

U.C. COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION/
COUNTY OF
VENTURA FARM
ADVISOR
669 COUNTY
SQUARE DR., #100
VENTURA, CA 93003



UC Cooperative Extension Report

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Fall 2009

Rose Hayden-Smith Invited to the White House

County Director Rose Hayden-Smith has been named to a USDA committee to work on a national gardening initiative.

This was a result of a second visit to Washington at the invitation of U.S. Department of Agriculture in September to work on this important proposal.

The visit included a tour of the White House gardens by Assistant White House chef, Sam Kass, who is also actively promoting pieces of a national food initiative.

Kass allowed the visitors to sample tomatoes from the garden and view the varieties of broccoli, lettuce, cabbage, herbs, sweet potatoes, and

other plants featured in their well-tended beds.

To sweeten the experience honey is collected from a bee hive on the property.

The garden produces several hundred pounds of food which is used not only to feed the First Family, but is served at official functions and other events. Any excess is donated to local food banks.

Michelle Obama has been the prime mover behind the garden which she feels is important not only in providing fresh, better quality food, but in serving as a vital example and tool for educating children and their families on nutrition and healthy eating.



Michelle Obama at White House garden

Although the President and the First Lady were not at hand, there was a sighting of the First Dog Bo, on the south lawn.

Rose topped off her trip with a visit to the People's Garden at the National Mall, a meeting with staff at the Congressional Hunger Office, and delivered a lecture at the U.S. Botanic Gardens.

For Rose, it's one more step in the right direction.

UCCE and Hansen Trust to Host Research Symposium

UCCE in conjunction with the Hansen Trust in Santa Paula will host the first annual Ventura County Research Symposium on Tuesday, December 2.

The agenda includes presentations by UC experts on topics specifically designed to address Ventura County agricultural issues and concerns.

The symposium will be of interest for growers, policy makers, community leaders, educators, journalists and anyone who cares about the future of farming in the county.

For more information contact Chris Webb at 805-645-1434 or link on the calendar at: <http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/>

Save the Date!

When: Tuesday, Dec. 2

Time: 8 am to Noon

**Where:
Oxnard Performing Arts
and Convention Center,
800 Hobson Way**

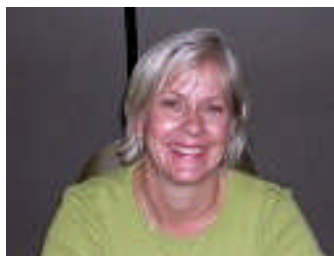
**Coffee and Refreshments will
be served**

We're the University of California Cooperative Extension...

We are proud to partner with the County of Ventura in tackling complex economic, environmental and social issues throughout the county.

We actively collaborate with farmers, fishermen, professional educators and service providers, community leaders and non-profit organization to support a healthy and sustainable community in Ventura County.

Rose Hayden-Smith Named County Director



Rose Hayden-Smith

Rose Hayden-Smith, who has been serving as Acting County Director since July 2008, was appointed County Director last spring.

Rose has been with the University of California Extension in Ventura since 1992. She began as a 4-H Youth Development Advisor, and has served as Master Gardener advisor, and Acting County Director several times in her tenure.

She serves on the Advisory Board for the UC Hansen Trust, Food and Society, the Ventura Star Community Board, and is a Kellogg policy fellow.

We heartily welcome and congratulate Rose on a well-deserved appointment.

County Kids Get Involved with Victory Gardens

Cabrillo Middle School students participated in a recent project that has its roots in the past and its eye on the future... victory gardens.

The students wrote and contributed to "Victory Gardens Now and Then," an informational journal that features graphics and articles geared to spreading the word to the next generation of home growers.

Dubbing themselves "The Garden Reporters," the students were guided in this effort by UCCE and Hansen Farm staff and advisors and in the process learned about the history of victory gardens, nutrition and hands-on gardening techniques.

During World War I a victory garden was planted on the very site where Cabrillo Middle School stands.

County Director and youth advisor, Rose Hayden-Smith is passionate about the subject and views it as an issue highly relevant to the immediate future.

Through programs like Junior Master Gardeners, 4-H and other educational outreach programs county students are getting an enlightened perspective on food that goes beyond dropping it into the cart at the grocery store.

After all, we all have to eat.



