

# Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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

Our 75th Year of Publication: Volume LXXV, Number 2, February 2021.



## COVID-19 Vaccine Information Page 2

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## Welcome New Members

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



## NEW DATES ADDED!

### FREE REMOTE DELIVERY

### Produce Safety Training



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!

**March 10, 2021**

Two Half Day Sessions Mar 10-11 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

**March 16, 2021**

Two Half Day Sessions Mar 16-17 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

**March 23, 2021**

Two Half Day Sessions Mar 23-24 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

**March 30, 2021**

Two Half Day Sessions Mar 30-31 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

**April 13, 2021**

Two Half Day Sessions Apr 13-14 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

**April 21, 2021**

Two Half Day Sessions Apr 21-22 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

### Space is limited!

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

### Register Today!

Register at Food Safety Training Partnership; visit <http://foodsafetytrainingpartnership.org>

For more information or call 916-561-5672.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Information

Riverside County continues to release appointments for the COVID-19 vaccines as they become available. The demand for the COVID-19 vaccine throughout our community continues to exceed the limited supply available. Community members are encouraged to check Riverside County's Vaccine Dashboard on a regular basis to make sure they are informed of new vaccine clinics as appointments become available.

- Visit Riverside County's new Vaccine Dashboard, at <https://www.rivcoph.org/COVID-19-Vaccine>
- Email your questions about Riverside County vaccinations to [rivco.vaccines@ruhealth.org](mailto:rivco.vaccines@ruhealth.org).
- For information on Riverside County's COVID-19 Response, visit [www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus](http://www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus).
- Please visit the CDC Essential Worker COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit to help educate your workers about important prevention tools and why vaccines are important. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/toolkits/essential-workers.html>
- Follow Riverside University Health System – Public Health on Social Media for the latest updates
  - Facebook: [www.facebook.com/countyriversidedepartmentofpublichealth](http://www.facebook.com/countyriversidedepartmentofpublichealth)
  - Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RivCoDoc>

# Red imported fire ants may be challenging to eradicate, but they can be controlled

As winter turns into spring, Southern California residents who live in areas where the red imported fire ant has taken hold will want to keep a close eye out for colonies establishing themselves in lawns, parks, schools and golf courses.

Red imported fire ant (RIFA) arrived in California in 1989, and is widespread in residential and commercial areas of Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, and adjoining areas of Los Angeles County. True to its name, the fire ants inflict painful, burning stings when they crawl onto people working, walking or resting on infested turf grass and other outdoor areas. For some people, RIFA bites and stings can lead to life-threatening anaphylactic shock.



Red imported fire ant workers are variable in size (1/16 to 1/5 inch long) and are dark reddish brown.

RIFA is difficult to eradicate, but care and attention can reduce the population to a level that minimizes the risk of injury, said Siavash Taravati, UC Cooperative Extension integrated pest management advisor in Southern California. He helped the California School for the Deaf in Riverside control an exploding RIFA population on its 70-acre campus, and turned the effort into a research project with results that can help other Southern California agencies deal with red imported fire ant infestations.



In California, RIFA mounds frequently resemble gopher mounds because they consist of a circular upwelling of loose soil.

"The School for the Deaf's grounds crew was struggling to control RIFA, but had little success," Taravati said. "It's a huge school with students from elementary to high school. They have football, baseball and softball fields and even housing on the campus."

The school's grounds crew had drenched ant mounds with liquid insecticides, but only achieved temporary control. With financial support from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, Taravati evaluated some of the most common products available for RIFA control, available in commercially formulated corn grits that are coated with soybean oil containing the pesticide.

Children must be kept away from the treated areas during and immediately after applications. Touching or eating fire ant granules might be harmful to children and adults.

"Schools must give parents, guardians and staff the opportunity to register to be notified 72 hours in advance of individual pesticide applications," Taravati said. "Also, there must be warning signs in the area where a pesticide will be applied, at least 24 hours before and 72 hours after the application."

