

The Leaflet

Newsletter of the Central Coast Chapter
of California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.

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Pushing the limits and the range
of fruit cultivation worldwide!

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Lawns to Food

A Demonstration Garden in Paso Robles

—by Carolyn Fergoda and Terri Knowlton

THE SECOND MILLENNIUM HAS BROUGHT renewed interest in growing food to promote better health and build community. Our group, The Transition Towns Paso Robles Food Group (TPRFG) is part of Transition Towns, which is an international movement to rebuild community resilience and self-reliance to meet the challenges of economic instability, declining oil supplies, resource depletion and climate instability.

In September of 2009, TPRFG signed an agreement with the City of Paso Robles to use a 3,000 square foot patch of lawn in the City's Centennial Park for a garden project. The park is located in the heart of a neighborhood and is a busy community hub with a sports center, YMCA after school program, and classes and activities for all ages, so it is an ideal

place to build community involvement around this garden project.

The City of Paso Robles Parks and Recreation Department has championed the garden from the beginning by supporting our presentation to the City Council at the onset of the project, providing ongoing advisory meetings, as well as advertising our workshops in their quarterly Activities Guide. City manager Jim App wrote that the garden "is highly anticipated as a catalyst for home, neighborhood, and even community development" and added that "one yard at a time, we can transform the way we live, lessen our demands on the planet, and create a more sustainable way of life." We couldn't agree more.



Carolyn Fergoda at the entrance to the demonstration garden

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



Last summer on a cool 92 degree July afternoon in Paso Robles, our chapter held a BBQ and potluck lunch at Pioneer Park. Our speakers that day told us about their ambitious plan creating a demonstration garden called Lawns to Food. We promised to

follow up on their progress, and I am happy to present in this issue an article demonstrating how much they have accomplished. Their garden is alive and we are proud to be supporting them.

One year later, at a July BBQ and potluck meeting even farther north in Bradley, Pet Daniels shared with me some purslane she had purchased at our new favorite Santa Maria grocery store, Vallarta. That inspired Margaret to write a story about our own adventure with this hardy annual, from pesky weed to good luck charm. We decided to create a new occasional department for this article, called Featured Plant. If you have any

favorite or fun plants you'd like us all to read about, please let me know at LeafletEditor@aol.com.

Have you ever wondered about that house in Shell Beach, right on the cliff, with the windmill? We learned that the owner's name, coincidentally, is Cliff! Clifford Chapman opened his gates to us all for our August meeting. His gardening and farming feats wowed us all. There are begonias, native plants and fruit trees coexisting and thriving! Read all about it in the Chronicle. And as always, Happy Harvesting.

Gary Fourer



The Leaflet

Distributed bimonthly by the Central Coast chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. to share ideas, news, and activities of interest to our local chapter.

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CRFG PROMOTES THE ENVIRONMENTALLY-SOUND CULTURE of any and all edible plants in the home landscape by encouraging and helping to facilitate public and scientific research, education, and preservation of plants worldwide that have edible seeds, fruit, leaves, stems or roots. The CRFG mission is to share knowledge acquired from these activities with home growers in particular and with anyone else in the world having an interest in edible plant cultivation.

"THERE IS NO HERB, NOR WEED,
BUT GOD HATH GIVEN VIRTUE TO
THEM, TO HELP MAN."

~ ANDREW BOORDE, B. 1490 – D. 1549
(ENGLISH PHYSICIAN AND WRITER)

Featured Plant

Purslane Weed or Food?

For years, Gary and I have been pulling a low-lying succulent-like weed that grows prolifically on our acre of sand in Nipomo. It pulls easily and we toss it into the chicken pen, much to the hens' approval. Last year, we expanded our usual garden planting choices with a plant we had never heard of before. We chose the seeds from a listing without pictures, planted it, and were quite amused to find that it looked exactly like the low-lying succulent-like weed growing prolifically in our yard. Turns out, we had planted Purslane, which had already been growing quite well all by itself.

Purslane Facts

Purslane is the common name applied to herbs of the genus *Portulaca*, belonging to the family *Portulacaceae*. *Portulacaceae*, in the order *Caryophyllales*, has about 15 genera and 500 species of herbs or small shrubs. About 40 varieties are currently cultivated for food and as ornamentals. An annual succulent, Purslane can reach 16 inches height. It has reddish-brown stems, alternate wedge-shaped leaves that sometimes form rosettes at the base of the plant, and clusters of yellow flowers containing 4 to 6 petals that usually bloom in summer but may appear year-round depending upon rainfall. Purslane has a taproot with fibrous secondary roots and is able to tolerate poor,

compacted soils and drought. All plants of the genus grow in cultivated and waste grounds on the seashore in almost all tropical and subtropical parts of the world. They can retain enough moisture to bloom and ripen seeds long after they have been uprooted.

