

2013 Annual Report

University of California Cooperative Extension
Los Angeles County



Message from the County Director

Mission Statment

The University of California Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles County continues to be healthy and relevant. The various programs, as articulated by the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, have helped to strengthen local youth, families and communities.

To sum up, in 2013, our programs *reached more than 20,000 people* in LA County from Palmdale to Long Beach. In turn, residents have benefitted from the tremendous information, efforts and extension activities. Youth have gained opportunities and life skills to grow as future leaders and engaged citizens. Residents have made their homes and landscapes safer and more efficient with valuable information on how to create drought-tolerant environments. More and more families learned how to grow their own food in sustainable ways. The list goes on and on.

Firmly grounded in its service tradition mission, Cooperative Extension is always looking for new and innovative approaches to our programs. As you go through this report, I invite you to connect with our program staff to see if new initiatives can be developed or new collaborations can be forged to strengthen our work.

Finally, a big *thank you* goes out to all of you who helped to make 2013 another successful year full of accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Keith C. Nathaniel

UC Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles County develops and implements community-based educational programs that address the critical needs of the county's diverse and multiethnic population. Staff and volunteers provide and encourage the use of current research-based information in the areas of nutrition, family and consumer science; youth development; urban gardening; commercial horticulture; agriculture; and natural resources.

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4-H Youth Development

The 4-H youth development program in Los Angeles County is all about providing opportunities for young people so that they can learn, lead and succeed. Throughout the year, events and contests are held to offer youth more opportunities to solve challenging problems and work in a team setting; and through team work, these events enhance their education, experience and development.

In January, UC Cooperative Extension held its annual LA County 4-H Livestock Symposium at the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds. Youth members and their families met with and heard experts speak on such topics as dog obedience and nutrition, rabbit care, swine selection, poultry basics, pygmy goat and market goat selection, and equine massage therapy.



An ethics training workshop, geared toward youth, was an important part of the symposium in 2013. All participating youth were required to take part in order to show an animal at the fair. The training included topics relevant to proper care and feeding of livestock as well as best practices for livestock projects.

In recent years, Keith Nathaniel, 4-H youth development advisor, has turned much of his attention to offering evidence that participation in 4-H programs adds value to lives of participants. In January, he published "Contributions of Youth Engagement to the Development of Social Capital Through Community Mapping" in the *Journal of Extension*, highlighting how youth obtain social capital from participating in 4-H programs, along with how youth contribute to the larger community through the use of community mapping. In addition, Nathaniel published "Positive Youth Development Merits State Investment" in *California Agriculture*, explaining how positive youth development lowers high school drop-out rates and improves the life choices youth make.

In February, 4-H held its annual Judging Day, a county-wide event for 4-H youth to showcase teamwork and fine-tune their critical thinking and reasoning skills. The event was

held at Littlerock High School in Littlerock, Calif. Youth participated in "judging teams" and evaluated livestock, artwork, science projects, food items and plants. As part of the process, youth judges provided oral and written evaluations.

Altogether, 63 members from 12 community clubs participated. In addition, leaders, parents and staff helped make the event a wonderful success.

In March, Field Day (a day of presentation competitions) was held at Mount San Antonio College in Walnut. This unique day provided the opportunity for youth to practice the art of public speaking. Participants gave demonstration speeches and engaged in impromptu speaking exercises and mock interviews. This event was held in conjunction with Fashion Revue, at which youth compete in sewing and home arts projects.

As a special part of Field Day, individuals or teams competed in talent presentations. Entries included singing, performance with an instrument, dancing, reading monologues and performing dramatic scenes. In particular, the Canyon Coyotes 4-H Club members performed a skit called "4-H in Neverland," which was written by their project leader, Wayne Wilson.

In June, LA County 4-Hers set off to Camp Seeley in the San Bernardino Mountains. Teens and adult directors planned the camp, which featured nature education, hikes, swimming, fishing, arts and craft projects, and fellowship with old and new friends from San Diego to Georgia. It was a fun time for the 140 youth and 25 adult chaperones who participated.

Finally, in October, we hosted our annual 4-H Pet Symposium. Held in East Los Angeles, the event attracted 400 youth and adults! They came out to learn about appropriate pet care and careers in pet-related fields. Through demonstrations and workshops — featuring cavy, rabbits, dogs and cats — youth learned how to train, feed and care for small pets. As in past years, vaccinations at reduced rates were provided — a service that is always in demand year after year.



