



# 2016 Annual Report

University of California Cooperative Extension  
Los Angeles County

# County Director's Message

UC Cooperative Extension, an enduring and respected organization, is defined by certain core characteristics: innovative research, education and passion. We take these qualities very seriously. We reflect on them as we develop and deliver our programs and services to the residents of Los Angeles County.

While our work is not always visible to the public at large, what we do affects the daily lives of many families. From the beach communities to Claremont, from the Antelope Valley to South Los Angeles, we are reaching people face-to-face with our workshops, trainings, classes and programs. In addition, our work is broad, deep and impactful. We improve the lives of youth with our 4-H Program; we improve the health of families with our nutrition education and gardening programs; and we assist local farmers, organizations and municipalities with our research in agriculture, natural resources and environmental horticulture programs.

We also maintain a website with all our information at <http://celosangeles.ucanr.edu>. Please visit often to check out events, new gardening classes and important updates about our programs. If you have any questions or want to leave a comment about our work, please feel free to contact us at (626) 586-1971. You can also send me a direct message to [kcnathaniel@ucanr.edu](mailto:kcnathaniel@ucanr.edu). I am more than happy talk about our programs and our people.

On behalf of UC Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles County, thank you for browsing through our report.

With much appreciation,



Keith Nathaniel, Ed.D.

## Mission Statement

*UC Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles County develops and implements community-based educational programs that address the critical needs of the county's diverse and multiethnic population. Staff and volunteers provide and encourage the use of current research-based information in the areas of nutrition, family and consumer science; youth development; urban gardening; commercial horticulture; agriculture; and natural resources.*

# 4-H Youth Development



4-H is where there's fun in learning. In Los Angeles County, 4-H offers lots of exciting activities that include animals, cooking, nutrition, science and rocketry. Equally important, there is an annual summer camp, which is accredited by the American Camp Association. It is an organization that helps young people develop knowledge and skills to become future leaders and helps youth to meet the challenges of today's society by "learn by doing" experiences.



The 4-H Youth Development program succeeds because of dedicated staff and volunteers who devote time and effort to reach out to youth each year. In 2016, staff members traveled all over the county to attend meetings, plan events and curriculum, and train volunteers, from participating in the planning of the Antelope Valley County Fair and leading the Leaders' Council meetings to helping judge the LA County 4-H Judging Day event. As in past years, they played an important day-to-day role in making 4-H a big part of 4-Hers' lives.

During the summer, at Camp Seeley in the San Bernardino Mountains, 4-H hosted more than 250 youth and adults for an exciting week of 4-H Summer Camp. The youth participated in archery, hiking, fishing, arts and crafts and four hours of science education (designed to develop and improve core science abilities).



In October, 4-H hosted its annual 4-H Pet & Science Symposium at Belvedere Park in East Los Angeles. The free event reached more than 250 youth and adults and featured speakers and displays on a variety of pet-related topics. The Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control was on-hand to provide low-cost vaccination and chipping services, and the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation provided the use of Belvedere Park. The pet symposium offers the ideal opportunity for pet owners as well as those interested in adopting to learn from experts about responsible pet care and interact with livestock for the very first time. There was lots of engagement through hands-on activities.



During the symposium this year, several youth participated in the 4-H National Youth Science Day by responding to the challenge of building a drone that reached a specific target. They had to apply several science concepts, such as designing and redesigning, collaborating and predicting. Drone technology is 4-H's latest foray into hands-on science education that stresses the importance of early exposure to STEM education.

## CONTACT

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# Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences



Cooperative Extension is dedicated to providing community-driven, research-based nutrition education to Los Angeles County families. Whether staff reach out to youth in classrooms or adults in community settings, the goal is to help them eat and shop smart.

In 2016, approximately **500 adults** successfully completed eight weeks of EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) classes. As a result, families improved their skills in food resource management and food safety practices. Participants are encouraged to make behavior changes as they improve the nutritional quality of the meals served to their families.

**Ninety-five percent** of participants showed improvements in one or more nutrition practices, such as planning meals, reading nutrition facts labels, and reducing sodium consumption.

