

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 3, March 2021.



Photo by Grace O'Driscoll on Unsplash.com

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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!

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)

May 11, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions May 11-12 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

May 26, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions May 26-27 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

June 8, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions June 8-9 from 10am-3:30pm (PST)

June 23, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions June 23-24 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.
- For information on Riverside County's COVID-19 Response, visit 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
 - ☐ Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RivCoDoc>



W I N T E R 2 0 2 1

bulletin



Which Parts of the State Are Most at Risk for Spotted Lanternfly?

An extensive visual survey of likely landing spots for SLF coming into California hasn't uncovered any infestations of the destructive pest.

A total of 141 sites around 68 high-risk locations in 24 counties across the state were inspected by the California Department of Food and Agriculture with no evidence of any SLF infestations. The 68 locations included:

- 44 sites receiving multiple shipments of goods directly from SLF-quarantined areas
- nine ports
- nine stone importers
- four railyards
- one airport
- one location of a purported public sighting from 2019

The survey, conducted August - September 2020, focused on areas of high risk of introduction where the insect's preferred host, tree of heaven, is found. Inspectors visually searched sites with tree of heaven occurring within a ½ mile of each target location for signs of SLF nymphs, adults, egg masses, feeding damage and honeydew. Tree of heaven was the target host of the survey, but grapevines were also inspected where no tree of heaven were present.

Though SLF have been found during air cargo inspections for Japanese beetles, experts say it's a relatively low risk pathway for California because any SLF that manage to fly into airplanes prior to takeoff are unlikely to be carrying eggs. Nevertheless, CDFA plans to continue to look for SLF as part of its intensive aircraft inspection program at multiple airports, as well as conduct additional SLF survey activities.

Finding SLF before any infestations can take root in the state is key. Growers and vineyard workers should familiarize themselves with what SLF looks like in its various life stages, regularly inspect tree of heaven around their vineyards, and report SLF finds to the CDFA Pest Hotline by calling 1-800-491-1899. Learn more at bit.ly/2XB1Njv.

Photo of adult SLF from Bugwood.org - Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture



Spotted Lanternfly Statewide Survey Sites

Map shows approximate location of areas inspected by CDFA for spotted lanternfly in late 2020

Adult spotted lanternfly

HOW GROWERS CAN PROTECT GRAPES FROM SLF



Learn what the SLF looks like in its various life stages



Regularly inspect tree of heaven around your property



Report SLF finds to the CDFA Pest Hotline 1-800-491-1899

Drought-tolerant plants can save water, but beware of those that are toxic

By Jeannette E. Warnert, Author - Communications Specialist, Agriculture and Natural Resources, UC Kearney Research and Extension Center

UC Master Gardener Francie Murphy was pruning the succulents in her San Diego front yard when an unfortunate accident catalyzed her commitment to communicating the dangers of toxic plants. She trimmed a stem on her drought-tolerant pencil milk bush and milky sap spurted into one eye, causing stinging pain.

"I tried to wipe it out, and in doing so got in both eyes. I was blinded. The pain was unbelievable," she said.

A nearby friend rushed her to the emergency room where the doctor diagnosed chemical burns to her corneas and washed her eyes with two liters of saline water each. Murphy removed the plant from her garden, but saw it growing throughout her community.

"I knew we had to do something," she said.

Drought-tolerant plants like cacti, yucca, agaves and aloes have adaptations to protect themselves from wildlife in search of the moisture within their leaves and stems. They have spikes or spines to ward off people and animals. Other plants don't have outward signs of danger. Fire sticks, also known as sticks on fire and pencil cactus and by its scientific name *Euphorbia tirucalli*, is a very popular succulent in frost-free areas. Its vertical growth habit and showy soft green to reddish-gold stems make it a striking landscape specimen. A native of southern Africa, the smooth, coral-like stems look deceptively harmless. The sap is toxic.

"Fire sticks should be planted far from walkways, in the back of the landscape, where you can see them, but not touch them," said UC Cooperative Extension natural resources advisor Chris McDonald. "When trimming the plant, wear long pants, long sleeves and eye protection. If the plant is tall, consider protecting your face."

After Murphy shared her story about these plants with other Master Gardeners, UCCE San Diego gathered a team and worked with colleagues to secure funding from the County of San Diego to develop a website and handouts to inform the community about readily available yet toxic drought-tolerant plants being planted into California landscapes.

