



2024 Impact Report UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County

Our Vision

UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County (UCMGSC) volunteers provide science-based information in response to local community needs. Our vision is to cultivate environmental stewardship one garden at a time. We educate home gardeners about many topics including how to:

- Incorporate sustainable food gardening and landscape practices.
- Cope with drought and improve water conservation.
- Address fire resilience.
- Adopt best practices in pest management.

Educational Outreach

UCMGSC reaches the community in many different ways so people can learn how, when, and where they prefer. We have extensive video resources on our YouTube channel and website and social media outreach via Facebook and Instagram.

We connect one-on-one with community members through our Information Desk online and at the UCCE Sonoma office, our presence at local Farmers Markets, workshops, lectures, and home visits through our nationally recognized Garden Sense program. Increasingly, our offerings are multilingual.

We have demonstration gardens located around Sonoma County that showcase best practices in sustainable landscaping and food production. UCMGSC also focuses on food security in partnership with several community gardens.



OUR VISION

Cultivate environmental stewardship
one garden at a time



CONTACT

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\$664,893 Value of
donated hours

17,816 Hours
donated

240 Active
volunteers



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INSPIRING children to connect with nature

Sonoma Garden Park Children's Garden

Sonoma Garden Park Children's Garden is a vibrant classroom where children explore nature through hands-on gardening and sustainability. For 18 years, Master Gardeners have inspired over 1,000 students and families annually, fostering a love for the environment and healthier lifestyles.

One of our proudest moments last year was the Annual Harvest Festival. This event gathered roughly 300 attendees, mostly young families, to celebrate the garden's bounty and connect with the community. Events included free activities like crafts, cider pressing, scarecrow-making, and birdhouse-building, creating an afternoon of learning and joy for all ages, promoting healthy eating and environmental stewardship.

Children's gardens are more than just plots of land; they're gateways to knowledge, health, and community. With your support, we can continue to cultivate these invaluable resources for our children.

For more information about the Sonoma Garden Park Children's Garden, [click here](#).



"Our garden has become a source of joy and learning," says Susan Angell, one of the Master Gardeners who co-founded the Sonoma Garden Park Children's Garden.



Master Gardener Kathy Matonak explains seed germination to schoolchildren during a fall 2024 field trip at The Children's Garden.

The Children's Garden at the UC Master Gardener Demonstration and Teaching Garden – Los Guilicos

The [Children's Garden](#) at Los Guilicos has blossomed into a thriving hub of learning and community engagement. Designed to empower children through hands-on experiences in nature, this garden serves as an educational space where young learners can connect with the environment, cultivate new skills, and nurture their curiosity.

It also serves as a safe haven for vulnerable children at the Valley of the Moon Children's Center (VMCC), allowing them to find solace and healing in nature while enjoying access to healthy, fresh produce. We have delivered over 300 pounds of fresh produce to VMCC.

During 2024, we debuted a field trip program at the Children's Garden for underserved youth in elementary schools across the County based on lessons and activities tied to Next Generation Science Standards. The field trips are so popular, we have schools signed up through Fall 2025.

"The impact on visiting students is evidenced by the heartfelt thank-you notes received from students after their field trips," says Master Gardener Pat Decker, Children's Garden project leader. "Many children share specific details about what they learned—from the intricacies of soil health to the joys of planting seeds."

Children's gardens are more than just plots of land; they're gateways to knowledge, health, and community



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UC Master Gardener Program awarded 'Unprecedented' grant



