

Jan.
Feb.
2025

Garden Views Newsletter



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
Riverside County

University of California Cooperative Extension

Master Gardener Program of Riverside County

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Advice to Grow By ... Ask Us!

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UC Master Gardener Program Mission Statement

"To extend research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California and be guided by our core values and strategic initiatives."

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Georgia Renne, Editor, grenne@earthlink.net

UC Master Gardener Reorganization Project Update 2025

Contributed to the November-December Garden Views by Rita Clemons (Area County Director), Robin Russel (Consultant), and Rosa Olaiz (Volunteer Services Coordinator), and updated for February 2025 by Georgia Renne, UC Master Gardener

The Reorganization Project continues to move forward! The Project team met first in December, two meetings in January, then one in February, and future ones scheduled in February and March. We meet in Riverside, Palm Desert UCR, and Cabazon Library to make it convenient for our members from all areas. Members of the group include Deborah Anderson, Stephen Crouse, Thurman Howard, Jim Huberty, Melody Knox, Eben Longfellow, Patricia Malone, and Georgia Renne.

As stated in the Project Update in the November-December *Garden Views*, the goals of are to determine how best to organize the Master Gardener Program Riverside County (MGRC) and “to provide all members with timely, regular/easy access to MGRC support and member focused activities/events wherever they live in the County.”

As the team reviews current practices, policies and procedures, individually and in relation to the overall project objectives, the members chose assignments for one of three teams that will work collaboratively: Team 1: Research and Analyze Riverside County Data; Team 2: Research and Analyze Current Structure; Team 3: Strategize Future MG Expansion.

At our last meeting we collaboratively discussed the specifics of the three Master Gardener Statewide Mission Impact Areas: Sustainable Landscaping, Home Gardening, and Community Well-Being in relationship to our Riverside County Program. We are now reviewing the list of all MG projects as currently found on VMS and determining which **primary** category each project represents within the above three Mission Impact Areas. We will then open the discussion to identify who receives MG

services and what type of activities we provide within our current projects. This information will be used to redefine and clarify our projects, collect more refined data, and thus assess how the MGRC is functioning to determine what changes are needed.

“In the coming months, the team will review current practices, policies and procedures, individually and in relation to the overall project objectives. As a result, we expect the group will refine ‘business as usual’ by improving and reinforcing current operating methods, and as necessary developing new strategies, new structures, policies, procedures, and methods of communicating with members.” (November-December *Garden Views*)

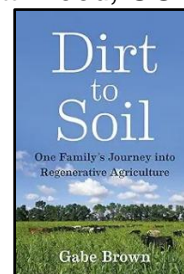
Further progress of the Reorganization Project will come to all Riverside County Master Gardeners in specific emails and issues of *Garden Views*.

Book Review

Dirt to Soil: One Family’s Journey into Regenerative Agriculture

By Gabe Brown

Reviewed by Patti Reed, UC Master Gardener



If you have wondered how regenerative agriculture can be ecologically sound and profitable, this is the book for you. Although my family’s roots are on the farms of South Dakota and Indiana, places we periodically visited as I was growing up, I never gave a thought to the “details” of how those farmers maintained or improved their cropland AND turned a profit to support their families. Turns out, many family farms have been unable to do so.

This book is a highly readable saga of Gabe and Shelly Brown, who left city life to buy her family’s North Dakota farm. It shares their struggles to make the land profitable, and their growing

conviction that improving the soil was key to productivity.

Initially, Gabe and Shelly Brown followed the farming practices of her parents only to discover that between the vagaries of weather, crop failures, prices of fertilizers, and pesticides, turning a profit to support their family was never assured. Little by little, they researched, experimented, and innovated until Brown's Ranch became a model of regenerative agriculture.

Just as "the devil is in the details," you'll be captivated by those details – both the failures and successes and all the innovations that Gabe and his son devised. My favorite was the chicken coop trailer that was moved from field to field to take advantage of the bountiful fertilizer the chickens provided! If you're lucky, you'll be able to visit his ranch near Bismarck ND one day. If not, you can treat yourself to a vicarious visit through this book and learn about the Browns' journey, celebrating their success as ranchers and as role models for all those who love farming and care deeply about the health of our planet.

Brown, Gabe. *Dirt to Soil: One Family's Journey into Regenerative Agriculture*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2018.

No Child Left Inside!

Contributed by Kim Coons-Leonard, UC Master Gardener

Master Gardeners' Youth-School Project hosted the countywide District Science Leadership (DSL) meeting Feb. 5 at UCR's Botanic Gardens. This is a quarterly meeting held in different locations throughout the county, focusing on best practices in science education while highlighting science opportunities for educators to share with youth.

