

UC Cooperative Extension

June 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



University of California Cooperative Extension

Fresno, Kern, Madera, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, & Ventura Counties

News from the Subtropical Tree Crop Farm Advisors in California

Editor: Matthew Fatino

Spring 2026 Vol. 27

Topics in this issue:

- California converted its irrigation to save water. So why is the energy bill going up?
- Silent Invaders: The beetles that could threaten California's avocado empire
- Avocado branch canker: what growers need to know and what we are learning
- Hydrogel baits offer targeted tool for earwig management in citrus, with broader IPM implications
- California and its creatures: research on bat diet in agriculture for sustainable pest control
- Surveys and upcoming workshops:
 1. UC ANR Asian Citrus Psyllid website survey
 2. Laurel wilt - Ambrosia beetle grower workshop June 11 (virtual)

[View the Spring Newsletter today.](#)

Disaster Resilience

Compiled By Lilian Thaoxaochay



New World Screwworm

On June 3rd, New World Screwworm (NWS) was detected in a 3 month old calf in Texas. While federal, state, and local resources including Texas A&M's AgriLife Extension Service are being deployed to respond to this finding,

California remains free of NWS.

Central Coast farmers can follow the [UCCE Livestock & Range Blog](#) for regular updates from Advisor Fadzayi E Mashiri. Additional resources are available at [CDFA: New World Screwworm](#). For images of NWS life stages and infections in animals, visit the [USDA Photo Gallery](#).

Photo by:USDA: Closeup of two NWS larvae (maggots)

Tips on Fire Safe Landscaping: Mulching Around the Home

There are three types of mulch: organic, inorganic, and synthetic. Organic and synthetic mulches are combustible. Inorganic mulches are not-combustible. How can you safely incorporate these materials into your home landscaping while still minimizing fire risk? Check out these tips (and pictures!) on spacing, piling, and creating breaks to reduce hazardous placement around your home landscaping from the [UCANR Fire Network Instagram](#). For more detailed information, refer to the UCANR Fire Network [Webpage on Mulch](#)



Mental Health Resources

1 in 5 US adults experiences a mental illness episode each year ([SAMHSA, 2024](#)). This includes minor and major depressive disorders as well as diagnosable conditions such as Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Biological and environmental factors greatly impact mental health. Habits around sleep, exercise, and dieting interact with work, family relationships, and social or digital interfaces and can affect, worsen, or accelerate the development of certain illnesses like anxiety and depression. More recently, [scientists](#) have begun studying how climate change causes eco-anxiety or climate-related grief felt in response to lost places, ecosystems, or species lost to events like hurricanes, wildfire, and other natural disasters.

What can we do about these feelings? May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. June is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month. And July is dedicated to Minority Mental Health Awareness. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) maintains a free, nationwide **HelpLine** for folks looking for emotional support or mental health information and resources. Visit their

[website](#), text “NAMI” to 62640, or call them at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) to learn more about how to receive support for your needs.

Additional support can be found at the [SLO County Behavioral Health Resource Center](#) as well as the [Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness](#).

For immediate assistance, call the “**988**” Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 24/7.

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

UC Master Food Preservers collaborated with the UC Master Gardener's Advice to Grow By event to educate 59 participants on how to safely preserve herbs to enjoy throughout the year.

Participants walked away with fresh herbs to practice drying in a paper bag, a great way to extend the flavor and quality of herbs.

[Read more about preserving herbs.](#)



Believe it or not, summer is here and for fellow preservers this can be a busy time of year preserving peak harvest. Now is the time to make sure your equipment and jars are in good condition for safe, high quality home canned goods. [Read more about getting ready for the summer harvest.](#)

Calendar of Classes & Events

[Children's Gardening Program:](#)

Wednesday, June 17, 2026: 2:00pm-3:30pm Lompoc Library

[Citrus and Avocado Workshop and Plant Sale:](#)

Saturday, June 20, 2026: 9:30 am-12:30pm San Luis Obispo, Garden of 7 Sisters

[Children's Gardening Program:](#)

Friday, June 26, 2026: 2:00pm-3:30pm Lompoc Library

[Lunchtime in the Garden:](#)

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

[Hands on Class: Grape Jelly 1st](#)

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

[Hands on Class: Grape Jelly 2nd](#)

[Session:](#) Saturday, July 11, 2026 : 12:00pm-1:30pm Paso Robles Library Study Center

[Teen Workshop: Thai Dipping](#)

[Sauce:](#) Wednesday, July 15, 2026: 1:00pm-3:00pm Santa Maria Library

[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

[Family Demonstration: Raspberry Cocoa Jam Using an Atmospheric](#)

[Steam Canner:](#) Wednesday, July 22, 2026: 12:00pm-2:00pm Santa Maria Library

[Summer Pruning of Fruit Trees & Tool Sharpening Demo:](#)

Saturday, August 1, 2026: 9:30am-12:00pm Santa Barbara, Mesa Harmony Garden

[Lunchtime in the Garden:](#)

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



Upcoming Events



Post-Fire Forest Resilience workshop participants look at the condition of trees during a field trip to the Caldor Fire footprint. Photo by Katie Reidy

New online course from UC ANR offers wildfire recovery guidance for forest landowners

Updated reforestation manual available; Reforestation Camp slated for June 16-17 at Hopland REC

[Take the free Post-Fire Resilience course](#) (note that enrollees will need to create a free Campus Extension account).