To gain the most accurate information about RIFA control from this project, Taravati used two different school sites and marked 35 locations of RIFA activity with construction flags and spray paint, then treated areas with various pesticides, and monitored them for a year. The pesticides he used contained indoxacarb, hydramethylnon s-methoprene, and boric acid. Taravati measured RIFA activity before and after treatment.

"After a few months, the number of RIFA mounds were reduced by 96% in the some of the most problematic areas," Taravati said. "Even when new mounds appeared on the lawn, they were always small in size."

The RIFA control guidelines that Taravati introduced were adopted by the school staff to maintain a safe environment for the school's 500 students.

"Many pesticides for RIFA control are designed and marketed to professional applicators, but there are some that residents can purchase in home stores or online," Taravati said. Detailed information about RIFA pesticide options are spelled out on the **UC IPM website pest guidelines** at <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7487.html>

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources brings the power of UC to all 58 counties. Through research and Cooperative Extension in agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, economic and youth development, our mission is to improve the lives of all Californians. Learn more at [ucanr.edu](http://ucanr.edu). By Jeannette E. Warnert, Author - UCANR Communications Specialist.



# Scientists developing new solutions for honeybee colony collapse

By Jules L Bernstein, Senior Public Information Officer,  
University of California, Riverside

## Grant establishes network of bee researchers at four UC campuses

The University of California, Riverside, is leading a new effort to stop and reverse a worldwide decline in honeybees, which threatens food security and prices.

Honeybees pollinate more than 80 agricultural crops, which account for about a third of what we eat. Several factors, including pesticide exposure and the spread of parasites and environmental changes, are to blame for the widespread collapse of bee colonies over the past decade.

To boost dwindling honeybee populations, the University of California's Office of the President has awarded \$900,000 to a four-campus network of bee researchers and engineers.

"This will become one of the largest honeybee health networks in the country," said Boris Baer, a professor of entomology at UC Riverside and principal investigator of the project. "I'm very excited about so many different kinds of bee expertise joining forces through this project."

The network, which includes researchers from the Davis, San Diego and Merced campuses, is approaching the problem in three main ways.

The first is through breeding programs — a particular focus of Baer's laboratory. "We seek to identify and breed bees that are better able to cope with environmental stress," he said.

A second goal of the new network is to develop medications and treatments for sick bees. Certain types of honeybees generate molecules that make them more tolerant of pesticides and parasites. New technology will enable the scientists to isolate those molecules and use them as a basis for drugs.

Finally, the group is looking to give beekeepers tools to better monitor bees' health. Small devices will be able to 'listen' and 'smell' inside hives to give beekeepers indications about the health of the hive.

"We know bee queens have a special pheromone they give off when they're hungry or dying, and these can be traced," Baer said. "We are essentially building 'electronic veterinarians.'"

Preventative devices like these are key to keeping bees alive, because once the colony collapses, it's too late to bring it back, Baer said.

The network's goals closely mirror those of UC Riverside's Center for Integrative Bee Research, or CIBER, which is also attempting to address the 'pollinator crisis.'

Both groups are working closely with local beekeepers and getting feedback on whether the tools being developed are working for them.

"Together, we'll develop innovative tools needed to effectively combat declining honeybee health, keep our food affordable, and safeguard the livelihood of those working with bees," Baer said.

Funding will also help provide research opportunities for undergraduates, including underrepresented students, with the goal of ensuring that students who enter research, academia, and industry reflects the diversity of the communities in which they learn and work.



Family of Beekeepers  
Professor Boris Baer's family tending beehives in Riverside, Calif.  
(Boris Baer/UCR)

# Register for the March 9, 2021 'Trees for Tomorrow Start Today' Workshop (via Zoom from 8:15 AM – 3:00 PM)

Landscape trees provide shade, cool urban heat islands, reduce interior energy use and related costs, provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife, and beautify our communities. They also help clean our environment by absorbing carbon dioxide emitted by vehicles and other producers of fossil fuels. Taking care of our urban trees is an important way to maximize these benefits and avoid damage, injury, and liability due to negligence. Unfortunately, the average lifespan of city trees is less than 1/4 of their potential due to poor selection and care.

