



## **2018 Annual Report**

University of California Cooperative Extension

Los Angeles County



# County Director's Message

**W**elcome to UC Cooperative Extension's 2018 Annual Report! I am pleased to share with you our 2018 Annual Report to showcase our commitment to serve all residents of Los Angeles County

according to their needs, no matter where they live in the county. In 2018, we delivered quality education programs and technical expertise information about good nutrition and youth development to gardening and sustainable agriculture. As you browse through this report, I hope you will get a sense of the incredible work by the UC Cooperative Extension staff, as they continue to strengthen communities and our programs.

2018 was a year of accomplishments, which I am proud to be able to share briefly with you.

- We trained and certified 45 new UC Master Gardeners.
- We managed an army of 336 Master Gardeners who logged in more than 16,000 volunteer hours at school and community gardens throughout Los Angeles County.
- We educated 518 adults and 8,300 youth through our nutrition education programs.
- We trained 511 pest management professionals and pesticide handlers through our workshops.



- We conducted 10 California Naturalist training series.
- We worked with 624 youth and placed them on the path to success.

As you browse through this report, please keep in mind that each story reflects a moment, person or activity that informs us that our work is having real impact and improving the quality of life for many Los Angeles County residents. I am honored to represent UC Cooperative Extension and its programs locally.

I also want to take this moment to express gratitude to our wonderful volunteers, particularly our Master Gardeners and 4-H Club leaders. They work hard to maintain the quality of Cooperative Extension programs. Our programs would suffer significantly without their many hours of service.

Finally, I want to hear from you. Please feel free to contact me at (626) 586-1970, [kcnathaniel@ucanr.edu](mailto:kcnathaniel@ucanr.edu) with any questions or inquiries for more information on anything in this report. We are here to serve you.

Sincerely,  
Keith Nathaniel

## Mission Statment

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 all about making a positive difference in the lives of young Los Angeles County residents. Our program changes lives, encourages achievement and cultivates leadership skills. Young people are engaged in hands-on science, leadership and community service. Whether they are volunteering at a local nonprofit organization or launching rockets in competitions, our diverse group of kids are growing and learning together! In Los Angeles County, the program prioritizes science, technology, engineering and math

(STEM) as well as positive youth and workforce development. We deliver these priorities through community clubs, 4-H camp, after-school enrichment, and innovative projects.

In March, 4-H held 4-H Field Day at Mount San Antonio College. Every year, youth come together to connect and showcase their skills in public-speaking contests. More than 80 LA County 4-Hers competed in categories such as demonstration, educational display, science/engineering, interpretive readings, prepared speeches and mock interviews. Youth train throughout the year, with the 4-H Field Day as the culmination of their hard work and learning.

In May, the 4-H program hosted a two-day agriculture event for

more than 1,000 urban youth. Youth participants listened to experts speak about nutrition, bees, fiber, water resources and gardening. In addition, they were able to watch a demonstration on how to milk a cow and shear a sheep. For many, these demonstrations were priceless memories as they became first-time experiences.

Every summer, the 4-H program heads to Camp Seeley in Crestline to experience summer camp fun. We see campers from different backgrounds and experiences coming together to have an

incredible time in the beautiful outdoor setting. They return home after a rich experience of bonding friendships and physical activity. Approximately 200 youth attended this year's "science and healthy living" camp. Our 4-H teens led camp with activities and learning opportunities they planned with our adult leaders during the year. A fantastic time was had by all.

In October, 4-H held its annual Record Book Competition. This event, held at Mount San Antonio College, attracts youth from all Los Angeles County community clubs.

Throughout the year, youth keep track of their work, management skills, budgets, wins and losses, photos and summaries. The competition offers feedback and recognizes outstanding 4-H work and skills.

Finally, we are pleased to report that, in November, three of our 4-H youth members were invited to a World Affairs Special Council Conference in Beverly Hills. With a theme of "Food Scarcity at Home and Abroad," youth participated in discussions on pressing global and domestic food security issues. They met Jim Collins, CEO of Corteva Agriscience—one of the world's largest crop seed and protection companies with operations in more than 130 countries. The attendees found it to be a valuable experience that allowed them to make connections and reflect on how to make positive changes.




