presented in January with a focus on desert landscaping; Edible Gardens classes were presented in February and again in June due to the number of community members on the waiting list. Landscaping in the Inland Empire was offered in April with participants from the entire county. The participants expressed gratitude for the information, they were impressed by the knowledge of the Master Gardeners and the research based information. A total of 64 participants were part of the five Home Gardening Basics Classes.



Water Efficient Workshop (WEL) committee coordinated five virtual workshops January through June. The workshops included several topics related to water conservation in the garden. From January through March, a series of topics were presented on creating a home garden. The three topics were Home Landscape Design, Drought Tolerant Plants, Bees, Pollinators and Backyard Wildlife. Edible Container Garden and Growing Avocados were presented the following months. A total of 490 participants attended the workshops.

UC Master Gardener Program graduated 32 Riverside County residents this year. The countywide training class was held virtually. The trainees completed their volunteered activities through online projects such as the Helpline, at home plant propagation, and other outdoor projects. The new group of Master Gardener volunteers are excited to begin in-person volunteer activities





Master Gardener Program

School Garden Committee continues to develop virtual activities available to teachers. Over the last year, the School and Youth Gardens co-coordinators created curriculum for students grades K-12 and recorded gardening video lessons for school use. The strong collaboration between West Riverside County Master Gardeners and Eastern Riverside County Master Gardeners led to the creation of curriculum, fact sheets, and teacher resources. All are available on our website. The project involved 34 Master Gardeners drawing on their talents, such as research skills, editing, graphic design, and audio/video engineering.



Chris Curtis preparing for a demo at Barnett Elementary School.



Master Gardeners were invited to participate in the **Lavender Walk** at the Highland Springs 123 Farm. The event is normally held for six weeks during May and June. This year, the event began in May and will continue through August 1 with smaller, limited activities to avoid large gatherings. The attendees have the opportunity to walk through the lavender fields and visit the UC Master Gardener exhibit to learn about water efficient gardening, pollinator gardening, and lavender. To date over 1,500 Riverside County Residents have visited the exhibit.

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (CVRM) is a new Master Gardener Project in the city of Indio. The mission of CVRM is to serve those in need by providing food, shelter, clothing, and spiritual recovery. Master Gardeners volunteer to provide the residents with horticulture education and guidance in the vegetable garden and fruit tree orchard. Master Gardeners provide workshops and hands on demonstration for CVRM residents. In recent weeks, the educational focus has been on proper irrigation to prepare for the fall planting. Master Gardeners are in the process of setting up the shade cloth over the raised beds. Thirty four residents participated in the gardening activities.



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Master Gardener Helpline

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Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences

The Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Program (NFCS) provides research-based education in the areas of nutrition, food safety and consumer economics. NFCS is working on two UC ANR Strategic Vision 2025 Initiatives: **1) Healthy Families and Communities:** promoting healthy behaviors for childhood obesity prevention; helping consumers make informed decision regarding food choices, nutrition and health; and improving consumers' food management skills, and **2) Ensure Safe and Secure Food Supplies:** educating community organizations and consumers on safe food handling practices. NFCS is one of four local implementing agencies for the CalFresh Healthy Living Program (CFHL) also known as SNAP-Education, funded by USDA through the California Department of Social Services. CFHL's mission is to inspire and empower under-served Californians to improve their health by promoting awareness, education, and community change through diverse partnerships, resulting in healthy eating and active living.

Resuming Community Garden Work o Eastside Riverside

As the COVID restrictions began to lift, the CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE was able to return to the Eastside Riverside communities to complete the two projects funded by Small Sparks Neighborhood Matching Grants from the City of Riverside, Community & Economic Development Department.



At the Community Settlement Association (CSA), the CFHL UCCE team led a group of volunteers to clean debris, pull weeds and plant tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, yellow squash, bell peppers, corn, onions, parsley, and Serrano and Fresno chiles on April 28th and May 3rd, 2021. Every one came back together on May 26th to celebrate restarting of the garden. The community continues to value this garden and the opportunity to grow their own food and to donate to the CSA food distribution program. The CFHL, UCCE and UC Master Gardener Program have been working in partnership to support the CSA family gardens since 2014.

CSA Garden Planting Event on May 3, 2021

At the Riverside Faith Temple, 23 participants helped assemble garden boxes and plant a variety of vegetables. The garden now has six raised beds and is growing in community support. Pastor Sims in partnership with CFHL, UCCE and UC Master Gardener Program started this community garden in June 2019 with the hope that it will be a platform for the church family and neighbors to grow together in healthy living and friendship.