Student Project

This journal will be available soon for online viewing at:

<http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/>

Garden Share and Community Outreach



Representatives from the county's food bank, "Food Share" met with UCCE to discuss a collaborative project to benefit the county's hungry. Food Share has developed an offshoot program, "Garden Share," that encourages home gardeners to share excess produce.

We are also working with them in promoting gardening projects with the County Agency on Aging to supplement senior nutrition efforts.

On another front in Camarillo, a Master Gardener has led the effort on a community garden.

In Oxnard, the Community Roots Garden, brings together farm workers and the community.

The Grow Food Party Crew, a volunteer group, is providing free expertise to home gardeners.

In Ventura, a youth corps group, some trained by UC staff and Master Gardeners, has planted at their building in sight of City Hall.

LEAN VC, which supports health and wellness in the city and focuses on gardening and local food systems as part of their program, met at City Hall in September. Read the City Manager's blog about it at:

<http://www.cityofventura.net/cmblog/2009/08/food-glorious-food-can-we-be-leaner-and.html>

Detrimental Fly in Ventura County

Don't mistake *Drosophila suzukii* for a primo Japanese motorcycle. *Drosophila suzukii*, also known as cherry vinegar fly or spotted wing drosophila, is one of the newer invasive pests to enter the county.

The fly is attracted to cherries, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries and blackberries and lays its eggs (larvae) into fruit that haven't been harvested. The larvae subsequently feeds inside the fruit before it exits to the pupa stage. The larvae damage then exposes the fruit to fungal and bacterial infection.

This unique invasion of the fruit's interior distinguishes the cherry vinegar fly from more ordinary fruit and vinegar flies and can impact production for county growers.

Addressing an infestation can be challenging. Fly development has four stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult. Conventional pest

management treatments are unfeasible at the first three stages. This is compounded by the high breeding potential of the fly which can populate an area so quickly they can be very difficult to reduce once they're established.

However, it's not all bad news. Fruit flies have been effectively managed in Hawaii, Florida and California with multi-dimensional programs that provide a framework toward addressing the cherry vinegar fly.

Some of the most likely treatments could include the use of attractant bait sprays that reduce fly populations, field sanitation which involves using the infested fruit as a host for more flies and is then isolated and destroyed apart from the healthy fruit, and additional research into other effective fruit and vinegar fly management programs.



***Drosophila suzukii*, cherry vinegar fly**

Should a grower find the cherry vinegar fly setting up household in their fruit, experts advise moderation and discourage the use of unwarranted or over spraying until more is known about how to best handle this pest.

There's a New 4-H in Town

Two new 4-H chapters were recently chartered at Point Mugu and Port Hueneme Naval bases.

UCCE program representative Susan Gloeckler trained staff and new 4-H club leaders in the basics of program management.

They have participated in the following projects:

- The Power of Wind
- Youth Experiences in Science
- Arts and Crafts
- Junior Master Gardener
- Keeping Fit

They've also started gardens and will be focusing on community service and leadership development this coming year.

Welcome new chapters!

Grants & Research Activities

The following is a sampling of recent research being done out of UCCE Farm Advisor

Testing an herbicide for management of yellow nutsedge, a major weed in production agriculture costing Ventura County growers thousands of dollars annually to control.

Experimental testing on an organic method of soil disinfection by creating anaerobic conditions in strawberry beds and monitoring effects on plant pathogen *Verticillium dahliae*. This part of ongoing efforts to find viable alternatives to methyl bromide fumigant usage.

Establishing new research experiments in commercial fields for management of lygus, a significant insect pest. Initiated the introduction of a biocontrol agent for lygus.

Conducting four field trials that evaluate management options for four pests detrimental to the strawberry industry.

Minimizing irrigation needs for strawberries, which address economic and environmental issues.

Conducting studies on implementation of the best management practices to reduce agricultural Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) in the Calleguas Creek Watershed.

Performing disease management studies on strawberry plant collapse problems in California.

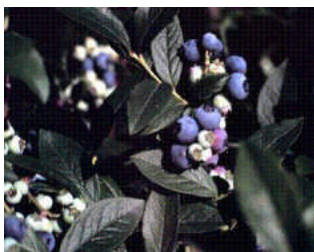


Recognition Given to Volunteer Coordinator

Leah Haynes, our Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator, was recognized by the county Area Agency on Aging in recognition of her commitment and dedication to the success of the Senior Nutrition Garden (see article on page 2).

