

Volume 1 Issue 3

March 2025

The RECap

*A newsletter from South Coast Research and Extension Center
and UC Cooperative Extension Orange County*



Happy Spring! The days are slowly getting longer and it's finally lighter later in the day.

Featuring:

- Research Spotlight
- In the Media
- Employee Spotlight
- Pro Tips
- SCRECipes
- Upcoming Events

In this issue we are excited to highlight work that our UC ANR advisors have done and continue to do to combat food waste, because **April is Food Waste Prevention Month!** Coincidentally, our employee spotlight this month features **Natalie Levy**, our Soil Health and Organic Materials Management Advisor, whose work often involves managing food waste and compost. We hope you enjoy Issue 3 of The RECap!

Sincerely,
Lindsey Pedroncelli, Interim Director of South Coast REC
and
Rita Clemons, Director of UCCE Orange County

P.S. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future, please unsubscribe at the bottom of this email.

Research Spotlight

Food Waste Prevention

The month of April is **Food Waste Month** and the week of April 7 through 13 is specifically focused on **Food Waste Prevention**. Food waste is an important issue in California and throughout the US.

Here are some facts:



- The United States is losing up to 30-40% of its food from farm, to fork, to landfill. Uneaten food wastes enormous quantities of precious land, water, energy, fertilizer, human resources, and money.
- In California, nearly 5 million people are food insecure, lacking regular or reliable access to enough food. Roughly 1 in 8 Californians are experiencing hunger, and 1 in 5 of those are children.
- Food waste also represents the largest single category of waste in landfills in the US. Food waste decaying in landfills emits methane, a powerful greenhouse gas linked to climate change.



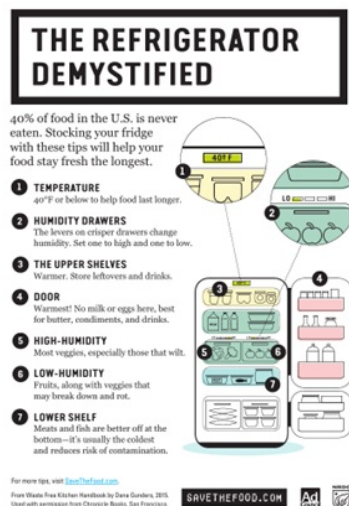
Natalie Price, Community Nutrition and Health Advisor in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, co-chaired the Orange County Food Waste Taskforce from 2019-2022. The Taskforce created a social media guide that agencies can use to promote food waste awareness during Food Waste Prevention Week/Month.

Natalie also collaborated with other advisors to develop a 5-part lesson series on household food waste reduction for low-income audiences (funded by [ReFED](#)). She pilot tested the curriculum at a school site in Orange County in August 2024 and hopes to officially launch the curriculum soon.

What can you do to prevent food waste?

Here are some tips:

- Learn to eat “ugly” produce. Even if it's oddly shaped it's still safe to eat!
- [Use your leftovers in creative ways.](#)
- [Freeze](#) or preserve food before it goes bad. Use the [Food Keeper App](#) to help you figure out if food is still good.
- Reduce the amount of food you buy, just buy what you need. This also saves you money! Try this [meal planner tool](#) or this [meal planner tool](#).
- [Properly store your food](#) to optimize how long it's fresh.
- [Learn the difference](#) between “sell by”, “use by”, and “best by” dates.



Click to enlarge the image.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SOUTH COAST RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER IS NOW ACCEPTING RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Submit your proposal by April 28, 2025 to be considered for the 2025-2026 season.

- Located in temperate Irvine, CA
- ~20 acres of available field space
- Discounted rates for UC researchers
- Strong community connections to facilitate outreach and extension

Questions?

- Give us a call 949-853-1810
- Email us southcoastrec@ucanr.edu
- Visit our website screc.ucanr.edu



Visit bit.ly/SCREC_proposal or scan the QR code to submit your proposal today.

Interested in conducting research at South Coast REC?