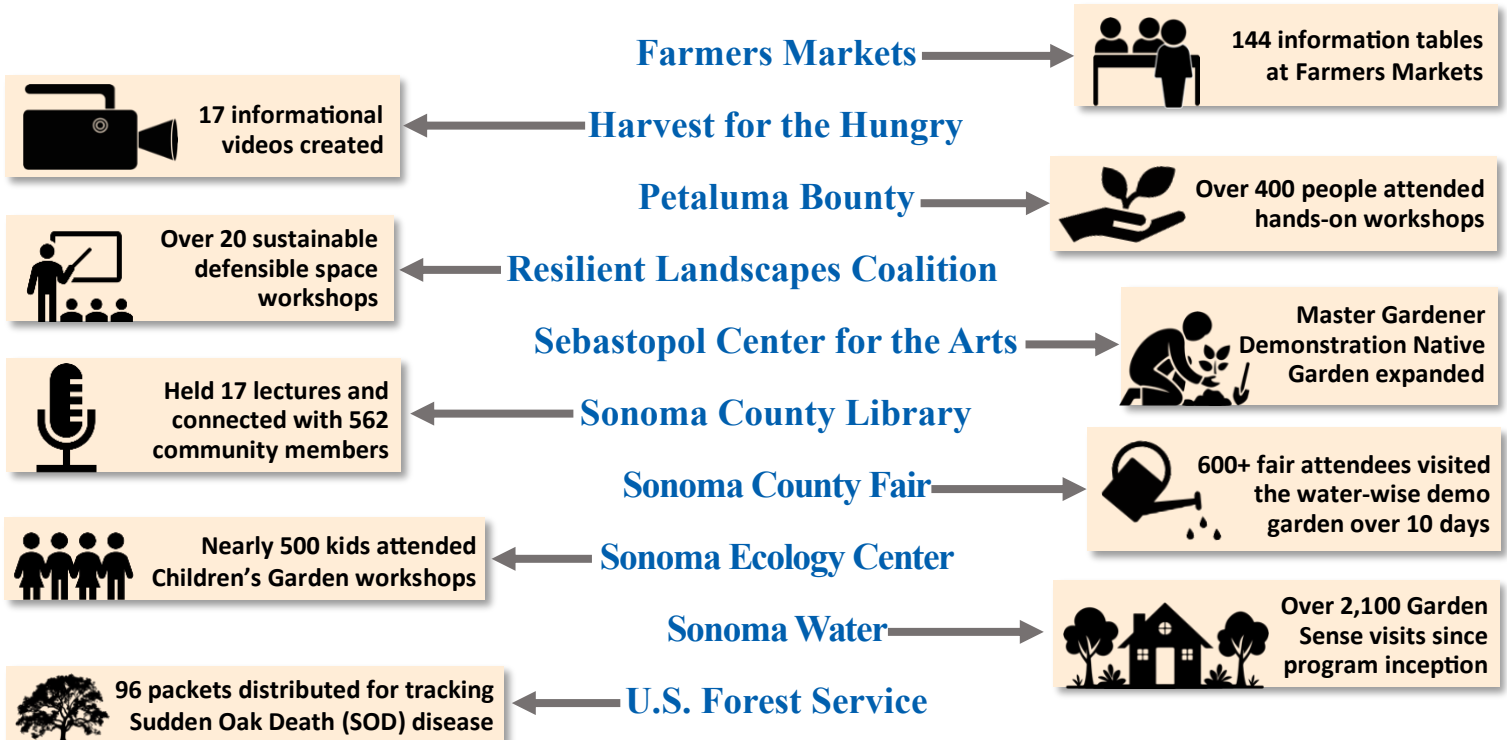
Pictured in the Board of Supervisors Chambers is the committee that collaborated on the Los Guilicos grant application. From left: John Dennis, Tami Stolte, Clio Tarazi, Pat Decker and Mimi Enright. Committee members not pictured: Anne Haddix and Kim Roberts.

During a December 10, 2024, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors meeting, the UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County received a \$1.046 million Sonoma County Ag + Open Space grant. The grant will support our work at the Los Guilicos Demonstration and Teaching Garden. "This grant is unprecedented in the entire history of the Master Gardener Program," says Missy Gable, Statewide Director of the UC Master Gardener Program.

The Los Guilicos Demonstration and Teaching Garden is a 4.5-acre parcel of land in east Santa Rosa near the Valley of the Moon Children's Center that was damaged during the 2020 Glass Fire. Since the spring of 2023, UC Master Gardener volunteers have transformed the property into a native, waterwise, firewise, and wildlife-friendly garden and learning space for adults and children. For more information about the garden and the grant, [click here](#).

Local Partnerships

We deliver programs rooted in evidence-based research that address environmental challenges facing communities such as climate change, drought, and fire in partnership with other community-based organizations:



Lifetime water savings from Sonoma Water & Garden Sense partnership: **289+ million gallons**



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Community Feedback

On-Point Research

"THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! You gave us some great ideas and some we feel we can actually implement. We really appreciate your insight and honesty. The research you presented was right on point."