Nutrition, Family and Consumer Science

Look beyond the glamour and wealth of Los Angeles and you will see many low-income families struggling to make ends meet and keep food on the table. They are also struggling to provide healthy options and reduce their health risks. With the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), UC Cooperative Extension addresses these concerns. Through an experiential learning process, staff nutrition educators help adults attain the knowledge, skills, and the necessary attitude and behavioral changes to improve their diets. In addition, adults learn how to manage their food budgets and adopt food safety practices.

UC Cooperative Extension nutrition educators are bilingual and they know the communities they serve. They understand multiple cultural and social factors that influence the dietary habits of participants and are able to address these practices and suggest healthier alternatives.

UC Cooperative Extension's staff demonstrated success in many communities across the county by improving the participants' health and reducing their risks of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and obesity. In 2013, staff reached more than 1,300 participants at 77 program sites. After the eight-week series of courses, participants reported making important changes: 92 percent improvement in nutrition practices; 74 percent improvement in food safety practices; and 61 percent improvement in not running out of food at the end of the month. Further, 36.9 percent of the participants reported a positive change in physical activity after the series.

EFNEP continued to expand its reach in the San Fernando Valley, an area where much of the residents are EFNEP-eligible and have high rates of obesity. In 2013, staff started the nutrition education series in North Hollywood and Sunland and conducted workshops at a shelter, an emergency food assistance site and adult education training center.

Youth EFNEP targets children from limited-resource families at local schools. In 2013, staff reached 4,787 children at 144 sites, a 20 percent increase from 2012. Behavioral improvements were documented in three key areas among youth participants in grades K-2: 79 percent improvement in knowledge to choose foods consistent with the Federal Dietary Guideline recommendations, 67 percent improvement in knowledge of food safety practices, and 48 percent improvement in physical activity practices.

UC Cooperative Extension's Master Food Preservers (MFPs) continued to extend their food preservation and safety knowledge throughout the county. The MFP volunteers are often the first line of response to consumer questions. Topics they covered included

general food safety, canning, freezing, fermenting, dehydration and pickling. In 2013, MFPs reached more than 13,000 residents with presentations and workshops,

which were conducted at farmers markets, schools, 4-H events, housing developments and the Los Angeles County Fair.



Master Gardener Program



UC Cooperative Extension's Master Gardeners are trained to provide research-based solutions to help LA County residents grow their own food and solve their gardening and landscape problems. In the process, they help build communities and gardening networks within the vast county.

Each year, the Master Gardener Program trains volunteers to become UC-certified Master Gardeners. During the rigorous training process, the volunteers learn about vegetables, fruits, trees, soils, composting, fertilization, irrigation, pests, diseases, weeds and harvesting. Special attention is given to organic and environmentally prudent gardening methods. Once certified, Master Gardeners provide free gardening workshops and technical expertise to many community and school gardens. Information booths, demonstrations and diagnostic clinics have been ways Master Gardeners answer questions and share information. In addition, Master Gardeners respond to questions by phone and email.

In 2013, staff trained 58 new volunteers and certified them as UC Master Gardeners. The active army of 254 Master Gardeners volunteered 18,421 hours, serving 130,345 residents at 205 local gardens, LA County housing development sites, farmers markets and fairs. This translates into a dollar value of \$460,525 (calculated as hours multiplied by \$25 per hour). They truly extend the University of California's ability to reach and assist LA County residents far and wide.

Grow LA Victory Garden Initiative, a unique program in LA County, offers low-cost classes to help new gardeners start their own gardens quickly and easily in a container, in the backyard or at a community garden. The classes are led by Master Gardener volunteers at many locations each spring and fall. In 2013, 80 Master Gardeners taught 62 beginning and intermediate classes to 540 participants at 39 locations.



Upon completing the classes, many new gardeners continued to meet informally by creating and participating in local neighborhood garden circles. Together, they nurture a culture of food self-sufficiency by sharing their knowledge while reinforcing family and community relationships.

By the end of 2013, it was clear to staff that the Master Gardener Program, along with its Grow LA Victory Garden Initiative, remains strong and relevant to many residents.