Submit your research proposal today!

Submit your research proposal by April 28, 2025 to have your project considered for our 2025-2026 season.

To view our current recharge rates, please visit [our website](#).

Questions? Contact Lindsey Pedroncelli Lrpedroncelli@ucanr.edu

Submit A Proposal

Click to enlarge image

In the media

L.A. coyotes less likely to spend time in wealthy areas in their home range, study finds

Human-Wildlife Interactions Advisor, [Niamh Quinn](#), is featured in [this news article](#), that talks about a [recent study](#) she published.



Employee Spotlight

Get to know the folks who work with South Coast REC and UCCE Orange County.

Get to know

Natalie Levy

Soil Health and Organic Materials Management Advisor for Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties

Hi, my name is Natalie Levy, and I am the Soil Health and Organic Materials Management Advisor. I have been in this position for 10 months. I serve Orange, Los Angeles, and San Diego counties in this role, and my office is located at South Coast REC (SCREC). Prior to this position, I worked at SCREC as an Associate Specialist for Water Resources for two years. I have enjoyed working at this exceptional field station and have deeply appreciated the opportunities SCREC has provided me with these last few years to build a community of practice in this region.



What does a "typical" day look like for you?

One of the best parts of my job is that there's no such thing as a "typical" day. Each day

brings a mix of community education, outreach, and field research projects. I also work with a diverse group of clients from both the public and private sectors across Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties. Every day is a new opportunity to learn, connect, and contribute to the field of soil health.

Recycled materials like compost and mulch are a critical piece to improving and protecting soil health in both urban and agricultural communities across Southern California. As a Cooperative Extension advisor, I have the privilege of collaborating with three of our statewide programs—the Master Gardeners, Master Food Preservers, and 4-H Youth Development. I'm excited to collaborate further with these programs to help expand the education and outreach I am currently doing on diverting organic waste from landfills to reach an even greater and more diverse audience.

What part of your work are you most excited about or proud of right now?

Right now, I'm particularly excited about our ongoing Climate Ready Vines trial at SCREC. In this project, we're testing different watering schedules to determine which vines thrive with less water in this climate. The goal is to identify vines that not only grow well on limited water but also help cool urban areas, especially where high heat is a concern.

Vines can absorb heat energy through their leaves and provide shade, making them a great option for cooling spaces—especially in neighborhoods where trees may not be a feasible option. By strategically planting fast-growing vines near structures, we can offer much-needed relief from extreme summer temperatures while using significantly less water. Stay tuned for more results from this project!

What's your favorite fruit/vegetable we grow at SCREC?

Pumpkins, pumpkins, and more pumpkins!! I love the fall pumpkin u-pick events at SCREC. I especially love watching all the different varieties of pumpkins grow over the season and am consistently impressed by how well they grow right here at our facility.

To get in contact with Natalie, [email nlevy@ucanr.edu](mailto:nlevy@ucanr.edu) or [connect with her on LinkedIn](#).

Pro Tips

Tips, tricks, and advice from our program experts

Soils



Understanding the unique nutrient profile and pH balance of your soil is the first step toward cultivating thriving plants and maximizing crop yields. By conducting a thorough soil analysis, you can identify specific deficiencies and strategically amend your soil with the right nutrients, creating an optimal growth environment. This proactive approach not only

Container Gardening



Discover the world of container plants, where gardening meets creativity. Perfect for urban dwellers and those with limited outdoor spaces, these versatile plants allow you to cultivate stunning blooms and delicious produce right on your patio or balcony. It provides for a flexible planting site, freedom from poor soil, and the ability to

Sun vs. Shade



When planning your garden, understanding the differences between shade and sun plants is crucial for cultivating a thriving landscape. Shade plants, such as ferns and hostas, thrive in low-light conditions and can add lush greenery to darker corners of your yard. Conversely, sun-loving plants like sunflowers and lavender require full sunlight to flourish,

