

# Guide to Ventura County's Gardening Resources

The information in this guide has been compiled as an aid to residents of Ventura County. The focus is on food gardening. To make corrections or get listed in future editions, please call 805/645-1455. You can find this guide on to the UC Cooperative Extension's website at [http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/mg\\_menu](http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/mg_menu).

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## Community Gardens

The following gardens have plots that can be used by members of the community, usually for a fee. A great way to grow food if you don't have a yard, get started in gardening in a supportive environment, or spend time with friends and neighbors in the garden.

### **KaBOOM! Playground Nyeland Acres**

Sonia Servantes (se habla Español)  
3334 Santa Clara Ave  
805/485-3111

Located at a community-installed children's park.  
16 garden plots.  
No fee.

### **Oak Park Community Garden**

401 Kanan Rd  
818/400-5814  
[www.oakparkcommunitygarden.org](http://www.oakparkcommunitygarden.org)

Located on the corner of Kanan Rd & Sunnycrest Dr.  
66 organic garden plots.  
\$84/yr. + 2 hrs help with garden/mo. + deposit.

### **Ojai Community Demonstration Garden**

401 S. Ventura St  
[ojaidemogarden@yahoo.com](mailto:ojaidemogarden@yahoo.com)

Located behind city hall in Ojai.  
Classes offered regularly.  
7 organic garden plots.  
No fee. Must attend monthly meeting and help with garden every month.

### **Senior Vegetable Garden, Oxnard**

531 E. Pleasant Valley Rd  
805/385-8028

Located next to the Fire Station.  
18 garden plots.  
Available to those over 55 years of age.  
\$55/yr.  
Video: <http://web.venturacountystar.com/special/2007/06/gardenshow/gardenshow.html>

### **Las Flores Community Garden Thousand Oaks**

1300 Avenida de las Flores  
[fmacune@hotmail.com](mailto:fmacune@hotmail.com) or  
[roeroe85@hotmail.com](mailto:roeroe85@hotmail.com)

Located near Conejo Creek Dog Park & Conejo Creek NW Equestrian Area, west of Hwy 23.  
99 organic garden plots.  
\$45/yr. + 1 hr help with garden/mo. + deposit.  
Video: <http://gallery.venturacountystar.com/video.cfm?VideoID=288>

### **Cornucopia Community Garden Ventura**

Telephone Rd near Johnson Dr  
805/658-4754

Located under the powerlines.  
148 organic garden plots.  
\$75/six mo. + deposit.  
Fee includes gardening handbook.

### **Jordan Avenue Community Garden, Ventura**

336 Jordan Ave  
805/659-1947

Located next to a church in a residential neighborhood.  
20 organic garden plots.  
\$60/yr.

*Many local elementary schools have food gardens as do a number of senior apartment complexes and senior programs (such as HELP of Ojai). Extra helping hands are generally welcomed in these gardens.*



Photo: [www.venturacountystar.com](http://www.venturacountystar.com)



Ojai Community Demonstration Garden  
Photo: Les Dublin



Photo: [www.venturacountystar.com](http://www.venturacountystar.com)



Jordan Avenue Community Garden

# Gardening Groups

We have many different types of gardening clubs and groups in Ventura County. They often have monthly meetings, and all welcome new members. Some groups have a narrow focus, such as organic gardening, others are broader in their focus, covering a wide range of gardening topics.

## Conejo Organic Garden and Herb Society

Sharon Borrosco  
805/499-4797

<http://conejoorganicgardening.org>

Dedicated to learning and teaching about principles and practices that promote successful earth-friendly living. Meet once a month.