*“As a mom, the program reminded us that we have the power. We are the ones who decide what to bring to our tables. I now pay more attention to [nutrition] labels and prices. I now incorporate more vegetables in my recipes. I look for different types of fruits and vegetables to introduce to my family. Thank you very much for this opportunity for our community to learn new ways to be healthy. A special thanks to our teacher...she made all the classes fun,”* said an EFNEP adult participant.



The program also provides nutrition lessons to youth to help them develop healthy eating habits and skills in preparing nutritious meals and snacks with Youth EFNEP. This aspect of the program reaches youth in traditional classroom settings and after-school programs. During the summer months, staff target day camps or activity centers to deliver the program. In 2016, staff reached more than **4,000 youth**. Of those who participated in a post-program survey, **78 percent** reported improvements in their ability to choose foods according to the Federal Dietary Recommendations or gained knowledge on diet quality.



*“It [EFNEP] was very informative. I didn’t know about servings and wasn’t really aware of how many calories I consume with just a drink itself. It was a fun lesson,”* said a Youth EFNEP participant.

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# Master Gardener Program

UC Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener Program is a widely recognized authority for garden news and information in Los Angeles County. The program helps to build communities as well as "green" the Los Angeles urban landscape. More importantly, we help residents (particularly low-income and traditionally under-represented families) grow their own food.



Volunteers are at the heart of the program. They are trained by UC Cooperative Extension academics and other qualified instructors, who use research-based information to promote environmentally responsible and sustainable horticulture practices in the home, community and school gardens. In 2016, staff trained **50 new Master Gardeners** during spring. Combined, Master Gardeners volunteered **a total of 18,590 hours** (valued at \$650,650), **servicing 127,362 Los Angeles County residents**.



UC Cooperative Extension manages and operates the Master Gardener Program under the leadership of Rachel Surls (Sustainable Food Systems Advisor). We are pleased to announce that in 2016, Surls developed an exciting new partnership with the Huntington Botanical Gardens to work with Master Gardener volunteers to offer weekly open houses at the Huntington Ranch, an urban agriculture site geared toward encouraging edible gardening.



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# Sustainable Food Systems



Urban farmers and gardeners are turning vacant lots, backyards and other urban spaces into places where food is grown. However, they face challenges when establishing a garden in the city. There are issues about land security, access to water and contaminated soil, to name a few. **Rachel Surls** (Sustainable Food Systems Advisor) looks for ways to support the farmers in Los Angeles and assist local residents in their efforts to grow food for their families and communities.



In 2016, Surls launched *Cultivate Los Angeles Part II*, which has been funded by the UC Global Food Initiative, to map urban farms, community gardens and school gardens around Los Angeles. In January, she held a meeting at UCLA to recruit volunteers and met with school gardening agencies to recruit more support. During the spring, Surls worked with a student assistant to update the project's map and data set. The update, completed in late 2016, contained new features and improved functions for users looking for urban agriculture information at the city, county supervisorial district and school district level.

For a second year, Surls worked with nonprofit partners, Community Services Unlimited and Social Justice Learning Institute, along with UC partners, to showcase the role of youth at local urban farms through youth-led tours of Los Angeles urban agriculture. The tours were documented by student videographers in a short YouTube film called *Youth-Led Urban Agriculture Tour* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XbCt9XZNK4>).



Surls continued to lead the UC Urban Agriculture project, which shares relevant information with California's urban farmers via a website, blog and social media. On behalf of the team, she applied for and received a UC ANR grant for a two-year expansion of the project to offer workshops for urban farmers throughout the state.

Surls also plays a role in advising the public and nonprofit sectors about food systems issues, providing leadership and technical assistance to organizations and their staff. In 2016, she co-chaired the Food Waste Prevention Working Group for the Los Angeles Food Policy Council. The group encourages restaurants and caterers to donate unused food, when possible, and urges local agencies to maximize their composting efforts. She also met with Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's staff to help the third supervisorial district plan technical assistance and training for their garden program grantees.