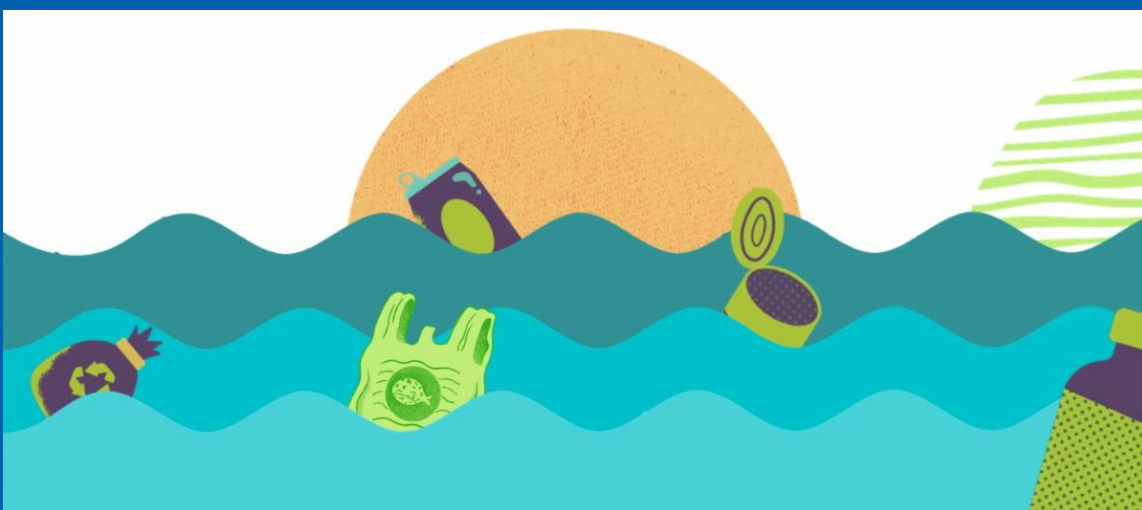
enhances plant health but also leads to richer harvests and a more sustainable gardening or farming practice. Don't leave your soil's health to chance; invest in soil testing and amending today for a flourishing tomorrow.

[Learn more.](#)

move plants around with the seasons. With the right combination of soil, drainage, and sunlight, you can transform any small area into a vibrant green oasis. Embrace the joy of gardening with container plants and elevate your living space with nature's beauty, all while enjoying the satisfaction of nurturing your own plants.

offering vibrant colors and delightful fragrances. By selecting the appropriate plants for their designated light conditions, you can create a balanced and beautiful garden that not only enhances your outdoor space but also supports local wildlife. Whether you have a sun-drenched patio or a shaded nook, choosing the right plants will ensure your garden blooms brilliantly all season long. [Learn more.](#)

Drinking and Environmental Water Quality



Did You Know?

Over 70,000 chemicals are used in everyday products. Some of these are contaminants of emerging concerns (CECs). CECs refer to a broad class of chemicals identified as potential threats to human health and the environment but are not routinely monitored in drinking water supplies.

From the medications we take to the lotions we slather on, CECs can find their way into our precious water supply. Even trace amounts can disrupt aquatic ecosystems and impact our health.

Here's a shocking fun fact: More than 80% of U.S. rivers and streams tested contain at least ONE contaminant! Isn't that wild?

Stay tuned for our upcoming RECap

¿Sabías que...?

¿Se utilizan más de 70,000 químicos en los productos de uso diario? Algunos de estos son contaminantes de preocupación emergente (CECs). Los CECs abarcan una amplia clase de sustancias químicas identificadas como posibles amenazas para la salud humana y el medio ambiente, pero que no se monitorean de manera rutinaria en los suministros de agua potable.

Desde los medicamentos que tomamos hasta las lociones que nos aplicamos, los CECs pueden llegar a nuestras valiosas fuentes de agua. Incluso en cantidades mínimas, pueden alterar los ecosistemas acuáticos y afectar nuestra salud.

