

January 2026

Message from the UCCE Director

Happy 2026! This month our UCCE office got to host one of our new SLO County Assistant CEOs, Kate Ballantyne. Through meetings and an office tour we were able to share the breadth of the important work happening across our UCCE programs. Her visit reminded me that many people in our region are still discovering the services we offer at UCCE—from our public helplines where trained volunteers are ready to answer your questions about home gardening or food safety and preservation; to trainings in positive youth development and disaster resilience; to hands on support for small, beginning, and organic transitioning farmers. Please help us expand our reach and impact in 2026 by sharing this newsletter with others who may benefit.

Shannon Klisch
UCCE Director SLO, Santa Barbara, Ventura

UCCE Advisor Updates

Woodpecker Damage in Avocado

Author: Ben Faber

Recently we were called out to inspect trees that had unusual cankers. Unusual, because it was a cluster of about 20 trees and the cankers had insect larvae in the liquid sap that had accumulated in the cankers.

When I see an avocado tree like this with discrete white cankers going up and down a branch or trunk, I immediately think of bacterial canker. [Read the rest of this article and many others here.](#)



Disaster Resilience

2026 Quarterly Growl Tests in San Luis Obispo County

Four times per year the **Early Warning System (EWS)** sirens are subject to a quarterly check. This is called a **Growl Test** wherein sirens may emit a brief,



low sound as they are triggered for maintenance. In 2026, Growl Tests have been scheduled for January 20 and 21, April 13 and 14, July 21 and 22, and October 13 and 14. No action is required on the part of the public.

The EWS is a requirement for **Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP)** which was set to close in 2024-2025, but had its operations extended to 2030. SLO County residents living in one of the 12 **Protective Action Zones (PAZ)**, an extension of the **Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ)** surrounding the DCP should always be prepared in case of an

emergency including radiological events. To find out if you live in or work near a PAZ – visit [PrepareSLO.org](https://www.prepare-slo.org).

A full-scale EWS siren test is set for August 22, during which the sirens will be sounded at full volume for three minutes once at noon and then again, thirty minutes later.

Outside of this schedule, if sirens continuously sound for three minutes, residents should tune into a local radio or tv station for emergency information and instructions.

SLO County utilizes multiple public alert and notification systems. You can learn more about them and sign up for services at [PrepareSLO.org](https://www.prepare-slo.org). Contact the UCCE Disaster Resiliency Advisor if you have questions about how to do this – Lilian Thaxoachay, lilthaox@ucanr.edu or (805) 441-4119.

Have a disaster resiliency story you'd like to share? Contact Lilian at lilthaox@ucanr.edu or 805-441-4119 to be featured.

Subscribe to the blog by clicking [here](#).

Upcoming Events



Conservation Practices Field Day / *Día del Campo*

Join us for an event focused on practical skills, knowledge, and resources to help you navigate conservation practices on your farm, with a focus on organic production. Learn from extension specialists, technical assistance providers, and farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange about practices and tools to help you make informed decisions.

El evento proporcionará habilidades prácticas, conocimientos y recursos para ayudarle a manejar prácticas de conservación en su granja y enfocará en la producción orgánica.

Tuesday, February 3, 2026, from 8:30AM-3PM at Le Fort's Organic Farm (Creston, CA)

El Martes, 3 de Febrero 2026 desde las 8:30 hasta las 15:00 en Le Fort's Organic Farm (Creston, CA)

Lunch provided. / *Almuerzo incluido.*
Registration [HERE](#). / *Regístrese [AQUÍ](#).*

For questions, please contact Claire Tuohey-Mote (ctuoheymote@ucanr.edu) or Maria Orozco (mdlorozcoramirez@ucdavis.edu).

Si tiene preguntas, por favor pongale en contacto con Claire Tuohey-Mote (ctuoheymote@ucanr.edu) o Maria Orozco (mdlorozcoramirez@ucdavis.edu).

