

Volume 1 Issue 9

September 2025

# The RECap

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



Fall is here and we are gearing up for our Annual Urban Ag and Garden Expo on October 11th! [Will we see you there?](#)

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## Featuring:

- Event Recap
  - Research Spotlight
  - Pro Tips
  - Upcoming Events
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The next few months at South Coast REC are some of my favorites. During our Urban Ag and Garden Expo we'll also have our Pumpkin U-pick. Later in the fall we'll have our Fall Veggie U-pick and our Persimmon U-pick. All of these u-pick events are great fun for the whole family, and they really highlight our mission of educating the community about where their food comes from. Stay tuned for the specific dates, pending harvest availability!

In this issue, we are proud to feature overviews of recent events, new research findings, and several upcoming events.

Sincerely,  
Lindsey Pedroncelli, Ph.D., Interim Director of South Coast REC

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

## Event Recap

**Irvine Harvest Heroes**



*(left to right) Jason Suppes and Tammy Majcherek, South Coast REC's Community Education Specialists, and Lindsey Pedroncelli, Director, hosted a booth at Tanaka Farms to highlight the research and extension activities at South Coast REC.*

*Photo by Diana Cervantes*



*Lindsey Pedroncelli, South Coast REC Director, accepted the certificate of recognition from Mayor Agran.*

On September 13th, South Coast Research and Extension Center was recognized by the Mayor of the City of Irvine as an Irvine Harvest Hero. Held at [Tanaka Farms](#), the inaugural [Irvine Harvest Heroes event](#) celebrated the rich history and exciting future of agriculture in Irvine, and recognized the farmers, nurseries, and families who have shaped the agriculture industry in the city and throughout Orange County. We are so honored to be recognized and to have the strong support of Mayor Agran!

## Coffee Workshop



*Ramiro Lobo, Small Farms Advisor, talks with workshop attendees about coffee seedlings in the greenhouse.*

In collaboration with [Ramiro Lobo](#), Small Farms Advisor for UCCE San Diego County, and [Darlene Ruiz](#), Small Farms Research Associate for UCCE San Diego County, South Coast REC hosted a Coffee Workshop on September 15th!

The event was very well attended and featured presentations about the history of growing coffee, differences in coffee varieties, growing coffee in California, and more. Participants then had the opportunity to walk through a coffee cupping demonstration, experiencing the

## Terra Madre Americas



*Lindsey Pedroncelli (right), South Coast REC Director, talks with event attendees about the cherimoya, a specialty crop grown at South Coast REC.*

South Coast REC Director Lindsey Pedroncelli participated in [Terra Madre Americas](#), a Slow Food event in Sacramento on September 26-28, 2025. The event brought together farmers, ranchers, artisan vendors, chefs, food-lovers, and more for a weekend filled with delicious food and drink tastings, educational panels, interactive demonstrations, music, and fun!

Lindsey is shown in the photo above talking with attendees about cherimoyas, which were previously



unique flavors and aromas of several different types of coffee. They then explored the lathhouse, where mature coffee plants are growing, and the greenhouse, where coffee seedlings are being propagated.



*Participants learned about and got to see first-hand the differences between natural (left), washed (middle), and honey (right) processed coffee beans.*

used in a research study at South Coast REC and are now a focal point of outreach and education events at the REC. Attendees were excited to hear from Lindsey about the mission of the [UC ANR Research and Extension Center System](#), and were especially thrilled to learn about [Harvest Solutions Farm](#), the result of a unique collaboration that South Coast REC has with [Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County](#) and [Solutions for Urban Agriculture](#). Harvest Solutions Farm uses approximately 40 acres at South Coast REC to grow fresh produce exclusively for the food bank. To learn more about Harvest Solutions Farm or to volunteer, [visit their website](#).

## Research Spotlight

### Biodegradable Mulches for a Greener Future

by Amrita Mukherjee, UCCE San Bernardino

A recent UC Cooperative Extension study in San Bernardino County compared biodegradable and organic mulches with traditional plastic film in hillside strawberry production. Trials with the cultivars 'Albion' and 'Portola' showed that coconut liner and biodegradable plastic mulch produced 33–38% higher yields than bare soil, while black plastic and paper mulch performed similarly to the control. [Read the full research article on “Comparative Analysis of Biodegradable Mulches in Strawberry Production” here.](#)

Importantly, fruit quality (size and sweetness) did not differ by mulch type, though 'Albion' consistently had higher sugar levels than 'Portola'. These findings suggest that biodegradable mulches can provide a sustainable alternative to plastic film, improving yield while reducing plastic waste in small-scale strawberry farming.