This garden was planted at the Juvenile Justice Complex in Oxnard. In October they celebrated the harvest of their first crop of tomatoes at an appreciation event for their sponsors and contributors.

Blueberries Make Welcome Addition to County Crops



County grown blueberries

County agricultural producers have planted about 500 acres devoted to blueberry cultivation. The crop, traditionally grown in cooler climates, is being looked to for its potential to be both financially and productively feasible.

Although it currently represents a very small portion of the county's agricultural yield, these crops are providing a test ground for possible expansion.

The emergence of a newer variety of blueberry, the Southern Highbush, makes it more feasible to plant in coastal California due to its shorter chilling time.

One of the downsides is that these plants prefer a rich soil that's acidic. This kind of groundwork modification can be an expensive proposition for prospective growers in these tough economic times.

The upside for county residents could be a less expensive berry available in greater quantities.

County advisor Dr. Ben Faber quipped, "We got growers singing the blues and loving it."

In the meantime, local growers are watching to see if blueberries will fulfill their potential as a marketable county crop.

Asian Citrus Psyllid Alert for County

The orange tree just doesn't look right. The fruit has a bitter taste, twigs are dying on the tree, the fruit is abnormally small or deformed, and there's not much of it. A waxy white sap drips from the leaves.

It sounds like a citrus tree that's been visited by the Asian Citrus Psyllid, (ACP), a pest found in warmer climates that feeds on citrus and related ornamentals.

The most dangerous consequence of ACP is that it

opens a pathway for citrus greening disease (Huanglongbing), a devastating affliction that permanently stunts, maims and eventually kills citrus trees.

In 1998 the ACP pest was first found in Florida. By 2008, thirty-two counties in the state were struggling with the infestation.

UCCE Advisor Dr. Ben Faber visited Florida this year to assess the situation. As a result he feels strongly about spreading the word

and implementing measures to prevent this viable threat to California's large community of citrus growers.

He has been working with the Agriculture Commissioner's office to limit transport of lemons from other counties by repacking to lessen the likelihood of importing the pest here.

Dr. Faber stresses the importance of declaring plants when crossing the border and staying alert for signs of ACP.



Asian Citrus Psyllid damage from infestation

A streamed video on how to recognize this insect is available at:

<http://news.ucanr.org/newsstorymain.cfm?story=1233>



Nandina Plant

Landscape Plants — How Deep to Transplant?

How do newbie gardeners know how deep to transplant a new acquisition for their garden?

Maren Mochizuki, a UCCE Staff Research Associate, is working with Ventura UCCE Advisor Jim Downer and Los Angeles UCCE Advisor, Don Hodel, in performing experiments on six common landscape plants to determine where their tipping point is before damage occurs.

The plants were set in the soil at grade and various depths below grade and will be annually rated for quality, length, width, height, and weight to evaluate how each level affects their growth.

The study is in its second year and will be yielding preliminary results soon.

In the meantime, do as Monty Python would and go out and get a shrubbery.

It's Not Always the Usual Suspects — Minor Strawberry Pathogens Have Major Consequences

Sometimes strawberry research can take on the elements of a CSI mystery. Dr. Oleg Daugovish's and colleagues' strawberry research findings that were recently published for the Farm Bureau are a case in point.

The crime: During the last strawberry production season of 2007-2008 several fields had extensive plant collapse.

The usual suspects: Soil-borne fungi *Verticillium* and *Phytophthora* are commonly responsible for this kind of die-back damage. However, they were not found in any of the plant samples tested. Next, anthracnose-causing fungus *Colletotrichum acutatum* was checked since it may survive in plant residue or travel to production fields undetected on transplants. This also was absent.

The main suspect: Digging further Dr. Daugovish identified *Macrophomina* (charcoal rot) and *Fusarium* in the dying plants. These pathogens have rarely troubled growers in the past and relatively little was known about their potential in California strawberries.

In Spain, where strawberry production systems are similar to California and no methyl bromide is allowed for soil fumigation, *Fusarium*-related die-back was recently confirmed and reported for the first time in 2007.

The intrigue grows: To learn more about biology and management of these pathogens in strawberries UCCE-farm advisors and UC-Davis Pathologists and Soil Chemists evaluated effects of various fumigants and various rates, fungicide application programs and strawberry variety susceptibility in five fields with a recent history

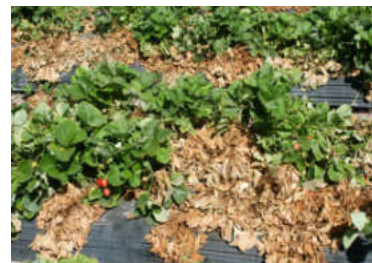
of die-back from *Fusarium* and *Macrophomina* in both Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Additional laboratory study evaluated strawberry specific behavior of these pathogens.

