

UC Cooperative Extension

July 2026

San Luis Obispo & Santa Barbara County News

Science-based solutions for healthy and resilient communities, food systems, and environments.



UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

UCCE Advisor Updates



Watershed and Natural Resources Advisor Royce Larsen Retires

For 30 years, Larsen has shared his expertise in rangeland management through UC Cooperative Extension, protecting the types of landscapes that were the backdrop to his childhood. Larsen spent most of his career as the watershed and natural resource advisor covering Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. This summer, he will retire from that role and move back to Utah.

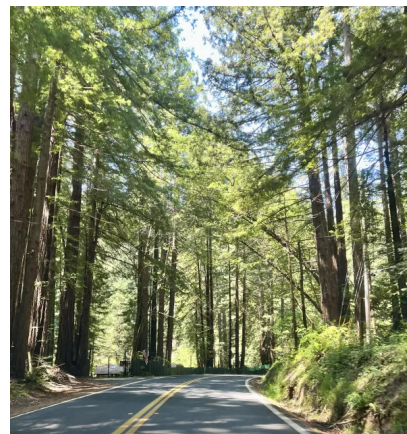
[Read more here](#)

Six exits to safety: UC study finds wildfire survival depends on roads for evacuation

Interactive map shows wildfire risk based on number of roads out of a community

One of the strongest predictors of wildfire fatalities may be the number of roads out of a community, according to a [new study](#) from scientists at the University of California Santa Barbara and UC Cooperative Extension. Their research reveals that a surprisingly specific number of roads separates high-risk communities from safer ones during a wildfire – six.

[Read more here](#)



4H Santa Barbara

Supporting Youth Development Partners During Summer Training Season

Melissa Guillen



In June, Santa Barbara County 4-H had the opportunity to partner with local organizations to provide training sessions for youth development professionals.

[Read the full article on our blog..](#)



Melissa Guillen and Ella Mitchell present a youth development training , photo by Kumari Jayakody



UC IPM on the South Central Coast

Christopher A Greer

Fusarium wilt is a disease of lettuce caused by a soilborne fungus, *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *lactucae*, that is becoming a more economically significant to lettuce production on the Central Coast of California. Management of this disease is difficult as once a field is infested with the pathogen; plant disease resistance is currently the only effective means of control where disease pressure is high.

The latest blog posting at “UC IPM on the South Central Coast” has the results of our 2025 Santa Maria Valley and Salinas Valley evaluation trials for tolerance of lettuce varieties to Fusarium wilt. Please visit the site for the detailed report and/or to subscribe to the blog to receive notifications for newly posted articles on this project and other relevant agricultural pest management topics for the region.

Read more about [Tolerance of lettuce varieties to Fusarium wilt – 2025](#) here.

Immature lettuce in field. Photo by Chris Greer



[Subscribe to the blog here](#) or use the QR code



Update on Asian Citrus Psyllid in California

Online, July 16, Noon-1 p.m.

Join citrus IPM (Integrated Pest Management) advisor Sandipa Gautam

for an update on the potentially devastating Asian citrus psyllid. Learn about practical ways to limit psyllid infestations in home gardens and landscapes. Part of the Urban and Community IPM Webinar Series, this session will cover identification, management strategies and steps you can take to minimize the spread of this pest. [Register for the webinar.](#)