This provided the opportunity to highlight our online science lessons following the recent release of our grades TK-8 ***Invertebrate*** series, and the Botanic Gardens as a field trip opportunity. Keeping in mind that science educators are faced with the pressure of a list of skills and concepts to be taught and assessed by the end of the school year, we focused on the

compelling research of increasing learner engagement by ongoing exposure to the outdoors using the theme ***No Child Left Inside!*** **All Master Gardeners should become advocates of *No Child Left Inside!* The following is a Cliff Notes version of the current research we shared with educators:**

- A growing body of evidence indicates that regular exposure to nature is not just good for children's health; it also improves their ability to learn.
- Acute doses of nature, whether through a window view of a tree-lined street or a walk in a park, have positive aftereffects on attention and working memory. This is because spending time in nature—talking a walk or even having a view of nature out the window—helps restore attention, allowing students to concentrate and perform better on assessments.
- Studies have found that holding a class outdoors can significantly improve the daily cortisol patterns of students—reflecting less stress and better adaptation to stress—resiliency, when compared to kids with indoor-only instruction.
- Getting your hands "*dirty*" in garden *soil* can increase serotonin levels which improves your mood or attitude. (Always a good thing in the classroom.) Contact with soil and a specific soil bacterium, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, triggers the release of serotonin in our brain. Serotonin is a natural antidepressant to strengthen our immunity.
- The highest positive academic impact of outdoor learning is in science followed by mathematics and language arts.

Special thanks go to fellow *No Children Left Inside* Master Gardener advocates:

- MG Volunteer Coordinator, Rosa Olaiz for providing science educators an overview of the UC Master Garden program and training opportunities.
- Janine Almanzor, UC MG and UCR Botanic Gardens Curator and Education Coordinator, for providing educators with an overview of the gardens and a tour.
- UC MG Youth-School South County Project Lead, Kathy Steckman, for helping with set-up and take-down for this day-long event, and ongoing input with educators throughout the day.

Celebrate!
UC Master Gardeners of
Riverside County
Recognition Awards
December-January

750 Hours Pruner Pin

Christal Ferlisi

Kay Force

500 Hours Watering Can Pin

Buddy Knoles

Jim Simpson

250 Hours Gardeners' Trowel Pin

Julie Weatherford

100 Hours Bumble Bee Pin

Sydnee Adcock

Dell Jean Van Fossen

The Peanut Patch Harvest

*Article and photos contributed by Burt Boss,
UC Master Gardener*

Shortly before the Christmas School Break the peanut harvest began at the Boys and Girls Club of Cathedral City (BGCCC). And look at what we found!



We pulled all of the plants from the ground, and each one had the same result – fully developed PEANUTS.



The kids pulled the peanuts off the root structures, and we gathered them in a pot.



After the plants were pulled, we went back and dug through the loosened soil and found even more peanuts. About another 1½ pounds.

We split up the harvest, and about half went to the kids to take home. The rest were left for me

to prepare as a treat after the kids returned from their school break.

I prepared the peanuts for roasting by washing and then soaking them (brining) in salt water for two days. They were removed from the brine and allowed to air-dry for about 24 hours. Then they were roasted in the oven at 250 F for about 40 minutes. The result was fresh roasted peanuts with just a hint of salt.

After the break, the kids ate the peanuts, and the general feeling was that they “tasted like peanut butter.”

The real test came when my gardening partner at the BGCCC (who is from the South) declared that they were EXCELLENT. We will attempt another crop this coming year.

Update: Trees for Tomorrow

Article and photos contributed by Xochitl Peña, UC Master Gardener

In recent months, the eastern Coachella Valley community has benefited from the “Trees for Tomorrow Start Today” (TFTST) tree giveaway program, with events held on Oct. 19 in Coachella, Nov. 23, 2024 in Mecca, Dec. 7, 2024 in Indio, and our final winter event in Sky Valley was scheduled for Feb. 1, 2025.

The program, in partnership with various community-based organizations, provides tree care education and free “climate-ready” shade trees to residents living in low-shade communities.

As we’ve learned from program founder Janet Hartin, UCCE Environmental Horticulture Advisor, Emerita, for San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Riverside counties, introducing more shade trees to the environment, is key to helping cool urban areas. And with urban heat islands especially an issue in desert communities, this program was a natural fit for the Coachella Valley.

A single tree can reduce the surface temperature of asphalt from 175 degrees

Fahrenheit to below 100 °F in desert cities. In addition, the transpiration helps cool the area by reducing temperatures immediately around that tree by 6 to 12 °F.

How These Events Work

Through various outreach methods including social media and one-on-one contacts, community members in the targeted areas are notified of TFTST tree education/tree give-away events and can pre-register for their free trees. Resources and information on tree species and care are emailed to all the pre-registrants along with details on how to pick up their free tree. The events are typically held for a two-hour period on Saturdays at libraries and other partner venues.