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UC Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is designed to provide community-driven and research-based nutrition education to limited-income adults and children. Our community educators—trained in basic nutrition and food-related topics by specialists from the University of California—are reaching out to adults in community settings and to youth in classrooms. The goal is to help families make positive

behavioral changes and make good nutrition choices for the improvement of total family health.

In an eight-week, hands-on program, “Eating Smart, Being Active,” adults learn about food, basic nutrition and fitness. In addition, they learn about various ways to shop and save. Wise decisions at the store can make a difference for a household's bottom line. In 2018, a total of 518 adults participated in the series. As a result, many reported an increase in their consumption of fruits and vegetables, more savings at the grocery store, and an increase in food safety and handling awareness.

In order to extend nutrition education to children, we offer Youth EFNEP. This version targets children of limited-income families through schools

and youth organizations. In 2018, staff reached 8,300 children in Los Angeles County. Our nutrition educators worked closely with teachers and other education extenders to deliver the message of healthy eating and physical activity.



Through our curriculum “Rethink Your Drink,” our educators provided a visual display of how much sugar students add to their bodies by consuming sugar-sweetened beverages. At the conclusion



of the lesson, children walked away with the message that picking up a glass of water or milk is the better and healthier choice to make. More importantly, this empowered the kids to be healthy and smart from the inside out.

Along with supervising and evaluating all aspects

of UC Cooperative Extension nutrition programs, Natalie Price (nutrition advisor), contributed to community leadership and civic engagement in the local effort to reduce local food insecurity. In

2018, Price actively participated in the Food Insecurity Coalition meetings, organized by PIH Health and Kaiser Permanente. Members have met regularly to address growing food insecurity and identify ways to connect hungry and homeless residents with food sources, such as promoting and enrolling clients in CalFresh and increasing access to local food pantries.

In addition, Price joined the County Nutrition Action Partnership, hosted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, to coordinate or create food distribution systems in communities throughout the county.




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# Master Gardener Program

UC Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener volunteers expand the University of California's ability to reach and assist Los Angeles County residents with non-biased, research-based information. Along with general gardening knowledge, they disseminate information about integrated pest management, water quality and conservation, composting, sustainable landscaping, adaptive gardening and fire-resistant gardening practices. They are teaching the



next generation of residents how to produce the foods that will keep their communities healthy and sustained.

In 2018, our Master Gardeners served 28,708 adults and 47,667 children in communities and schools throughout the county. They ran plant clinics, offered gardening workshops, responded to phone and email

requests, designed and implemented community-driven projects, and disseminated the latest gardening information and techniques to the public. They volunteered a total of 16,004 hours of service! We are very proud of this number and of our dedicated volunteers.

Acceptance in our annual training program is very competitive. Class size is limited to 50, and we usually receive more than 200 applications per year. In order to maintain an active membership as a Master Gardener, they must volunteer at least 50 hours during the first year. For subsequent years, they must volunteer at least 25 hours and participate in 12 hours of continuing education. In 2018, 46 new Master Gardeners graduated from our three-month intensive training, joining an army of 327 active volunteers.

During spring, UC Cooperative Extension offered its Grow LA Victory Garden Initiative gardening classes at locations throughout the county. Led by our Master Gardener volunteers, these four-session classes targeted beginners and taught them how to start new gardens quickly and easily in a container or in a backyard/community garden setting. Upon completion of all classes, the participants became UC-certified Victory Gardeners.

Our Master Gardener volunteers are always seeking to find innovative ways to collaborate with local organizations. In 2018, our volunteers partnered with The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens to keep The Ranch Garden open on Saturdays for the public. This weekly event is an open invitation for the public to experience and taste the seasonal bounty with Master Gardeners who offer technical advice as well as tours of the site. The garden, imagined as part classroom and part research lab, inspires visitors to incorporate edibles into their home gardens and landscapes. As a direct result of this wonderful collaboration, The Huntington was able to keep The Ranch Garden open for more than just one day a month.