The findings for *Macrophomina*:

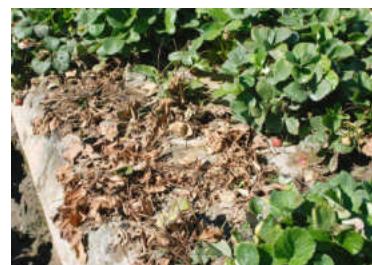
- Isolates (thirteen so far) differ in aggressiveness in strawberry plants and strawberry varieties demonstrate differential susceptibility to crown infection (where plants stems meet the roots). So far the Seascape variety is the least affected.
- None of the isolates had viable microsclerotia which are resting structures of the fungus similar to plant seeds, when buried six inches deep and bed-fumigated either with methyl bromide, 1, 3 D+chloropicrin or iodomethane.
- No *Macrophomina* related die-back occurred during the first 5 months after planting in October 2008. This is in agreement with previous observations that suggest that this pathogen is especially troublesome for plants with heavy fruit loads and potentially other stresses during the last two to three months of production.

The findings on *Fusarium*:

- In non-fumigated soil this fungus killed nearly 100% of plants within eight weeks after planting at one site and 25-40% at another site. Additional replantings in non-fumigated soil caused rapid and complete plant collapse.
- The Camarosa variety showed the greatest susceptibility and levels of die-back, while the Ventana variety exhibited the most tolerance.



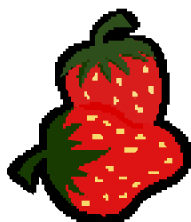
Macrophomina phaseolina



Fusarium oxysporum

- All tested fumigants and rates prevented die-back similarly, however, plant mortality was slightly higher for those plants that combined their treatment with 1,3 D+chloropicrin than with methyl bromide+chloropicrin. A fungicide program with Thiophanate-methyl did not aid plant recovery.
- It was noted that plant disease ratings during the season may be different among treatments and are currently under assessment.

The case remains open. The California Strawberry Commission supports Dr. Daugovish and colleagues' research. Investigation of these pathogens and their control options will continue during the upcoming seasons.



Hmm, it looks like the work of *Macrophomina* and her fiendish henchman, *Fusarium*. Get me the fungicide, STAT!

Water Conservation

As water resources become more strained in a drought-prone state with an increasing population, conservation of this vital resource is becoming more urgent. Our UCCE advisors and staff have been participating in research projects that address this crucial issue for county residents. The following are a couple of related projects...

Rain Gardens Conserve Water

On a very hot day in August UCCE Master Gardener volunteers and twenty youth in the Oxnard City Corps program installed a rain garden at the Camarillo Ranch House.

The highly physical project involved digging channels, moving rocks and boulders, and transferring an estimated 100 wheelbarrows of dirt.

UCCE's natural resources advisor, Dr. Monique Myer, Master Gardener water conservation group leader, Ian Leslie, and Master Gardener Diane Beeler were the driving forces behind the project which expects to announce a grand opening soon.

Ventura County is subject to periodic drought conditions and like many Southern California counties finds that water demand does not meet the local supply.

A rain garden collects water by channeling rainfall through gutters, pipes, swails or curb openings to a depression in the yard where it soaks into the ground and waters vegetation.

This kind of garden can help homeowners and others conserve a shrinking resource and save on rising water costs in an impacted county.

Dr. Myer and the Master Gardeners recently gave an interview about conservation on local KCLU radio. An audio of the interview can be found at:

http://www.kclu.org/news/local/story.php?story_id=554



City Corps youth contribute rain garden to community

More information on rain gardens and other water conservation techniques can be found at:

<http://www.csgc.ucsd.edu/BOOKSTORE/>

UCCE Participates in Statewide Water Research Project

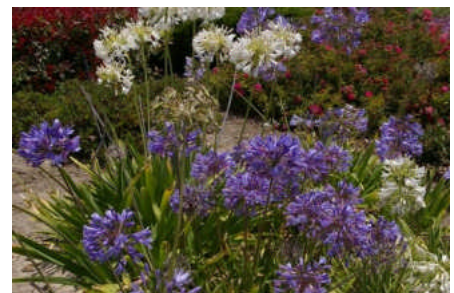
UCCE Ventura Advisor Dr. Jim Downer, staff researcher Maren Modizuki, and UCCE Los Angeles Advisor Don Hodel, have been working in conjunction with UCCE researchers across the state on a project studying water requirements for a variety of ordinary landscape plants.