Riverside Faith Temple Garden Planting Event on May 15, 2021

Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences

Virtual Day of Action 2021

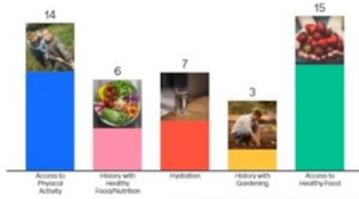
The CFHL, UCCE team hosted a virtual “**Make Every Day Rethink Your Drink Day**” to students at New Horizon High in Banning on May 13th, 2021. The students learned how to calculate the amount of sugar in their favorite beverages and how to stay hydrated with make your own flavored water. They were especially eager to try the mango and jalapeño water recipe!



“THANK YOU so much!!!! Such a fun presentation! I think the timing of it is perfect too, because as the weather warms up, our students will think back to this presentation and to the yummy drinks in the pictures. I know I will anyway! “

Youth Participatory Action Research Project (YPAR)

What area of health do you want to research & make a positive change in?



What does being a leader mean to you?



Sixth graders at Villegas Middle School in Alvord Unified met twice a week for 12-consecutive weeks to learn about research process. The students used the Regional Opportunity Index database from UC Davis Center for Regional Change to obtain information about the health of their community. They voted on the issues they would like to learn more about to make a change in their community. The top choice was food access. They developed questions to identify challenges that people may face with food access and interviewed adults who typically purchase food for the household including parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents who live alone, and adult neighbors. They found it surprising that people are spending more on fast food and eating out often and would like their school to provide support and resources to help families save time and money by preparing healthy foods at home and eating at home more often.

Student Comments:

"To me YPAR means letting young kids have a voice and speak out in their community."

"YPAR project improved our research skills and we learned a lot about how to collect data and I learned a lot about the food system..."



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CalFresh Healthy Living Program Staff

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Subtropical Horticulture

Programs are organized under three themes: 1) Sustainable Agriculture Productivity; 2) Insect Pests, Plant Pathogens, and Weed Management; and 3) Extension and Outreach. These themes focus on many aspects of two University of California (UC) Initiatives: The *Sustainable Food Systems Initiative* and the *Endemic and Invasive Pests and Diseases Initiative* and support several of ANR’s public value statements. The program goal is to improve grove systems to increase yield, fruit quality, and improve economic returns. In addition, the program helps manage the nuisance, damage, and spread of troublesome and invasive pests based on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices with a sustainable approach.

Farmer-to-Farmer Program in Malawi Africa



Rios worked alongside Felix Chipojola from in Malawi, Africa for two weeks. Due to COVID, she worked remotely, while Felix works directly with growers. Rios taught growers about pest biocontrol, IPM, pesticide safety and best management practices in macadamias.



‘GEM’ Avocado High-Density Trial



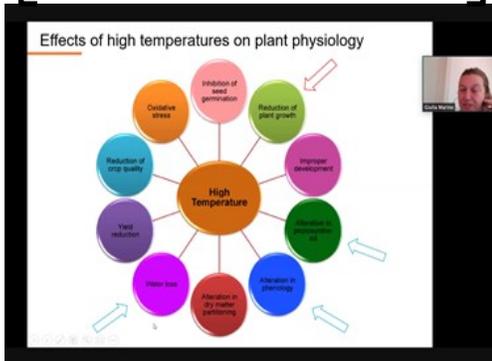
University of California Subtropical Horticulture Farm Advisors, Sonia Rios, Ben Faber, and Gary Bender received a \$50,000 grant to conduct a 5-year study on a ‘GEM’ high density trial. Collaborators include Tim Spann, a representative from the California Avocado Commission (CAC) and Anil Shrestha from California State University, Fresno. With the help of CAC, the research trial was planted at Pine Tree Ranch in Santa Paula in May. The ‘GEM’ is a high yield per acre avocado variety that allows for efficient harvesting. GEM’s flesh has a unique buttery/nutty flavor and smooth texture. The green skin turns blackish-purple when ripe. The fruit hangs on the tree much longer than Hass without compromising fruit quality, so it allows growers to

offer fruit of excellent quality during late seasons when limited fruit is available. GEM grows on smaller trees than Hass and is a more consistent producer since it tends to be less alternate-bearing than Hass. Our goal is to see if high-density, smaller trees can produce a larger amount of yield than traditional planting of 20’X20’ spacing, rather than the three smaller spacings in the trial.