Disaster Resilience

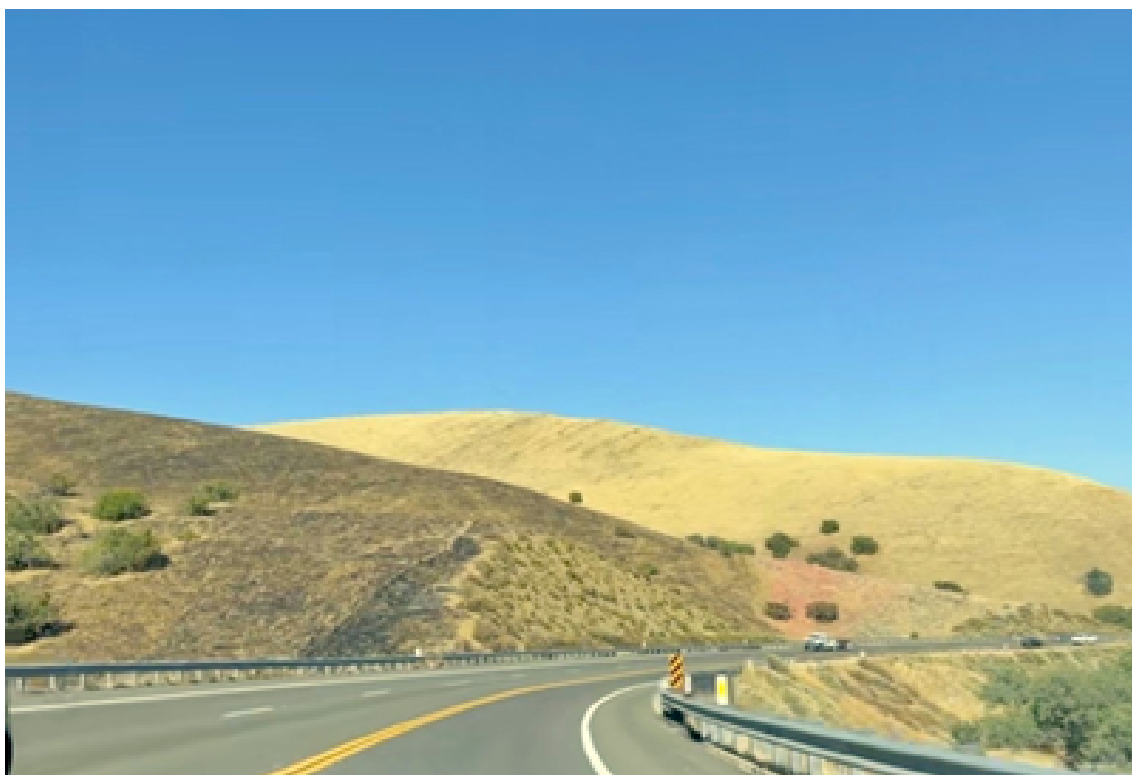
Complied By Lilian Thaoxaochay

Santa Barbara County and Others Named a 2026 Fire Risk Reduction Community

Since 2022, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) has published and maintained “[a list of local agencies...that meet best practices for local fire planning](#)”. The list is updated every two years. Communities whose applications are approved are eligible for priority funding for wildfire prevention projects like the SBC FireSafe Council’s [Free Chipper Days](#). In some instances, designation means that local citizens may be made eligible for discounted insurance rates or more options for insurance.

The 2026 Fire Risk Reduction Community List is [available here](#).

Congratulations to Santa Barbara County! Additional Central Coast designees also include: the City of San Luis Obispo, the Cambria Community Services District, the Morro Bay Fire Department, and the Ventura County Fire Protection District.



Post-burn view of the June 7th Cotton Fire which burned 26 acres in SLO County at the Kern County Line and Hwy 41, Photo by Lilian Thaoxaochay (2026)

New World Screwworm Updates

There are still NO confirmed cases of New World Screwworm (NWS) in California at this time. Per the [USDA APHIS NWS Dashboard](#) – all confirmed (active and inactive) cases have been mapped in Texas and New Mexico only.

However, as of June 12, 2026, an Animal Quarantine and additional NWS entry requirements are in place for animals entering California from NWS affected areas – this includes range animals and domestic pets. Please visit the [CDFA NWS website](#) for more information.

We continue to update resources for [NWS on The Disaster Blog](#) including a recent training from the National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) about the public health risks for farm, livestock, and outdoor workers. And while human infections in California and the United States is very rare, education is important for prevention.

Have a disaster resiliency story you'd like to share? Contact Lilian at lilthaox@ucanr.edu or 805-441-4119 to be featured. [Subscribe to the blog here.](#)

UCCE Community Education Programs



UC Master Food Preservers

Do you want to become a Certified Master Food Preserver? [Join our email list](#) to receive updates once the applications open in early fall

Did you know July is National Ice Cream Month? Come beat the heat and learn about home freezing basics on July 25th with us. Of course, there will be an ice cream demonstration and tasting. [Click here to register for the class.](#)



Want to make summer last longer? Preserve your own jar of summer salsa with us on August 22nd. No prior canning experience required. [Click here to register for the salsa class.](#)



UC Master Gardeners



We recently joined The City of Atascadero, the Central Coast Zoo and Madrone Landscaping for the ribbon cutting ceremony for Atascadero's new Monarch & Pollinator Native Habitat.

Located near the Morro Road/Highway 41 and US-101 gateway, the habitat transforms a highly visible space into a place for native plants, pollinators, and public education.

The design was developed by Olwyn Kingery, a Landscape Architect and UC Master Gardener volunteer. The site features native species that support monarch butterflies and other pollinators, with educational signage to help visitors learn about pollinator habitat, native gardening, and local conservation.