Surls is a locally recognized expert in the history of farming in Los Angeles. With Judith Gerber (UC Master Gardener and local farm writer), she published a new book, *From Cows to Concrete: The Rise and Fall of Farming in Los Angeles*. The book depicts the growth of agriculture in Los Angeles and how that forged an urban metropolis, which ultimately paved over thousands of acres of farmland. Today, on that same land, urban farmers are creating a foundation for a greener future for Los Angeles. Surls and Gerber conducted numerous presentations and were featured on radio programs, such as *Good Food with Evan Kleiman* on KCRW (<http://kcrw.co/2bo7U9H>).

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# Environmental Horticulture

Cooperative Extension’s environmental horticulturists are experts in the valuable “green industry” economy of Los Angeles County. They are knowledgeable about new technologies, research, regulations and guidelines to help residential homeowners as well as commercial clients grow successfully. Their clients are involved in the production, design, installation, maintenance, sales and service of plant materials.



Over the years, **Don Hodel**, Environmental Horticulture Advisor, has traveled to many places and observed many (and even named a handful) species of palms. However, Cuba was a place that he could not access. So, when he had a chance to visit in the spring, Don Hodel packed his bags and flew to Cuba. While there for three weeks, he was able to document the palm species on this unique island-nation.

Cuba is home to one of the most intriguing assemblages of palms in the world. Many of its palms are spectacular ornamentals. A few are bizarre, and most grow in harsh conditions, such as directly on the sea coast where they are subjected to salt spray (on limestone rocks) and a lengthy, dry season. The incredible tolerance to harsh conditions make Cuban palms potentially outstanding subjects for southern California.



Hodel worked with Cuban botanists Milian Rodriguez and Duanny Oropesa to write a definitive, monographic book on the palms of Cuba. To follow-up on their work, additional trips are planned for 2017 and 2018. Hodel returned from the trip with seeds of some of the palms and he will be assessing their merit for the nursery and landscape trades in Southern California.



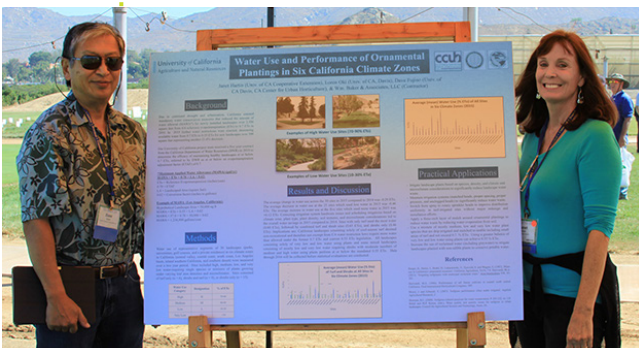
**Dennis Pittenger** (Area Environmental Horticulture Advisor) conducts education and applied research programs that address landscape problems in Southern California. He is recognized regionally and nationally for his work in planning and writing the *California Master Gardener Handbook*, which is the University of California’s comprehensive basic horticulture reference, now in its second edition. It continues to set the standard nationally for Master Gardener program training references.

# Environmental Horticulture

In 2016, **Janet Hartin** (Environmental Horticulture Advisor) continued to serve as principal investigator, along with Dr. Dave Fujino and Dr. Loren Oki of UC Davis, on a large multi-site contract from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to set up demonstration sites that exemplify how landscape water waste can be reduced with proper plant selection, use of mulch and irrigation scheduling based on water need. The project is intended to assist large landscape water managers meet the goals of California's water budget legislation reducing landscape water use to 70 percent of the water required by cool-season turfgrass for all new landscape sites more than 2,500 square feet in size.



In addition, Hartin continued to serve as cooperator on the *Climate-Ready Trees* project. She helped develop the plant palette of low-maintenance, drought-resistant, underused tree species that were planted in a park. The trees will be evaluated over a 20 year period for their attributes. The selected tree species are expected to provide ample shade for streets and parks with limited irrigation and maintenance, while being attractive.