– Garden Sense clients

School Field Trip Takeaways

We held our first school field trips at the Los Guilicos Demonstration and Teaching Garden in spring and fall 2024.

Students

- *"I learned the worms have five hearts."*
- *"I learned about the parts of a flower."*
- *"It was soooooo cool. I loved being there."*
- *"I learned how to grow a seed."*
- *"Your garden is beautiful and fun, and you are really kind people."*

Teachers

"I am excited to bring next year's class there to see how it has grown. All of your Master Gardeners are fabulous."

–Jen Magee, third grade teacher

"I continue to hear about their [students'] seeds and how they are growing into plants now. I also appreciate how organized and thoughtful all of the stations were. We appreciate you all."

– Jack Lewelling, second grade teacher

This One Takes the Cake

After a Master Gardener, who was volunteering at our Information Desk, provided tree recommendations, diagnosed aphid and scale infestations, and offered scientific solutions, the customer said, *"Oh, Roger! If you lived nearby, I would bake you a cake! Thank you so much!"*

A Magical Connection

"Thank you so very much for making the Succulent Swap a huge success! It was even bigger than last year and a smash hit, again! I talked with lots of people and every single one had a smile on their face!"

There were teens and tweens just starting their plant collecting journeys, toddler garden helpers, and lots of adults remarking on the amazing community and super fun event!

This event melds the goals of the Library and the Master Gardeners in such a magical way by promoting sharing, learning, and community connection."

– Librarian Cailin Yeager and the Petaluma Library

Winter Garden Inspiration

"I'm so glad I stopped by your table. Thank for the great information about carrots and lettuce and varieties to consider growing. As a first-time gardener, I'm now even more inspired to start planning my winter garden!"

– Occidental Farmers Market attendee

A 'Mobile Master Class!'

"Thank you for providing the three of us and Stone Creek community with landscaping inspiration, and science-based knowledge for our consideration and application."

The reference packets, your presentations, assessments, recommendations, key messages and instructions were all on point. A mobile master class!

Your services are invaluable, especially in this period of impactful climate changes. Thank you for helping create gardens of mindfulness."

– Garden Sense clients

"Your services are invaluable, especially in this period of impactful climate changes."



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COLLABORATING with community gardens to improve food security

Petaluma Bounty Unity Garden

We're celebrating over three years of partnership with Petaluma Bounty, a local food security non-profit farm, with our Unity demonstration garden. Our Master Gardener team of volunteers transformed a weed-infested garden space into a wonderful hub of sustainable garden practices.

The team hosts seasonal hands-on workshops on topics such as successful spring planting, fruit tree pruning, container gardening, vegetables and pollinator plants, tool maintenance, children's activities and more. During 2024, the team reached over 400 community members through hands-on learning opportunities.

During 2024, Master Gardener volunteers received and planted a habitat kit from the Xerces Habitat Kit Program to create a habitat hedgerow. The team also assists with information tables at Petaluma Bounty's seasonal plant sales that are open to the public. For more information about the Petaluma Bounty Unity Garden, [click here](#).

Right: Master Gardener Patricia Souza volunteered at the "Caring for your Winter Garden" hands-on learning event held at the Unity Garden in February 2024. About 35 gardeners learned to maintain their tools, trim roses and apple trees, and trim back their pollinator beds.



"Gardening with Harvest for the Hungry volunteers is a joy! Not only do we grow food for the hungry, we nurture ourselves in the process by growing friendships along with vegetables," says Master Gardener Tobi Brown at the garden.

Harvest for the Hungry Garden

Founded in 1987, [Harvest for the Hungry Garden](#) is more than just a garden—it's a lifeline for those facing food insecurity in Sonoma County. By growing organic produce year-round, Harvest for the Hungry provides fresh, nutritious food to those who need it most, while fostering a sense of community and sharing the joys of gardening.

Master Gardeners have been involved since the beginning playing a vital role in establishing the garden and continuing to provide expert advice and hands-on learning experiences for visitors and volunteers. During 2024, nearly 20 food gardening education videos were filmed at the garden by Master Gardeners.

Beyond growing food, Harvest for the Hungry empowers the community with knowledge. Through annual workshops and seasonal videos, Sonoma County Master Gardeners share science-based gardening techniques helping individuals and families become more self-sufficient in producing their own food.

