

Volume 2 Issue 1

January 2026

The RECap

*A newsletter from South Coast Research and Extension Center
and UC Cooperative Extension Orange County*



Happy New Year!

We are very excited to see what 2026 has in store for us here at South Coast REC and UCCE Orange County. We are looking forward to assisting with new research projects, collaborating with more community partners, and hosting educational events for clientele and the public.

Featuring:

- Program Updates
- Pro Tips
- Employee Spotlight
- Upcoming Events

We hope your plans for 2026 include visiting us or interacting with our researchers and programs! Stay tuned for new and exciting events and opportunities, and please reach out if we can be of any assistance to you!

Lindsey Pedroncelli, PhD
Interim Director, South Coast REC

P.S. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future, please unsubscribe at the bottom of this email.

Program Updates

Orange County 4-H Youth Development



**4-H Youth
Development Program**
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Evaluators needed!

Do you enjoy working with youth? OC 4-H needs evaluators for our upcoming events – Food Fiesta, Fashion Revue & Field (Presentation) Day. Evaluators give feedback, based on a rubric, to youth who make presentations at these events or who compete in activities like Cupcake Wars or knowledge tests. And don't worry – we will train you so you can evaluate with confidence!

- Evaluators for Food Fiesta would help on Saturday January 31. The event runs from about 8am-3pm, but you don't have to commit to the entire event.
 - Contact foodfiestaoc4h@gmail.com for more information.
- Evaluators for Fashion Revue & Field Day would help on Saturday March 14. These events run simultaneously from about 8am-4pm, and again, you don't have to commit to the entire event.
 - Contact ocfieldday@gmail.com or 4hfashionrevueoc@gmail.com for more information.



OC 4-H New Family Webinars

Ideal for those who are new to 4-H or considering participating in OC 4-H.

Two options, same content, just pick one!

Thursday, January 22 at 7pm

Sunday, January 25 at 3pm

[Register Here](#)

[Register Here](#)

Pro Tips

Tips, tricks, and advice from our program experts

Resolve to Reduce Food Waste in 2026

Looking for an easy New Year's resolution? Consider reducing your household food waste!

Food waste is a hidden crisis that costs the world trillions of dollars each year and drives the current climate emergency. Approximately one-fourth of all food produced worldwide goes to waste each year, and if food loss was a country, it would be the 3rd largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

There's clearly a lot of room for improvement but knowing where to begin can be a challenge. I find the best place to start is small: pick one action that seems approachable, make it a habit, and build from there. Here are some ideas to consider:

1. Review your cupboards & refrigerator and make a menu for the week.
2. Shop from a list and stick to it. Impulse buys are more likely to go to waste when they're not "part of the plan".
3. Avoid promotions and bulk buys. Purchase only what you will consume or preserve by the expiration date.
4. Know the difference between the "use by" and "best before" dates to avoid throwing out good food. Foods labeled "use by" are perishable and must be eaten before the given date. Foods labeled "best before" can be eaten after the given date but may be of lesser quality.
5. Put your freezer to work! Have more of a fresh ingredient than called for in a recipe? Individually Quick Freeze (IQF) the extra portion for use at a later time. This is a great solution for preserving leftover berries.
6. Use the FoodKeeper App to help you safely store foods to maximize freshness and quality: www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/
7. Review your refrigerator often and designate a shelf or area of your fridge for foods that need to be used and build your next meals around those items.



The United States aims to reduce food waste by 50% in the next 5 years and we can all help in achieving that goal. I hope you will use these tips in 2026 to minimize food waste, save money, and help protect the environment.

Happy New Year!

Jennifer Borges is the new Program Coordinator for the Master Food Preservers of Orange County. She can be reached with questions or inquiries at jhborges@ucanr.edu. For quick answers to your food preservation and safety questions, contact the MFP Helpline: uccemp@ucdavis.edu

Employee Spotlight

Get to know the folks who work with South Coast REC and UCCE Orange County.

Meet

Jennifer Hoffman Borges

Orange County
Master Food Preserver Coordinator

Jennifer Hoffman Borges has been the Master Food Preserver Coordinator for 3 months, but prior to serving in this role, she spent 8 years as a Master Food Preserver volunteer!

What does a "typical" day look like for you?

There is no such thing in this position. Some days I'm in planning meetings with MFP coordinators around the state, and other days are spent teaching high school students the fundamentals of food safety. The variety of duties makes this job both interesting and challenging.



What part of your work are you most excited about or proud of right now?

The MFPs participated in SCREC GROW Days in November and December. Our volunteers discussed food safety and led hands-on activities with hundreds of high school students. It is always exciting and rewarding to share knowledge with students.

What's your favorite fruit/vegetable/plant we grow at SCREC?

I do not discriminate against any fruit or vegetable grown at SCREC. If you grow it, I will preserve it! That said, I was here when the dragon fruit study was underway - that is a very interesting fruit!

