



UC Master Gardener
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources



Greetings!

Happy New Year. As we step into 2026, we are taking a moment to look back at everything we accomplished together in 2025. From navigating a new website platform to embracing a refreshed brand, you showed adaptability and a strong commitment to clear, effective communication.

This month's newsletter reflects that same forward momentum. It includes a year-in-review story, a brand audit checklist to help start the year strong, and a look ahead at what's coming. Whether you are planning content, updating platforms, or easing back in after the holidays, we are here to support you.

Here's everything you can find in this month's issue of *Rooted in Marketing*:

- Looking back, moving forward
- New Year audit
- December content inspirations
- Upcoming & previous training

If you have any questions or need help with marketing, join our weekly office hours, ask questions in our private [Facebook group](#), or email us. We're here to support you.

Happy New Year! 🎉

Melissa & Barbra

UC Master Gardener Program

Statewide Communications Team



Looking Back, Moving Forward

2025 has been a year of significant change for UC Master Gardener communicators. From new platforms to refreshed branding, we've worked together to strengthen how our programs connect with communities across California. As we close out the year, let's reflect on what we've accomplished and look ahead to what's coming in 2026.

What We Accomplished in 2025:

- **A new digital home.** In April, we migrated to UC ANR's new Drupal website platform. While the transition had its bumps, we navigated it together. Today, our websites appear more professional, our events reach a wider audience through the content hub, and we're all part of a more unified UC ANR digital presence.
- **A fresh brand identity.** October brought our refreshed [UC Master Gardener logo](#), honoring the California poppy while giving us modern tools to tell our story. We updated social media profiles, downloaded new templates, and began the gradual transition to consistent branding. By November, Canva templates for flyers, social posts, certificates, and more were ready to use. More assets, name badges, and other items will be coming soon!
- **Growing our accessibility knowledge.** Throughout the year, we've been building our understanding of digital accessibility—from alt text on social media to caption standards for videos—making our content available to all. Make sure to look over all our [previous accessibility articles](#) to get ready for 2026.

What's Ahead in 2026:

- **New website guidelines coming soon.** UC ANR will be releasing comprehensive website guidelines to help all programs achieve brand compliance and create a cohesive look across the organization. These guidelines will provide clear direction on everything from navigation structure to image standards.
- **Accessibility takes center stage.** On April 24, 2026, new ADA regulations take effect, requiring all digital content to meet WCAG 2.1 Level A and AA standards. This includes websites, social media, PDFs, workshop recordings, and virtual events. We'll be sharing training resources to help you understand these requirements and implement them across all your communications.
- **AI guidance and best practices.** As artificial intelligence tools become more common in content creation, we'll be sharing guidance on how to use AI responsibly and effectively in your communications work—from writing assistance to image generation.
- **A new tagline for our program.** Voting on finalist tagline options kicks off in January 2026 as we prepare to retire "Advice to Grow By ... Ask Us" and welcome an updated tagline that reflects our mission.

None of this would have been possible without your patience, flexibility, and commitment to excellent communication! As we head into 2026, we're here to support you every step of the way.



New Year Audit

The start of a new year is the perfect time to review your branding and ensure you're using the correct, unaltered UC Master Gardener logo across all platforms and resources. This quick audit will help present a consistent, professional image that aligns with UC ANR brand standards.

Why This Matters

Using the correct logo without alterations protects the UC Master Gardener brand identity and maintains consistency across the statewide program. Even small changes to spacing, color, or proportions can weaken brand recognition and violate UC ANR guidelines.

Your Logo Audit Checklist

First: Get the Current Logo

[Download the official UC Master Gardener logo files](#). The [Brand Guidelines](#) specify correct logo usage, including minimum size requirements, clear space, and approved color variations.

Check Every Platform

Review each location where your logo appears:

Social media

- Profile pictures (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X)
- Header/banner images
- Verify the logo is the current official version, unaltered, sized correctly, and high-resolution

Newsletters & email

- Header and footer logos in your email platform
- Signature blocks

Graphic Design Templates

This is where issues often hide. Check logos in:

- Event flyers and postcards
- Social media post templates
- Presentation slides
- Program brochures

Look for these common problems:

- Logo stretched, compressed, or recolored
- Elements removed or added
- Insufficient clear space around logo
- Poor resolution when printed