City planners, 'green industry' professionals, HOAs, non-profits, master gardeners, and others interested in increasing the health, longevity and canopy coverage of our city trees are invited to participate in University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources 'Trees for Tomorrow Start Today' workshop (via Zoom) on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 (8:15 AM – 3:00 PM). While the workshop is free, registration is required through this secure link: <http://ucanr.edu/u.cfm?id=264>. Once registered, you will receive a link to the workshop.

A bevy of speakers including certified arborists, horticulturists, planners, water district personnel, and other non-profit and green industry representatives will discuss the benefits of urban trees; recommended practices for their selection and care; how to avoid hazardous trees that damage property and structures and increase liability; and share success stories resulting from partnerships among cities, non-profit organizations, and the green industry.

A highlight of the workshop will be the opportunity for attendees to participate in breakout sessions that cut across professions and interest groups (city planners, community service directors, arborists, landscape architects, landscapers, water district managers, HOA managers, golf course superintendents, nursery growers, UC master gardeners, concerned citizens, etc.) to enact positive change.



## 'Trees for Tomorrow Start Today' Workshop

**Goal: To increase tree health and reduce impacts of urban heat islands by properly selecting and caring for trees today to ensure a greener tomorrow**

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Via Zoom

Register here:

<http://ucanr.edu/u.cfm?id=264>



8:15: **Welcome and Workshop Overview** Rose Epperson (Executive Director, Western Chapter ISA), Elizabeth Skrzat (Executive Director, Chino Basin WCD); Mandy Parkes (District Manager, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District); Tamara Hedges (Executive Director, UCR Palm Desert) and Janet Hartin (Environmental Horticulturist, University of California Cooperative Extension)

8:30: **Benefits of Landscape Trees and 'Best Practices' for Their Selection and Care** (Janet Hartin)

9:15: **Are Your Trees Safe? Tree Risk Assessment/Case Studies** (Jeremy Rappoport, Certified Arborist, Certified Arborist Expert Witness, Registered Consulting Arborist, Tree Risk Assessor, President, Rappoport Development Consulting Services LLC)

10:00: **Break**

10:15: **Working Together Across Professions 'Success Stories'**: Hector Ramirez, Cal State San Bernardino; Dave Roger, retired, City of Claremont; Cris Falco, West Coast Arborists; Angela Johnson, Coachella Valley Water District; Mandy Parkes, IERCD; Ryan Stendell, Director of Community Development, City of Palm Desert.

11:50: **Questions/Discussion with Morning Speakers**

12:15: **Lunch**

1:00: **Roundtable Discussions: Challenges and Opportunities to Increase Tree Canopies and Tree Health** (small group discussions based on geography and profession/interest that include city planners, community service directors, arborists, landscape architects, landscapers, water district managers, HOA managers, golf course superintendents, nursery growers, UC master gardeners, concerned citizens, etc.)

2:00: **Reports from Roundtable Discussions (Group Leaders)**

2:45: **'Next Steps'** (Workshop Organizers)

3:00: **End of Workshop**



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# Deadly citrus tree disease found in Moreno Valley; citrus quarantine expanded

The incurable citrus greening disease causes citrus fruit to not ripen properly and will kill the tree in three to five years  
By Beau Yarbrough | byarbrough@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

A fatal citrus tree disease has reached Moreno Valley for the first time, in the mouths of a tiny insect.

“Asian citrus psyllid is the insect vector” for Huanglongbing, also known as HLB or citrus greening disease, said Victoria Hornbaker, director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Citrus Pest and Disease Prevent Division. “It spreads the bacteria as it feeds.”

Citrus greening disease is not harmful to humans, but is fatal to citrus trees within three to five years. Leaves on infected trees become mottled and misshapen. Their fruit does not ripen properly and is green and misshapen, with a bitter taste.



“It’s the biggest threat to citrus in the entire world,” said Ruben Arroyo, agricultural commissioner for the Riverside County. “Every citrus-growing region in the world has HLB.”