Aquí tienes un dato impactante: ¡Más del 80 % de los ríos y arroyos de

newsletter, where we'll dive deeper into individual CECs. Don't forget to follow us on [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [X](#), formerly Twitter, for biweekly updates on "Everything Water!"

Now it's your turn! What's one thing YOU do to reduce CECs in your life? Please share your tips in the comments below or contact us at anrsocalwater@gmail.com! Let's fight for clean water and a healthier planet!

Read the blog post

EE.UU. analizados contienen al menos UN contaminante! ¿Increíble, verdad?

¡Estate atento a nuestro próximo boletín RECap, donde profundizaremos en contaminantes específicos! No olvides seguirnos en [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), y [X](#), antes Twitter, para recibir actualizaciones quincenales sobre "Todo sobre el agua".

Ahora te toca a ti: ¿Qué haces para reducir los CECs en tu vida? Por favor, comparte tus consejos en los comentarios abajo o contáctanos en anrsocalwater@gmail.com. ¡Luchemos juntos por agua limpia y un planeta más saludable!

lee la publicación del blog

SCRECipes

South Coast REC-ipes: delicious dishes made with SCREC-grown produce



Baked pasta with zucchini and tomatoes

submitted by Natalie Levy

Ingredients:

- Zucchini
- Tomatoes
- Pasta
- Ricotta cheese
- Parmesan cheese
- Mozzarella cheese
- Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper

Instructions:

- Heat oven to 350 degrees F.
- Sauté veggies on medium heat. Take a few spoonfuls of ricotta cheese and add to the sauté. Add in some Italian seasoning, salt, pepper. Cook for ~10 minutes.
- Boil water and cook pasta of choice. Once the pasta is done, drain.
- Add the pasta to the baking dish, as the bottom layer. Take the veggie ricotta mix and add on top. Top all with Parmesan and mozzarella cheese.
- Bake for 12 to 15 minutes and then enjoy!

Upcoming Events

South Coast REC Events

Potato U-Pick



Saturday, April 12, 2025
(Rain or Shine)
9:00am - 10:00am
OR
10:30am-11:30am

South Coast Research &
Extension Center
7601 Irvine Blvd. Irvine, 92618

Space is limited and spots sell out fast so **register** as soon as possible if you are interested!

Register Here

We're tuber-excited to bring back our annual South Coast REC Potato U-Pick!

Fee: \$20.00 per group of four - includes (1) 10 lb. bag per group - CASH or CHECK ONLY. Checks should be made out to UC REGENTS

All proceeds benefit our outreach and extension activities for the local community.

Register for one of the available sessions (space is limited, one bag per person sold on site).

A confirmation will be emailed with directions, etc. once your reservation has been completed.

Cancellation Policy: No refunds.

All participants must wear closed-toe shoes that can get muddy.

Questions, contact us at: tjmajcherek@ucanr.edu

4-H Youth Development Events



Join OC 4-H as we

- Still exhibits like ceramics, photography, decorated cakes
- Livestock shows & demonstrations
- Stage with presentation, demonstrations, make &

showcase youth projects!

More Info Here

- take activities
- Community service project table
- Outreach table

This event is free! Parking at the Fairgrounds is \$15

UC Master Gardener Events

Master Gardener Expo & Plant Giveaway

Come to the inaugural Master Gardeners Expo at the Norman Murray Center in Mission Viejo for information, inspiration, and answers to tough plant problems.



