

UC Cooperative Extension in Santa Barbara County

HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS • HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS • HEALTHY COMMUNITIES • HEALTHY CALIFORNIANS

FROM THE FIELD:

From Andrea Adams-Morden, Invasive Species Management Coordinator, Channel Islands Chapter-California Native Plant Society:

"I received training from UCCE on weeds and weed management, which has helped me to successfully lead groups to rehabilitate natural areas in Santa Barbara Country



Students learning culinary and nutrition skills during their afterschool 4-H Student Nutrition Advisory Council club meeting with CalFresh Healthy Living

NUTRITION EDUCATION

The UCCE Youth, Families and Communities programs work with low-income schools, communities and youth-serving organizations in northern Santa Barbara County to provide nutrition, food security, food preservation, and food safety support services. During Jan-March 2022, the CalFresh Healthy Living team restarted in-person nutrition, garden, and positive youth development programming after two-years of virtual programming. In addition, the UC Master Food Preservers started training new food preservation volunteers in Santa Barbara County. These efforts have been shown to support healthy individuals and communities through increasing youth access to and preference for healthy foods, and reducing food borne illness.

RANGELAND & WATERSHED

Findings from a new study have been accepted and is currently in press. This paper will be in the journal Rangeland Ecology and Management very soon. This study was conducted throughout California, including sites on the Central Coast, so it is relevant to our annual rangelands. California ground squirrels cause more economic damage on rangelands than any other rodent. In this paper we address forage losses due to ground squirrels. These losses are believed to be significant for ranchers. We evaluated the amount of standing crop removed by California ground squirrels across 16 sites at four different ground squirrel density categories in central California rangelands from 2019 through 2020. We also included precipitation and livestock grazing intensity to help account for their potential effect on forage production. We found that ground squirrel abundance negatively affected standing crop biomass, with available forage reduced by 59 lbs/acre at the end of the growing season per individual ground squirrel. This information will be useful to ranchers to help determine when control efforts may be needed for California ground squirrels given relative abundance of ground squirrels on their rangeland properties.



California ground squirrel eating grasses.

SUBTROPICAL CROPS

We have begun a study using hydrogels infused with pesticides to control Argentine Ant. This insect is the most disruptive for biocontrol in citrus. The ants forage for sugar and one of the best sources is honeydew excreted by such pests as aphids, Asian Citrus Psyllid, scale and mealybugs. By controlling the ants which protect their sources of sweets from predators and parasites, such as parasitic wasps and predatory lacewings, the pests species can be controlled. These hydrogels are similar to jello and can be made of seaweed. The gels swell up with a sugar, water and pesticide solution. The neat thing is that a very small fraction of the pesticide is used compared to a normal field application. The ants carry the sugary pesticide back to the underground nest, feeding it to the young. Slowly the ant colony declines.



Argentine Ant Protecting Scale

UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Barbara County

1105 E. Foster Rd., Suite F

Santa Maria, CA 93455

Phone: 805-781-5940

<http://cesantabarbara.ucanr.edu/>

Quarterly Report

January– March 2022

Submitted by:

[Katherine E. Soule, PhD](#)

Director