Fix What You Find

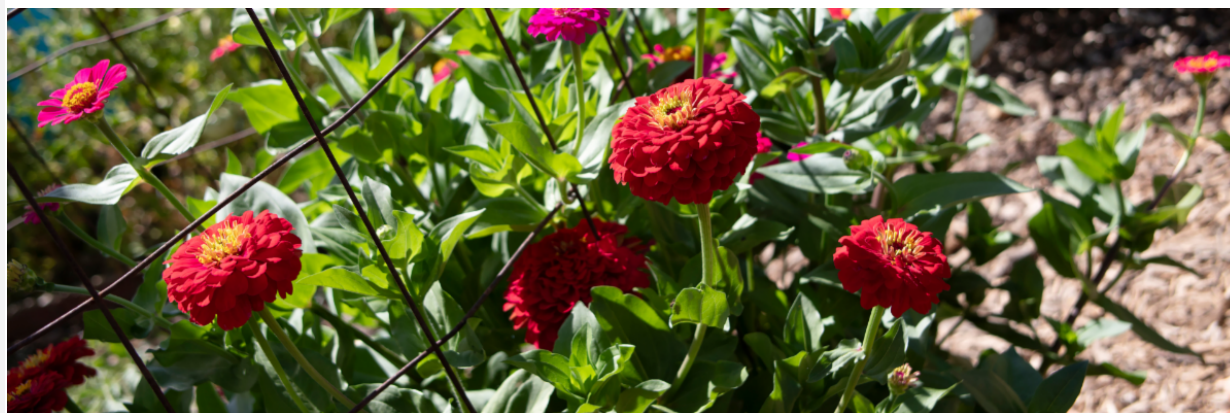
Replace any incorrect logos with the current official version. Delete old logo files from your shared drives to prevent future use. If you work with designers or community partners, share the official logo files and brand guidelines with them.

While You're At It

Update platform details:

- Confirm your program name is "UC Master Gardeners of [County Name]"
- Verify contact information is current
- Update website and social media links
- Check that the one-line disclaimer statement is present
- Include the nondiscrimination statement in newsletters
- Review account administrators and remove outdated access

Questions?



Resources: Accessibility Training

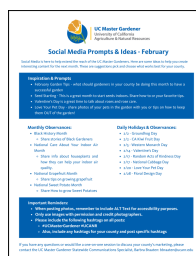
We've compiled essential accessibility resources on the UC Master Gardener Coordinators website to help you prepare for the April 2026 accessibility requirements. The page includes links to UC's Electronic Accessibility guidelines, UC Davis's accessibility and inclusivity best practices, and searchable accessibility courses through the UC Learning Center. You'll also find UC ANR's official website accessibility statement and detailed information about WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance standards—the requirements that apply to all UC web-based information.

One standout resource is W3C's free "[Introduction to Web Accessibility](#)" online course, which provides the foundation you need to make your digital content accessible. The course covers how accessibility works well for people with disabilities, meets international standards, enhances user experience for everyone, and helps you achieve your communication goals.

Whether you're working on websites, social media, PDFs, or virtual workshops, these resources will help you understand what accessibility means in practice and how to implement it across all your communications. Visit ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardener-coordinators/accessibility to explore everything available.

Content Inspiration - February

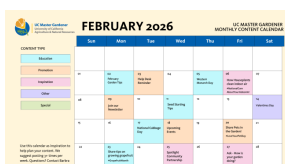
Here is your content inspiration and Content Calendar for February 2026. The Content Calendar is set up for posting three times a week to social media using the buckets: education, inspiration, and promotion. As always, both of these documents are just suggestions! Please add or change the topic as needed. If you have questions, please email Barbra Braaten at bbraaten@ucanr.edu



February Social Media Inspiration

You can find inspiration for your January social media content, including the start of the National Cabbage Month, Love Your Pet Day, and more.

- [Download the February Inspiration Guide](#)
- [Download the February Content Calendar](#)



Upcoming Marketing Training & Events:

Office Hours: UC Master Gardener Communications

Every Tuesday, 11 am -12 pm

Zoom link:

<https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/96405979243?pwd=F6p7QLOzFlgPZQlq1hbsdoXZwmHI9.1>

Previous Recordings

From Spreadsheet to Spotlight in One Sheet

<https://youtu.be/Apx1WFCO60A> (June 2025)

National Volunteer Appreciation Month

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQxIxS1c5jg> (April 2025)

Volunteer Communicator Orientation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XutHQAtdGmg> (Oct. 2024)

Newsletter Best Practices

<https://youtu.be/9uEOFPc2WvU> (Jul. 2024)

Social Media Accessibility Guidelines

<https://youtu.be/d1XAnZCcHyU> (Aug. 2024)

Rooted in Marketing Past Issues: <https://link.ucanr.edu/rooted>

Private Facebook Group for UC Master Gardener Communicators

Join

Subscribe to get the monthly issues of "Rooted in Marketing"

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Our Mission

Thanks for reading this month's issue! To submit questions, topic suggestions, or feedback, email Statewide Communications Specialist Barbra Braaten at bbraaten@ucanr.edu.

"To extend research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California."



To support clarity and accessibility, this newsletter was edited with the assistance of artificial intelligence. All content reflects UC Master Gardener Program standards and review. If you need this information in an alternative format, please contact us and we will work with you to meet your needs.

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