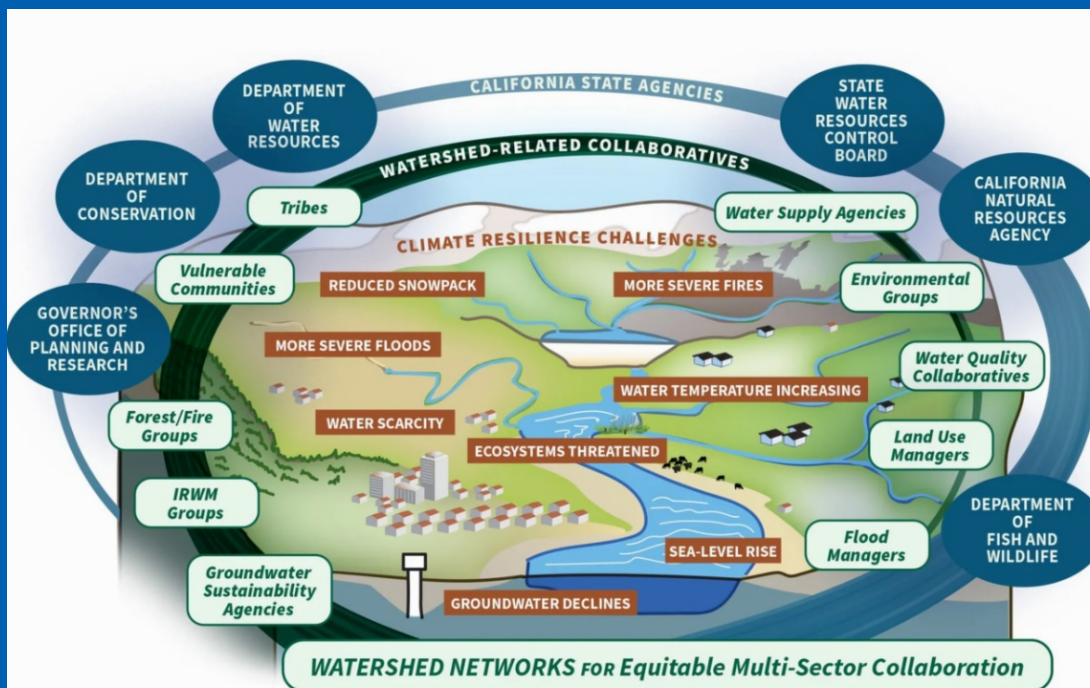
**Questions? Contact Amrita at [amukherjee@ucanr.edu](mailto:amukherjee@ucanr.edu)**



## Pro Tips

*Tips, tricks, and advice from our program experts*

### Urban Watershed Resilience: California Water Plan



Credit: California Department of Water Resources

By [Dr. Esther Lofton](#), Urban Watershed Resilience advisor serving Orange, LA, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties; [Laura Elisa Garza Diaz](#), Area Water Resources Management Advisor serving Mendocino and Lake Counties; and [Dr. Laljeet Singh Sangha](#), Community Water Systems Advisor serving Kern, Kings, and Tulare Counties

**Do you know potable reuse now serves nearly a million in OC?** California's 2023 Water Plan (CWP-2023) shows how wins like that can scale; three pillars (climate urgency, watershed resilience, equity) and seven case studies proving it



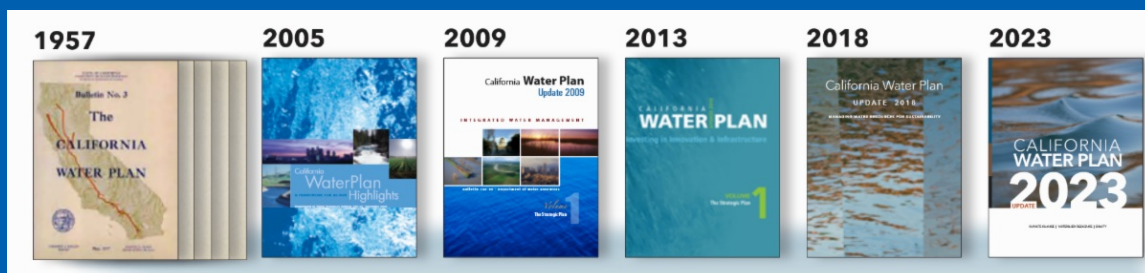
works: LA County's countywide road map, OC's GWRs (130 MGD), Pure Water San Diego (~50% local by 2035), Santa Clara Valley Water's purified supply and recharge, Sacramento's Harvest Water (50,000 AFY), SAWPA's OWOW, and FIRO on the Russian River.

**Why it matters:** less reliance on imports, stronger local supplies, cleaner waterways, and nature-based solutions that double as green infrastructure. We also share the "how": crosswalk your plans to CWP-2023, set measurable targets, launch early pilots (reuse, stormwater, recharge, NbS), and report progress publicly; now turbocharged by new DPR rules and DWR's Watershed Resilience Initiative.

- Read the [full blogpost on the Water Resilience, Climate Change, and Water Systems \(WrCcWs\) blog](#).
- Tune in next time: We're publishing Part 2 of our CWP-2023 series, a deep dive into the LA County Water Plan: targets, governance, funding pathways, and the 2045 supply build-out.
- And don't miss updates; follow ANR Socal Water Resources on [Instagram: @socal\\_h2o](#), [TikTok: @socal\\_water](#), [Twitter/X: @SoCal\\_H2O](#) for tools, templates, and case-study breakdowns, and also join the conversation about building a drought-ready, climate-smart California water future.