Purslane is most likely native to the Indian sub-continent; evidence of its use in the Old World extends from North Africa through the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent to Malesia and Australasia. It most likely reached North America in the pre-Columbian era. In the Purslane family, *Lewisia rediviva* (bitterroot) is a native of North America; it develops a thick, starchy, highly nutritious root that was eaten by the Native Americans. The genus was named in honour of Capt. Meriwether Lewis, a leader of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804–06). The leaves of miner's lettuces, or winter Purslane (*M. perfoliata*), are edible.

Purslane as Food

Common Purslane, *P. oleracea*, is considered a staple leafy vegetable throughout Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Mexico. The stems, leaves and flower buds are all edible. Purslane has a slightly sour and salty taste. It can be eaten raw or cooked. Since medieval times in Britain "purslain" has been used as a potherb, and the young leaves and flowers have been added to salads. In France, the young and tender shoots are pickled, like gherkins. It can be used in curry preparations, stir fries, or cooked like spinach. As



a pottage herb, it is used in stews and soups, as it will help thicken the brew with its mucilaginous quality. Australian Aborigines use the seeds to make seedcakes. A quick search for Purslane recipes online finds from Epicurious.com: Purslane, Meyer Lemon and Pear Salad with Kaffir Lime Vinaigrette; and Grilled Zucchini Salad with Purslane and Tomato. And from Prodigalgardens.info: Cucumber Purslane Salad; Purslane Green Bean Marinade; Purslane Gazpacho; Purslane Salsa; and Purslane Spanish Rice.

Purslane and Nutrition

Purslane doesn't disappoint when it comes to nutritional value. It is low in calories and fats, but is rich in dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals. It is an excellent source of Vitamins A and C, as well as dietary minerals, such as iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium and manganese. Purslane contains more omega-3 fatty acids than any other leafy vegetable plant, and it has a full range of amino acids.

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Through the Fence

Joe Gets Three Dragon Fruit Blossoms —from Joe Sabol

I have three dragon fruit blossoms in full bloom tonight!!! Two are from one plant and a third flower is from a different plant. I sure hope they are not related and will pollinate each other!! I will hand pollinate them later tonight, mix and save pollen overnight, and pollinate 'em again in the early morning!! Edgar is my teacher!!

I have NEVER had three blossoms on the same night!!! Cannot wait to go out and smell the greenhouse later tonight (it is shut up tight and you know those blossoms are soooooo fragrant!!!).

What fun!!! Cannot wait to taste the fruit!!!!

Photo taken by Jill at 3:15 as the flowers are just starting to open up!!!



News from Sacramento —from Owen Baynham

I already miss you guys. There was a local meeting last Saturday that I attended. Since the Sacramento Chapter is not real active I need to get in there and do some kicking! I had a good time at the meeting.

I'll be thinking of you tomorrow! (Who's going to do the official count at the meeting?)



Marketplace Manager

The CRFG Marketplace provides a very valuable service for CRFG and its chapters! It also provides some revenue for CRFG. Art is looking into a way to make this a group effort for our chapter. Our wonderful Marketplace (MP) Manager, Jack Burgard, is retiring this year. He has stored and made available back issues of the Fruit Gardener, fruit related books, and other related items for many years. If you

have any ideas for this, please contact Arthur DeKleine at adeklein@calpoly.edu.

I didn't get a lot of news these last months, but I did receive this: -ed.

Help When it's Needed

An old Italian man lived alone in New Jersey. He wanted to plant his annual tomato garden, but it was very difficult work, as the ground was hard. His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament:

Dear Vincent, I am feeling pretty sad because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me, like in the old days. Love, Papa.

A few days later he received a letter from his son, "Dear Papa, don't dig up that garden. That's where the bodies are buried. Love, Vinnie."

At 4 a.m. the very next day, FBI agents and local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologized to the old man and left. Later that same day the old man received another letter from his son., "Dear Papa, go ahead and plant the tomatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances. Love you, Vinnie."

—from Dawn King

LEAFLET RECIPES

Mehe's Rice Salad

At our July meeting potluck, one of the highlights was Mehe's Rice Salad. A light, fresh and colorful side served with BBQed chicken, her recipe is also appropriate for vegetarian and gluten-free diets.