**Saturday, April 12, 2025
9 am – 1 pm
This event is free!**

**Norman P. Murray Community
and Senior Center**

**23492 Veterans Way
Mission Viejo, CA 92692-274**

**Event includes one free plant
for each family (first 500).
Additional plants start at \$2.**

At the expo, you can participate in engaging Lightning Talks and demonstrations about:

- Advice on growing: tomatoes, peppers, veggies, herbs, plumeria, and more
- Ask-a-Master-Gardener: get answers to your tough gardening problems
- Succulents: succulent centerpiece demonstration/sale (cash), and make-and-take succulent-egg activity (limited quantities on both, come early)
- California natives, including milkweed
- Emerging tree pests: learn about new invasive pest threats to trees
- Bees and pollinators in your garden
- Hydroponics: learn about hydroponics, and do a make-and-take hydroponic lettuce (\$7 cash)
- Pest Management: learn how to manage mosquitoes, ants and other pests
- Kids/adults coloring fun
- Mission Viejo Library seed library: learn about this great source of free seeds
- Master Food Preservers: learn about transforming your garden bounty into delectable edibles
- Vermiculture

UC Master Food Preserver Events

Pressure Canning Salmon Workshop

**April 8, 2025 11am-3pm
7601 Irvine Blvd, Irvine, CA
92618**

Have you always wanted to Pressure Can fish? Well, now is your chance to learn the safe way to do just that during this \$45

Pressure Canning Salmon
with UCCE Master Food Preservers of Orange County

Tuesday, April 8, 2025
Time: 11:00-3:00 pm (bring a bag lunch)
Cost: \$45

UCANR South Coast Research & Extension Center, 7601 Irvine Blvd, Irvine, CA 92618



Register online:
<https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=44178>

Have you always wanted to Pressure Can fish? Well, now is your chance to learn the safe way to do just that. Please plan on joining us on Tuesday, April 8th when the UC Master Food Preservers of Orange County will be teaching a class on how to Pressure Can Salmon. In addition to taking a jar of salmon home, you will create a seasoning mix to take as well.

If you want to hone your pressure canning skills, hang out with your friends and learn something new, or join a group of fun Master Food Preservers, then this is the place to be!

There will be 1 workshop offered. This class is limited to the first 16 registrants.

If you need an accommodation to be able to participate, please contact the Master Food Preserver Program at ucce-mfp@ucanr.edu at least 2 weeks prior to the event.

Register and pay online by April 6, 2025 and bring a printed or digital copy of your confirmation proof-of-payment email to class.

Closed-toe shoes are required. Please tie back long hair for this class. Please bring an apron from home. If you cannot bring an apron, please select \$5 cleaning fee for a loaner apron. All ingredients and kitchen tools will be provided at the class.

Cancellation Policy: No refunds two weeks prior to workshop, as materials will have been bought.

Directions: to the location are shown on the home page of the website.
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/MFPOC/>

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UCCE Master Food Preserver Program
Orange County

Scan the QR code at the right to go to our website at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/MFPOC/>
Send your questions to ucce-mfp@ucanr.edu or ucce-mfp@ucanr.edu

Facebook: @UCCE Master Food Preserver OC, Twitter: @MFPOC1, Instagram: master_food_preservers_oc

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[Click to enlarge image](#)

Register Here

workshop hosted by the **UC Master Food Preservers of Orange County** In addition to taking a jar of salmon home, you will create a seasoning mix to take as well.

More information here:
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/MFPOC/Events/index.cfm>

California Master Beekeeper Program Events



Interested in learning about beekeeping? Sign up for a CAMBP OC Workshop for Beekeepers!

Workshop topics include:

- Checking overwinter colonies
- Managing for honey production
- Swarming & robbing prevention
- Checking for diseases & queen health
- Preparing a split to requeen
- Feeding techniques
- Completing a hive inspection
- Strategies to requeen
- Mite test load & control
- Honey extraction



Have you ever toured an apiary? Sign up for a California Master Beekeeper Apiary Tour!

Tours are from 10am-12pm on the following dates:

- Friday, April 25th
- Friday, May 16th
- Saturday, May 24th
- Friday, June 6th
- Saturday, June 14th
- Friday, July 11th
- Saturday, August 23rd
- Saturday, September 6th

Register Here

technique

Upcoming workshops are on:

- April 19, 2025
- July 12, 2025
- October 18, 2025

Register Here



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