The study is being conducted at the Hansen Agricultural Center on nine common landscape species that are watered at various levels less than daily local evapotranspiration measurements. Evapotranspiration is the loss of water to the air from plants by evaporation and/or transpiration.

Weather and local conditions affect evapotranspiration in plants and subsequently, affect the amount of water needed to sustain a healthy plant. The same plant can have different requirements that are tied into the location where it is grown.

For two years the team has been measuring clippings and rating their appearance. The project is currently in its last year and preliminary results of collected data should be coming available soon.

The study has importance for water challenged Southern California holding



Agapanthus is one of the plants under study

a population that loves its landscaping, but lacks the water resources. This research could help provide state residents and municipalities options that serve both a water starved state and landscaping aesthetics.

We look forward to seeing the final results.

Master Gardener Workshop and New Class Recruitment

On November 7 the Master Gardeners hosted a Home Garden workshop at the Faulkner Farms/Hansen Agricultural Center in Santa Paula. These workshops are specifically designed for Ventura County Home Gardeners and focus on seasonal garden tasks.

The event included a full-day of informative gardening education with presentations by University of California advisors and horticulture experts.

Self-guided garden and docent-guided house tours were available and included access to

the Master Gardener Plant Sale.

The Master Gardeners have also been recruiting for their 2010 class of volunteers. Thirty-three trainees have been selected for certified training that includes 80 hours of class instruction.

The program emphasizes a learn by doing curriculum with hands-on demonstrations providing real world experience for the volunteers.

Our Master Gardeners go on to contribute over 12,000

hours of volunteer time every year to gardening programs in the county.

These volunteers also staff a help-line every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00 to 4:00 that provides valuable gardening advice and expertise to county home growers.

If interested in learning more about this worthwhile program please visit the following webpage:

<http://groups.ucanr.org/VCMG/index.cfm>



Olivas Adobe ornament for White House Christmas Tree

County Represents on White House Christmas Tree

Ventura County 4-H members were chosen to participate in a project to decorate ornaments for the White House Christmas tree.

4-H groups from all over the county contributed twenty decoupage ornaments which will be displayed in the Blue Room of the White House. More than sixty community organizations throughout the country received the 800 foam bulbs given out by the White House for this annual event.

The bulbs are large, about seventeen inches in circumference and the theme this year is "Landmarks."

County 4H-er's submitted a variety of images from local landmarks (the Ventura pier) to those in Hawaii and other parts of the country.

UCCE 4-H program representatives, Susan Gloeckler and Tisha Fisher organized the project. The activity was greeted with enthusiasm by the participants who were

proud to contribute to this White House tradition.

This year's tree is a Douglas fir chosen by contest through the National Christmas Tree Association and is usually around eighteen feet tall. It is scheduled to be set up on November 27 and decorated later in the day.

Excited 4-H members look forward to their ornaments being enjoyed by the First Family.

Dr. Sal Mangiafico Joins Rutgers as Advisor

Dr. Sal Mangiafico has left UCCE for a position with Rutgers University as the water resources advisor for Salem County, New Jersey.

Dr. Mangiafico worked with UCCE's floriculture and nursery crop advisor, Julie Newman, for two and a half years evaluating management practices for effectiveness in reducing runoff and loss of nutrients due to leaching,

producing publishable scientific manuscripts, making presentations to growers, and presenting results at scientific meetings.

Dr. Mangiafico grew up in Connecticut where he earned his PhD in soil science in 2005. His new position takes him to the southern rural part of New Jersey where he will concentrate on helping rivers and

waterways meet Environmental Protection Agency Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements.

We here at UCCE office in Ventura sorely miss Sal's humor, informative presentations and contributions to making this county a better place to live. Good luck and best wishes from all of us, Sal!



Dr. Sal Mangiafico



WEB SURFING

Take a side trip on the information highway....