Tree species provided so far to Coachella Valley registrants include Desert Willow, Palo Verde, and Chilean Mesquite. They are specifically selected because of their drought tolerance, resistance to pests, and ability to thrive in the hot, dry, desert climate. Five-gallon trees ready to plant are purchased through funding from the Coachella Valley Resource Conservation District from local growers.

During the events, Master Gardener volunteers, work diligently to sign-in the pre-registrants and provide one-on-one information, in English and Spanish, on how to plant and care for these young trees. Plant-care instructions include everything from how deep to plant it to long-term watering and pruning needs. TFTST staff and volunteers stay in contact with tree recipients to ensure trees remain healthy and answer any questions on tree care as trees mature.

It is also important to stress the benefit of shade trees. Not only do they help cool urban heat islands, but they also filter pollutants, absorb and store carbon dioxide, provide windbreak, reduce noise, and encourage habitat for animals.

Grateful For Info and Shade

While some folks just wanted to pick up their trees and go, many seemed grateful for the tutorial on their new home addition.

Most of the information was provided one-on-one, but occasionally Stephen Crouse, TFTST project lead in the Coachella Valley, would lead a large group, depending on how many registrants arrived at any given time.



With eastern Coachella Valley home to a large population of Spanish speakers, it was beneficial to have bilingual Master Gardeners who could get folks registered and discuss tree attributes and planting and care tips in Spanish. A special shoutout goes to Master Gardeners Uriel Esparza-Gonzalez, Ruben Arias, and Roxana Price, part-time TFTST Coordinator, who helped in that regard. Rosa Olaiz, UC Master Gardener Program of Riverside County Volunteer Services Coordinator, who stopped by the Mecca event, also lent a helping hand.

In talking to many registrants, it became clear that the reasons for wanting a free shade tree varied. Some wanted more protection from the sun for when their children played. Others needed shade next to their cement driveways to help keep their cars cool. And others just wanted to beautify their yards with attractive, low-water-use trees.

While the draw differed, tree recipients were grateful for the new addition to their household, and left the event with a newfound knowledge on how one tree can help make a difference.

Volunteers Are Key

These events would not be successful without the hard work and coordination of Master Gardeners. Leading the desert coordination efforts is Stephen Crouse, TFTST project lead in the Coachella Valley. Jolene Hancock is the West Valley project lead, and Roxana Price, is the part-time TFTST Coordinator.



The **Coachella event on Oct. 19** was held at the Coachella Library courtyard (above). Master Gardener volunteers for this event included: Stephen Crouse, Roxana Price, Ruben Arias, Rose Morisoli, Uriel Esparza-Gonzalez, Carol Rochlin, Bernice Rummonds, and Xochitl Peña (pictured below).



The **Mecca event on Nov. 23** was held outside the Mecca Library. Master Gardener volunteers included: Stephen Crouse, Roxana Price, Uriel Esparza-Gonzalez, Linda Mayo, Bernice Rummonds, Rosa Olaiz, and Xochitl Peña. (pictured below).



The **Indio event on Dec. 7** was held outside the temporary Indio Library. Master Gardener volunteers for this event included: Stephen Crouse, Roxana Price, Patricia Malone, Linda Mayo, Uriel Esparza-Gonzalez, Joyce Mochizuki, and Bernice Rummonds (pictured below).



Latest TFTST Update from Janet Hartin:

The goal of the TFTST project is to cool urban heat islands by providing free 5-gallon drought, heat, and pest resistant shade trees (paid for by our partners) and information on their planting and care to residents of low-shade neighborhoods. We hope Master Gardeners will

volunteer at one or more TFTST events this spring. MGs help sign in pre-registrants, provide tree care information in English and Spanish (you will know what species are being provided ahead of time), and help walk-up registrants complete tree applications.

The next event will be on Saturday, March 8 at the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District located at 31315 Chaney Street in Lake Elsinore. Please sign up in VMS if you can help out. (Volunteers should arrive by 9:00am and stay through 12:30 pm even though the actual event is shorter.) We will be conducting three TFTST events in the East Valley this Spring, as well. We'll keep you posted on VMS for those dates once they are secured.

Produce: Safety After a Fire

Contributed by Betty Guida, UC Master Gardener



Because of the recent wildfires in So Cal, many gardeners are asking: Is the smoke/ash affecting my backyard vegetable garden? Is the produce edible? What should I do to ensure my family's safety?

If you are asking these questions, you are justified. The chemicals and contaminants in the smoke don't stay in the air, but can be deposited in the water, on the soil, and on our plants.

The following are best practices for backyard vegetable gardeners:

- Wear closed-toe shoes.
- Wash your hands before and after examining your garden.
- Examine each plant, do they look healthy? Are there ash or particles that you do not usually see?