## CONTACT

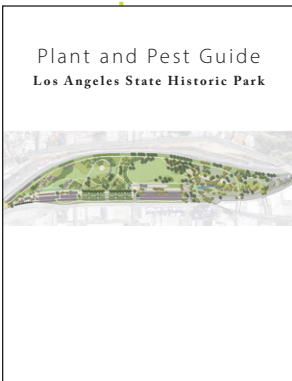
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For questions about gardening, please contact Master Gardener volunteers at (626) 586-1988 mglosangeleshelpline@ucdavis.edu



# Integrated Pest Management

UC Cooperative Extension's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program provides practical information and training on pest management techniques and identification for a broad range of pests. Offering nonbiased research-based information, the program is a valuable resource in Los Angeles County, widely recognized by residents and pest management professionals. IPM advisors help solve problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment. Rather than eliminating pests, they focus on long-term solutions, such as making the host or location less attractive to pests.



In 2016, **Cheryl Wilen** (Area IPM Advisor) announced the completion and publication of *Plant and Pest Guide, Los Angeles State Historic Park*. With support from the Metabolic Studio of Los Angeles and the cooperation of the staff at the Los Angeles State Historic Park, Wilen completed the helpful guide with the goal of helping park staff identify common diseases and pests that can feed on or infect the plants. Once identified, staff can implement appropriate IPM policies.

IPM advisors share best practices and new data with local agencies as they navigate pest challenges. In 2016, **Siavash Taravati** (Area IPM Advisor) assisted the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission identify and control Indian meal moths at its Alhambra headquarters. He also met with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and Compton Unified School District to help address pest control issues with infestations of flies and cockroaches at various sites.

Education and communication have always been the foundation of UC Cooperative Extension's IPM program. So in addition to technical advice, Taravati conducted trainings to spread IPM information. Throughout the year, he conducted workshops for UC Master Gardener trainees, pest control operators and building managers to help them identify pests and teach safe pest control techniques.



## CONTACT

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# Natural Resources



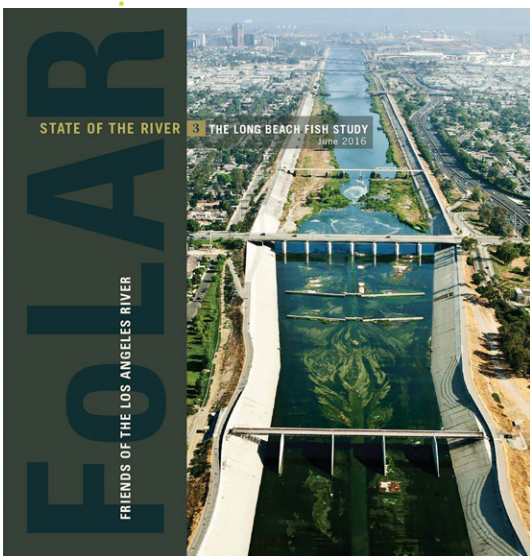
UC Cooperative Extension's Natural Resources Program provides research-based information and training to serve as the basis for sound natural resource management in Los Angeles County. **Sabrina Drill** (Natural Resources Advisor) works closely with local, state and federal agencies and service providers, community organizations and educational institutions to improve ecosystem management efforts throughout Los Angeles County. Drill is an expert in habitat and species conservation and restoration, conservation planning, watershed education and invasive species.



In 2016, Drill presented information through various workshops and technical advisory boards to decision makers in resource management, including the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, LA County Regional Planning Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee, and LA/US Forest Service Urban Forestry Center Advisory Board. She also continued her research program into conservation of local aquatic habitats through surveys of the fish community in the LA River. This effort culminated in the report, *State of the River 3, The Long Beach Fish Story June 2016*, which was published by Friends of the LA River.



For much of 2016, Drill's invasive species education efforts centered on the invasive Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB), as it continued to spread throughout Los Angeles County and the Southern California region. She conducts outreach and education to organizations, professionals and residents so that they are able to understand and manage this pest in urban and wildland areas, and continues to share information through her website, [www.pshb.org](http://www.pshb.org). The beetle can infest a huge variety of tree species. It drills galleries and inserts fungi that are harmful to the host tree, causing dieback, and in some cases, death.