Master Gardeners help people become more self-sufficient in growing their own food



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EMPOWERING adaptation to a changing climate



Sonoma County Master Gardener Adaptation and Resilience for Climate

The Sonoma County Master Gardener Adaptation and Resilience for Climate (ARC) study group, formed in June 2024, has been developing climate-related learning activities for kids.

The ARC study group hosted an insect hotel table at the Master Gardener Children's Jamboree and Fall Festival held at the Los Guilicos Demonstration and Teaching Garden in October 2024. Fifty bug hotels, which were wildly popular, were built by children who attended the event.

The ARC study group has also tackled learning more about climate resilient seeds, seed saving and hosted a seed saving workshop. In spring 2025 the ARC study group and our Food Gardening study group will host two neighborhood food gardening fairs. The purpose is to identify how Master Gardeners can help build resilience, food security and community.

Left: Benjamin Fulton, son of Master Gardener Tiffany Fulton, enjoyed helping at the insect hotel table at the Master Gardener 2024 Children's Jamboree and Fall Festival.

Sonoma County Fair sustainable garden display

The UC Master Gardeners of Sonoma County and Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership teamed up for a second year to create a sustainable garden display at the 2024 Sonoma County Fair.

Our focus was informing home gardeners about our free program, [Garden Sense](#), which includes advice about water saving irrigation tips and plant selection. The climate ready landscape display of low water, mostly California native plants highlighted how home gardeners can invite native pollinators and birds to their garden while also having the garden look beautiful year-round.

The garden not only highlighted low water use plants but also featured ways to slow, spread and sink rainwater, and how to reduce landscape water use via smart irrigation controllers and drip irrigation.

Master Gardeners staffed the garden display at the fair over 10 days and enjoyed sharing the rewards of sustainable home gardening with over 600 Fair attendees.

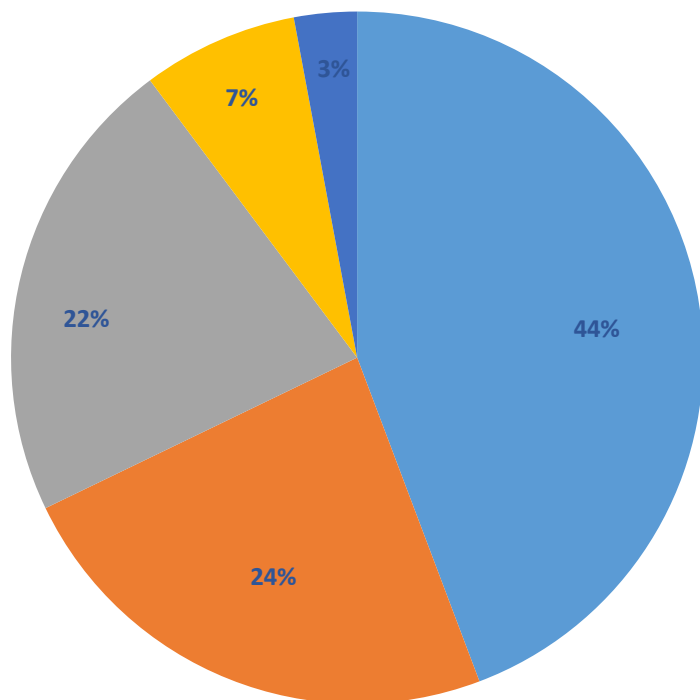
Right: The sustainable garden display featured mostly California native plants that require less water and attract pollinators. For information about California native plants, visit our [website](#).



Master Gardeners share the rewards of sustainable home gardening



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Connections with the Community

- Information Tables – 3,891
- Public Education – 2,074*
- Demonstration Gardens – 1,930
- Information Desk – 640
- Garden Sense Program – 258

Total Connections = **8,793**

**Includes lectures and Propagation for Education*

Social Media & Newspapers

- Webpage visitors
 - Unique visitors: **108,000**
 - Most popular page: **Planting under Oaks**
- YouTube subscribers: **1,730**
- YouTube views: **9,100**
- Facebook followers: **5,300**
- Instagram followers: **2,525**
- “Advice to Grow By” columns in local newspapers:
 - *The Santa Rosa Press Democrat*: **21**
 - *La Prensa Sonoma*: **8**

Fundraising

- Individual donations: **\$54,685**
- Plant sales income: **\$21,066**
- Grant funding:
 - **Sonoma Water**: **\$50,000** over 2 ½ years to support our Garden Sense water conservation educational outreach program.
 - **United States Forest Service**: **\$32,000** annual funding in support of our Sudden Oak Death (SOD) citizen science program tracking the spread of SOD in Sonoma County.