The week prior to the event all registrants will receive address, directions and parking instructions for the event.

La semana antes del evento todos los registrados recibirá la dirección de la granja, como llegar, e instrucciones de estacionamiento.

Photo: LeFort's Farm : Maria Orozco

UC Climate Stewards

The Community Environmental Council's Climate Stewards certification course provides the resources, training, and confidence for participants to join the grassroots climate action movement on California's Central Coast.

Dates: January 27 - March 17, 2026

Fees: \$360 (Scholarships available to Central Coast Residents)

Delivery Mode: Hybrid

Contact: Kathi King, kking@cecmail.org



Climate and Agriculture: Farming in a Changing Climate

Learn about climate trends, potential impacts on Ventura County crops and available resources

Date: Tuesday, January 20 in Camarillo or on Zoom 8:30am-2:30pm

4.5 CCA CEU's pending

Register by 1/16 to be included in lunch service

[Register Here](#)

More Information Here: [Climate and Agriculture Workshop](#)

The flyer for the 'Climate & Agriculture: Farming in a changing climate' workshop. It features a background image of a field with a circular overlay containing the title. Text on the flyer includes: 'You are invited to a free UC ANR workshop:', 'SEE FULL PROGRAM BELOW', 'When: Tuesday January 20, 2026', 'Time: 8:30 am - 2:30 pm (lunch will be provided)', 'Where: Ventura County Community Foundation, 4001 Mission Oaks Blvd, Suite A, Camarillo, CA', 'For those who cannot attend in person, a Zoom option will be provided on the registration page', 'For more information contact Julie Clark: jclarkdebbiasio@ucanr.edu', and '4.5 CCA CEU's pending'. There are also logos for Ventura County, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, ANR, USDA, and PSA. A QR code is present, and a list of speakers is shown on the right: Dr. Daniel Swain, Dr. Tipán Pathak, and Lisan Thanoosochay.

UCCE Community Education Programs

4H of Santa Barbara County

On December 12th, Santa Barbara County 4-H's Youth Leadership Committee hosted an all-ages community holiday party featuring gingerbread house decorating. This event was attended by 4-H staff, Ella Mitchell, and our new



advisor, Melissa Guillen. The Youth Leadership team looks forward to hosting the event again next year



Photo: Santa Barbra County 4H holiday party : Melissa Guillen



UC Master Gardeners of San Luis Obispo County

January 17th Master Gardener Plant Sale
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM • Garden of the Seven Sisters

The plant propagation team has been busily growing some great plants. Come on out to the [Seven Sisters Demo Garden](#) on January 17 to see what we have .

There will be a nice selection of California natives + more including:

Manzanita groundcover - *Arctostaphylos* 'Pacific Mist' and 'Emerald Carpet'

White Sage - *Salvia apiana*

Red flowering currant - *Ribes sanguineum*

Fragrant Pitcher Sage - *Lepechinia* 'El Tigre'

Ceanothus 'Blue Jeans'

Toyon - *Hetermoles arbutifolia*

Yarrow - *Achillea millefolium*

Hummingbird Sage - *Salvia spathacea*

Scilla peruviana - Beautiful bulb, native to Western Mediterranean region

Please bring cash or checks. *checks must be made out to UC Regents



Lepechinia 'El Tigre'