The handout can be downloaded from the Plant Safely website at <https://ucanr.edu/sites/PlantSafely/>. The materials were quickly distributed to nurseries, garden events and Master Gardener help booths, such as at farmers markets, home shows and fairs, and other educational events. A key feature of the website is a database of nearly 100 plants with photos and descriptions that explain how they are unsafe and how they can be used safely in the landscape.

Some common yet toxic landscape plants included in the database are:

- Fire sticks (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) – Sap in any form, including dried sap, is irritating and can be toxic if it gets on skin or in eyes.
- Oleander (*Nerium oleander*) – The entire plant is toxic if ingested. The wood can be severely irritating if burned in a fire or BBQ.
- California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) – The entire plant is toxic if ingested.
- Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) – The entire plant of many species is toxic if ingested. Milkweeds, like the California native narrow leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*), are the only food source for monarch butterflies and can help restore monarch populations.
- Sago Palm (*Cycas regoluta*) – All parts of the plant are toxic to humans and pets, and the tips of leaves are surprisingly sharp.
- Mexican bird of paradise (*Caesalpinia* spp.) – Plants, seedpods, seeds and leaves contain toxins, which can cause gastrointestinal irritation, nausea and vomiting.

"These potentially harmful plants are grown widely in many parts of California," McDonald said. "It's important to promote drought-tolerant landscapes, and we must also do it in a way that preserves public health."

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.

California Farm Bureau presses for Senate action on agricultural immigration bill

Now that a significant agricultural immigration bill has won passage from the U.S. House of Representatives, the California Farm Bureau has called on the Senate to begin the process of moving the bill to President Biden's desk.

The Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021 by Reps. Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose, and Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., passed the House today with bipartisan support. It would update agricultural visa programs and accommodate immigrant agricultural employees already in the country.

"We're pleased to see the Farm Workforce Modernization Act advance," California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson said. "We thank Reps. Lofgren and Newhouse for championing the bill, and the many California representatives who advocated and voted for it."

Johansson said Farm Bureau will work with California Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla to seek refinements to the bill's guestworker provisions before a Senate vote.

"We know Sens. Feinstein and Padilla appreciate the importance of easing chronic employee shortages on California farms, and of providing more stability and dignity to the men and women who work in agriculture," he said. "Farmers and farm employees are eager to see the Senate move quickly in addressing immigration reform for agriculture."

Senate action would further recognize the essential work farm employees have performed during the COVID-19 pandemic, Johansson said.

"The men and women who work on farms and ranches have shown dedication to their jobs and to their communities during an extremely trying time," he said. "Everyone in the country has benefited from that dedication. Farmers and farm employees need a legislative solution that will help assure farms and ranches retain the flexibility to respond to changing demands for safe, healthy food and farm products."

New, Cross-sector Work Group will Speed California's Shift to Safer Pest Management

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation and California Department of Food and Agriculture launch a broad new work group to accelerate the systemwide adoption of safer, sustainable pest control practices.

The 25-member Sustainable Pest Management Work Group includes farmers, community members, university researchers and representatives from commodity groups and the pesticide industry. They are charged with identifying pathways to minimize the use of toxic pesticides and expand the use of integrated pest management practices; better protect public and environmental health; and engage, educate and promote collaboration to achieve these goals.

"Transitioning away from toxic pesticides requires us to speed up the development of effective alternatives," said CalEPA Secretary Jared Blumenfeld. "By giving our farmers a suite of integrated pest management tools, we can better protect farmworkers and some of California's most vulnerable communities. This dynamic task force will give us the roadmap to achieve this bold vision."

"California agriculture is recognized not only for its quality and quantity, but also for the sustainable, innovative, forward-thinking way it is grown," said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. "Our farmers have been leaders in adopting integrated pest management and partnering with universities and technical assistance providers to meet our high standards for food, environmental and worker safety. This work group represents a broad array of perspectives to inform the next decade of research and development investment and new partnerships to continue the production of nutritious, delicious food and high quality agricultural products with the least impact to our surrounding communities."

Funded in last year's budget, the group's work will build upon the recommendations of the Alternatives to Chlorpyrifos Work Group whose 2020 report identified alternatives to the hazardous insecticide and outlined actions to further support agriculture and the health of local communities, farmworkers and the environment. A new status update details additional actions DPR has taken based on the 2020 report, and how DPR and CDFA are working together to provide additional funding to the University of California and California State University to expand integrated pest management research and education. California prohibited virtually all uses of chlorpyrifos as of Dec. 31, 2020.

