UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

## Spotlight on San Mateo and San Francisco Counties

UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) San Mateo–San Francisco brings University of California research in agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, and youth development to communities from the San Mateo coast to the neighborhoods of San Francisco. Advisors, community educators, and trained volunteers work with county agencies, schools, farmers, land managers, and community organizations to deliver practical, science-based solutions to address the needs of our residents.

### The Year in Volunteer Contributions

UC-trained Master Gardener, Master Food Preserver, 4-H, Environmental Stewards, and CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE volunteers extend our educational reach. With UCCE staff, they logged 16,625 educational interactions with the public.

| 542 | 40,035 | $1.67M |
|---|---|---|
| Active Volunteers | Volunteer Hours | Value of Service |

### Wildlife Coexistence in San Mateo County

Dr. Carolyn Whitesell, Human-Wildlife Interactions Advisor, helps livestock producers, livestock owners, and residents coexist with mountain lions and coyotes. She co-leads the Bay Area Carnivore-Livestock Interactions Project, testing nonlethal deterrents to protect livestock. She also leads a study in collaboration with CDFW and UC Santa Cruz studying mountain lion movements and behavior east of Highway 280. Her talks reached 260+ Half Moon Bay High School students, and she created outreach materials in English and Spanish.



A mountain lion east of Highway 280 caught on Dr. Whitesell's wildlife camera, October 2025

### Urban Landscape Research & Practice

Dr. Igor Lacan, Bay Area Environmental Horticulture and Urban Forestry Advisor, turns UC research into practical guidance for arborists, landscape managers, and local governments. He co-authored *Greening the Golden State*, California's plan to increase urban tree canopy 10% by 2035. He also organizes the annual meeting of the 30-year-old Western Tree Failure Report Program at Filoli House & Garden in Woodside, which tracks why urban trees fail. From January to June 2026, his programs reached 823 local and regional participants, and his teaching helped train 30 new Master Gardener volunteers.

> "I have begun noticing ribs, cracks, and bumps on some trees in my neighborhood—I now know what that means!"
>
> Reader of Dr. Lacan's *Wood Decay Fungi Guide for Non-specialists*.

### From Soil to Success

The Phoenix Garden 4-H Youth Internship provides paid, hands-on work experience for youth in San Mateo County. Designed especially for young people who have been involved with, or are at risk of entering, the juvenile justice system, the program offers a supportive environment where participants build both practical and professional skills. Interns gain experience in the 6-acre Phoenix Garden, learning essential gardening techniques such as weed management, tree care, and beekeeping, while also developing valuable life and job skills that prepare them for future opportunities. This summer, 19 interns each completed an independent project to improve the garden.



Paid interns celebrating with program leaders at the youth-run Phoenix Garden in San Mateo

UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Practical. Connected. Trusted.

## 4-H Youth Development

4-H empowers young people with skills to lead for a lifetime. Seven community clubs offer hands-on projects, camps, and leadership opportunities, supported by 164 adult volunteers who gave 19,680 hours. Afterschool programs such as Water Wizards in Daly City and East Palo Alto, and culinary arts classes at Juvenile Hall, reach youth who might not otherwise join a club. Youth in 4-H Farms projects based in Pacifica, Woodside, San Carlos, and San Bruno, shone at the San Mateo County Fair.



**2,570 youth reached through 4-H in San Mateo & San Francisco Counties**

4-H Youth Development Advisor Dr. Sally Neas secured the $1.2 million ResilientRoots project to bring 4-H to youth who have been underserved by traditional clubs. This spring, afterschool sessions served 42 students at T.R. Pollicita Middle School in Daly City and Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Elementary in East Palo Alto, with expansion to more community partners underway.

## Master Food Preservers

43 Master Food Preserver volunteers gave 1,539 hours teaching safe home food preservation, logging 2,126 educational interactions. Workshops and events reached youth, adults and seniors at locations across the county including the East Palo Alto Community Garden, Phoenix Garden, Juvenile Hall, and the Redwood City School District.



## Community Health & Nutrition



CalFresh Healthy Living, UC delivered nutrition and physical activity education to 1,966 participants, mostly through schools, preschools, and family resource centers. Changes to policies, systems, and environments at partner sites reached 7,723 people.

With SNAP-Ed funding eliminated under H.R. 1, the program ended September 30, 2026. Staff trained partners, such as Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, to continue the work.

## Master Gardeners

208 UC Master Gardener volunteers gave 16,481 hours sharing research-based gardening and pest-management advice. They work through a free weekday helpline, plant clinics, workshops, and ten demonstration gardens across the Peninsula. Their Spring Garden Market drew 700+ visitors. Volunteers inaugurated a new rooftop demonstration garden at Redwood City's Veterans Memorial Building/ Senior Center.



## Elkus Research & Extension Center




Elkus Ranch, home to UCCE San Mateo-San Francisco's offices, is now an official UC ANR Research and Extension Center. The ranch welcomes nearly 8,000 visitors a year. From January to June 2026, 5,310 youth and adults joined field trips, camps, and events, and 36% of classes were scholarship-funded.



Andrew Miller, Area Director
San Mateo-San Francisco & Santa Clara Counties
cesanmateo.ucanr.edu

