



Edible Campus Program

Ryan Carr

University of California Global Food Initiative Fellowship

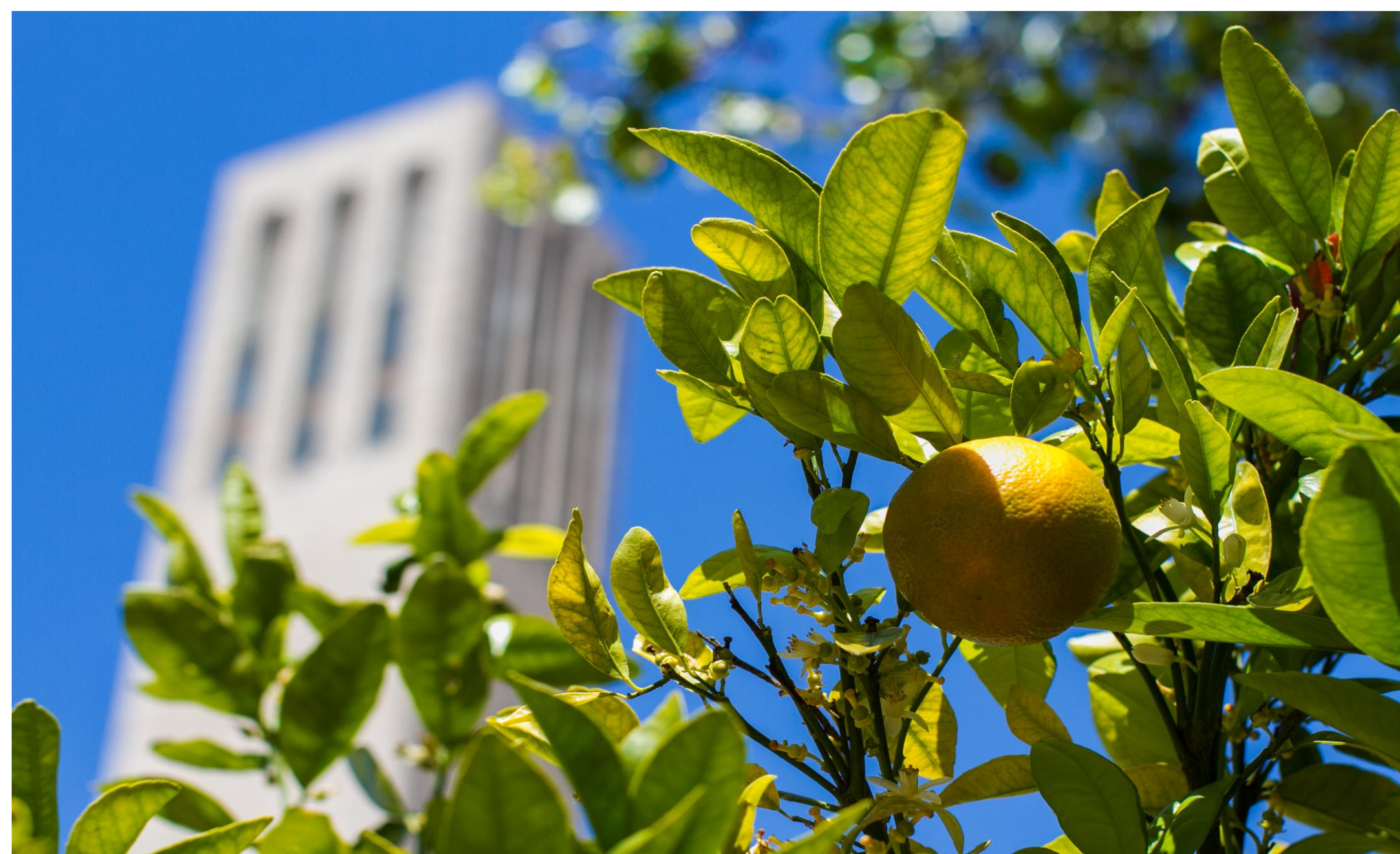
Introduction

The Edible Campus Program aims to address local food insecurity by repurposing underutilized spaces for sustainable food production, turning waste into food, and engaging students as growers and producers. We have trained students in practices that address social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability. We've helped students to reclaim their personal connection to the land and their food.