The Sustainable Pest Management Work Group is part of the State's larger commitment to accelerating the transition away from hazardous pesticides. To support the move, Governor Newsom is proposing to fund additional support for the transition by replacing the current flat-fee mill assessment on pesticide sales with a new risk-based tiered mill assessment, where higher toxicity pesticides are assessed a higher fee.

The additional revenue will fund enhanced integrated pest management (IPM) programs, including funding for UC Cooperative Extension and CSU Agricultural Research Institute to develop alternatives to toxic pesticides and support grower adoption of IPM; strengthen enforcement and air monitoring; and increase community engagement, particularly in disadvantaged communities.



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SAVE THE DATES

2021 Date Palm Webinar Series

Sponsored by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, California Date Commission, University of California, Riverside, and USDA/ARS National Clonal Germplasm Repository for Citrus & Dates

Dates/Times: Virtually on Zoom, every Thursday in April 2021, starting at 10:00 AM – Noon
COST: \$10/per seminar (Day) OR Pre-Pay for ALL seminars (X5) and pay \$35 (\$15 discount)- Links Pending

CEU's Pending: CCA, PCA (Other & laws/Regs), ISA, and Arizona (AZDA)

Atención: aplicadores privados, hasta 2 Unidades de Educación Continua en español, Departamento de Regulaciones de Pesticidas y Departamento de agricultura de Arizona - Pendiente

Webinar #	Date/Time	Speaker	Topic/Title
1	4/1 @ 10 AM	Albert Keck, Hadley Date Gardens, Inc. & CA Date Commission	Welcome & Current Status of California Date Production
2	4/1 @ 10:30AM	Ali Montazar, UCCE Imperial/Riverside Counties	Cost-Effective Tools and Technologies to Improve Irrigation Management in Date Palms
3	4/8 @10 AM	Mark Hoddle, UCR	South American Palm Weevil Update
4	4/8 @11 AM	Sonia Rios, UCCE Riverside/San Diego	The Challenges to an Effective Integrated Weed Management Program in Date Palms: Evolution of Herbicide Resistance Weeds
	4/15	Intermission	
5	4/22 @ 10AM	Ruben Arroyo – Riverside Ag Commissioner office	California Laws & Regulations Update (1 hr laws/Regs)
6	4/22 @11 AM	Ricardo Salomon-Torres, Sonora State University, MX	Date Palm Status and Perspective in Mexico
7	4/29 @10 AM	TBD-Oficina del Comisionado de Agricultura de Riverside	Actualización de leyes y reglamentos para de California - en español (1 hr laws/Regs)
8	4/29 @ 11 AM	Ricardo Salomon-Torres, Universidad Estatal de Sonora, MX	"La Palma Datilera: Fuente de Alimentos, Endulzantes y Bebidas" en español
9	5/6 @ 10 AM	Thomas Perring, UCR	Management of insect and mite pests of dates
10	5/6 @11 AM	Thomas Perring, UCR	Timing and amount of irrigation can impact date puffy skin – PART 1
11	5/6 @ 11:30 AM	Robert Krueger, USDA/ARS	Timing and amount of irrigation can impact date puffy skin - PART 2

If you have any questions please contact, Sonia Rios: srios@ucanr.edu

Funding provided by: USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant



To Register <https://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=33307>



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



📅 April 14, 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

USDA concludes investigation of 'mystery seeds'

Packets of "mystery seeds" sent to thousands of people across the U.S. last year have prompted a federal agency to provide additional guidance for online seed sales. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says it found no evidence someone was trying to harm agriculture when they sent the seeds last summer. After an investigation, USDA concluded the seeds were likely part of an internet scam to help an online seller's search results.

Detectives analyze rural-crime trends

Agricultural crime remains a serious problem in many parts of California, though reported crimes declined in some rural counties the past year. Detectives say they're not sure why the decline occurred, and farmers say they continue to be plagued by thefts, illegal dumping and other problems. A bill introduced in the state Legislature would increase fines for illegal dumping. In one county, inmate work crews that clear dump sites have been reduced due to pandemic concerns.

U.S. Capitol Christmas tree will come from North Coast

A tree from the North Coast of California will serve as the official U.S. Capitol Christmas tree. The Six Rivers National Forest, based in Eureka, announced it had been chosen to provide the tree, which will be placed on the west lawn of the Capitol in early December. It's the first time a tree from the Six Rivers forest has been selected, and the fifth time a tree from California will serve as the Capitol Christmas tree.

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