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Title of presentation: Pollinator Habitat Gardens Produce Diverse Native Pollinators that Visit Avocado Flowers in Greater Ventura

Abstract: Research on the development of pollinator habitat gardens in the avocado growing areas of greater Ventura will be briefly described. Gardens were originally established from encouragement by the USDA to investigate the potential for native pollinators to supplement honey bees in the pollination of crop plants in both NorCal and SoCal. Research from 3 avocado ranches in the Ventura area demonstrate there are at least 60 species of insects that visit avocado flowers, and half of these are native bee species. Several groups of flies and some wasps are also being investigated for their pollination potential. Critical for implementation of the findings is developing good cooperative relationships with growers and managers, with the assistance of UC Coop Extension, and more specifically with Dr. Ben Faber.

Bio: Dr. Gordon Frankie is a research entomologist from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a specialist in native bees and other native insects that visit avocado flowers. He has worked in the greater Ventura area since 2014 documenting how to encourage and conserve native insects through development of habitat gardens in agricultural areas. His primary focus is on 30+ species of native bees that visit avocado flowers.