### Contact Information

Dr. Esther N. Lofton, Urban Watershed Resilience Advisor, UC ANR – South Coast REC Email: [anrsocalwater@gmail.com](mailto:anrsocalwater@gmail.com) | Website: [ucanr.edu/site/socal-water-resources](https://ucanr.edu/site/socal-water-resources)



## Upcoming Events

October 11, 2025 is our annual Urban Ag & Garden Expo with our Pumpkin U-pick!

# URBAN AG & GARDEN EXPO

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11TH 9-2PM**

**South Coast Research & Extension Center**

7601 Irvine Blvd. Irvine 92618



- Free admission
- Free Tool Sharpening
- Workshops/Lectures
- Tractor Tours
- Kid's Activities
- \$5 Pumpkin U-Pick
- Vendor Fair
- Opportunity Drawings
- Talk to our experts
- Much More!

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

**Watch the recap of last year's expo below.**



**Activities include:**

- A tractor tour of the research center
- A pumpkin u-pick (pending harvest availability)
- Presentations from our expert researchers
- Hands-on demonstrations from our program leaders
- Prizes and giveaways

**RSVP Here**

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## **3-part Forestry Webinar Series**





**Hosted by:**

UC Forest Stewardship  
Program

*in collaboration with:*

UC Fire Network



The Forest Stewardship Education Initiative is a CAL FIRE funded contract (8CA04547), awarded July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2027, to Susie Kocher, RPF#2874, University of California Cooperative Extension, to help landowners develop forest management plans.



## Register Now!

### 'Before You Buy Forestland' 3-part webinar series for prospective and new forestland owners

Online Thursdays, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, November 13<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup>

6:00pm – 7:30pm

The Forest Stewardship Program, in collaboration with the UC ANR Fire Network, is hosting this webinar series to provide prospective forest landowners with tools and resources to make an informed and thoughtful purchasing decision before buying forestland.

**Join us to learn more about:**

- Forest Stewardship considerations (motivations for purchasing forestland; forest conditions; and living in the woods)
- Living with wildfire risk (risk and evacuation planning; defensible space requirements; home hardening; and prescribed fire)
- Financial Practicalities of Owning Forestland (insurance; collaboration efforts; and conservation easements)



**UC ANR Fire Network**

University of California  
Agriculture & Natural Resources

**Registration is free. Sign up now at:**

<https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=46897>

For questions, contact Kim Ingram, [kcingram@ucanr.edu](mailto:kcingram@ucanr.edu)

**Register Here**

## H2O for HOAs: Free Education and Networking Event



# REGISTER TODAY!



**H<sub>2</sub>O**  
for  
**HOAs**

## THURSDAY

# OCT 23

8AM - 12NOON

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

24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo

**[bit.ly/H2OforHOAs2025](https://bit.ly/H2OforHOAs2025)**

**Register Here**

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## UC Landscape Plant Irrigation Trials Fall Open House

# UC Landscape Plant Irrigation Trials™

## South Coast REC FALL 2025 Open House

**Who should attend?** Professionals from Landscape, Horticulture, and related fields; City Planners/Urban Designers; UC Master Gardeners; Water Conservationists; Academics/Educators; Garden Writers.

**What's involved:** Evaluating aesthetic qualities of selected plants (takes ~60 mins)

**When:** Tuesday, October 28th between 8:00 am and 12:00 pm

**Where:** South Coast Research and Extension Center, 7601 Irvine Blvd., Irvine 92618

**Registration is required:** <https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=46991>



**About the event:** Join us for the second Open House of the 2025 Climate Ready Vines trial. Participants will assess the impact of different levels of irrigation on vine plant performance following the summer heat. After a short introduction to the rubric, participants will evaluate the aesthetic qualities of selected plants independently at their own pace. We will provide a clipboard, rating sheet & pen. Sturdy, comfortable shoes, sunscreen and/or a hat are suggested as the field is uneven mulch/packed dirt in full sun. Carpooling is encouraged but not required. Cold water will be provided.

**About the Project:** UCLPIT™ seeks to improve urban water-use efficiency and develop irrigation recommendations by evaluating landscape plant performance on three irrigation treatments that correspond to the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) High, Moderate, and Low categories of water need.

*Participation is voluntary. UC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



Scan QR code for event registration!

**Questions?**

Email Nathan Lo at [nclo@ucanr.edu](mailto:nclo@ucanr.edu)

**More about the project:**

<https://uclpit.ucdavis.edu/>

**Spring Open House Recap Video**

<https://youtube.com/shorts/61tCNnZZHAc>

**UC DAVIS**  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANT SCIENCES

UC  
CE



**Register Here**

Learn more about the [UC Landscape Plant Irrigation Trials here](#) and watch the video below for a look at the Spring Open House!





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## 4-H Youth Development Book Drive



Join OC 4-H in our Fall Community Service Project: 1000 New Books Drive for CHOC Hospital Little Library, which provides books to patients and their families during their hospital stay. Until November 16, drop off NEW BOOKS ONLY in the box in Building 103 at South Coast REC.

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