In 2018, our Master Gardeners reached many LA County residents by participating in the 2018 LA County Fair with a booth in "The Farm at Fairplex." They answered gardening questions; distributed educational handouts and seeds; and conducted short gardening workshops and demonstrations. Topics ranged from seeds and backyard composting to attracting pollinators and other beneficial insects. "The Farm" also holds spring- and fall-themed events with Master Gardeners giving talks and hosting gardening information booths.




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## Contact:

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

UC Cooperative Extension's Sustainable Food Systems Program offers technical assistance and training for food systems projects, especially those related to urban gardening and farming. Rachel Surls, sustainable food systems advisor, works with local



agencies and nonprofit organizations to find creative solutions for communities.

In 2018, Surls wrapped up a two-year project to train urban farmers around California. She led a team of researchers from around the state to offer 16 workshops for urban farmers in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Sacramento and San Diego, reaching more than 500 growers. She offered workshops, training and technical assistance on soil testing and remediation, school gardens, food safety for urban farmers, and legal and regulatory issues. In addition, she presented at a variety of conferences

and events, including the 2018 San Diego Food Tank Summit, with the theme of "Growing the Food Movement." The event featured more than 30 different speakers from the food and agriculture field.

2018 was a wonderful year of recognition. Surls was awarded the 2018 UC Davis Bradford Rominger Agricultural Sustainability Leadership Award for her leadership (spanning her career of more than 30 years) in providing support and technical assistance for urban farmers as well as community and school gardeners. During the latter part of the year, she was awarded a new two-year grant from

the California Department of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crops Block Grant Program. The project will allow Master Gardeners to



expand their educational efforts about the Asian Citrus Psyllid and the disease the insect carries (Huanglongbing), while promoting the planting of non-citrus fruit trees. The goal is to educate county residents about the pest and the tree-killing bacterial disease. Also, residents will know

how to manage home and community orchards to slow the spread of the disease.

Surls oversees the UC Master Gardener Volunteer Program in Los Angeles County as part of her role as an advisor of UC Cooperative Extension. She works closely with Master Gardeners on a variety of initiatives related to urban food production, including the Grow LA Victory Garden Initiative. The initiative is an annual success that teaches new gardeners the basics of vegetable gardening and helps them start their own gardens quickly and easily in a container, in the backyard or at a community or school garden. Our Master Gardener volunteers lead these four-session classes at community locations throughout the county. Upon completion of the series, participants become UC-certified Victory Gardeners.

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**Contact:**

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UC Cooperative Extension's environmental horticulturists are enthusiastic, hands-on experts in urban landscape trees and shrubs, recreation turf, athletic fields, efficient water-use and integrated pest management. They are experts in the valuable "green industry" economy of Los Angeles County.

Don Hodel, environmental horticulture advisor, identifies problems and seeks out solutions for his clients in the professional landscape industry as well as for homeowners. He does this by extending the practical, research-based information he has gathered over many years. In 2018, Hodel spent significant time on his ongoing tree species evaluation project at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Gardens. These trees included many species, such as oaks, sycamore and various palms from Mexico. Many attained maturity and appeared well-adapted to Southern California, having the potential to serve as seed sources for propagation for the nursery industry.



During the year, several pests reared their ugly heads on landscape trees, including the difficult-to-control tuliptree scale (attacking magnolia trees) and white garden snail (active in the Palos Verdes region). The snail is disturbing due to its role, in some parts of the world, as an intermediate host between rats and humans of the serious and deadly rat lung disease. Hodel was the senior author of two papers in the online journal "PalmArbor" about successful management of these two pests. In addition, he continued his evaluation of several potential control strategies for the invasive species shot hole borer on landscape trees, working with the City of Lakewood and West Coast Arborists, Inc.

In 2018, Hodel made his third stimulating trip to Cuba to document, photograph and evaluate the island nation's rich and diverse palm flora for potential use in Southern California. The fascinating results and details of the trip will be part of a book he plans to complete soon.