Subtropical Horticulture

Seminar Series



2021 Avocado Grower Webinar Seminar Series

California Avocado Growers Seminar Series 2021 is a lecture series presented by the California Avocado Society, Inc., California Avocado Commission, and University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) to help inform and further educate California Avocado growers.

During this time period our team hosted three seminars for our clientele. The last seminar will be in August. Please join us: <https://californiaavocadosociety.org/seminars.html>

Date Palm Webinar Seminar Series

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, California Date Commission, University of California, Riverside, and USDA/ARS National Clonal Germplasm Repository for Citrus & Dates sponsored a 5-week seminar season. This webinar series provided a virtual platform to learn about ongoing and upcoming issues and challenges in date production such as irrigation, pest, nutrition management, and updates on current County and State laws and regulations. We offered one webinar session completely in Spanish, including a Laws & Regs talk. Those who benefited were California and Arizona date producers/growers, PCA's, and CCA's that are currently in the date palm industry, native habitat managers from public and private lands, and urban ornamental tree growing and management sectors.



South American Palm Weevil Seminar Series

Rios and her team received a grant through Western IPM to conduct South American Palm Weevil Extension and Outreach in Southern California and in Arizona. There will be other events in the upcoming year!



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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

This program focuses on the conservation of agricultural lands statewide and preservation of their economic viability and sustainability across urban and rural communities by protecting lands at risk for conversion to non-agricultural uses, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A long-term community vision is needed to support agricultural communities, leverage existing programs, projects, and policies, and reinforce collaborative action to counteract trends.



In early May 2021, Dr. Richards joined UC ANR as the Agricultural Land Acquisitions Academic Coordinator II to support the mission of the Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program (SALC) across San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego Counties. In the first two months, she worked with her supervisor, Chris McDonald, and key ANR staff to understand the program and develop technical expertise to support those eligible for the SALC program. On an outreach level, she began by connecting with the grant administrators, Strategic Growth Council (SGC), Department of Conservation (DOC), and regional leaders, including at ANR, land trusts, farm bureaus, local area formation commissions, and resource conservation districts (RCD). Dr. Richards presented on the SALC program at the Riverside Corona RCD Board meeting and led a conversation on both planning and easement grants, financial competitiveness, and other SALC grant successes. She also performed preliminary assessments of past SALC awardees and began compiling and assessing research materials to develop a needs assessment and outreach plan roadmap for future work.

- Connected with eligible applicants across Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties, including land trusts, farm bureaus, LAFCOs, and RCDs regarding the SALC Program and potential application projects.
- Continued connecting with ANR staff working in southern California on topics related to sustainable agriculture, conservation, and transportation.
- Presented SALC materials to the Riverside-Corona RCD Board and Staff members and addressed any concerns or barriers toward applying for planning funds.
- Began developing outreach materials in collaboration with ANR digital media and technical assistance provider staff members.
- SALC timeline: Planning grant pre-proposals are due July 1, 2021.



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Viticulture

Research programs in 2021 have been focused on the evaluation of a new material to advance the development of table grapes. Unique weather conditions in the Coachella Valley can affect grapevine development. It is known that bud break of vines in areas that have mild temperatures during the vine's dormant period may be delayed and erratic. Inadequately chilled vines also may exhibit decreased shoot and cluster numbers per vine and poor uniformity of fruit development reducing yield and fruit quality. Due to the lack of chilling in the winter is a common practice to use plant regulators to break dormancy. A field trial was conducted to test the effect of a plant hormone in advancing grape development. In contrast with the traditional agents used to break dormancy, this material is not toxic and will offer a new tool to the grape growers to advance the development of table grapes in the Coachella Valley.

From January to June only the Sunergist trial to evaluate bud break was conducted. The advancement of maturity and color will be completed in July 2021. The ant project will be set up in the summer of 2021.

Data of the Sunergist trial were collected in June and have not been processed, however during harvest we observed differences on the levels of damage in the different treatments regarding the presence of Botrytis, a disease on grapes. We will review the cultural practices conducted during the trial and will make recommendations to reduce the incidence of this disease.



Current research projects:

- Evaluation of Sunergist, a plant hormone in the advancement of grape development, ripening, and color development on table grapes in the Coachella Valley.
- Management of ants in vineyards.
- Area-wide trapping of glassy-winged sharpshooter in citrus and grapes in the Coachella Valley.



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**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES (UC ANR)
NONDISCRIMINATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
POLICY STATEMENT FOR UC ANR
PUBLICATIONS REGARDING EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

April 2021

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This policy statement supersedes the UC ANR Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy Statement for University of California Publications Regarding Employment Practices dated July 2013.