



# Farmer Newsletter

A newsletter made especially for  
farmers in the Inland Empire!



## In this issue...

See a recap of our farmer appreciation event, and meet Jorge from the Garcia Center of the Arts Garden Project!







This quarter, as the country honors farmers on National Farmer's Appreciation day and celebrates Thanksgiving, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) acknowledges with gratitude the farmers and farm workers who labor to put food on our tables. IERCD staff coordinated an appreciation day for our local farmers in celebration of National Farmer's Day, which falls on October 12th.



The Master Food Preservers provided free pickling kits, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided information on their Conservation Stewardship (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives (EQUIP) programs, and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources' Specialty Crop Advisors helped farmers fill out grant applications for drought relief funds through the California Small & Underserved Producers Program.



## Farmer Appreciation Event 2022



Over 30 farmers and seven partners joined us to celebrate the hard work our growers and ag professionals perform year-round. Our event featured partner education and outreach booths, a presentation from UCANR on food safety, giveaways, and a celebration dinner.



The farmers enjoyed connecting with old friends & new acquaintances while engaging with our partners about their available assistance programs and agricultural resources.



## Jorge Osvaldo

Executive Director



"My main goal with the garden project is to create a community space that is collaborative, that promotes creativity, as well as cultural and environmental connection. I believe that gardening has many benefits. It is good for our mental health. It helps ground us, and really puts into perspective where our food comes from, and how depleted our current environment is. My role in the local food system is to serve primarily as an advocate. Our local growers deserve a lot of respect. Urban agriculture in particular is not an easy thing to do, but it's the right thing to do, especially as we are combatting the effects of climate change, hotter days and longer droughts. The less our food needs to travel to get to our table, the better. If this can be achieved, we could potentially conserve a lot of energy and resources in the fight against climate change."

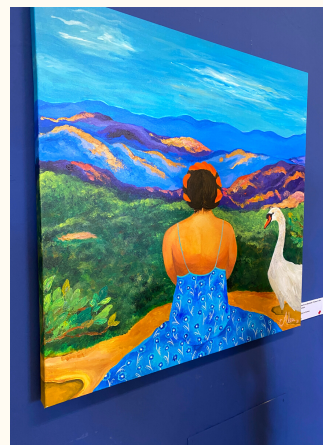


"I am very fortunate to work at an arts center, there are many different cultural backgrounds coming through the space. In Southern California, where we are fortunate to experience a variety of cultures, there is always something new to learn, because everyone approaches gardening and farming differently. This is why I believe whole-heartedly, that gardening is an art that must be practiced widely, so that we may be able to learn and share with one another."

## Garcia Center for the Arts



The Garcia Center for the Arts began as a cultural arts center in 1935, followed by headquarters for the City of San Bernardino's Municipal Water Department, a fire station, and ultimately an abandoned property in 2008. In 2013, the San Bernardino Valley Concert Association executed a 99-year lease for the site prior to fully restoring its interior and much of its exterior. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Garcia Center was reaching 1,000+ community members each month through art classes, distribution of resources, and educational events. Since the pandemic, they have been working to renovate the surrounding exterior space. This current effort to elevate outdoor space including the adjacent empty lot received significant attention and support from the local community, including a \$1M state budget allocation spearheaded by Assemblymember James Ramos.





"The garden has changed a lot. The garden was at first an empty three-quarter acre lot, with no access to water. With the help of many volunteers and friends, we were able to install a backflow and irrigation system. Now there are over 40 fruit trees, agave, sage, strawberries, zucchini and more growing. It's been a total transformation already, but there is still much more change and growth to come. I'm currently spending most of my time weeding, especially removing the budding palm trees from the garden space. We are also currently building an adobe earth home in the garden."



"The community has only had positive things to say about the garden. My favorite thing has been when community members share a memory that comes to them as they move around the garden. We have a fence that has been overtaken by passionfruit, and someone said it reminded them of when they were a child, walking in their neighborhood alongside their parents, next to a similar wall of passionfruit."

"We are currently inviting residents to join us at the Garcia Center garden on Wednesday evenings at 6pm and Saturday mornings at 8am. In the near future, we will also be starting a membership program, where residents will be able to get their own individual plot within the space."



"IERCD has been amazing. IERCD is made up of very passionate and insightful people that do the best job at educating people about the natural resources in our area. They are amazing at connecting residents with resources, donating and planting hundreds of trees throughout the San Bernardino area. IERCD has been very supportive of the Garcia Center garden, hosting a couple of workshops, but also helping donate and plant most of the fruit trees in the garden. When I was first trying to connect with people who knew a thing or two about gardens, it was the people at IERCD that really made the difference."



# OPEN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS!

## Drought Emergency Funding - due 01/15/2023

- With the ongoing drought crisis in California, farmers face increased costs ranging from higher water and energy bills, to installing new well equipment. This is especially difficult for smaller farms, and farmers from BIPOC, immigrant, and disadvantaged communities. These farmers often fall through the cracks of traditional government aid. California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) has partnered with CDFA to administer the Drought Relief Grants, which will be reimbursement grants for expenses incurred as a result of the drought. Note: You are not eligible for this grant if you received a CDFA CUSP economic relief grant from CAFF, ABIRC, CCOF, or Peoples Land Stewardship Fund within the last 12 months.



## CDFA Healthy Refrigeration Grant - due 3/15/2023

- The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announced a grant application process for the Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program (HRGP). CDFA will fund energy-efficient and climate friendly refrigeration and freezer equipment in corner stores, small businesses, and food donation programs in low-income or low food access areas throughout the state. New units are to stock California-grown fresh produce, nuts, eggs, meat, dairy, minimally processed, and culturally appropriate foods. The purpose of the program is to improve access to healthy foods in underserved communities, while promoting CA-grown agriculture. Small businesses include small farm operations with farm stands or stores, that sell or donate food to low-income or low-food access clientele.





# NEWS & UPDATES

## Asian Citrus Psyllid

- An ongoing study in coastal Southern California citrus groves has found that just over 3.5% of Asian citrus psyllids (ACP) tested are carrying the bacterium that can cause HLB. ACP is the insect vector of HLB. Thus far, 138 of 3,000 adult ACP collected from 15 commercial citrus sites had some level of the bacterium present. The results were reported by researchers from the University of California (UC) Agriculture and Natural Resources, UC Davis, UC Riverside, and the University of Arizona, Tucson. (agnetwest.com, November 23, 2022)



## Workshop Requests

- IERCD works with UCCE Master Gardeners and Food Preservers to provide free workshops & kits to community gardens and local farms! If you are interested, please contact the IERCD Sustainable Agriculture Specialist at (909) 285-4754 to request a topic and workshop date. Workshop topics have included seed saving, tree care, fruit preserves, composting etc.