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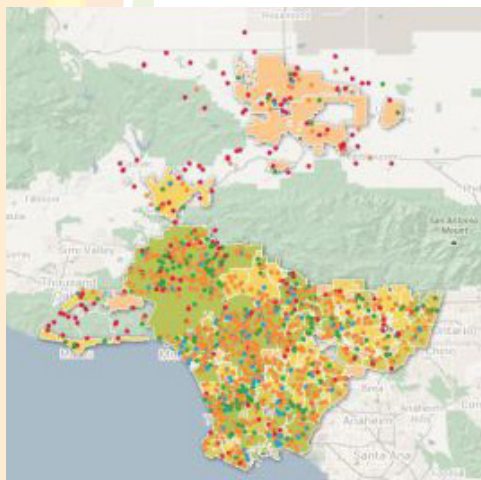
Master Gardener Help Line: (626) 586-1988 | mglosangeleshelpline@ucanr.edu

Sustainable Food Systems



Access to healthy food continues to be an important issue in urban Los Angeles. At the same time, local consumers have a growing appetite for fresh, locally grown produce. Sustainable urban food systems have the potential to address these two concerns very effectively. Additionally, they have the potential to enhance communities by creating

positive economic development and open community spaces.



In 2013, Rachel Surls (sustainable food systems advisor) completed her work with UCLA urban planning faculty and graduate students to assess and map urban agriculture activities in Los Angeles County. Acting as “the client” for a two-quarter student capstone project, she helped faculty members plan the course and guided students through the project. The students studied the geography of urban agriculture, the distribution

channels for urban farm products, school gardens and zoning codes.



Based on their research, they created a report, website and an interactive map of all 1,200-plus urban agriculture sites in the county. The project was completed in June and was made available to the public and policy-makers in August.

The study received widespread attention, including coverage in the Los Angeles Times, KCET, NPR, Imperial Valley News, the Santa Monica Mirror, KCRW and a number of blogs.



Surls completed the first year of a two-year project funded by the UC ANR Competitive Grants Program. The project conducted a needs assessment of urban farmers in California to determine how UC ANR can provide resources and information effectively to them. The 15-member team, which consisted of experts in urban planning, landscape design, environmental health, nutrition, small farming production, and agriculture conducted interviews of farmers and policy makers on initiatives and challenges. In addition, they produced an extensive literature review on the social, health and economic impacts of urban agriculture (<http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/sfs/urban-agriculture>). In 2014, the team will use the information gathered to develop science-based materials for farmers, which will be available online.

In July, Surls planned and facilitated a two-day event for Los Angeles Food Policy Council members, UC ANR colleagues, Will Allen (Founder and CEO of Growing Power, the premier urban agriculture nonprofit in the nation), and local partners. The event included visits to several urban farms as well as traditional small farms in peri-urban settings.

Surls continued her work with Little Green Fingers, a collaborative effort to build community gardens in limited-resource neighborhoods. Her role is to involve UC Master Gardeners and their technical assistance and plan the educational component for the gardens. In 2013, the collaborative completed the West Athens Victory Garden at 105th and Normandie in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

As a UC Cooperative Extension advisor, Surls disseminates her program information to research peers and the public. In 2013, she co-authored “Community Gardens” (UC ANR publication available at <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=8499>) and presented her findings at conferences, such as the Seedstock Sustainable Agriculture Conference at UCLA and the Agriculture of Human Values Society Annual Conference.

Environmental Horticulture

UC Cooperative Extension advisors are specialists in urban landscape (trees and shrubs), turfgrass, efficient water use, integrated pest management (IPM) and plant care. Through workshops, seminars and written material, environmental horticulture advisors educate the public and offer technical advice on complex horticulture issues. They are a valuable part of the local “green industry.”



Don Hodel, an internationally respected palm expert, conducts research that is valued by his clients and professionals in landscape management and nursery production. In 2013, he conducted more than 20 research projects, two of them at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden



in Arcadia. In one project, he assessed more than 300 trees in the arboretum’s historic core, evaluating them for health, safety, longevity and remedial action, if any was needed. Some of the trees date back to as far as the

mid-19th century. For the second arboretum project, he planted several species of Mexican oaks and sycamores, which he collected in Mexico in 2001. These new transplants, most being evergreen and low-water users, were then evaluated for growth, health, horticultural traits and climate adaptability. Doing well, they have garnered attention among local nurseries and residents, who are interested in obtaining seeds and propagating them.