## Conejo Valley Garden Club

Lillian Trevisan  
805/498-1623

<http://conejovalleygardenclub.blogspot.com>

Vegetable and general landscape gardening. Classes. Tours. Newsletter. New members welcome. Meet 3rd Wednesday of month, 9:00 am. United Methodist Church  
1000 Janss Rd, Thousand Oaks

## Ojai Valley Garden Club

Joanna Berry  
805/649-1920

Devoted to development of all phases of gardening, betterment and beautification of community, and protection and conservation of natural resources. Meet 2nd Wednesday of month, 10:00 am. Ojai Woman's Club, 441 E. Ojai Ave, Ojai

## Ojai Valley Green Coalition, Food and Agriculture Committee, Home Farming Subcommittee

[dulanie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dulanie@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.ojaivalleygreencoalition.org/action-committees/food-agriculture/](http://www.ojaivalleygreencoalition.org/action-committees/food-agriculture/)

Working to become better home farmers, build soil fertility, install more gardens and work as teams in each others gardens. Meeting times and place change. See website.

## Pleasant Valley Garden Club

Sandy Roth  
805/484-5484

Meet 3rd Thursday month, Sept-May, social time 9 am, meeting 9:30 am. Seventh Day Adventist Church  
3975 Las Posas Rd, Camarillo  
Speakers, field trips. Guests welcome.

## Permaculture Guild, South Coast

Join listserv to receive announcements of classes - <https://www.arashi.com/mailman/listinfo.cgi/scpg>

Links to info - [www.islandseed.com/scpg.html](http://www.islandseed.com/scpg.html)

## Permaculture Guild, Ojai

[sarabrookebenjamin@gmail.com](mailto:sarabrookebenjamin@gmail.com)

Join Ojai permaculturist blog - [www.wiserearth.org/group/ojaipermacultureguild](http://www.wiserearth.org/group/ojaipermacultureguild)

Permaculture—from permanent and agriculture—is an integrated design philosophy that encompasses gardening, architecture, horticulture, ecology, even money management and community design. The basic approach is to create sustainable systems that provide for their own needs and recycle their waste.

## Rare Fruit Growers

Ventura/Santa Barbara Chapter  
805/968-0989

[ventura@crfg.org](mailto:ventura@crfg.org) or  
[beardtropics@earthlink.net](mailto:beardtropics@earthlink.net)  
[www.crfg.org/local/chapters/ca\\_v\\_sb.html](http://www.crfg.org/local/chapters/ca_v_sb.html)

The largest amateur fruit-growing organization in the world. Focused on species not native to nor grown commercially in any given area. Mission is to share knowledge with home growers in particular and with anyone else in the world having an interest in edible plant cultivation.

Monthly meetings. Different locations.

## Ventura County Garden Club

805/983-1121

Meet 1st Wednesday of month, 1:00 pm. St. Pauls Episcopal Church  
177 N, 7 th St, Santa Paula



Las Flores Community Garden  
Photo: [www.venturacountystar.com](http://www.venturacountystar.com)



Oak Park Community Garden  
Photo: [www.venturacountystar.com](http://www.venturacountystar.com)



Foster Cole, Oxnard Senior Vegetable Garden  
Photo: [www.venturacountystar.com](http://www.venturacountystar.com)

# Gardening Classes

Gardening classes are offered by the following entities, as well as some of the community gardens and clubs listed on the previous pages. Contact them for current class offerings.

**Fairview Gardens  
Center for Urban Agriculture**  
598 North Fairview Ave, Goleta  
805/967-7369  
[www.fairviewgardens.org/classes\\_classes.html](http://www.fairviewgardens.org/classes_classes.html)

Worth the drive! An internationally-respected model for small-scale urban food production, agricultural preservation, farm-based education and community supported agriculture (CSA). Classes, tours, lectures.

**Master Gardener Training Program  
UC Cooperative Extension**  
805/645-1455  
[ljhaynes@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ljhaynes@ucdavis.edu)  
[http://groups.ucanr.org/VCMG/About\\_Us/](http://groups.ucanr.org/VCMG/About_Us/)

See description of the Master Gardener Training Program on the next page.

**Ojai's Center for Regenerative  
Agriculture**  
805/390 0747  
[david@ojaicra.org](mailto:david@ojaicra.org)  
[www.ojaicra.org/](http://www.ojaicra.org/)

Offers tours of an organic farm to children and adults. Classes on sustainable and organic food growing strategies and permaculture.

