

# Riverside County AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.  
A private, nonprofit organization serving farmers throughout Riverside County since 1917

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**Welcome New Members**

We would like to "Thank You" for becoming part of the Farm Bureau Family.



The Riverside County Farm Bureau has secured additional stock of disposable masks, please contact our office for availability and to arrange pick-up.

Call our Office (951) 684-6732

The Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office has a limited supply of N-95 masks solely for the protection of agricultural applicators and handlers that use pesticides labeled with N-95 requirements. Please contact their office at (951) 955-3045.



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Learn about the importance of educating our youth about food and fiber through all subject areas with a focus on adapting in a distance learning environment.

We look forward to offering an opportunity to fulfill our mission and LearnAboutAg® with our friends from throughout the state at the virtual 2020 CA Agriculture in the Classroom Conference! Join us and register today!

To register go to ~ <https://learnaboutag.org/programs/conference.cfm>

**For COVID-19 Resources and Information  
Please visit these websites**



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# Service Proposes Reclassifying Stephens' Kangaroo Rat from Endangered to Threatened Under the Endangered Species Act



After more than 30 years of conservation efforts by federal, state and local partners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to reclassify the Stephens' kangaroo rat from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). A concurrent proposed 4(d) rule will provide additional management flexibility for landowners within the species' range to conduct weed and fire management activities, and other beneficial actions that are outlined in a Service-approved management plan.

Stephens' kangaroo rats are small mammals adapted to live in warm, arid environments. They have fur-lined external cheek pouches used to transport seeds, and large hind legs used for jumping.

"We appreciate the work of Riverside County, the Department of Defense and other federal, state and local partners in achieving this significant step towards recovery of this native California mammal," said Paul Souza, Regional Director for the Service.

Patchily distributed in grassland habitat in portions of Riverside and San Diego counties, California, there are currently 18 locations occupied by the species. In Riverside County, the Stephens' kangaroo rat Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan support eight core reserves for the species.

In addition to the HCPs, the Department of Defense is also managing the species on Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, on Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, Detachment Fallbrook, and within Navy Base Coronado's Remote Training Site Warner Springs in San Diego County.

Other partners contributing to the long-term conservation of the species include Cleveland National Forest and San Diego Zoo Global.

When the rat was listed as endangered in 1988, the primary threat was loss of habitat. Through the development of landscape-scale HCPs, along with management efforts on other federal, state and local lands, this threat has largely been ameliorated. Other activities such as grazing, predation by domestic cats and off-highway vehicles may affect individuals but are not impacting the species as a whole.

Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted until October 19, 2020. Requests for a public hearing must be submitted in writing by October 5, 2020.

The proposed downlisting rule is available for public review today in the Federal Register. The proposed rule will officially publish on August 19, 2020, at which time all documents and supporting information will be available at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). In the search box, enter the **Docket No. FWS-R8-ES-2019-0113**.

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information about our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov/cno](http://www.fws.gov/cno) or connect with us via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr.*

## With New Research on the Horizon, Continued Best Practices Encouraged for Growers

As the threat of Huanglongbing (HLB) and the Asian citrus psyllid continue to put pressure on the commercial citrus industry, researchers across California are working to find the best treatments for this deadly disease. Last week, the University of California, Riverside (UCR) released information regarding a promising new treatment that “effectively kills the bacterium causing the disease with a naturally occurring molecule found in wild citrus relatives.” Dr. Hailing Jin, a geneticist at UCR, has conducted greenhouse trials on young citrus plants to investigate the role of citrus-derived peptides in the battle against HLB. While the long-term effectiveness of this research has not yet been confirmed or published in a scientific journal and the project is still in its early stages, Dr. Jin’s findings have resulted in a commercial licensing agreement between UCR and Invaio Sciences.

“This is a very exciting development in the ongoing search for effective treatments against Huanglongbing and I applaud the innovation and years of dedicated research conducted by Dr. Jin and her team,” said Victoria Hornbaker, director of the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division. “While this announcement is promising to the future of our citrus industry, it will take some time – perhaps years – before the potential treatment is on the market. In the meantime, it is important for industry members to remain vigilant in implementing best practices in the fight against Huanglongbing and the Asian citrus psyllid.”

The recommended voluntary best practices for growers – which are grouped based on a grower’s proximity to an HLB detection – represent the most effective tools known to the citrus industry at this time. Endorsed by the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee, these best practices were developed by a task force consisting of growers from various regions across the state and scientists, including DATOC members Dr. Beth Grafton-Cardwell, Dr. Neil McRoberts, Holly Deniston-Sheets and others.

As of July 10, 2020, 1,947 citrus trees have been confirmed with HLB in the residential areas of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Now more than ever, the industry must work together in the fight to save California citrus from this deadly disease. Growers are encouraged to implement any methods that are feasible for their operation in order to limit the spread of the Asian citrus psyllid and HLB, as the cost to manage the Asian citrus psyllid is far less than any potential costs or less to the industry should HLB take hold throughout our state.

For more research on the science behind peptides and their involvement with HLB, visit the University of California’s Science for Citrus Health website:

- Using peptides as a preventative approach to target the psyllid and the pathogen
- Automated delivery system for therapeutic materials to treat HLB-infected citrus



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To help control ants inside, wipe them up, along with their chemical trails, with an all-purpose cleaner, and fill tiny gaps, cracks and holes with caulk to make their entry difficult.

## Controlling ants the healthy way

Spotting ants in the home or yard is no reason to reach for insecticide sprays or call an exterminator. UC Cooperative Extension experts say the insects can be managed by residents in ways that are effective, inexpensive, safe and environmentally kind.