To prevent the disease from devastating commercial citrus groves, a citrus plant quarantine was established in parts of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Citrus greening disease has been found in all four counties.

It was just discovered in a lemon tree in Moreno Valley, about a mile outside the previous quarantine boundaries, according to Arroyo. The quarantine zone has now expanded to cover more parts of Riverside, Woodcrest and, for the first time, Perris. There are a total of 225 square miles quarantined.

“Worst-case scenario is we have a landscape like many other parts of the world where HLB has taken hold,” Hornbaker said. “You can see dead and dying trees all over parts of Florida. We don’t want to see that in California.”

It is also illegal to bring citrus fruits or plants into California from outside the state and those inside the quarantine area cannot move their citrus plants, fruit or foliage off their property. Citrus tree owners can consume oranges, lemons, grapefruits and kumquats on the properties where they are grown, however.

“Citrus is part of our heritage in California,” Hornbaker said. “We want to protect that. We want people to be able to go out into their yard and pick lemons for lemonade or go out and pick oranges at half-time for their kiddos ... We stand a chance of losing that, losing part of our California heritage.”

An estimated 60% of California homeowners have citrus trees.

“What we really want folks to do is to keep an eye on their trees,” Hornbaker said. “Are they seeing Asian citrus psyllid on their trees? Are they seeing the bacterial infections of HLB in their trees?”

Citrus greening disease causes blotchy, yellow leaves, deformed fruit that does not ripen and fruit dropping in excessive numbers before it is ripe. Citrus tree owners wanting to prevent their trees from getting infected can check with their local home and garden centers for ways to keep psyllids from their trees, she said.

UC Riverside researchers are attempting to develop citrus varieties resistant to citrus greening disease. Last summer, UCR scientists announced they had discovered an antimicrobial peptide that kills the bacterium that causes the disease.

“Hopefully between the research and the regulated community that’s helping to limit the spread, we hope we can keep it at bay until we find a cure for the disease,” Arroyo said.

If you think your tree may be infected, call the Riverside County agricultural commissioner’s office, 951-955-3045. Outside Riverside County, call the California Department of Food and Agriculture, 800-491-1899.



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# Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU

## Tuesday, March 23

Registration for the 2021 Capitol Ag Day is now open!

Join us virtually on Tuesday, March 23, as we kick off our year of policy development with our annual legislative day.

Hear about the prioritization of our issues from California Farm Bureau President, Jamie Johansson

Followed by featured guest speakers:

- Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Robert Rivas
- Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Andreas Borgeas
- California Secretary for Environmental Protection Jared Blumenfeld

To register go to: [www.cfbf.com/capitolag2021](http://www.cfbf.com/capitolag2021).

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

📅 March 10, 2021 ~ 5:30 PM, Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting will be held by a Zoom Conference. If you are interested in participating, please call our office at (951) 684-6732.

## Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

### *UC publishes food-safety guide for urban farms*

Urban farms and community gardens that sell or donate food need to know about how food-safety laws apply to their operations, and the University of California has produced a guide intended to help. The free publication includes information on rules that pertain to urban agriculture in California. Along with explaining regulations, UC says the guide lists best practices to assure food safety for produce grown in urban settings. <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8660.pdf>

### *Treatment for citrus disease shows potential*

A naturally occurring substance from a close relative of citrus plants has shown more promise in fighting the deadly plant disease known as HLB. New research with a peptide derived from Australian finger limes shows the peptide can kill bacteria that cause HLB and stimulate a citrus tree's immune response against new infection. University of California, Riverside, researchers say they have begun field tests of the peptide in Florida.

### *Food waste could be reused as plant food*

Fermented food waste could be used to deliver beneficial bacteria to food plants. Research from the University of California, Riverside, found that beneficial microbes on crops "increased dramatically" when the food waste was added to plant-growing systems in a greenhouse. The researchers say the fermented food waste appears to help plants resist pathogens and could reduce carbon emissions from farming.

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