



Contact Us!

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The RCD is committed to supporting San Diego's ever-growing community of Farmers and Ranchers. We equip hard-working stewards of the land with conservation practices known as regenerative agriculture which help to improve farm and ranch productivity. This holistic approach to managing working lands strengthens agricultural businesses while conserving natural resources, reducing the risk of wildfire and adapting to the effects of climate change.

El Distrito de Conservación de Recursos (RCD) está comprometido a apoyar la creciente comunidad de agricultores y rancheros en el condado de San Diego. Proveyendo prácticas de conservación a nuestros agricultores, conocidas como "Agricultura Regenerativa," estas practicas aumentan la productividad de granjas y ranchos. Además, esta manera de cultivación de tierras beneficia a las empresas agrícolas, conserva los recursos naturales, reduce el riesgo de incendios y adapta las granjas a los efectos de cambio climático.

Para recibir estas noticias de subsidio, eventos e investigaciones de agricultura regenerativa puede contactarnos en español, solo tiene que responder a este mensaje o escribirnos a ag@rcdsandiego.org

Tidings from our

Tijuana River Valley Farm and Gardens

The Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County supports our region in many different ways. Our Agriculture team connects farmers and ranchers like you to resources, funding and technical assistance. Our Fire and Forest Health team supports the many community-led Fire Safe Councils in the region, provides free and reduced price chipping and defensible space clearing, and collaborates with local fire agencies to protect us from wildfire and maintain the health of our forests.

You may be familiar with those programs, but did you also know that we manage Wild Willow Farm & Education Center and two community gardens in the South Bay? Those spaces have been integral in engaging the community in sustainable agriculture, from the backyard enthusiast to the beginning farmer.



Wild Willow Farm & Education Center

2550 Sunset Ave, San Diego, CA 92154

Wild Willow has served the community as a non-profit educational working farm since 2010. The RCD began managing the farm in 2018 and provides support to expand their operation and offerings to the public.

Sharing education and awareness is at the heart of Wild Willow's values. There are a host of classes throughout the year that teach all levels of green-minded folks about growing your own food, the basics of soil health, crafting and creating using ingredients from the Earth, and so much more! You can [check out their calendar of upcoming classes here](#), and be sure to [sign up for their newsletter](#) to stay informed about what's next. For folks interested in more in-depth learning, Wild Willow's educators offer an 8-week Farm School course every Winter, Spring and Summer. It is designed to be accessible to all levels of interest and experience, and is open to all. [See more here about how to become a Farm School graduate](#).

Every Saturday morning, the farm hosts volunteers of all ages to get their hands dirty. They also host tours, private events and school field trips. [See here for how to book your next visit](#). We look forward to meeting you!

Wild Willow farmers grow food using regenerative practices and without pesticides. You can purchase this nutrient-rich produce onsite at the farm stand, or through the weekly community supported agriculture (CSA) subscription. [Learn more here and sign up!](#)

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Sweetwater Community Garden

5354 Sweetwater Rd, Bonita, CA 91902

The Sweetwater Community Garden is a quickly growing community of passionate gardeners. There are 200 plots in total, with currently 58 full sized plots (20' x 20') available

There are monthly story times and seed exchanges hosted in the garden, and this Fall we are hosting students from the [Fulbright Foreign Student Program](#) for a beautification project.



Plant & Seed Exchange
Sweetwater Community Garden
 Meet at the picnic tables
 5354 Sweetwater Rd
 Bonita, CA 91902
 August 26, 2022 @ 11:00am-11:30am
 Bring seeds or plant cuttings from your home or garden.
 Enter our free plant raffle.



STORY TIME
Sweetwater Community Garden

Join us for an outdoor story time presented by Miss Janet or Miss Rosa (Bilingual) from the Bonita/Sunnyside Branch Library. This Family story time will feature books and songs with a gardening theme. Come ready to learn, laugh and have fun! All Ages welcome.

Location Details
 Sweetwater Community Garden
 5354 Sweetwater Rd, Bonita, CA 91902

August 26, 2022
 10:30am - 11:00am
 Last Friday of the Month

Contact Info
 Rachel Lloyd
 rachel.lloyd@rcdsandiego.org
 619-562-0096 ext 204

Tijuana River Valley Community Garden

2100 Hollister St, San Diego, CA 92154

Located a couple of miles from the border, this is the largest community garden in San Diego with 210 garden plots in total! Standard garden plots are 30' x 30', and they are highly coveted growing spaces. There is a waitlist of 200 people for these garden plots, and folks adore their plots. Over half of the tenants have been there 5 years or longer, a quarter have been there 10 years or longer, and the longest tenants have been there since the garden opened in 2000.

