

Why just a form? Because you're receiving this email because you've expressed an interest in Berkeley's Growing Roots projects. Don't forget to add jsowerwi@berkeley.edu to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Latest research, upcoming workshops,
news and events for the Growing Roots community!



Gathering for Ag Day at City Slicker Farms. Alana Siegner photo.

Sustainable Urban Farming for Resilience and Food Security

In this issue:

- Pre-holiday Urban Agriculture Gathering!
- Increasing Food Security While Researching Soil Health
- Partner Profile: Food Shift
- Fall Workshops and Events
- From the Field: City Slicker Farms
- Sharing What We're Learning Through Videos
- What We're Reading

Got news? if you're receiving this newsletter, you're doing work we'd like to share with this network. Please send your events to growingroots@berkeley.edu, and let us know if you'd like us to feature your work in an upcoming issue!

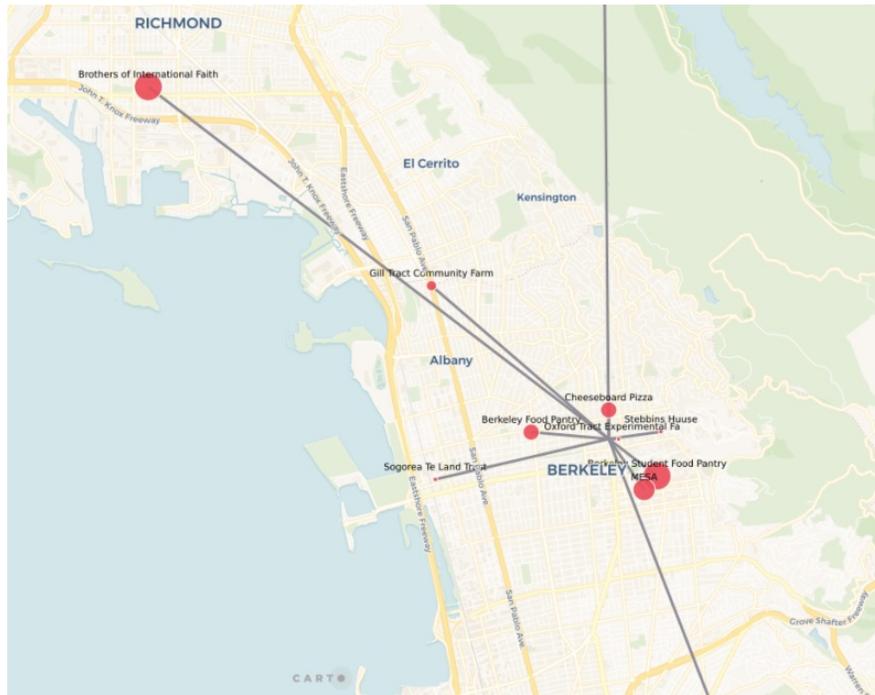
Pre-holiday gathering!

We are excited to invite you to a **[BFI Urban Agriculture community gathering](#)** in December! Please join us to discuss preliminary results from our survey of East Bay farms, give us your input, and network with other East Bay urban agriculture folks over delicious snacks!

When: Tuesday, December 11th, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Where: Morgan Hall Lounge, UC Berkeley

Please [RSVP here](#) so we can plan food and drink. **Hope to see you soon!**



Oxford Tract produce distribution to 10 community organizations. Map by Alana Siegner.

Increasing Food Security While Studying Soil Health

As part of the Sustainable Urban Farming for Resilience and Food Security project, UC Berkeley Oxford Tract is the site of a no-till urban agroecology experimental plot, modeling production practices adopted from Paul and Elizabeth Kaiser of [Singing Frogs Farm](#) (in Sebastopol, CA). A soil health research team led by Tim Bowles and Cole Rainey is collecting and analyzing various soil and plant data resulting from this biointensive, high-compost system. They also produced over 2,700 lbs of food in the spring/summer growing season, which was distributed to the organizations shown on this map.

Partner Profile: Food Shift

40% of all food produced in the US is wasted. In addition to the waste of resources and valuable nutrition, food waste is one of the biggest contributors to climate change. Since 2012, [Food Shift](#) has been working with communities, businesses, and governments to help shift this social and environmental crisis into an opportunity for a more thriving planet and community.

Part catering operation, part chef training program, part food recovery and distribution organization, Food Shift is tackling a persistent challenge in the regional food ecosystem: some people have too much food, while others have far too little (1 in 4 in San Francisco are food insecure). Food Shift recovers surplus food, creates jobs for formerly homeless individuals through [Food Shift Catering](#), and distributes produce and healthy prepared meals to the community.



In the Food Shift Kitchen. Food Shift photo.