Along with research activities, Hodel invests considerable time in disseminating research data and results to other tree experts and the public through presentations and trainings. In 2013, he conducted more than 26 presentations to commercial and landscape professionals and 11 presentations to homeowners and consumers. In addition, he trained many LA County employees about proper pruning methods at the South Coast Botanic Garden in Palos Verdes.

Dennis Pittenger, area environmental horticulture advisor, is a specialist in water management and conservation. Like Hodel, he conducts research and disseminates information for landscape management professionals. In 2013, Pittenger conducted two workshops to teach the latest techniques for managing and conserving water and prepared web content on water management for the website, Center for Landscape and Urban Horticulture (<http://ucanr.edu/cluh>). In research, he continued a field study, evaluating the responses of 18 species of groundcover plants to reduced irrigation. The goal was to identify attractive plants that need little water.

Understanding the value of collaboration, Pittenger worked with six water agencies in Southern California to draft a customer handbook on how to use water efficiently in the landscape. He co-authored five technical articles on issues related to landscape palms and a best management practices manual on landscape irrigation. Pittenger continued his work with researchers from three other universities to devise a new paradigm for estimating the water needs of urban landscapes.

(continued on next page)

Environmental Horticulture (continued)

Identification and management of pests are a significant part of **Cheryl Wilen's** integrated pest management program (IPM). She devotes a considerable portion of her extension time to helping residents, growers and land managers prevent and solve pest problems using safe techniques that protect people and the environment. In 2013, Wilen



helped train professional landscapers, florists, nursery growers and Master Gardeners on topics such as weed identification, entomology, pesticide mitigation and integrated pest management strategies.

Using online and printed materials, Wilen offers a wealth of information to the public. She reviewed and developed materials for training retail nursery staff about the impacts and control of the Asian citrus psyllid in Los Angeles County. In addition, she developed and reviewed IPM materials specifically for Spanish-speaking landscapers — an area that continues to see growing demand.

In March, Wilen was quoted in an LA Times article, “Nutgrass: Three experts’ solutions to one of the worst weeds,” in print and online versions.

Janet Hartin, environmental horticulture advisor, specializes in irrigation and water conservation. In an environment of increasingly challenging competition for funds to support research, Hartin continues to be successful in creating a case for investment in her investigations.

In 2013, Hartin continued her work monitoring water use under Evapotranspiration Adjustment Factor (ETAF) at study sites in Lakewood, Walnut, Pasadena, San Gabriel and Claremont. The study is funded by the California Department of Water Resources.

In addition, Hartin conducted focus groups that included 75 Spanish-speaking landscapers and interviewed 10 participants to better understand their needs. Understanding needs allows UC Cooperative Extension to create programs and services that offer solutions that work and make sense. Based on the results of the focus group and interviews, Hartin was able to develop important hands-on educational modules and materials in landscape irrigation, water conservation, IPM and environmental stewardship. The results were also presented at five work sites in Los Angeles County with plans to present several more times in 2014.

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Natural Resources

UC Cooperative Extension's Natural Resources Program provides research-based information and training to serve as the basis for sound natural resource management in Los Angeles County. Sabrina Drill, natural resources advisor, works closely with local, state and federal agencies and service providers, community organizations, educational institutions and interdisciplinary natural



resource groups to improve the management efforts in the county. She is an expert in habitat and species conservation and restoration, conservation planning, watershed education and invasive species.

Drill is co-director of the statewide California Naturalist Program, which was established in 2012 to foster a diverse community of naturalists and promote stewardship of California's natural resources through education and service. The program has gained momentum throughout 2013. More than 30 students completed the program at Pasadena City College. As part of the course's citizen science project to monitor

Pasadena's biodiversity in places like Eaton Canyon and the Arroyo Seco, 1,239 natural observations were logged.

The California Naturalist Program also organized a training session for future instructors at the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, bringing together 18 Southern California environmental education organizations. Looking forward, the program anticipates adding more sites, offering additional training, and building long-term relationships with organizations that work with diverse populations throughout Los Angeles County.