Our program started with the Urban Orchard, in which we planted 7 citrus trees in Storke Plaza. The Orchard was launched with the mentorship and financial support of the Johnson Ohana Foundation. The Hydroponic Vertical Garden Project was our second program to launch in April 2017 in partnership with the UCSB Recreation Center and the associated student governance board. The Campus Farm, set to open in Fall of 2017 will be a small scale farm at West Campus. The farm will be a space that fosters community, as well as education, all while connecting students back to their food source and the land. All of the food grown at these three locations is harvested and distributed through the Associated Students Food Bank.

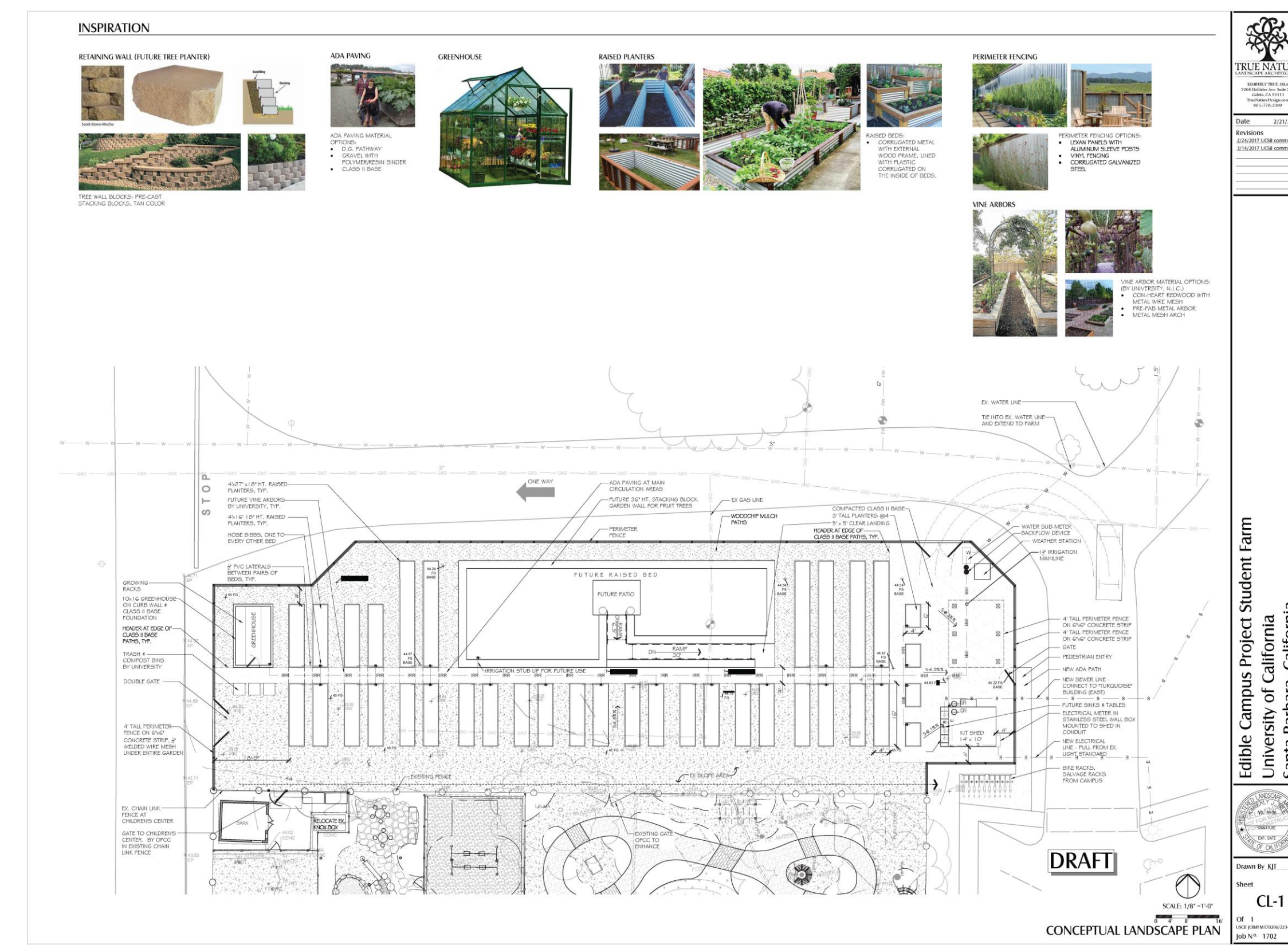
Urban Orchard

The Urban Orchard Project works with campus stakeholders to identify underutilized areas of campus where citrus trees can be placed in planters to grow food for students in need. This was the first project of the Edible Campus Program and was launched in April 2015 with our first gift from the Johnson Ohana Foundation. Jack and Kim Johnson worked closely with students from the Associated Students Department of Public Worms, the Associated Students Food Bank, and the UCSB Sustainability Program to conceptualize, build support for, and launch this effort. The success of this pilot laid the ground work for our Vertical Garden Project and Campus Farm.



Student Farm

The Edible Campus Program is launching a farm that will allow students to learn and practice agricultural techniques that address social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability while at the same time supplying the Associated Students Food Bank with much-needed additional healthy produce. The Associated Students Department of Public Worms will provide the core maintenance and operational support for the farm.



Edible Campus Program



Partnerships

The Edible Campus Program is a coalition of several groups:

- The Associated Studies Department of Public Worms is the heart of our program, keeping all three growing projects running on a day to day basis and providing continuity for the effort.
- The Associated Students Food Bank will be distributing the food to students in need.
- UCSB Sustainability provides support with fundraising, development of new programs, and guidance in working through the campus approval process.