Founder and Executive Director Dana Frasz is committed to expanding social enterprise models that reduce wasted food, create jobs for disadvantaged populations, generate revenue, and

distribute nutritious food throughout the community. Food Shift encourages businesses to pay for food recovery services in order to support critical infrastructure and capacity like vehicles, labor, kitchen space, and cold storage needed to recover, process, and distribute excess food. Our research team hopes to build connections between urban agriculture producers and organizations like Food Shift through our research, as both these groups share a commitment to increasing food access for low income households.

Please consider joining Food Shift for their [7 Year Anniversary Benefit Party](#) on Dec 1 in Oakland with guest speaker Joanna Macy, check out this just-released [video](#) on the Food Shift Kitchen program, and consider hiring [Food Shift Catering](#) for your next event!



Carrots! Photo by Ramona Taylor.

Fall Workshops and Events

Sustainable Urban Farming Project

Focus Groups, Interviews and Workshops: The Sustainable Urban Farming project team seeks input on food access and distribution from the urban farming and food justice community. That's you! If you would like to participate and/or help host a local gathering, please contact edithfriedman@berkeley.edu.

Community Notices

New Farm Stand in Downtown Berkeley: The Ecology Center is launching a farm stand at the new Berkeley BART plaza featuring produce from area farms including the [UC Gill Tract Community Farm](#). [More info here.](#)

One Seed, One Community: [East Bay Local Seeds](#) is doing a community grow out of an edible-podded yellow pea, Golden Sweet Pea. Seed provided, and EBLs will walk you through the process from sowing to harvesting and sharing seeds. Sign up by filling in [this form](#). Seeds are available for pick up at [local seed libraries](#).

Food Shift is hiring a Food Recovery Driver: Come work with Food Shift to help to redistribute over 100,000 lbs of food each year. This food supports a free produce stand in West Oakland, agencies who feed the community, and helps us create jobs for people who are formerly homeless. [Details here.](#)

From the Field: City Slicker Farms

Two of our research team members recently caught up with Rodney Spencer at [City Slicker Farms](#) to talk about urban food access and distribution. After turning and watering the compost pile, Laney Siegner and Hannah Lewis interviewed Rodney about his current operations and hopes for the future. High on his list is establishing a commercial kitchen space where local professional chefs could lead training programs, lease space for catering, and eventually supply an on-site café that would serve tapas and farm-fresh prepared foods to community members on their way home from work.



City Slicker Farms. Alana Siegner photo.

Rodney is building relationships with the real estate developer constructing a multi-family housing

complex next door to the farm, and hopes to turn that project into an opportunity to scale up his composting operations into a production-scale local system. His vision for policy change to support urban ag: turn every public park from a field into a food-producing landscape, whether it's through fruiting trees and bushes or small community garden plots in the park managed collaboratively between residents and city employees.

"None of us eat grass. If we were cows, I think [city fields] would be a great idea. Instead of paying people to grow grass and cut it, pay people to grow food, cut it, and distribute it." - Rodney Spencer



UC Gill Tract Community Farm. Gordon Kole photo.

Sharing what we're learning through videos

Students at UC Berkeley are helping to document the process and share results of our collaborative research into making urban farms stronger. Hannah Lewis reports:

My bike bags bulge from the camera, wireless speakers, and disc reflectors nestled inside. The tripod sticks out like an erect tail, marking my path on the Ohlone Greenway and East Bay streets. On two wheels. En route to [City](#)

[Slicker Farms](#), [Albany Crop Swap](#), the [Oxford Tract](#), [Bancroft Community Garden](#), [Peralta and Northside Community Gardens](#), the [Gill Tract Farm](#). I'm a long-time believer in the power of storytelling, particularly necessary to show the impact of science. Creating short videos to share agricultural research findings begins to bridge the chasm between academic research and on-farm endeavors, between experts in beneficial insects, soil health, food access, and farmers improving soil vivacity, helping feed low income members of their community, sharing knowledge. So many people in the East Bay are involved in this process of revitalizing or reclaiming our dissociated agricultural food system. It's an honor to speak with people in all aspects of this change-making, to share their stories.

What We're Reading

Indicators of Land Insecurity for Urban Farms: Institutional Affiliation, Investment, and Location. This article by Joshua Arnold and Paul Rogé explores land tenure insecurity with 56 California urban farm managers. [Read it in Sustainability here.](#)

Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land. A new book by Leah Penniman combines African-heritage farmers' history and how-to guidance for sustainable farming today. [Learn more here.](#)



This newsletter is a project of Growing Roots and the Berkeley Food Institute.
<https://food.berkeley.edu/> <http://growingroots.berkeley.edu>