Fire Information Resource on UCCE Website

County Fire Prevention

Southern California's dry climate and beautiful weather come with a higher risk of fire for county residents. With this in mind our UCCE website has added an valuable resource for those seeking plant related fire prevention information.

The site offers calculators for tree, vine, avocado and citrus tree loss due to fire, tips on living with fire, links to the SAFE landscapes project, the UC Center for Fire Research and Outreach, fire departments in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, and a list of fire related publications.

Find this resource at:
http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/Fire_Information/

Climate Change Website Launched

Sea Grant Resource

A cooperative effort between California Sea Grant, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, and UCCE has resulted in a website focused on climate change information in California.

The website features streamed video interviews with researchers, interview transcripts, audio files, links to climate change websites, and a section where other scientists can add applicable research. Monique Myers, our coastal community development advisor, was one of the site's key developers.

This website can be found at:
<http://groups.ucanr.org/CAClimateChangeExt/>

UCCE Farm Advisor Enters the Blogosphere

Blogging the Message

The UCCE/Farm Advisor department recently added a blog section to our website that includes three links to blogs covering our UCCE office here in Ventura, the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) world outside our office and VictoryGrower, a collection of observations about participating in this popular gardening movement.

The site features a search option and topic related links on areas of specific study or interest to our readers. Information on gardening programs, plants, fire-safe landscapes, invasive pests, youth programs and other agricultural issues can be found easily here.

Check out our blogs at
http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/Blogs_and_News/Blogs.htm

UC Breaks Ground with New Website

The UC Link to Gardening

UC Davis has launched a new website that should be of interest to home gardeners. This site draws on the University of California's comprehensive wealth of research-based information on gardening, landscapes and lawns with a focus on sustainable gardening practices.

The site, which is updated weekly, was designed by the UC Statewide Master Gardener program staff and includes seasonal gardening tips, blogs, and links to other UC web gardening resources. Links to UC IPM, The California Oak Foundation, the California Backyard Orchard are among the sites accessed.

This wonderful new resources can be found at:
<http://cagardenweb.ucdavis.edu/>

Published Research

UCCE Ventura County academic, research and program staff publishes the results of the wide-range of research that UCCE conducts, so that it may benefit others and increase the body of knowledge available on topics vital to the sustainability of agriculture. This is an area in which Ventura County staff excels. Below are some recent publications produced by members of our staff.

James Downer. Mulches. *Western Arborist Magazine*.

James Downer, Maren Mochizuki. Two manuscripts accepted to *Hort-Technology* on Pruning Landscape Palms and Diseases of Palms.

James Downer. The Date Bug pest. *Southwest Trees and Turf Magazine*.

Ben Faber, Julie Newman, et al. 2009. Re-evaluation of the Roles of Honeybees and Wind on Pollination in Avocado. *Journal of Horticultural Science and Biotechnology*. (84)3:255-260.

Ben Faber. 2009. Cherry Vinegar Fly in Ventura County. *Ventura County Farm Bureau Newsletter* 41(7): 2-3.

Rose Hayden-Smith, et al. Proceedings of the Chicago Urban Agriculture Symposium. <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/wed/index.php>

Monique Myers, et al. Differences in Benthic Cover Inside and Outside Marine Protected Areas on the Great Barrier Reef: Influence of Protection or Disturbance History? *Aquatic Conservation magazine* and <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/84503925/issue>

Julie Newman. Article. *Greenhouse Management & Production*.

Awards:

Monique Myers and Sabrina Drill. 2009. Award of Merit. *Ecology Awards for Quagga Mussel manual*.



**"Education is a social process. Education is growth.
Education is, not a preparation for life; education is
life itself." John Dewey**

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FARM ADVISOR
669 COUNTY
SQUARE DR., #100
VENTURA, CA 93003**

Our mission is to serve the people of California through the creation, development and application of knowledge in agricultural, natural and human resources.



We Are...

County Director:

Rose Hayden-Smith

County Advisors:

Carrie Culver

Oleg Daugovich

Jim Downer

Ben Faber

Monique Myers

Julie Newman

Research Staff:

Maren Mochizuki

Marjie Bartels

Cross County Advisors:

Carl Bell

Sabrina Drill

Program Representatives:

Susana Bruzzone-Miller*

Susan Gloeckler

Leah Haynes*

IT Technician:

Steve Griffin

Support Staff:

Tisha Fisher

Cris Johnson

Chris Webb

**UC Hansen Agricultural Center*