In addition to the standard garden plots, there are 10 quarter acre plots on site. These are often referred to as "incubator plots", because they serve as an opportunity for new and/or small-scale farmers to scale up their operations and begin building their farm business. One incubator plot resident is [Pixca](#), a cooperative co-owned by farmers of color who grow vegetables and flowers sold at their weekly farm stand. Like Pixca, [Grow Eco Farm](#) also operates a CSA program and both are members of the [Foodshed Small Farm Distro](#). The RCD has also maintained a quarter acre plot for a Carbon Farming Demonstration project for four years with funding from the CA Dept of Food and Agriculture. This demonstration plot and three other quarter acre plots will be available for lease soon.

In 2016 and 2017, the garden was funded to expand to its current size and as part of that project, a hedgerow was designed and planted to support our native plants and pollinators. We wanted to include a hedgerow because of the many benefits they bring to farmland including hosting beneficial wildlife, serving as a windbreak for the garden, and sequestering carbon in the soil. It contains native nectar and host plants that bloom at different times to attract and support pollinators throughout the year. Over the years, volunteer groups, garden members, and local students have helped us maintain the

TRVCG, please [check out more information on our website!](#)



Upcoming Events

Working Rangeland Wednesdays Webinar Series

Biweekly from 6:00pm - 6:45pm

- August 24 - Irrigating with Limited Water
- September 7 - Fall/Winter Forecast and Remote Sensing

Join UC Cooperative Extension Advisors, Specialists, Researchers, and Ranchers for a biweekly summer webinar series highlighting applied, land manager-oriented solutions for rangeland drought challenges. [Register here.](#)

Compost Connector Webinar

Wednesday, August 24th | 10:00am - 11:30am | Zoom

Join us for a presentation by Zero Foodprint about their Compost Connector program, which helps agricultural producers get subsidized compost! [Register here.](#)

Young Farmers and Ranchers Social Hour

Wednesday, August 31st | 5:30pm | [Draft Republic in San Marcos](#)

Beginning farmers are invited to enjoy a rotating happy hour or farm tour on the evening of the last Wednesday of each month. Come learn from peers in agriculture and build the next generation of local farmers and ranchers. RSVP at YFR@SDFarmBureau.org.

Save the Date: Pitahaya/Dragon Fruit Production Tour and Workshop

Thursday, September 8 | 7:00am – 5:00pm | Bonsall & Ramona

UCANR is hosting a dragon fruit tour including stops at Wallace Ranch in Bonsall and Dragon Delight Farm in Ramona. Stay tuned for more information, or reach out to Ramiro Lobo at relobo@ucanr.edu or Erin Spaniel at enspaniel@ucanr.edu.

Learn About Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB)

Saturday, September 10th | 10:00am |

[21610 Crestline Road](#) on Palomar Mountain

The Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council is inviting community members to a free screening at San Diego County Fire Station 79 of a new video and live Q&A about fighting the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB), the invasive bug that has killed many thousands of San Diego County's signature oak trees.



Celebrate San Diego's Farmer of the Year

Thursday, October 27th | 6:00pm | [San Diego Zoo Safari Park](#)

Join the San Diego Farm Bureau in honoring Neil Nagata as San Diego's Farmer of the Year! [Learn more and buy tickets here.](#)

Save the Date: San Diego Farm & Nursery Expo

Thursday, November 10 | 9:00am - 3:00pm | [Escondido Center for the Arts](#)

Participate in seminar series featuring top professionals in the field, network with a wide variety of farmers and vendors and learn about programs that might be beneficial to you. [Register here!](#)

Your Support Needed

San Diego Agricultural Planning Program

The Agricultural Planning Program is a two-year planning grant funded by the CA Dept of Conservation with Cap-and-Trade proceeds, and is managed by the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). [You can learn more here at our website.](#)

In July, we hosted three meetings discussing potential initiatives for the priority topics of (1) Land Access, (2) Water Availability and Efficiency, (3) and Agricultural Workforce Development. Thanks to participant engagement, we have been able to identify three policy projects that will begin to address key challenges for producers in our region. These projects include (1) Agricultural Land Matchmaking Database (2) Water-Saving Crop Swap Program and (3) Streamlined Approval of Farmworker Housing.

On September 6th, we will hold a strategic planning session and form working groups for each project that include producers, decision makers and supporting organizations. Space is limited - if you would like to join the meeting, [you can register here.](#) After the meeting, you will have a chance to join one of the three working groups. Stay tuned for the project selections and the working groups who are championing them in next month's newsletter!