Ribes



Salvia spathacea



Scilla peruviana

Photo: San Luis Obispo Master Gardener Kathy Cinowalt, Photographer

UC Master Food Preservers of San Luis Obispo & Santa Barbara Counties

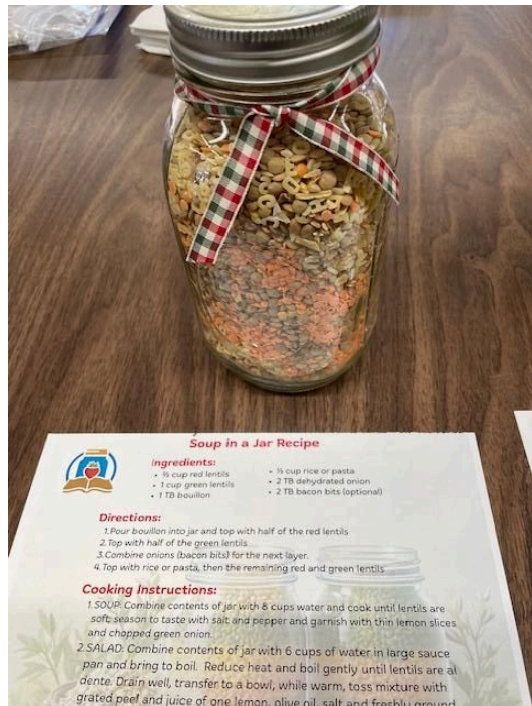


As we welcome the new year, we also welcome 11 incoming trainees to our 2026 cohort. UC Master Food Preservers are staying busy this season as they diligently prepare in-person lab trainings to build capacity for trainees to deliver quality, evidence-based education to our communities.



Winter is the season for citrus, but don't throw away those rinds. Instead, check out this [citrus video](#) from the Statewide UC Master Food Preserver program for more tips and ideas on how to preserve and cook with your citrus.

Photo Credit: by Bruna Branco on Unsplash



UC Master Food Preservers wrapped up the last lesson of 2025 in collaboration with Lompoc Public Library and CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE where UC Master Food Preserver volunteers taught participants how to use dehydrated herbs and other ingredients to make an easy and nutritious soup in a jar recipe. For more entrees in a jar, consider these [recipes](#).

Photo Credit: UCCE Staff member

Calendar of Classes & Events

[Deciduous Fruit Trees-Winter Care and Pruning:](#)

Saturday, January 17, 2026 :
10:00am- 12:00pm: San Luis
Obispo: Garden of the 7 Sisters
[Garden to Glass: Winter Mocktails
\(Online Delivery Program\)](#)
Saturday, January 31, 2026: 1:00pm-
2:00pm: Zoom

[Winter Pruning for Summer Success](#)

Saturday, February 7, 2026:
10:00am-12:00pm: Paso Robles:
Live Oak Room Centennial Park
[Garden Talk Vermicomposting:](#)

Monday, February 2, 2026: 7:00pm-
8:00pm: Zoom

[Soil Preparation Workshop:](#)

Saturday, February 7, 2026:
10:00am- 12:00pm: Santa Barbara:
Mesa Harmony Garden

[Tomatoes A to T:](#)

Saturday, February 21, 2026:
10:00am-12:00pm: San Luis Obispo:
Garden of the 7 Sisters

[Garden Talk Growing Tomatoes:](#)

Monday, March 2, 2026: 7:00pm-
8:00pm: Zoom

[Building Healthy Soil for Home](#)

[Gardens and Landscapes:](#)

Saturday, March 21, 2026: 10:00am-
12:00pm: Paso Robles: Garden of
the 7 Sisters

Funding Opportunities



[Supplemental Disaster Relief](#)

[Program \(SDRP, Deadline: April 30, 2026\)](#) –
The **USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)** began
accepting applications on November 29, 2025,
for *Stage 2* of SDRP for producers with uninsured

or shallow drought-based losses from 2023 and 2024 that were not previously covered by *Stage 1* of SDRP. Applicants who receive funds from this program must purchase federal crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available crop years at the 60% coverage level or higher. For more information about San Luis Obispo County, contact the Templeton Office (65 S Main Street, Suite 106, Templeton, CA) at (805) 434-0398. For more information about Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, contact the Santa Maria Office (920 E Stowell Road, Santa Maria, CA) at (805) 928-9269.

UCCE in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties improves the lives of local residents by working with growers, families, volunteers, and partners to advance science-based solutions in agriculture, natural ecosystems, community health, and youth development.

Your support helps in many ways.

Thank you.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

[Contact Us](#)



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