Janet Hartin, environmental horticulture advisor, focuses her work on drought-resistant, sustainable landscapes. The goal of her applied research and outreach is to help the landscape and urban forestry identify and care for trees that withstand high temperatures and drier conditions associated with climate change. In 2018, Hartin found that parks, school grounds and home landscapes can save 40 to 60 percent of water by adopting practices such as irrigating turf and trees on separate schedules, based on species and climate and with proper irrigation equipment selection, repair and maintenance.



Hartin was co-lead on a climate-ready landscape tree study to evaluate the species palette of trees adapted to the future. Partnering with other UC ANR academics and the US Forest Service, she examined 12 trees to collect information about water use, pests and diseases, and their growth and health. In addition, she evaluated a subset of these trees for the effect of mulch for conserving even more water by reducing soil evaporation, recycling/reusing valuable organic matter.

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#### Contact:

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UC Cooperative Extension's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program is a knowledge-based approach to effective management of pest problems while minimizing the negative health and environmental impacts. The program provides non-biased, practical information and training on a broad range of pests. In other words, it is a valuable resource for Los Angeles County residents, the pest control industry, housing authorities, public schools, nurseries, parks, commercial growers, landscapers and other public agencies.

In June, Cheryl Wilen (area IPM advisor) conducted a training session for school landscape staff members from various local



school districts and contractors to help them reduce student and staff exposure to pesticides and implement the Healthy Schools Act. The training was part of the "Weed Management Expo for School Sites" event and was conducted in collaboration

with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. Wilen, along with other specialists and experts, conducted demonstrations and offered valuable information for participants to be able to implement a successful IPM program in their respective schools. Training and demonstration topics included weed identification, use of non-chemical weed management methods and gopher control techniques. Wilen also worked closely with members of the Los Angeles Agricultural Commissioner's Office to provide information about weed control and IPM.

Siavash Taravati, also an area IPM advisor with UC Cooperative Extension, focuses on structural IPM. He spent much of the year speaking at training workshops for pesticide applicators, publish-

ing articles and assisting public agencies with pest problems. For example, he assisted the City of Santa Monica with an ongoing bed bug infestation in the city's public libraries and public buses by inspecting their properties and providing consultations. Also, he worked with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles to help manage pests in their buildings.

As an advisor of UC Cooperative Extension, Taravati engages in applied research and participates in scholarly associations and activities. In 2018, he conducted a two-year applied field research project on red imported fire ants and Turkestan cockroaches. He was able to significantly reduce the pest population at two public schools in Southern California. He also published three peer-reviewed journal publications as the first author. One of his papers presented a unique way of analyzing microwave signals for detecting dry wood termites in structural studs inside the drywall systems—an important topic for California due to the prevalence of these termites as a major wood-destroying organism in urban areas.




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### Contact:

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Los Angeles County is an internationally recognized center for biological diversity and contains a wide variety of ecosystems that include marine and wetland communities, deserts, mountain-top forests, and the more common chaparral, coastal sage and urban habitats. It is also home to about 10 million people and growing.

Sabrina Drill (natural resource advisor) plays an important role in the stewardship of Los Angeles County's natural resources. She serves as a technical resource and raises the environmental awareness through her natural resources program. Her information-dissemination efforts focus on building capacity for local agencies and

respond to changes in hydrology and aquatic habitat conditions. In addition, Drill participated in the Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee, along with UC Cooperative Extension Specialist Thomas Scott (UC Riverside). The advisory committee provides oversight to the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning about ways to protect habitat when development is proposed in designated significant ecological areas.

A major focus for our natural resource program is preventing, monitoring and training for management of invasive species—organisms that threaten the health of native communities. The invasive shot hole borer is one of the most pernicious invasive pests affecting Los Angeles County. These beetles spread a fungal disease to more than 200 tree species, including native and popular ornamental species, with significant damage to sycamores and box elders. In 2018, the natural resources program held three workshops around the county, training more than 190 arborists and land managers on the identification and management of the pest.