Educational Resources & Opportunities

Become a Resilerator with Farmlink

The Resilerator is the first and only 10-week course on how to efficiently and sustainably manage your farm, ranch or fishing business. It will be convened virtually across California from November 2022- January 2023, and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until October 1st. [Check out their website here](#) for eligibility requirements. You can also reach out directly to Educational Program Manager, Andrea Levy at andrea@cgfarmlink.org for more information.



CARCD Annual Conservation Education Speak-Off Competition

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts hosts an annual speech competition for high school students, addressing a specific topic relating to conservation. This year's topic - *"How does the long-term California drought affect your region? What can local Resource Conservation Districts do to help?"* – is particularly relevant. Students first compete at the regional level by submitting their speech via video, with the top speakers advancing to the state competition. Local winners can win up to \$250 and will compete in Sacramento for additional prizes. The deadline for regional submissions is [September 28, 2022 at 11:59 PM](#), and the state competition will take place in early December. [For all information and the application click here!](#)

Enhancing Pollinator Habitat on Working Lands

Are you a commercial farmer or rancher interested in promoting native habitat for pollinators? In partnership with Partners for Fish & Wildlife, NRCS and Earth Discovery Institute, the RCD of Greater San Diego County is offering site visits to assess the quality of native pollinator habitat on farms and ranches. Assessors then present producers with an actionable plan to enhance native pollinator habitat, as well as connect them with support to apply to NRCS funding opportunities for the installation.

[Use this form to sign up for a site visit.](#) You can also [consult this guide](#) for more information on the benefits of maintaining pollinators and their habitat on your working lands.



Funding Opportunities

Disaster and Extreme Weather Assistance Programs

Drought, Fire, COVID-19 - if your business has been struck by disaster this year, non-profits and agencies are offering funds to help. If you are a small-scale producer in San Diego or part of a socially disadvantaged group, we are here to help you complete your application. To help you navigate the application process, set up an appointment at the RCD with Joel Kramer (joel.kramer@rcdsandiego.org, 619-562-0096 x103).

County of San Diego is offering support to businesses impacted by COVID-19. [You can learn how to apply here](#). Awards average \$5,000 and the grant can be used to reimburse previous expenses, or for new expenditures within 60 days of the grant award.

US Department of Agriculture offers a variety of programs to help farmers, ranchers, communities, and businesses that have been hard hit by natural disaster events, like drought, fire and flooding. [See here for more info](#).



Zero Food Print's Compost Connector is designed to get the maximum greenhouse gas reduction from organic material - keeping it out of the landfill is good, but turning organics into compost and applying it onto working lands is great. Everyone is eligible, though farms willing to take larger amounts of compost will likely be prioritized. Projects can be submitted at any time, and will be fulfilled on a rolling basis. For additional information, head to their [website](#).



The RCD is currently applying for funding from the Department of Food and Agriculture to provide farm conservation plans. Examples include Carbon Farm Plans, Grazing Management Plans, Pollinator Habitat Plans and Irrigation Management Plans. If you would like to have your operation be considered for the RCD application, [complete this intake form](#) by September 30. [Learn more about the funding opportunity at the CDFA website](#).

Organic Farmers and Farmers in Transition can receive support from the USDA to help cover costs of organic certification and additional expenses in the process. Applications are due October 31st. [See more information here](#).

Do you want to get serious about conservation practices on your working land? The National Resource Conservation Service offers financial and technical support to agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers through the **Environmental Quality**

1st, with additional funds set aside for border regions.

Looking for other funding options? [Check out UC Cooperative Extension's directory](#) of available opportunities!

Job Openings

Farm Apprentice

Foodshed Small Farm Distro

Foodshed is seeking part-time Apprentices to assist their Production Team in achieving adequate production levels at our North County Training and Packing Hub to meet customer demand. This is a part-time position between August 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022 aimed at providing aspiring farmers with the opportunity to attain hands-on skills in regenerative farming.

[See here for a full job description and how to apply!](#)

Carbon Farming Support

We are here to help you! From direct assistance to technical advice, here are some of the services that the RCD offers to San Diego farmers and ranchers, free of charge:

- **Soil sampling** for organic carbon content
- **Irrigation evaluations** - [sign up here](#)
- **Technical guidance** for implementing conservation practices
- **Request a Carbon Farming Plan** [here](#)
- **Plant selection** for native hedgerows and habitat buffers
- **Free chipping** for unincorporated County residents - [Visit Fire Safe Council](#)

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