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



City Slicker Farms. Laney Siegner photo.

Sustainable Urban Farming for Resilience and Food Security

In this issue:

- Researching barriers to food access and distribution
- Bay Area farmers help assess best practices for nutritional content in black beans
- Partner Profiles: New leaders at Urban Adamah and City Slicker Farms
- Community events and opportunities

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.

Understanding Barriers to Food Access and Distribution in the East Bay

This research initiative follows food grown on UC Berkeley's urban farms - the Oxford Tract and the UC Gill Tract Community Farm - along the distribution chain to the plates of East Bay residents. Led by members of the Bowles Lab at UC Berkeley - professor Timothy Bowles, PhD student Coleman Rainey and undergraduate Annika Levaggi - and by Jennifer Sowerwine and Alana Siegner of the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, Charisma Acey of the Department of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley, and Rob Bennaton of UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, the project seeks to understand the barriers to food access and distribution of urban-grown produce, in order to create greater connectivity between food distribution networks and hubs to strengthen efforts to address food insecurity in the Bay Area.

The project team is compiling data from

interviews with distributors and consumers at various farm stands, CSA/donation programs, cooperative retailers, and food pantries across the East Bay. A consumer focus group in the early fall will bring together our preliminary analyses and develop group insights and policy recommendations.

For more information about the project, or if you are interested in participating, please reach out to Coleman Rainey at cwrainey@berkeley.edu. This effort is part of the [Sustainable Urban Farming for Resilience and Food Security](#) project supported by the [Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research](#).



Food for distribution at the Oxford Tract. Annika Levaggi photo.

Collaborative Urban Agriculture Research: Examining Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Fungal Communities and Drought-stressed Black Bush Beans

A summer research team at the Bowles lab - working with Coleman Rainey, a PhD student in the Bowles lab - has been planting black bush beans at the Oxford Tract as well as its partner urban farms: [Acta Non Verba](#), [Ashby Community Garden](#), [City Slicker Farms](#), [UC Gill Tract Community Farm](#), [Mills Community Farm](#), and [Urban Adamah](#). The partner farms will be tending to the beans as they usually would, applying soil amenities and watering on their own schedules, offering researchers at the Oxford Tract background information for their experimental study.



Black bean plants. Annika Levaggi photo.

The project is gathering data on the soil and the rhizosphere (the region of soil and microorganisms directly influenced by the plants' roots), as well as on the plants themselves. Our objective is to examine the rhizosphere by analyzing the soil's carbon content, enzyme activity, and the rate of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungal colonization of the beans' roots, and sequencing the DNA of the fungal community. In addition, we will be measuring the plant's stem water potential and the actual nutrient content of the beans. With all this data we will be looking for any correlations that arise between the activity in the rhizosphere and the plant's nutritional content. For more information about the project please reach out to Coleman Rainey at cwrainey@berkeley.edu.

Partner Profiles: Two New Urban Farm Leaders!

This month, we are featuring two of our urban farm partners who have new leaders in place: [Urban Adamah](#) in Berkeley and [City Slicker Farms](#) in Oakland. The new farm leaders answer a series of questions, Q&A style, below.

Debbie Harris, Farm Director, Urban Adamah

"What if there were policies in place that protected the land these farms are on and honored the improvements made to them?"

Q: When did you begin your position?

A: I began my position as Farm Director three months ago!

Q: What is your farming background?

A: I've been getting my hands dirty in the soil for seventeen years. My passion for agriculture and education has brought me all over the world from Mongolia to Zanzibar studying regenerative agriculture and rural development. After several years growing at Farm and Wilderness in Vermont, I managed a youth-run, urban farm in

Philadelphia for the University of Pennsylvania's Urban Nutrition Initiative. Thereafter, I went on to manage farms and farm programming for The College of the Atlantic, Pie Ranch, Echo Valley Farm, The Healthy Hearts Institute, and CommunityGrows.

[Read more.](#)

Eric Telmer, Farm Park Manager, City Slicker Farms

"I believe that by having a public space, with simple, interactive demonstrations that teach a systemic approach to soil and plant health...we will see a much larger success and retention rate of East Bay gardeners in the future."

Q: When did you begin your position?

A: February 7, 2019.

Q: What is your farming background?

A: When I was a kid I would go and help my grandfather on his farm for a week each summer. In adulthood, I have been growing my own marijuana for the last 3 years and my own vegetable garden for the last 2 years.

Q: What is your main goal for City Slickers as an urban farming non-profit?

A: City Slicker Farms is not only an urban farm, but also a public green space for the people of West Oakland. In the past, the top priority of City Slicker Farms was to grow food for people, and to empower people to grow food for themselves. However, with the purchase of the farm park in 2015, and the opening of local grocery stores in the neighborhood, my priorities have shifted.

[Read more.](#)



Debbie Harris of Urban Adamah



Eric Telmer of City Slicker Farms

Community Notices

How sustainable is your farm?

Want to quantify the environmental sustainability of your urban food production? Curious about the impact hotspots and benefits of your farm to water, land, energy and climate change? Participate in a project with UC Berkeley researchers to calculate various environmental footprints, and see how you compare to other forms of agriculture! Using the technique of life cycle assessment, interviews, and data collection with help from researchers, we will deliver results about your current impacts, greatest strengths and areas to improve.

[Read more about this opportunity here](#) or contact Erica Dorr at erica.dorr@agroparistech.fr for more information.

Partner with the Berkeley Food Pantry!

The **Berkeley Food Pantry**, established in 1969, provides emergency groceries to Berkeley and Albany residents. We have a client choice model which allows our visitors to "shop" from a diversity of nutritious foods. Our visitors take home vegetables, fruits, dairy, eggs, frozen meat (or a meat substitute), and shelf-stable foods such as pasta and peanut butter. Fresh vegetables and fruits are the most popular items and the first to run out. **We have a need for fresh vegetables and fruits on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, year-round. We would love to develop partnerships with local urban farms to meet our visitors' demand for fresh produce.** For more information about the Berkeley Food Pantry, please visit <https://www.berkeleyfoodpantry.org>. If you would like to form a partnership to donate from your farm, please contact: Aram Antaramian at manager@berkeleyfoodpantry.org.



Squash plant. Edith Friedman photo.

Open House at Paradise Community Garden

Join us for music, food and free workshop on [Horticultural Therapy: Plants and Their Superpowers.](#) 10am - 3pm on Saturday September 7th. 20095 Mission Blvd, Hayward.



Monthly Farm Party

The UC Gill Tract Community Farm hosts farming, food, and music from 11am - 3pm on Sunday September 15th. Plant, harvest, weed, prep, compost, and help feed the Bay Area! 1050 San Pablo Ave, Albany. [More info here.](#)

Jobs

UC Berkeley is hiring a **Food Systems Project Manager** (half time position). For more information and the job description, email growingroots@berkeley.edu.

City Slicker Farms is hiring! See job postings [on their website here.](#)

To share upcoming events and information with the Growing Roots network, email growingroots@berkeley.edu.



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