Volunteers & Volunteer Hours

- Active volunteers: **240**
- Volunteer hours: **17,816**
- Value of volunteer hours: (\$37.32/hour): **\$664,893**
- All-time volunteer hours: **500,292**
- All-time value of volunteer hours: **\$18,670,897**

Staff Support

- Half-time County-funded Program Coordinator
- Half-time County-funded Administrative Assistant

Garden Sense Program

- Clients: **258**
- All-time client visits: **2,110**

Sonoma County Master Gardeners connected with 8,793 community members



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Thank You!

Your gifts help us grow



\$1,000+

- Anonymous (4)
- Off the Page Readers Theater
- Shelia Mutter
- Clio Tarazi
- Cathy Williamson

\$100+

- Anonymous (6)
- Therese Arsenault
- Janet Bair
- Susan Bishop
- Kathleen Conover
- Jodi Davidson
- Anne Devlin
- Christopher Downing
- Catherine Elliott
- Mimi Enright
- Penelope Fink
- Clare Gallardo
- Carolyn Green
- Winifred Grelis
- Elizabeth Hambrecht
- Healdsburg Garden Club
- Niels Jensen
- Diane Judd
- Michael Kambour
- William Klausung

\$100+

- Jennifer Levy
- Linda Lewis
- Lorraine Linstrom
- Mary Lou Milkoff
- Kimberly Nielsen-Glynn
- Patrick O'Connor
- Oddone Vineyard
- Karla Rosen
- Santa Rosa Garden Club
- Mary Savage
- Steve Saxe
- Jean Schlesinger
- Dan Schurman
- Suzie Shield
- SPMF Quality Team
- Susan Yarian
- Ellen Zaslansky

Under \$99

- Anonymous (6)
- Mary Abbey
- Maggi Andrews
- Ellen Boulanger
- Tobi Brown
- Robin Christensen
- Christyne Davidian
- Shirley Davis
- Karen Deist
- DJ DeProspero
- Laura Eakin
- William French
- Mary Gomez
- KC Greaney
- Alina Matutes Haigler
- Alexis Harrit
- Lisa Howard
- Doreen Jansen
- Constance Joseph
- Rory Kalmar
- Jo-Anne Kennedy
- Rachel Kligerman

Under \$99

- April Lynch
- Marilyn Madrone
- Mary Mariani
- Stephanie Miller
- Malinda & Landon Painter
- Jeff Pierce
- Deborah K Platt
- Patricia Restaino
- Melanie Sanborn
- Mike Scannell
- Jude Sharp
- Sonoma Mountain Garden Club
- Betty Strazzo
- Joanne Stubblefield
- Bryce Sumner
- Shirley Tavenier
- Phyllis Turrill
- Karin Wiedner
- Susan Yarian
- Linda Zala

\$500+

- Cie Cary
- Sashi Cousins
- Nancy Creveling
- Amy Dyer
- Paula Glogovac
- Devon Jackson
- Kim Roberts
- Leslie Rohan
- Tami Stolte



A Special Thank You

Chuck and Cathy Williamson supported our Portable Gardens project with a \$15,000 donation. An **anonymous donor** gifted \$10,000 for bus transportation for schoolchildren who visit our Los Guilicos Demonstration and Teaching Garden.

In-kind donations

- Annastassios Tarazi
- Clio Tarazi
- Cloverdale Home & Garden
- Denbeste Yard and Garden
- Devil Mountain Wholesale Nursery
- Emerisa Gardens
- Gaddis Nursery
- Gardenworks Inc.
- Kendall Jackson
- Oliver's Market
- Pam Vana-Paxhia & Jon Lacaille
- Sonoma-Marin Water Saving Partnership

Help us have a growing impact

Click or scan the QR code to learn how you can support the UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County. Your tax-deductible donation helps us achieve our vision of cultivating environmental stewardship one garden at a time. Thank you!



Total cash and in-kind donations: **\$52,612**