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## Bee Better Staff Interviewed for FERN's Buzzkill Podcast

Xerces' former Pollinator Conservation Co-Director Eric Lee-Mäder was interviewed this past spring for podcast series Buzzkill. Listen to the [first episode](#) in the series called "Save which bees?" to hear Eric discuss the importance of native pollinators in agriculture as he and J. Tyson Davies tour a Bee Better Certified blueberry farm managed by [AC Foods](#) in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Thank you to the [Food & Environment Reporting Network](#) for giving us the opportunity to highlight this important work!

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## Bee Better Certified on the Xerces Blog

Bee Better Certified Program Coordinator, Cameron Newell, recently wrote about the importance of industry associations in advancing sustainability initiatives that can have a big impact on pollinators.

[Read the full blog post.](#)

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## Bee Better Certified Now Licensed in Chile and Peru!

Bee Better Certified recently received the great news that our trademark has been registered in both Chile and Peru. This offers important protections for our partners in these countries when promoting their valuable conservation work through the Bee Better Certified program. Please reach out if you are located in Chile or Peru or source from the region. Bee Better Certified has a number of [resources](#) in Spanish and we have [Spanish speaking staff](#) ready to assist.

Bee Better Certified recibió recientemente noticia de que nuestra marca registrada se ha registrado tanto en Chile y Perú. Esto ofrece importantes protecciones para nuestros socios en estos países a la hora de promover su valioso trabajo de conservación a través del programa Bee Better Certified. Comuníquese con nosotros si se encuentra en Chile o Perú o si obtiene productos de la región. Bee Better Certified tiene [recursos](#) en español y contamos con personal que [habla español](#) y está listo para ayudar.



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### Notes from the Field

Chances are, if you've driven throughout Southern California lately, you have noticed the abundance of citrus orchards, and trees starting to hang heavy with fruit. Though some may be tempted to pluck a fruit from a tree, trust that it is better to wait. The longer the citrus stays on the tree, the sweeter the fruit! Patience really is key when it comes to citrus. Unlike other plants, citrus trees need nearly every month of the year for fruit development. Essentially, there is no break for the citrus grower!

Southern California citrus growers are working tirelessly throughout the year to provide fresh citrus in the Western US while also facing many challenges, including several pests/diseases, such as the Asian Citrus Psyllid (*Diaphorina citri*) and Huanglongbing (*Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*). Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) is arguably one of the most economically damaging citrus pests in the US, with the ability to vector a lethal bacterium causing Huanglongbing (HLB). Once a tree is infected, HLB is fatal, and leads to bitter and unmarketable fruit until the tree eventually dies within 5-8 years.

Considering the ACP has already devastated the citrus industry in Florida, it's a threat that is constantly on the CA citrus grower's mind. Although the CA citrus industry has managed to avoid the impacts seen in Florida, it is still imperative that growers take proactive measures. Several growers in Fresno, Tulare, Riverside, and San Diego county are doing exactly that by participating in California Department of Food and Agriculture's [Healthy Soils Program](#) Block Grant to install hedgerows that will support pollinators and beneficial insects that attack citrus tree pests.

Beneficial insects such as syrphid flies, lady beetles, and lacewings are just some of the natural predators of ACP and can help improve predatory biocontrol in citrus orchards, effectively reducing ACP densities. By creating permanent habitat for such predators, farmers are creating more sustainable operations and maximizing the ecosystem services permanent, native habitat provides. Meanwhile, they are also supporting native bees and pollination services on the farm!

While still in the initial planning stages, these growers are working with one of our Bee Better team members, [Nicole Spehn](#), to install native, flowering hedgerows in fall of 2025 and 2026. These efforts are all aimed to support pollinators and beneficial insects, and create more sustainable operations for citrus growers in general. The hope is that the installation of these hedgerows will lighten the heavy workload Southern CA citrus growers are already carrying.



## Bee Better Certified – Bridging the Gap Between Conservation and Agriculture

The team at Bee Better Certified - and the [Xerces Society](#) more broadly - is made up of conservation, policy, agriculture and endangered species professionals. We are a mix of experts that makes the perfect partner when working to understand the intersection of environmental regulations and agriculture. We specialize in the blending of an understanding of regulations and agricultural practices to protect biodiversity while also working towards long term agricultural resilience. We understand that the Endangered Species Act (ESA), state Endangered Species Acts (i.e. CESA), and other local and state regulations can be tricky to navigate, and we are here to help.

### The Endangered Species Act: Protecting Imperiled Wildlife

[The Federal Endangered Species Act \(ESA\)](#) of 1973 is one of the most robust environmental laws in the U.S., designed to prevent species from becoming extinct due to human activity. It is a valuable tool for building awareness for imperiled species and unlocking critical funding to work to recover these species. Current and proposed listings under the endangered species act, such as those of the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), seek to protect vital and charismatic insects that deserve a safe space in the landscape. Today, supporting the farmers who feed our country and derive their livelihoods in areas where these species are present is one of the major considerations in how these species are protected under the ESA.

### Bridging Conservation and Agriculture

At first glance, ESA enforcement and agriculture may seem at odds—one focusing on habitat protection and the other on land productivity. However, professionals trained in both

disciplines recognize that on-farm habitats, as well as many farming and ranching practices, can be fine-tuned to benefit both agriculture and biodiversity. Experts who understand the goals of both agriculture and conservation are vital to develop biodiversity-friendly farming practices that promote coexistence. Some key efforts include:

- Habitat restoration on farmlands, such as maintaining wetlands, planting native species, and creating wildlife corridors.
- Biodiversity-friendly farming where Integrated Pest Management programs incorporate pest prevention techniques that aim to benefit bees, butterflies, and endangered pollinators while also building healthy natural enemy populations and boosting crop yields.
- 4(d) rules and Safe Harbor Agreements supported by the USFWS and conservation partners that set out how farms can actively manage for biodiversity on their lands while being protected under the ESA

As our climate continues to change and ecosystems and agriculture continue to face increasing pressure, the collaboration between ecologists and agricultural practitioners is more important than ever. By integrating science-based conservation strategies with sustainable farming practices, the Bee Better and Xerces team are proving that human land use and biodiversity protection can go hand in hand.

If you would like more information on how our team works in this challenging and sometimes confusing space, please [contact](#) us. We are always happy to answer questions and collaborate.

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## Upcoming events



**March 12-14, 2025**

[Organicology](#)  
Portland, OR

Bee Better Certified staff will be exhibiting at the tradeshow on Wednesday, March 12th, stop by our booth and say hi or [drop us a line](#) if you would like to set up a time to chat!

**Contact:**

[info@beebettercertified.org](mailto:info@beebettercertified.org)  
[503-2326639](tel:503-2326639)



**Learn more:**

[beebettercertified.org](https://beebettercertified.org)





Bee Better Certified is an initiative of the Xerces Society.

The Xerces Society is a donor-supported nonprofit organization that protects our world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats.

Your tax-deductible donation will help grow and sustain that essential work.

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