

# CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE

The California Center for Urban Horticulture (CCUH) is an exciting new partnership of the UC Davis Arboretum and the Departments of Plant Sciences (Environmental Horticulture) and Landscape Architecture, within the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of California, Davis. The center will be a dynamic meeting place of horticultural knowledge and need, supporting scientific research and the exchange of science-based information on a range of people-plant interactions. This unique initiative will bring the latest in horticultural information, interactive learning opportunities, and research and demonstration projects to audiences across the state.

## **Sustainable Horticulture for a Changing California**

There is an urgent need for horticultural education for the residents of California. Residential demand for water continues to increase as the population of the state grows. Currently, half of residential water use is in home landscapes. Half of the pesticide use in California is residential and nonagricultural. Pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals are often over-applied by home gardeners and the excess is flushed into the state's waterways. Gas-powered lawn mowers and other garden equipment account for a significant proportion of air pollutants, particularly in urban areas.

Urban horticulture can help mitigate many of the environmental and social challenges associated with growth and can improve the quality of life for urban residents. The California Center for Urban Horticulture will help address these problems by encouraging Californians to adopt horticultural practices that reduce water and energy consumption, preserve biodiversity, support native plants and wildlife, and reduce air and water pollution.

## **Goals of the California Center for Urban Horticulture**

- Goal 1      Communicate knowledge about the principles and practices of urban horticulture to a broad statewide audience, with an emphasis on promoting sustainable practices that protect resources and enhance ecosystems.
- Goal 2      Provide training and continuing education opportunities for horticulture and landscape professionals, public agency staff, Master Gardeners, K-12 and community college teachers, and other stakeholder audiences.
- Goal 3      Provide statewide academic leadership in urban horticulture education and research.
- Goal 4      Fund capital needs through extensive partnerships within and beyond the University.
- Goal 5      Build a high performance staff, faculty, student, and volunteer corps dedicated to leadership, teamwork, and service

## **Research, Training and Outreach**

- University of California research scientists will have opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues in public agencies and industry to address some of the pressing needs facing the state. Researchers will have access to research sites in Arboretum and California Center for Urban Horticulture demonstration landscapes, new funding opportunities, new venues for disseminating research results (website, exhibits, public programs, publications), and opportunities to work with experts in informal education and outreach methods to reach a wider audience.
- Home gardeners, landscape and nursery professionals, K-12 and community college students, and anyone with an interest in plants and gardens will be able to visit the center on the UC Davis

campus to learn about environmentally-responsible gardening for California through demonstration landscapes, exhibits, a horticultural library, workshops, and classes.

- In addition to the UC Davis center, affiliated centers at public gardens and other horticultural organizations throughout the state will offer exhibits, classes, research and demonstration landscapes, internships for UC students, and other center programs.
- Statewide audiences will be able to access the resources of the California Center for Urban Horticulture online, through media programming, or through outreach programs at schools, garden centers, community events, and other venues.
- Horticulture professionals, Master Gardeners, and a new generation of UC students will have a range of training opportunities to develop their skills in sustainable horticulture, and will bring critical new knowledge and expertise to their work and their constituencies.
- Private landholders and public land managers will have access to the latest information to help them comply with changing regulations on water quality protection and pesticide use, and to encourage them to use more sustainable horticultural practices to protect wildlife corridors and support native pollinators.

### **Pilot Projects**

The California Center for Urban Horticulture will be launched in Fall 2006 with a series of pilot projects, including:

**Urban Horticulture Conference.** One of the first programs of the California Center for Urban Horticulture will be a professional conference that will provide a forum to discuss research topics among academics, present management methods to stakeholders, and provide training to professionals. Subsequently the center will sponsor a similar conference for home gardeners and the general public.

**Research and Demonstration Landscapes.** The center will construct three identical residential building mockups on the UC Davis campus and compare three different landscape designs to determine their effectiveness in conserving water and reducing pollution in irrigation and stormwater runoff and leaching. One of the structures used to mimic homes will be set up as a classroom and the demonstration landscapes will have educational signs and exhibits on management methods to reduce pollution. This project will replicate a study titled “Mitigating Pesticide Runoff in Urbanized Environments,” currently underway at the South Coast Research and Extension Center in Irvine.

**Urban Horticulture Website.** The California Center for Urban Horticulture website will be a full-service resource with an on-line horticultural reference library and links to horticultural sites. It will disseminate the horticultural expertise of the University of California, with the latest research results, information for both novice and experienced gardeners, and a portal to educational opportunities for a variety of audiences.

### **Director Search**

We are currently recruiting for the founding Director for the California Center for Urban Horticulture. A report on the California Center for Urban Horticulture and the director’s position description are available on the UC Davis Arboretum website at <http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>. For more information, contact Kathleen Socolofsky, Arboretum Director and chair of the search committee, at [kmsoco@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kmsoco@ucdavis.edu).

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