**Ojai Community Demonstration  
Garden**  
401 S. Ventura St  
[ojaidemogarden@yahoo.com](mailto:ojaidemogarden@yahoo.com)

Located behind city hall in Ojai. A variety of classes are offered on a regular basis at the garden. Ask to get on the email list to be notified of upcoming classes.

**Oxnard Recreation & Community  
Services**  
805/385-7995  
[oxnardrec@ci.oxnard.ca.us](mailto:oxnardrec@ci.oxnard.ca.us)  
[www.oxnardrec.org/Default.aspx?DepartmentID=17](http://www.oxnardrec.org/Default.aspx?DepartmentID=17)

Offer a series of classes taught by Master Gardeners.

**Quail Springs: Learning Oasis  
& Permaculture Farm**  
805/886-7239  
Upper Cuyama Valley  
[www.quailsprings.org/](http://www.quailsprings.org/)

Regularly offers permaculture classes (see permaculture description above under Permaculture Guild).

**Rancho Simi Park District**  
805/583-6059  
[www.rsprd.org/rec/brochures/opbrochures.html](http://www.rsprd.org/rec/brochures/opbrochures.html)

Offer a series of classes taught by Master Gardeners.  
For those at least 50 years of age.

**UC Hansen Agricultural Center  
at the Faulkner Farm**  
14292 W. Telegraph Rd, Santa Paula  
805/662-6948  
[sbmiller@ucdavis.edu](mailto:sbmiller@ucdavis.edu)  
<http://groups.ucanr.org/Hansen/Education%5Fand%5FOutreach/>

Ventura County's gem! A 27-acre farm and education center working to ensure sustainability and viability of agriculture in Ventura County. Home vegetable & fruit gardening class held seasonally. Tours of the farm, lectures.

*Pruning Class  
Ojai Community Demonstration Garden*



**Ventura College**  
4667 Telegraph Rd, Ventura  
805/654-6400  
<http://students.vcccd.edu/catalogs.htm>  
Search the class guide for the college's current offerings.

**Ventura Parks & Recreation  
Department**  
805/658-4726  
[www.cityofventura.net/resident\\_resources/myventura](http://www.cityofventura.net/resident_resources/myventura)

Search the class guide for the city's current offerings.

*Faulkner Farm, Santa Paula  
Home of the UC Hansen Agricultural Center*



# Ventura County Master Gardeners

Ventura County is fortunate to have a very strong Master Gardener Program. Take advantage of their expertise to get your gardening questions answered, or consider becoming a Master Gardener yourself.

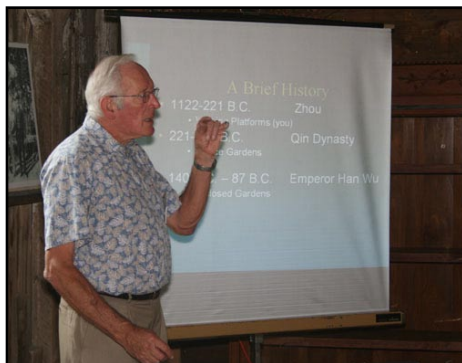
## Master Gardener Helpline

UC Cooperative Extension Office  
669 County Square Dr, Ste 100, Ventura  
805/645-1455  
mgventura@ucdavis.edu

The Master Gardeners are available to answer your questions. They can also send you helpful brochures and refer you to informative websites and other resources.

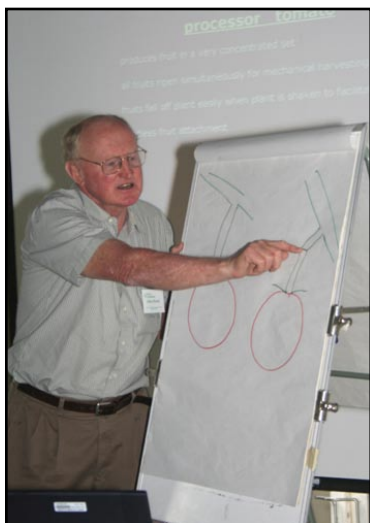
Call, email, or stop by with your gardening questions.