In 2016, Drill continued her work as the associate director of the UC California Naturalist Program (<http://calnat.ucanr.edu>). The program began in 2012 and was designed to educate Californians about the state's unique ecology and engage the public in study and stewardship of natural communities. Focusing on partnering with and training local land management and environmental education organizations, certification courses are offered in their respective communities. In 2016, the California Naturalist Program added **nine new partner organizations** (for a total of 36) and certified **507 new naturalists** (for a total of 1,725). They committed **33,800 volunteer hours** in 2016. Among Los Angeles County partners, several collaborate with programs that provide training to young adults from underserved communities.

## CONTACT

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# Agriculture



As the Farm Advisor for Los Angeles County, Andre Biscaro works with high desert growers, local agencies and other UC Cooperative Extension advisors and specialists to develop efficient and sustainable growing practices. He considers the challenges associated with increasing production costs, water-use restrictions, agriculture-urban interface and a growing population.

In 2016, Biscaro offered technical assistance and information to local growers about irrigation as well as nutrient and pest management. In California, the surface and ground waters can be impaired by nutrient leaching and runoff, creating many challenges for growers. In addition, he has dedicated time and effort to address health impacts from the sand and dust that blow through the High Desert area. Biscaro participated in numerous meetings with the Lancaster USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Los Angeles County Farm Bureau to come up with ways to mitigate the hazardous health impacts and educate residents and agricultural workers on how to reduce their dust exposure.



As in past years, Biscaro organized a large gathering for members of the High Desert Agromonic community in November. This workshop provides a unique opportunity for growers to meet and hear from experts about the latest agriculture information and technology. It also allows growers to mingle and network with other growers.



## CONTACT

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# Funding and Thank You

## Thank You to our Volunteers

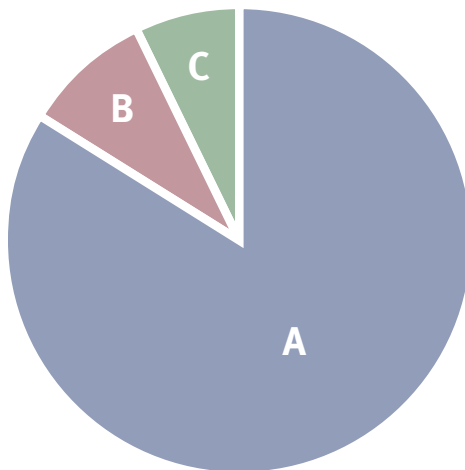
We want to thank all our volunteers who help UC Cooperative Extension become a valuable asset to Los Angeles County. Their hard work and dedication to UC Cooperative Extension inspire us every day of the year.

## Thank You to our Donors

Acorn Naturalist  
Robert P. Amman Memorial Campership Fund  
Britton Tree Fund  
California Department of Water Resources  
ESRI, Inc.  
Thelma Hansen Fund  
Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation  
The Los Angeles Breakfast Club Foundation  
Los Angeles County  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
National 4-H Council

The Nature Conservancy  
Renee's Garden Seeds  
Semptra Energy  
Trader Joe's  
UC Agriculture and Natural Resources  
UC Global Food Initiative  
UC Office of the President  
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
USFS Forest Health Protection Program  
Western Chapter International Society for Arboriculture

## Funding Sources



- A. University of California 84% \*
- B. County 9%
- C. Gifts, Contracts and Grants 7%

\* Includes ANR General Funds, Endowment Funds, Federal Funds and Statewide Cooperative Extension Support.

# From the Campus to the Community



## University of California Cooperative Extension, Los Angeles County

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rent legal and regulatory requirements, and are consistent with University standards of quality and excellence. In conformance with Federal regulations, written affirmative action plans shall be prepared and maintained by each campus of the University, by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, by the Office of the President, and by the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Such plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Office of the President and the Office of the General Counsel before they are officially promulgated. This Policy supersedes the University of California Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy Regarding Academic and Staff Employment, dated January 1, 2004. Inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Staff Personnel Services Equal Opportunity Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1111 Franklin Street, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 987-0096.

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<sup>3</sup> Covered veterans includes veterans with disabilities, recently separated veterans, Vietnam era veterans, veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Military, Ground, Naval or Air Service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, or Armed Forces service medal veterans.