"Ants are probably the No. 1 most common pests of our homes and gardens," said Carolyn Kinnon, an environmental horticulturist and instructional associate at Mira Costa Community College. "Scientists find chemicals in our waterways that include pesticides commonly used to kill ants."

Kinnon teamed up with UCCE community education specialist Scott Parker to present a Healthy Garden-Healthy Home online ant workshop during the COVID-19 pandemic to take the place of a planned in-person event. Healthy Garden-Healthy Home was initiated in 2005 with a grant from the California State Water Resources Control Board and continues with funding from San Diego County. With the move online, the workshop attracted four times more participants than usual.

"A silver lining of the COVID disaster has been our ability to reach out to many more individuals," Parker said.

Healthy Gardens-Healthy Homes aims to cut residents' use of chemicals and reduce soil erosion that can wash into gutters with irrigation or rain water, course through storm drains and into streams, reservoirs and the Pacific Ocean. During the recent UCCE webinar on healthy ant control, Kinnon introduced science-based solutions that can be combined to keep ants at bay.

### Use ant biology to battle ants

Ants are always looking for food and will forage any accessible source. Short circuiting this biological need is the first approach to controlling the pest. Outside, ants are often attracted to a sticky, sweet honeydew that pests like aphids leave behind when they feed on plants. Washing off aphids and honeydew with a sharp stream of water from the hose reduces the food source.

In spring, Kinnon said, ants like to feed on proteins, like seeds, nuts, dog food and other fatty substances. Fallen nuts, bird seed and leftover pet food should be discarded to reduce ant activity.

"When honeydew production from sap-sucking insects declines in the hot summer, and there is an absence of food sources outdoors, ants may come indoors," she said. "Ants will travel several hundred feet in search for food."

Removing inside food sources – like spills on counters and floors – and blocking access – by filling in holes and cracks – is the first defense against an indoor ant invasion. Kinnon recommends keeping food containers clean and sealed, rinsing empty recyclables – particularly sugar-sweetened beverages – and wiping up grease on barbecues and stove tops. Wipe up ants and their chemical trails with an all-purpose cleaner, and fill tiny gaps, cracks and holes with caulk to make their entry difficult.

### Managing expectations

Another way to achieve environmentally friendly ant management is coming to terms with the fact that they can't be eliminated from outdoor areas.

"Our goal is to focus on reducing population numbers," Kinnon said. "We have to tolerate a certain number." Spraying a pesticide on an ant trail or sprinkling granular pesticides will only kill a fraction of the ants in the yard. Those materials can run off and pollute watersheds.

### Baits

If cleaning up food sources, exclusionary measures and increased tolerance aren't enough, pesticide baits are an additional integrated pest management tool.

"This works because female worker ants take the bait back to the nest and feed it to other ants in the colony," Kinnon said.

The bait must be slow acting so it doesn't kill the worker before she gets back to the colony. Kinnon recommended baits with no more than .5% active ingredient. For best bait placement, follow trails to find the nest and place the bait close by in a safe bait station. If the nest can't be found, the bait station can be placed along the trail.

"Baits are just one part of an integrated pest management program," Kinnon said. "You must keep up with exclusionary efforts and sanitation for ant control to be effective."



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**NEW DATES ADDED!**  
**FREE REMOTE DELIVERY**  
Produce Safety Training



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**



Food Safety Training Partnership is pleased to offer FREE Produce Safety Training (required by the Produce Safety Rule) offered through Web-based live remote delivery by Produce Safety Alliance-approved instructors from the Food Safety Training Partnership's Safe Food Alliance!

The Riverside County Farm Bureau does not hold a Board Meeting in August. The next meeting is slated for September.

**Space is limited!**

A high-speed internet connection and confirmed attendance for the full course will be required.

September 8 & 9 (NEW!)  
September 28 & 29 (NEW!)

**Register Today!**

Register at Food Safety Training Partnership; visit <http://foodsafetytrainingpartnership.org> for more information or call 916-561-5672.

## USDA expands pandemic-relief program

As farmers and ranchers continue to struggle during the pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Tuesday it has made more crops and commodities eligible for relief under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. Farmers of 42 new fruit, vegetable and nut crops may now apply, along with producers of cut flowers and nursery crops, farmed fish and other products. USDA extended the application deadline to Sept. 11. For more information go to <https://www.farmers.gov/cfap>

## Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

### *Unsolicited seed packets raise concerns*

Californians who receive unsolicited seed packets should not open them and should contact their county agricultural commissioner's office: That's the advice from the state Department of Food and Agriculture. The U.S. Agriculture Department says suspicious packages have been received around the country. Most appear to have been shipped from China. Officials warn against planting seeds from unknown origins, citing concerns about plant diseases the seeds could carry.

### *New knowledge could slow grape pest*

By mapping the genome of a key grapevine pest, University of California scientists say they have learned how the insect spreads, which could help them learn how to stop it. The research involves phylloxera, which feeds off and damages grapevines. Working with colleagues in France, UC Riverside specialists identified genes that allow the insects to colonize vines. That could lead to breeding of grape rootstock that resists the pest.

### *Grape Commission ads promote rural communities*

Seeking out California-grown grapes at the grocery store benefits rural communities around the state, according to the California Table Grape Commission, which has developed a marketing campaign encouraging shoppers to support the state's farmers and their employees. The campaign will feature radio ads in Spanish and English. California farms produce practically all the table grapes grown in the U.S., but face competition from imported grapes.

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