Drill continued her work on wildfire preparation and recovery in the wake of the Woosley and Hill fires. She worked behind the scenes with the Surfrider Foundation to update the foundation's Ocean Friendly Garden Guidelines for fire-prone areas. In addition, she held several workshops on fire-resistant landscaping, updated

her Sustainable And Fire Resistant (SAFE) Landscapes website; contributed to UC ANR's new statewide fire website; worked with a team of experts (Fire and Flow Forum) to develop a strategic plan for recovering watersheds after fires and debris flows; and co-hosted a workshop specifically for land-use planners on fire-resistant development design practices.

Drill also served as associate and interim director of the UC California Naturalist Program. The program provides training and certification to nonprofessionals who want to volunteer with envi-

community organizations to manage and restore habitat, and to prepare for and address environmental disturbances such as fire, drought, flooding and increasing heat.

Drill provides technical assistance to organizations and the public to solve difficult problems. In 2018, she served on a committee to study the impact of climate change on stream flows and aquatic habitat in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. The effort, led by the Southern California Coastal Waters Research Project, brought together a community of researchers to better understand, predict and



ronmental organizations as well as young adults entering the “green” workforce through conservation corps or community colleges. Staff have collaborated with many local Los Angeles partners, such as the Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum, Catalina Island Conservancy, Pasadena City College, USC SeaGrant, the LA Conservation Corps and two programs that serve youth in workforce education programs, supported by the National Forest Foundation at Angeles National Forest and the Long Beach Conservation Corps. In 2018, the program certified 65 naturalists. Upon graduating, they joined a group of existing naturalists who contributed a total of 2,754 volunteer hours to habitat stewardship and education.

Niamh Quinn (human-wildlife interaction advisor) develops resources and conducts research to help solve and reduce human-wildlife conflict in urban and agricultural areas in Southern California. In particular, she focuses on the management of coyotes. Quinn conducts educational programs for agencies and residents directly impacted by coyotes. In 2018, she developed a tool (online survey) called Coyote Cacher to collect information about coyote encounters. Residents who encounter coyotes provide information that will allow researchers to study trends in human-coyote interactions. Instantaneously popular, Coyote Cacher garnered television and print news coverage in Los Angeles, extending UC Cooperative Extension’s reach

to a larger audience concerned with the impact of coyotes in daily life. An interactive coyote encounter map can be viewed in various neighborhoods by visiting <https://ucanr.edu/sites/CoyoteCacher>.

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**Contact:**

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As the farm advisor for Los Angeles and Ventura counties, Andre Biscaro works with growers and local agencies to identify priority needs for extending information and educational programs to optimize the High Desert's agricultural production and environmental sustainability. He considers these needs against the challenges associated with a growing county population, the issues of the agricultural-urban interface, water-use restrictions and increasing production costs.

In 2018, Biscaro focused on developing and adapting cost-effective and sustainable agronomic practices with an emphasis on irrigation and nitrogen-use efficiency. Through consultations and educational workshops organized for his clientele, Biscaro helped growers and crop consultants optimize both water and nitrogen fertilizer use by developing nitrogen uptake curves, devising fertilization programs and introducing new technologies for irrigation water management. These efforts led to improvements in