Calendar of Classes & Events

[Workshop: The Helpline Files:
Current Pests & Common Gardening](#)

[Mistakes & Plant Sale](#): Saturday,
July 18, 2026: 9:30am-12:00pm San
Luis Obispo, Garden of the 7 Sisters

[Evening in the Garden](#): Sunday, July
19, 2026: 6:00pm-7:30pm, San Luis
Obispo, Garden of the 7 Sisters

[Family Demonstration: Raspberry
Cocoa Jam Using an Atmospheric
Steam Canner](#): Wednesday, July 22,
2026: 12:00pm-2:00pm Santa Maria
Library

[Home Freezing Basics Workshop](#):
Saturday, July 25, 2026: 10:00am-
12:00pm San Luis Obispo, UCCE
Auditorium

[Summer Pruning of Fruit Trees &
Tool Sharpening Demo](#): Saturday,
August 1, 2026: 9:30am-12:00pm
Santa Barbara, Mesa Harmony
Garden

[Evening in the Garden](#): Tuesday,
August 4, 2026: 5:00pm-6:30pm,
Paso Robles, Centennial Park
Demonstration Garden

[Lunchtime in the Garden](#):

Wednesday, August 5, 2026:
11:30am-1:30pm San Luis Obispo,
Garden of the 7 Sisters

[Hands-On Class: Escabeche
\(Mexican Pickled Vegetables\)](#)

[Session 1](#): Saturday, August 15, 2026
10:00am-11:30am Paso Robles,
Paso Robles Library Study Center

[Hands-On Class: Escabeche
\(Mexican Pickled Vegetables\)](#)

[Session 2](#): Saturday, August 15, 2026
12:00pm- 1:30pm, Paso Robles,
Paso Robles Library Study Center

[Workshop: Mythbusters 3: Liars Club](#)

[Version & Plant Sale](#) : Saturday,
August 15, 2026: 9:30am -12:00pm,
San Luis Obispo, Garden of the 7
Sisters



Upcoming Events

UC Environmental Stewards Statewide Conference

Collectively Unstoppable: Environmental Stewards Leading from the Ground Up!



For more information and to register:

<https://na.eventscloud.com/website/91075/>



2026 Central Coast Region Organic Agriculture Conference: Save the Date

September 15-16, 2026 San Luis Obispo County

[Visit the event website](#) to sign up to be notified when registration opens! Questions? Please contact Lexie Wilson at lwilson@ucanr.edu!



California Agritourism Summit: Registration is now open!

September 23-25, 2026 San Luis Obispo County

REGISTRATION LINK IS LIVE

Visit the [California Agritourism Summit](#) website to see an overview of the Program and learn more about the amazing farms we will visit on the Workshop on Wheels.

[Register here before September 11, 2026](#)



Funding Opportunities

Clean Air Grants for Farmers

2026 Clean Air Grants are open for farmers looking to replace their +25HP diesel engines for lower emissions alternatives including electrical tractors, carts, and similar equipment. Projects can also include electrical charging stations, refrigeration units, and agricultural pumps. Visit your Air Pollution Control District website for more information about your local program including eligible projects, how to apply, and upcoming deadlines.

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District: [Agricultural Grants](#) – Priority Enrollment for Small Businesses open February 17, 2026, to August 18, 2026.

Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District: [Clean Air Grants Program](#) – Open July 27, 2026-September 4, 2026.



A tractor-drawn device cuts slits in the polyethylene mulch, through which bare-root strawberry transplants will be planted, Jack Kelly Clark (2007)



Extreme Weather Relief Grants for Small Farms

The [California Underserved Small Producers \(CUSP\) Program](#) is still accepting applications for small farms (grossing <\$400k/year or <\$1m for dairy operations) who were impacted by drought or other extreme weather including flood, wind, or wildfire from 2017 to the present. Farmers can receive up to \$20k for eligible losses every 12 months.

Organizations currently accepting applications or whom will be opening applications soon include [Community Alliance with Family Farmers](#) (CAFF) and

the [Ventura RCD](#).

For application assistance in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties – contact: Claire Tuohey-Mote, ctuoheymote@ucanr.edu, (805) 704-9098.

USDA Support for Specialty Crop Farmers Announced



The [Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers \(ASCF\) program](#) has announced payment rates and their enrollment period. USDA will issue \$1.625b in payments to eligible producers for 2025 market disruptions, persistent inflation, and/or market losses from foreign competitors. Pre-filled forms were mailed out to producers with online accounts on June 1. For paper applications or if you have questions about the program, your eligibility, and/or need assistance with the application – call or visit your local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office. The deadline to submit completed ASCF applications is **August 7, 2026**.

USDA FSA, San Luis Obispo County, Templeton Office: 65 S Main Street, Suite 106, Templeton, CA, (805) 434-0398

USDA FSA, Santa Barbara County, Santa Maria Office: 920 E Stowell Road, Santa Maria, CA, (805) 928-9269

UCCE in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties improves 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.

Your support helps in many ways.
Thank you.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Contact Us

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