[Find additional post-fire management resources](#) on the UC ANR website.

As wildfires burn larger and hotter in California, swathes of forestland may not naturally regenerate new trees. Natural regeneration relies on living seed trees, so when all the trees across a landscape burn, it may be necessary for land managers to intervene and replant the landscape with seedlings.

Over 40 years ago, land managers received guidance on the reforestation process when the first comprehensive manual for reforestation in California was published. UC ANR forestry scientists took a lead role publishing an updated version of the manual this year to address a heightened, statewide reforestation need.

The 2026 Reforestation Manual for California Conifers brings expertise from UC ANR, UC Davis, UC Berkeley, U.S. Forest Service, CAL FIRE, and industry professionals to the public for free. Land managers can learn best practices for selecting seedlings, preparing landscapes for planting and management for seedling success.

The Reforestation Manual for California Conifers is available to [download on the eScholarship website](#).

For forestry practitioners interested in one-on-one reforestation training, UC ANR is hosting a [Reforestation Camp](#) in Mendocino County at UC ANR's Hopland Research and Extension Center, June 16-17.

Reforestation camp participants will receive a "crash course" in different aspects of reforestation planning and implementation, from assessing potential sites to monitoring seedling success post-planting. [Learn more and apply](#).



**2026 Central Coast Region Organic
Agriculture Conference: Save the Date**
September 15-16, 2026 San Luis Obispo County

Join UC Organic Agriculture Institute and partners, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Central San Luis Resource Conservation District, UC Cooperative Extension and UC Small Farms Network, for two days of organic

agriculture programming on the Central Coast. On Tuesday, September 15th, join a bus tour of three organic farms in the region. On Wednesday, September 16th, meet regional resource providers, hear organic research updates and learn from farmers and technical assistance providers about topics ranging from soil health to accessing institutional markets. Spanish interpretation will be available / Habrá interpretación en Español.

[Visit the event website](#) to sign up to be notified when registration opens!

Questions? Please contact Lexie Wilson at lwwilson@ucanr.edu!



California Agritourism Summit: Registration is now open!

September 23-25, 2026 San Luis Obispo County

This September, San Luis Obispo County will become a hub for agritourism knowledge exchange. Through keynote speakers, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and farm tours, summit participants will gain practical tools and inspiration to strengthen agritourism in California.

“California is more than the country’s leading agricultural state; it’s where food, family, and farming intersect in powerful ways that consumers can directly experience,” Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture remarks. “Agritourism adds additional income for farming families while helping people from across the globe learn where their food comes from and connect with some of the people who grow it.”

The broad coalition of stakeholders assembled by the summit will offer knowledge and useful practices for attendees to bring back to their home counties, bolstering agritourism across the state. [Read full press release here.](#)

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. We will continue to provide updates as new sessions and speakers are added.

