

Please Bug Me!

"I'm really good at finding mummies!"

Kevi Mace, a UC Berkeley Graduate Student in Extension, has been developing a project with her guiding professor Nick Mills and UC Cooperative Extension's Virginia Bolshakova examining beneficial insects across a varied landscape using school, community, and private gardens in the San Francisco Peninsula. This project brought her into contact with the Pacifica Sanchez Library and their lovely garden. As a fun and informative outreach event, Kevi participated in their Please Bug Me Program for local kids and parents integrating the library and garden spaces. Fifteen people came out for this sunny Saturday morning event. Starting with a colorful, visual presentation, Kevi introduced the basic characteristics of insects and their life cycles, talked about beneficial insects in the area, and gave them helpful tips to easily identify a few common groups of insects.

After inspecting some previously collected and curated insects from her collection, the group moved into the library's garden to collect and identify insects in real time!



The enthusiastic bug hunters gathered a variety of insects. Collecting reinforced the terms Kevi covered in the presentation as well as a sense for habit and behavior of particular species. By the end of the morning, everyone knew what a parasitoid was and understood its life cycle. Much to their delight, they witnessed a female hover fly (Family Syrphidae) lay an egg in an aphid colony on fava beans, where there were also many parasitized aphids (pictured). To top off their exciting adventure, they netted a shimmering, green *Agapostema* bee (Family Halictidae; pictured), a California native.



Beneficial insects are all around if you know where to look.

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