Tuesday and Thursday, 1-4 pm



Master Gardeners assist with garden lectures, exhibits, demonstrations, community gardening, the phone helpline, research, and many other projects.

One new “class” of Master Gardeners is trained each year beginning in January, though those interested in this popular program need to attend an orientation in the fall prior.



## Master Gardener Training Program UC Cooperative Extension

805/645-1455  
ljhaynes@ucdavis.edu  
[http://groups.ucanr.org/VCMG/  
About\\_Us/](http://groups.ucanr.org/VCMG/About_Us/)

The Master Gardener Program is a two-part educational program in which volunteers are provided with 80 hours of intense home horticulture training, and in return they “pay back” the UC extension office by providing science-based information on horticulture and environmentally sound gardening practices to the community.

Master  
Gardener

## Master Gardener Speakers Available

Call the Master Gardener Program at 805/645-1455 to request a presentation for your group.

Here are some of our popular topics:

- Making Compost
- Vegetable Composting
- Container Gardening
- Saving Your Own Vegetable Seeds
- Pruning
- Fruit Gardening
- Pest Control
- Soils
- Garden Design/Plant Selection
- Low Cost/No Cost Gardening



## Home Garden Installation

Food gardening is hot right now. All over the country, and the world, there are groups working to promote the return of gardening and small-scale food farming or “urban agriculture” - for the security and sanity it offers in these changing and challenging times. Helping others install home gardens is a new trend growing out of this movement.



Photo: Priscilia Cisneros

### The Grow Food Party

In Ojai: [dulanie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dulanie@sbcglobal.net)

In Ventura: Rebecca Sexauer, [snshine333@gmail.com](mailto:snshine333@gmail.com) or Leticia Sandoval, 805/236-4025 [growfoodpartycrew@gmail.com](mailto:growfoodpartycrew@gmail.com)

Video: [www.ojaitv.com/2009/01/grow-food-garden-party/](http://www.ojaitv.com/2009/01/grow-food-garden-party/)

The Grow Food Party Crew is a playful approach to growing food and building community. The goal is to inspire an ever-expanding group of people to create and maintain vegetable gardens, fruit orchards and edible landscaping.

Much like an old-fashioned barn raising, friends and neighbors gather with potluck meals, music, kids, tools and a party atmosphere to transform the work into pleasure. The Grow Food Party Crew helps would-be gardeners establish their own Party Crews, to help design and install home food production block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood.

### Landscaping Companies

There is a growing trend for traditional landscaping companies to offer not only food garden installation, but also maintenance. Ask around.

Grow Food Party installing a garden in a front yard in Ventura.  
Photo: [www.venturacountystar.com](http://www.venturacountystar.com)



### Ventura City Corps

805/653-2351

[www.venturacitycorps.org](http://www.venturacitycorps.org)

City Corps is a youth training and leadership program that seeks to nurture personal initiative, foster leadership development, and teach civic responsibility and active citizenship to its members. Installation of food gardens at schools and homes is one of their new community service programs.

## Food Banks

The following organizations feed people in need. Donations of extra garden produce are welcome. Some also have “gleaning” programs where volunteers come to your garden (or field) and pick the fruit off your tree or harvest your extra produce.

### FOOD Share, Inc.

4156 South Bank Rd, Oxnard

805/983-7100

[www.foodshare.com](http://www.foodshare.com)

Accepts food donations. Food gleaning.

### HELP of Ojai

111 W. Santa Ana St, Ojai

805/207-8946

[www.helpofojai.org](http://www.helpofojai.org)

Accepts food donations. Food gleaning.