- Volunteers have been integral to the success of the program. People from campus and throughout the community will help to ensure the continuation of the Edible Campus Program

Vertical Gardens

In April 2017, the Edible Campus Program launched our first hydroponic project. The vertical gardens do not grow in soil. Instead the roots grow into the air where water is misted over them. Given the size of the water droplets, this is considered a "hydroponic" growing system. Aeroponic systems would have smaller water droplets. Nutrients for the plants come from a mixture of compost tea prepared by the Associated Students Department of Public Worms and a commercially made nutrient mix. Compost tea is a liquid by product of worm composting.



Education

In Winter 2017, we hosted workshops on how to start growing produce in your apartment or backyard. We stressed that it doesn't matter if you have a small patio space or a little land behind your house or apartment, growing a small garden is easy. We taught students how to make a small herb container and garden bed, while emphasizing options that are cost effective and tailored to the Santa Barbara environment. We also hosted a workshop on indoor gardening.

It is also important for students to feel connected to the local food system, know their farmers, and learn from the best practices of local growers. In Winter 2017, we visited Chapala Gardens, a local hydroponic vertical tower farm. By visiting an established grower locally, we could learn from their successes. Also in Winter 2017, we visited Fairview Gardens, a farm nestled in the middle of a dense suburban area. We learned about the challenges of small scale suburban farming, what issues are important to our local farmers, and best practices that have made them more successful.

In Spring 2017, we launched the Urban Agriculture Speakers Series. The goal is to introduce and connect our audience to various innovators in urban farming. For the first edition of the series, we invited Kelly Carlisle From Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project in Oakland, and Jill Santos from Food Forward in Ventura. They spoke on the connections between social justice and growing food. We hope to reframe the discussion around food as one centered in social justice.

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