

# RanchTalk

Elkus Ranch Program News

Fall/Winter 2013

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## Signing on as Elkus Ranch Director

Dear Elkus Ranch Family,

My name is Virginia Bolshakova, and it is my honor to pick-up where Marilyn Johns famously left off as the Elkus Ranch Director. I am delighted and enthusiastic to join in the efforts of bringing UC ANR's 2025 vision of healthy people, environments, and communities to a reality through environmental education. The Ranch programs offered to children and the surrounding community are outstanding. I hope my research in science education and insect ecology, can be an asset to the Elkus Ranch Outreach initiative.



The shift of families to cities and suburbs has resulted in leaving the experience of rural living behind. Growing-up on a hog and crop farm in southwestern Michigan (where my parents still work the land to this day) offered authentic learning experiences. It was during these years, I learned about environmental capacities and gained awareness of the connections between people and nature. Mr. Elkus understood well the gift he made to the surrounding community that will last many life times. I am committed to building upon the previous work done by others at Elkus Ranch, to further extend the reach of Mr. Elkus' vision for the *education of children*. Thank you for this opportunity.

See you back at the ranch!

Virginia Bolshakova

What goes on at the  
**UCCE Master Gardeners Elkus Research Garden**

~ Mike Pettinari

We conduct trials on a yearly basis, experimenting with a variety of edible and ornamental plants to determine what grows well in USDA Zone 10b or Sunset Climate Zone 17 and how best to grow it. All trials are to be written up and posted on the MG public website <http://ucanr.org/sites/MGsSMSF/> to assist and advise the home gardener.

We have built 14 new raised beds with an 8' fence around the beds and a platform for an 8' shed at the MG Elkus Research Garden.

The project is most active from March through September, our spring and summer planting season. There are opportunities for fall and winter trials as well.



Spring cleaning



**Elk, Ducks, and Bears! Oh my!**

~Kathi Baxter

Tom Mattusch, current Director at Large of the Bay Area Chapter of Safari Club International, recently stopped by the ranch *bearing* gifts. His generous donation included hides from a black bear, an elk, a black-tail deer and a sheep, taxidermy mounts of 3 different ducks and a goose in flight, and skulls from a boar, a sheep, a black bear, a coyote and a beaver. These amazing items will become part of a new display in the lower barn that will educate the public about the plight of endangered animals and the efforts made to restore their habitats. We would like to thank Tom and the members of SCI for supporting our educational programs. Make sure to see these amazing items the next time you visit the ranch.

UC Elkus Ranch

**Winter Discovery Day Camp**

1500 Purisima Creek Road  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

December 26 & 27, 2013  
and  
January 2 & 3, 2014

9:00am - 3:00pm      \$60 per day/per child      ages 6-11

For more information please go to: [http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus\\_ranch/Winter\\_Discovery\\_Day\\_Camp/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus_ranch/Winter_Discovery_Day_Camp/)

## Flora and Fauna at Elkus Ranch

Julie Mathiason

Black-tailed deer are the most populous subspecies of deer located in California inhabiting approximately 75 percent of the state. Black-tailed deer get their name from their black tail.

Their habitats stretch all the way from the northern



California border south to near Santa Barbara. Throughout history the black-tailed deer has been of great service to man in providing meat for food, skins for clothing, and sport for recreation. They

are an integral component in the food chain, filling their role as grazers/browsers of wildland plants to their role as prey for California's top carnivores such as the mountain lion, black bear, and coyote.

At Elkus Ranch we see black tailed deer almost daily. There are currently three deer who visit our ranch (a doe and her two fawns). They sometimes enjoy munching on the vegetables in the garden at Elkus. They are fond of green beans, broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower. They do not like onions or tomatoes!

Deer are ruminants, which means they have a four-chambered stomach, chew a cud, and regurgitate food more than once before finally swallowing it. The color of the coat changes with the season, from a generally reddish-brown in summer to grayish in winter.

A male deer is called a buck. Each winter the buck sheds his antlers, only to grow a new set the next spring. Their weight usually varies, although the larger bucks may be over 140 pounds. The natural life span is 9 to 10

years (17 to 20 yrs. in captivity,) although many live far less since they are either hunted or killed by predators. It is believed that where



heavily hunted, bucks live for only about 3 to 5 years. Fawns are the newborn deer. They are born in the spring and spend most, of their time with their mothers. The fawns camouflage coat is their main means of survival. The white spots that are scattered about their reddish-brown coat blends with the fallen leaves on the forest floor.

The fawns eventually lose this birth coat when it is weaned, and grows a grayish winter coat, which provides camouflage in the fall forests.

The doe is a female deer. Does lead a very separate life style from a buck and travels in a small family group consisting of an older doe and her relatives.

Look for the skull of a deer and deer antlers, and a deer rib bone in barn one when you visit the ranch.

UC Elkus Ranch  
Environmental Education  
Center  
Spring  
Preschool Days



Visit the animals, explore the gardens, make a woolly craft to take home. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy outside. Preschools, play groups and individuals are all welcome to attend.

Date: March 20 & 21, 2014  
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

\$5/person— reservations required.

For information call (650) 712-3151, email [elkusranch@ucanr.edu](mailto:elkusranch@ucanr.edu) or visit our website: [ucanr.edu/sites/elkus\\_ranch](http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus_ranch)

University of California Cooperative Extension

"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."  
~Abraham Lincoln

## THANK YOU!

Thanks to our donors for their generosity!  
Steve and Carolyn Battaini, Tom Mattusch, New Leaf Community Market, Sterling Russell, and Carolyn Wollenberger.

Our apologies to anyone we might have overlooked, we have had computer issues.

Elkus Ranch is a 501(C3) non-profit entity, donations are tax-deductible. Your donations help fund feed for the animals, sponsor scholarships for classrooms, and help us to improve our programs and ranch grounds. We appreciate all donations and no donation is too small. Thank you!

Donate Online: (Click the button below)



Please make all checks payable to: UC Regents and mail to :

Elkus Ranch Administration Office  
80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
Phone: 650-712-3151  
Fax: 650-712-3153

## 2013 Calendar

Winter Camp: December 26 & 27, 2013 &  
January 2 & 3, 2014

Spring Pre-School Days: March 20 & 21, 2014

Spring Family Day: March 29, 2014

Sheep to Shawl: June 14, 2014

Range Camp: June 15-21, 2014

Discovery Day Camp: Session 1, June 23-27, 2014

Discovery Day Camp: Session 2, July 7-11, 2014

Discovery Day Camp: Session 3, July 21-25, 2014

Discovery Day Camp: Session 4, August 4-8, 2014

Discovery Day Camp: Session 5, August 18-22, 2014

## Elkus Ranch Wish List

4" pots  
Foam camping mats  
Garden tools  
Children's rain gear, boots and jackets.



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## RanchTalk

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