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

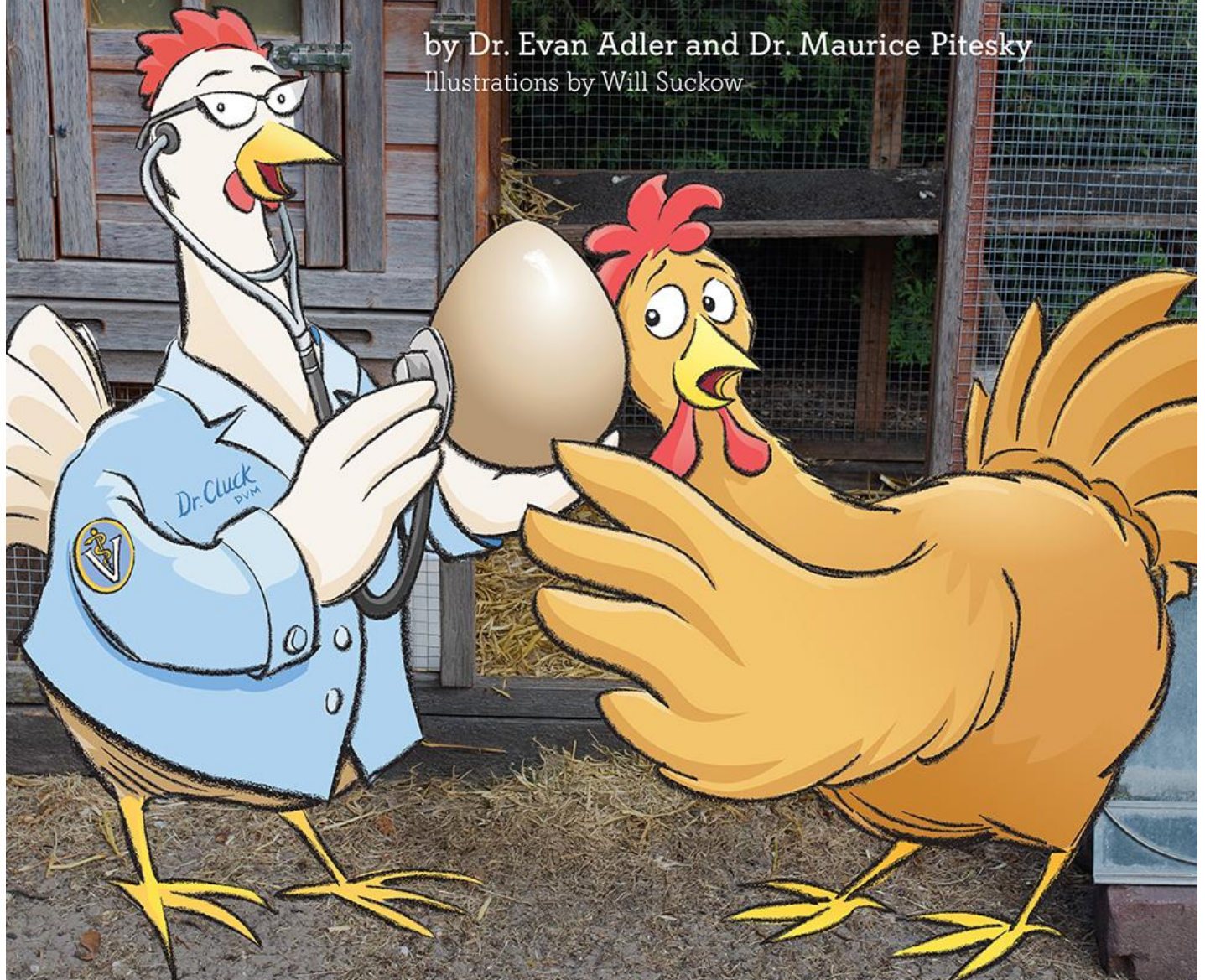


ANR Publications

Dr. Cluck's Backyard Chickens

*Your ultimate guide to raising
happy, healthy chickens.*

by Dr. Evan Adler and Dr. Maurice Pitesky
Illustrations by Will Suckow



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UC DAVIS
VETERINARY MEDICINE

UC ANR Publications is thrilled to announce the release of Dr. Cluck's Backyard Chickens: Your Ultimate Guide to Raising Happy, Healthy Chickens—and we think you're going to love it!.

As Dr. Cluck herself pledges in the opening pages: "I, Dr. Cluck, do hereby pledge allegiance to not use any fancy words in this book without explaining them—with liberty and chicken wings for all."

Order your copy now! Available in [paperback](#) (\$29) and [hardbound](#) (\$70) through our brand-new UC ANR Publications [website](#)—your one-stop shop for our full catalog of peer-reviewed publications.

And to celebrate the launch, here's a little gift from us to you:

Use promo code EGGVIP at checkout for 25% OFF your order!

This exclusive discount is valid now through September 1, so don't let it slip through the coop!

Thank you for your continued support of UC ANR Publications—we hope Dr. Cluck brings as much joy to your bookshelf as she does to the coop.

[Order Your Copy Here](#)

Funding Opportunities



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

Community Partners

Heard of prescribed fire?

We want to hear from YOU!



The San Luis Obispo Prescribed Burn Association is a community-based organization bringing fire as a land management tool back into the hands of the people.

We are surveying:

- Agencies
- Non-profits
- Tribes
- Landowners
- Academics
- Business owners
- Community members

to gauge interest and capacity for prescribed fire projects in SLO and neighboring counties.

If you want to share your thoughts on or have an interest in prescribed fire, **take our survey!**

<https://bit.ly/SLOPBAsurvey>

San Luis Obispo

**Prescribed
Burn
Association**



@slo_pba



SLO PBA Survey



LARGE LANDSCAPE **IRRIGATION EVALUATION**

- Distribution Uniformity (DU) Analysis
- Sprinkler/Irrigation inspection
- Soil Survey
- Irrigation Scheduling Assistance
- Nutrient Management Assistance
- Equipment Recommendations



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science-based solutions in agriculture, natural ecosystems, community health, and youth development.

Your support helps in many ways.
Thank you.

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