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



Free farmstand. Courtesy UC Gill Tract Community Farm.

Sustainable Urban Farming for Resilience and Food Security

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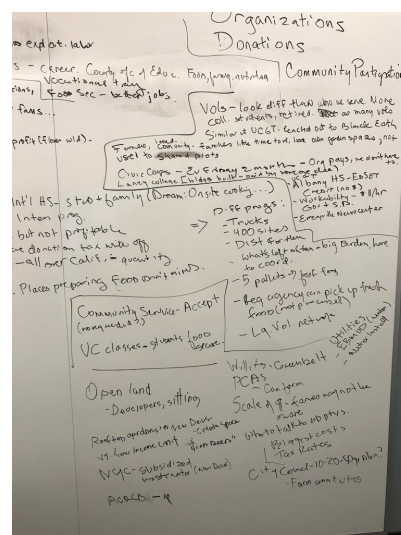
Got news? if you're receiving this newsletter, you're doing work we'd like to share with this network. Please send your news, events and job openings to growingroots@berkeley.edu.

Share your story! Partner Profiles introduce you and your farm to a diverse group of community stakeholders. Please let us know if you'd like us to feature your work in an upcoming issue.

Urban Farmers brainstorm ideas for sustainability

On May 24, 2019, a group of ten urban farmers sat down with our research team to discuss ongoing challenges to urban farm viability, strategies for addressing food security, and other topics of common interest. Participants echoed previous calls for strengthening connections between urban farms, and shared creative ideas for overcoming common problems around distributing food, meeting labor needs, and accessing land through partnerships with existing groups or institutions.

With the goal of advancing a sustainable and viable urban farming network in the East Bay, we are excited to share some of the policy-relevant ideas in our upcoming late summer and fall focus groups with policymakers and planners. We will also be hosting consumer-oriented focus groups, targeting individuals who currently access food from urban farms as well as food-insecure households that do not currently access urban produced foods. *Please reach out if you'd like to see the comprehensive notes from the Urban Farmer Focus Group, or if you have ideas for recruitment for the policy or consumer-related focus groups coming up!* Contact Laney:



Notes from the Urban Farmer focus group discussion



Cooking demo at the Oxford Tract.
Cole Rainey photo.

Soil health to community health: making connections at the Oxford Tract

Fifty students, staff, and community members gathered at UC Berkeley's Oxford Tract on April 26th to make connections between soil science, sustainable agriculture, and community building. Organizations [Housing and Dining Sustainability Advocates](#) (HADSA), the [Community Alliance with Family Farmers](#) (CAFF), and the [Multinational Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture](#) (MESA) partnered to host the workshop.

Participants toured the [model urban farm on no-till agriculture](#) established by Berkeley researchers. Sara Tiffany from CAFF offered a lecture on soil health, while students enjoyed farm farm veggies stir-fried on Berkeley's Basic Needs mobile cooking cart. Community

members learned about sustainable soil-building practices such as *composting*, *cover cropping*, and *dense intercropping*, and had the opportunity to view nematodes under the microscope. Towards the end of the day, organizers and students facilitated a round table discussion on land use, food sovereignty, and the importance of the Oxford Tract remaining an inclusive and open green space. **Stay tuned for the next event at the Oxford Tract!**

Partner Profile: Joanna Letz, Bluma Flower Farm

Hi everyone,

I'm excited to join the urban ag community. I started farming over ten years ago and I have been running my business and farm in Sunol for the past 4 years, growing certified organic cut flowers on 2 acres. I am committed to sustainable, ecological farming, and to revitalizing local agriculture. Bluma Flower Farm supports biodiversity by growing over 60 varieties of plants that support vast numbers of pollinators and insects that come to feed on the nectar and pollen.



Joanna Letz at Sunol location. Courtesy Bluma Flower Farm.

I just moved my farm to the rooftop on Dwight and Fulton in Berkeley. I'm excited to grow down the street from where I live and in the city where I grew up. We have about 1/6th of an acre on the roof and I grow primarily cut flowers, edible flowers and herbs. The rooftop is also now certified organic! I sell wholesale to florists and grocery and do design for weddings and events. I am also starting a flower CSA and doing tours and workshops on the roof. **We welcome volunteers Wed-Friday.**

You can check us out on the web at www.blumaflowerfarm.com and we're on instagram www.instagram.com/blumafarm/. Thanks and looking forward to connecting!

- Joanna

Summer Workshops and Events

Sustainable Urban Farming Project

Are you a farmer who wants to contribute to urban farm success? The Sustainable Urban Farming project team seeks input on food access and distribution from the urban farming and food justice community. To learn more and schedule an interview, contact Laney: asiegner@berkeley.edu.

Community Notices

All Power Labs and **UC Gill Tract Community Farm** will host a **Biochar Composting Workshop** for farmers from 6 - 8pm on Friday, June 21st. Come learn the advantages of adding biochar to your farm's compost! *Event is free but space is limited to 12.* RSVP to Bob Flasher, rangerdude333@hotmail.com

UC Gill Tract Community Farm Monthly Party: farming, food, and music from 11am - 3pm on Sunday June 16th. Plant, harvest, weed, prep, compost, and help feed the Bay Area! [More info here.](#)

Urban Tilth is hiring a Greenway Gardens program manager and several other positions. For more information visit [their website.](#)

MESA is hiring an Operations and Grants administrator. For more information, [see posting.](#)

To send us upcoming events to share with the Growing Roots network, email edithfriedman@berkeley.edu



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