This is what you should do even if you do not see any ash:

- Wash the produce well under running water. You can also wash the produce in a 10% white vinegar solution. (10% vinegar and 90% water)
- For leafy vegetables, remove the outer leaves and then wash. Root vegetables, peel before eating.



Regarding the soil in your garden, ash deposits can change the acidity of the soil making it more alkaline. Therefore, the nutrient levels in the soil may also change. The following are soil testing laboratories. You will be charged between \$10 and \$70 per sample, depending on what you wanted tested.

Soil and Plant Laboratory,
<http://soilandplantlaboratory.com/>

Farmecology Laboratory,
<http://farmecologylabs.com>

Environmental Technical Services,
<http://entechserve.com/>

These are simple, straight-forward steps which will ensure the safety of your backyard garden after being exposed to the ash and smoke of a wildfire.

Resources:

<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=44099>


https://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/Disaster_Resources/Fire/Produce_Safety_after_Urban_Wildfire/

https://acmg.ucanr.edu/Over_the_Fence/Potential_Hazards_of_Wildfire_Ash_592/

DURING A WILDFIRE


SAFETY TIPS FOR LOCAL FOOD GROWERS

PROTECT YOUR LUNGS




Inhaling smoke has very severe health risks

WASH PRODUCE WITH RUNNING WATER




Remove outer leaves or peel if you see ash

NUTRITION BUILDS RESILIENCE



Low risk of harm from produce exposed to smoke

TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS



Children – Elders – People with Respiratory and Heart Disease

Produce Safety After Urban Wildfire
 UC Cooperative Extension of Sonoma County
ucanr.edu/produceafterfire





Driftwood Succulent Planter

Workshop



Workshop instructor

Linda Powell,
Master Gardener

March 8, 2025

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**1 Botanic Gardens Dr
Riverside, CA 92507**

Register Online

\$45/members

\$55/non-members

Create your own one-of-a-kind planter filled with succulents. You will select a unique piece of a vine from an old California vineyard and fill it with succulent cuttings. These plants are perfect to place in your home or enjoy in your garden. Workshop fee includes driftwood, succulents, moss, and all necessary tools.

gardens.ucr.edu

Volunteers Save The Date!

2025 Riverside Flower Show and Garden Tour

April 26 and 27

Garden Tour Hours are 10 am to 5 pm
both days

Stay tuned for more information

Contact Darrilyn Erickson
at daerickson59@gmail.com



Powered by water. Driven by service.

Western Municipal Water District partners with the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, [University of California Master Gardener Program of Riverside County](#) to host FREE monthly virtual workshops that focus on gardening and efficient outdoor water use. Workshops are hosted on the second Saturday of each month.

The next one is "Growing Vegetables," on Saturday, March 8.

Register:

<https://westernwaterca.gov/539/Master-Gardener-Workshops>



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
Riverside County

Free Workshop

Tomato Time

Saturday, March 1, 2025 • 10 a.m.



Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District



Welcome to the
Wonderful World of
Tomatoes!

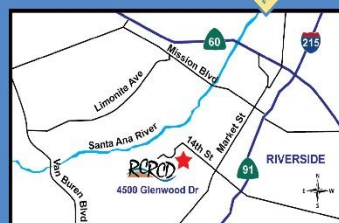
Join Kathy Swanson, UCCE
Riverside County Master Gardener,
to learn how to deal with tomato
pests and diseases.

Get tips on how to use your
bountiful harvest of tomatoes!

Ask a Master Gardener First Saturdays from 9 a.m. - noon.
Stop by the Master Gardener booth to have all your gardening questions answered.



Open Daily, 8 am to 4 pm
4500 Glenwood Dr., Riverside, 92501
For more information, please contact us at
(951) 683-7691 ext. 207 or llc@RCRCD.org.



Two Steps to Happiness:

1. get a plant 🌱

2. get some more
plants to go with
your plant 🌱🌱🌱



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
Riverside County

UC Master Gardeners of Riverside County Announce Spring Home Gardening Class 2025 For Home Gardeners!



Saturday, March 15, 2025, from 9:00 am-2:00 pm
in person in Riverside

- The cost for the class is \$30* including all materials.
- Class size is limited to 25.
- Light lunch is included.
- **Registration Deadline: Saturday, March 1, 2025.**
- For more information or to register contact: Georgia Renne, HG Coordinator, at grennemg@gmail.com.

Home Gardening: “Spring into Spring: Are You Ready for Spring Gardening?”

- 🌱 **“Habitat Gardening”**
- 🌱 **“Succulents”**
- 🌱 **“Container Gardening”**
- 🌱 **“Veggies for Spring Planting”**

*(*The tuition covers expenses and supports the UC Master Gardener Program.
UC Master Gardeners are volunteers and are not paid for their time.)*