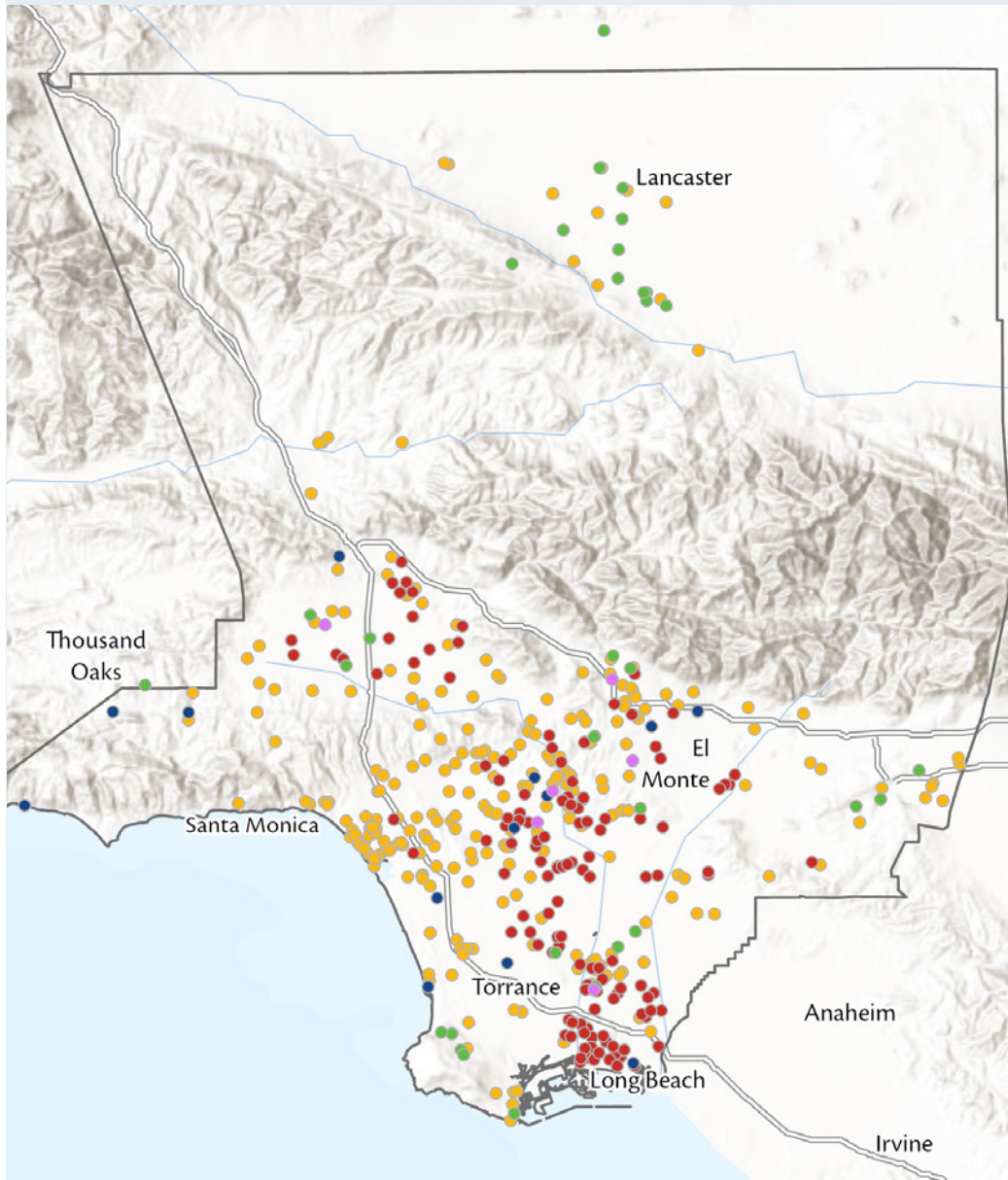
efficiency and profitability of the county's agriculture industry. In addition, the program contributed significantly to improving both the availability and quantity of water for residents of the High Desert. Without a doubt, 2018 was a productive year for our agriculture program.

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### UC Cooperative Extension Activities in Los Angeles County (2018)

- 4-H Youth Development
- Master Gardener Program
- Natural Resources
- Nutrition Education (Adult & Youth)
- Sustainable Food Systems (Urban Ag.)
- Los Angeles County border

## 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.

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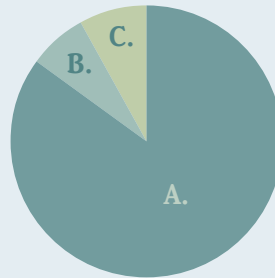
## Thank You to our Donors

- 4-H State Office
  - The California Department of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crops Block Grant
  - Los Angeles County
  - Eileen White Reed
  - Robert P. Ammon Fund
  - Thomas and Dorothy Leavy Foundation
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## Funding Sources

- A.** University of California: 85%\*
- B.** County: 7%
- C.** Gifts, Contracts and Grants: 8%

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





**University of California Cooperative Extension,  
Los Angeles County**

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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.

<sup>1</sup> Pregnancy includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

<sup>2</sup> Service in the uniformed services includes membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services.

<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.