Do you have any accounts/website/contact info you want to include?

We are in the process of rebuilding our social media presence on both Facebook and Instagram, so I encourage everyone to follow us: [@masterfoodpreserversoc](https://www.instagram.com/masterfoodpreserversoc) [@UCCE-Master_Food-Preserver-OC](https://www.instagram.com/UCCE-Master_Food-Preserver-OC).

We also have a helpline with a quick response time! I would encourage people to visit our website for more information: <https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-food-preserved-program-orange-county>.

A quick food preservation quiz.

Answers are at the end of the newsletter.

1. What is the most common type of food preservation today?
2. When was the first home refrigeration unit introduced?
3. What famous world leader offered a reward for the invention of a food preservation technique that could sustain troops on the battlefield?
4. Who popularized the "quick freeze process" in the United States?
5. True or False? Pectin is a man-made chemical.

Upcoming Events

Orange County Bee Team Workshop: Overwintered Colony Inspection and Making Decisions

Workshop



**Presented by the
CAMBP
OC Bee Team**

On January 24th, 2026

Time: 9:00 am - 11:30 am

Cost: \$40.00 per person

(Registration limited - 10 per session)

- **INSTRUCTOR:** Karine Pouliquen
- **TOPIC:** Overwintered Colony Inspection & Making Decisions

**At: South Coast Research and Extension Center
7601 Irvine Blvd. Irvine, CA 92618**

Required: All registrants are required to bring their own personal protective gear - closed toe boots, bee suit/veil/hat, glove and water bottle. None will be available for use on site.

Contact Info: Tammy Majcherek tjmajcherek@ucanr.edu

Office (949) 653-1824

Registration Link:

<https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=47371>

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Workshop Details

When: January 24, 2026, 9-11:30am

Where: South Coast Research and Extension Center 7601 Irvine Blvd. Irvine, CA 92618

Cost: \$40 per person

Questions?

Contact Tammy Majcherek at tjmajcherek@ucanr.edu or (949) 653-1824

Register Here

UC ANR Forest Stewardship Workshop:

San Diego and Surrounding Counties

Join UC ANR's team of forestry experts online and in-person at the San Diego Forest Stewardship Workshop, starting January 2026! Get equipped with the knowledge to understand forest management in California, and earn a free site visit with a Registered Professional Forester, CA Range Manager, or Burn Boss (an \$800 value).

If you live in the forest, near a forest, or are interested in trees, this educational opportunity is for you. Learn about forest ecology, methods to reduce fire risk on your property, forest management planning, and more. Participants in this nine-week workshop series will gain the skills to identify their forest management goals and draft a forest management plan.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources Forest Stewardship

REGISTER NOW!

Sign up today for the San Diego Forest Stewardship Workshop. Participants receive a free site visit from an RPF, CRM, or Burn Boss.



Your healthy, fire-resilient forest starts here. Share and shape your stewardship goals with UCCE!

Weekly Zoom meetings January 27-March 24, 2026
In-person field day on Saturday February 28, 2026
Registration: \$60, scholarships available by request.

Workshop Details

When: Tuesday evenings (6:00-7:30 PM) January 27-March 24, 2026

In-person field day February 28, 2026

Where: Weekly meetings over Zoom, in-person field day in San Diego County

Cost: \$60, need-based scholarships available by request. Please reach out to Kim Ingram (kcingram@ucanr.edu) to request a scholarship.

[Learn more and register here](#)

SOLD OUT - Small and Backyard Farming Workshop

Do you work for a school, place of worship, or a community center and you've thought about growing food for your community? Do you have a large backyard space and want to take your green thumb to the next level and sell your produce at market or grow enough to sustain your household throughout the year? Then register today for the Small and Backyard Farming workshop!

Small & Backyard Farming Workshop
Saturday, February 28th 9-3pm • \$30



Intro to Soils• Irrigation• Tools• Hydroponics• Pest Management• Mulches• Compost and More!

Our workshop features UC Ag & Natural Resource advisors and professionals who will help lay an introductory foundation on things to consider like site planning, what tools you'd need, irrigation, Integrated Pest Management, mulching, composting,

small space hydroponics, and more! Lunch and snacks provided, scholarship consideration available by request at jrsuppes@ucanr.edu

Workshop Details

When: February 28, 2026, 9am to 3pm, Lunch and snacks will be provided.

Where: South Coast Research and Extension Center, 7601 Irvine Blvd. Irvine, CA 92618

Cost: \$30, scholarship consideration available upon request, reach out to Jason Suppes at jrsuppes@ucanr.edu

Sponsored by the Orange County Farm Bureau

Though the event is sold out, check back for last-minute openings and future classes!

Register Here

Food preservation quiz answers:

1. Refrigeration
2. 1913
3. Napoleon Bonaparte, Napoleonic Wars
4. Clarence Birdseye
5. FALSE. Commercially produced pectin is produced from citrus fruit for use as an edible gelling agent.

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