### MANNA:

The Conejo Valley Food Bank

3020 Crescent Way, Thousand Oaks

805/497-4959

[www.mannaconejo.org/](http://www.mannaconejo.org/)

Accepts food donations.

Grow Food Party installing a garden in Ventura.  
Photo: Priscilia Cisneros



Article courtesy of the Ventura County Star.

## Eye on the Environment: Compost, mulch available locally

By David Goldstein  
Guest writer

Sunday, February 17, 2008

Do you know the difference between compost and mulch? Although sometimes made from the same material, they look different, and they are used differently.

Compost is fully decomposed organic material, and gardeners usually use it as a soil amendment, working it into existing soil to help plants grow. In contrast, mulch is slower to decompose and is usually placed on top of soil to reduce erosion, stop weeds, retain soil moisture and moderate soil temperature. Both can be made of items such as ground-up wood, but compost is processed to the point of decomposition before it is used.

Using compost and mulch from local sources helps both our environment and our economy. Using local compost and mulch keeps material out of landfills and recycles nutrients back to the soil. Such use also reduces disposal costs, supports local businesses and creates jobs.

One local generator of compost actually provides the material to the public free of charge. The Ojai Valley Sanitary District composts a mixture of horse-stall bedding and biosolids during dry weather, producing a nutrient-rich soil especially useful for nonfood crops such as ornamental flowers.

Unlike some sewage-derived compost, the district's compost is certified as Class A, Exceptional Quality, because of the way it is processed and because the incoming material does not have excessive contaminants such as heavy metals.

Before being distributed as compost, the material is processed in a bacteria reactor, where microorganisms eat all of it, digesting it into a natural nutrient for plants.

Availability is limited, so call 646-5548 before going to pick up a load.

Another inexpensive source of local compost is made from a processed and decomposed mixture of hay and horse manure, available from the California Mushroom Farm in Ventura. The farm is one of the biggest recyclers in the county, collecting stall bedding from horse racetracks all over the region. After the material is decomposed in long, steaming rows, the compost is laid out on acres of enclosed shelves in dark, enclosed structures, and mushrooms are grown in it. Workers harvest the mushroom crops, then clear out the compost and start again.

To pick up some of the "spent mushroom compost substrate," call 339-2724.

A wider variety of compost products is available from Agromin at Ormond Beach near Oxnard. It makes custom blends of compost for every gardening need and uses a wide variety of inputs.

Last year, Agromin began a pilot program and received temporary permission to add certain types of food waste to the compost piles. It even composts tomatoes from packing plants and coffee grounds from a drink manufacturer.

With its high-quality compost, it serves clients ranging from local landscapers to Oprah Winfrey's garden in Montecito. You can contact it at 650-1616 to pick up compost or have it delivered for an extra charge.

In the east county, American Soil Amendment Products near Simi Valley runs a "full-circle" composting operation. It provides lumber-mill shavings to local ranches for horse bedding, collects the

Building soil is one of the most important steps in successful food gardening. This article provides information on sources of locally-made compost for soil building (as well as mulch for use on top of the soil). *Note: use compost made from biosolids in the non-food parts of your landscape only.*



used bedding, composts it, screens out any leftover manure, blends it with other organic materials, and sells the resulting compost, sometimes to those same ranches. The company can be reached at 578-0052.

At the Simi Valley Landfill, California Wood Recycling operates grinders turning wood and landscape waste into mulch. The mulch is then sold to landscapers, trucked to the Agromin compost facility, burned for energy in Delano, or spread over the landfill to combat erosion, control dust or provide daily cover. The company can be reached at 650-1616.

Another local source of mulch is the Ojai Valley Organics Recycling Center, at 640-9194. Santa Clara Organics, which operates that center, does not make compost. Instead, it grinds incoming wood and yard clippings, offers the mulch for pickup or delivery and uses whatever it doesn't sell on its organic orange farm near Fillmore.

Using locally produced compost and mulch is a great way to keep your eye on the environment.

— David Goldstein is an environmental resource analyst for the county of Ventura.