

# Ananda Dham – Peach Farm ravaged by wild fires



On Memorial Day weekend in the White Rock camping area in the Los Padres National Forest, a vicious wild fire blaze broke out. The fire moved fast due to high wind gusts, high temperatures, and the seasonal tinder-dry vegetation. It was dubbed the White Fire. More than 6,000 campers and 4,000 residents were ordered to evacuate before the fire changed course and headed southeast threatening a number of small commercial properties and dozens of rural homes. Santa Barbara and neighboring residential communities sitting on the other side of the coastal range, which rises quickly from near the Pacific shoreline to peaks topping 3,000 feet, were even on alert. Hiway 154 was closed while over 600 firefighters worked for a full week to control the inferno.

Ananda Dham, the Peach Farm MU, was in the direct path of and ravaged by the fire.

Ananda Dham, the agricultural project located at Lake Hughes in the Angeles National Forest in Southern California, is a beloved and unique agrarian Master Unit for our sector. It is affectionately referred to as the Peach Farm. Anyone who appreciates fresh garden produce, the practical knowledge that it takes to work a garden of any size, and understands that the stewardship of the environment as contingent on man's intimate affiliation with nature, can appreciate the praca and ideological dedication to Ananda Dham. The successful farm is listed as a California Certified Organic Farm (CCOF), attests to the stringent standards and techniques used to manage the soil for lasting fertility and produce with high quality taste and nutrition.



Run by Dada Gananathananda, the organic commercial endeavor, first planted in 1993 by the late Arjuna, includes both peach and Asian pear orchards with thousands of trees and field crops, such as lustrous dark purple globe and elongated Japanese eggplants, alongside the retreat center. The harvest financially supports the MU and

is sold to an organic foods wholesaler and some markets, such as the Whole Foods chain. Surplus produce has been donated to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Midnight Mission hot meals program, and the neighboring Juvenile Correction Center.

The farm lost most of the orchards totally, over 700 trees set with immature fruit burned to the ground, or are partially damaged. The fire miraculously jumped the greenhouse, jagrti, and barn, leaving them undamaged. Dada was able to evacuate and bring with him the two dogs. We will keep you updated on the conditions. The MU is not covered by AMURT at this time since it is a commercial working farm. Donations, which will be put in a fund for purchasing and replacing the orchards next fall, are appreciated and can be sent c/o the New York Sectorial Office.