Publications play an important role in communicating Drill's information and programs to the public, decision makers and natural resource practitioners. In 2013, much of her work was disseminated through articles as well as through a variety of less formal means, including videos, manuals, newsletters, information cards and conferences. Some examples include:

- Special Concerns Near Aquatic Habitats (California Invasive Plant Council newsletter article, co-authored with Joel Trumbo)
- New Oak Threats (video)
- Aquatic Invasive Species Identification and Prevention Best Management Practices (pocket card, co-authored with Michelle Lande, Leigh Johnson and Darren Haver)
- Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer Spreading in California (Ventura County Farm Bureau newsletter)
- California Naturalist Instructor Manual (co-authored with Julie Featherston, Brook Gamble, Jessica Chen and Adina Merender)
- Educating Public Workers About Aquatic Invasive Pests (online University of California publication, co-authored with Leigh Johnson and Darren Haver)
- Southern California Academy of Sciences (conference)
- Room for the River Conference (conference)
- Regional Area Safety Task Force Annual Fire Summit (conference)
- California Native Plant Society (conference)
- California Invasive Plant Council Annual (conference)



Agriculture

Vegetable and fruit crops are important sources of income for many high desert growers. Add to that, interest in locally grown produce has helped new and established growers become an increasingly important part of the local economy.

Andre Biscaro, UC Cooperative Extension's farm advisor, extends important research-based information to these growers in Los Angeles County. He is also responsible for establishing research and education programs that meet farmers' needs. He focuses on developing cost-effective and sustainable agronomic practices, while considering the challenges associated with increasing production costs, water-use restrictions, agriculture-urban interface and a growing population.



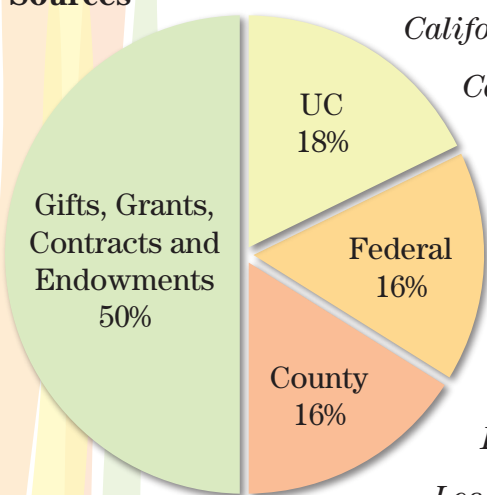
Biscaro not only delivered the day-to-day mix of services that keep local growers' operations informed and running productively, but he also engages in high-value research. In 2013, he presented findings for his research project, "Improving Irrigation and Nutrient Management of Onions," at the California Garlic and Onion Symposium. From this project, he was able to create information on nutrient uptake for fresh-market onion production in California.

As the county's farm advisor, Biscaro also provides leadership by organizing and coordinating conferences and meetings for industry growers and stakeholders. These gatherings highlight best practices as well as fostering coordination and collaboration. In 2013, Biscaro organized or co-organized the California Weed Science Society's 65th Annual Conference in Monterey, the Antelope Valley Fair's Vegetable Gardening Section, a Salt/Nutrient Management Stakeholder meeting, and other events and exhibits.



Thank you to our supporters

2013 Funding Sources



Anonymous Donor

Calandri/SonRise Farms

California Department of Pesticide Regulations

California Department of Water Resources

California Garlic and Onion Research Advisory Board

California Women for Agriculture

Carl and Roberta Deutsch Foundation

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

Inland Empire Utilities Agency

International Plant Nutrition Institute

The LA Breakfast Club

Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation

Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Renee's Garden Seeds

Renewable Resources Extension Act

Resources Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains

Theodore Payne Foundation

Two Dog Nursery

UC ANR Competitive Grants Program

US Department of Agriculture

Also, a big thank you goes out to our volunteers. We, at UC Cooperative Extension, know that volunteers are the heart and soul of everything we do. With their continued involvement, we look forward to another year of being a vital force for so many Los Angeles County residents.

From the campus to the community

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In conformance with Federal regulations, written affirmative action plans shall be prepared and maintained by each campus of the University, by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, by the Office of the President, and by the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Such plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Office of the President and the Office of the General Counsel before they are officially promulgated.

This Policy supersedes the University of California Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy Regarding Academic and Staff Employment, dated January 1, 2004.

Inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Staff Personnel Services Equal Opportunity Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1111 Franklin Street, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 987-0096.

¹ Pregnancy includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

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