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 1/4 cup lime juice (about 2 large limes)
 - 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 - 1 15 oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
 - 2 tablespoons red onion, finely chopped
 - 3 cups cooked rice
 - 1 cup carrots, finely diced (about 2 medium carrots)
 - 3/4 cup corn, raw, frozen or canned
 - 3/4 cup tomato, finely chopped (about 1 large tomato)
 - 1/4 cup Italian parsley, fresh, minced
 - 1/4 cup cilantro, fresh, minced
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
1. In a serving bowl, stir olive oil, lime juice and cumin to blend.
 2. Add beans and onion first and let sit awhile.
 3. Add to beans and onion, rice, carrots, corn, tomato, parsley, and cilantro.
 4. Stir gently to coat.
 5. Season to taste with salt and pepper.



Featured Plant: Purslane continued

Purslane as Medicine

Purslane's use as a medicinal herb dates back about 2,700 years and was used by ancient Greeks and Romans to treat dysentery, intestinal worms, headache, and stomachache. The Zulu used the plant as an emetic. Purslane is part of Traditional Chinese Medicine in which it is known as Ma Chi Xian.

Although not verified by clinical studies, Purslane has been found to be beneficial in urinary and digestive problems, to have antifungal and antimicrobial effects, and to possess marked antioxidant activity. Purslane is used in various parts of the world to treat burns, headaches, stomach,

intestinal and liver ailments, cough, shortness of breath, arthritis and osteoporosis, and psoriasis.

Purslane as Companion Plant/Beneficial Weed

Purslane can benefit your garden in a number of ways. It provides ground cover for nearby plants, creating a humid microclimate and stabilizing ground moisture. With its deep roots, it brings up moisture and nutrients that other plants can use. Some plants, including corn, will "follow" Purslane roots down through harder soil than they can penetrate on their own.

Whether you plant it or wait for it to appear in your yard, it is

clear that the hearty persistent Purslane has much to offer.

—by Margaret Lange



Winter Purslane, or
Miners' lettuce

FOOD IN HISTORY

Oranges and Lemons in Britain



The crusaders who wintered in the fruit groves around Jaffa in 1191 were probably the first Englishmen to taste oranges and lemons. Originally from northern India, citrus was enjoyed by the Persians, Greeks, Romans, and at the time of the crusades, the Arabs were propagating citrus throughout the Mediterranean. They used the Persian method of cultivation: planting trees in gardens irrigated by water channels.

A Royal Treat

About 100 years after the Englishmen's first encounter, the importation of citrus into England began. In 1289, Queen Eleanor ordered 15 lemons, 7 oranges, and 230 pomegranates which were brought in a Spanish ship.

During the 1400s, oranges were often given to pregnant women as a treat and possibly to encourage appetite. The custom was prevalent enough that John Paston felt an apology was in order when he asked for some to be sent to Elizabeth Calthorpe. He wrote: "she longeth for oranges, though she be not with child." In 1505, the menu for the enthronement

feast of Archbishop Warham, held at Canterbury, included as a second course: "quince and orange baked." This dish was served to the nobility only, with the "lower orders" served "quince baked."

First English Oranges

The first orange trees in the country were said to be grown by Sir Francis Carew on his estate at Beddington in Croydon around 1562. Growing oranges and lemons in the cool foggy climate of England required careful tending; they were sometimes planted in boxes on wheels that could be moved out in to the sunshine in summer and kept indoors in winter. Early orange varieties, such as the Seville orange, were somewhat bitter and were often made into marmalades, and the peels were candied, or they were used in meat and fish cookery. In the 1600s, the China orange was introduced: "a sort lately had from Portugal, whither it came not many years since from China. This hath the rind so pleasant and free from bitterness that it may be eaten as well as the meat which is sweet, and it is the best kind to preserve whole." The China orange was considered too sweet for savory foods, and instead was used to flavor puddings, cakes, and biscuits.

Lemonade

When it was discovered in the 1600s that the juice of oranges and lemons was effective against scurvy, it was added to the earlier

remedy which included juice of scurvy-grass, brooklime and water cresses. Lemonade was invented in France about this time, and the first English recipe for lemonade was translated from French, calling for lemon juice mixed with water and sugar in which a whole sliced lemon was allowed to infuse. Orangeade was made in the same way. The English often added an equal amount of white wine to their lemonade recipe.

Five Farthings Worth

"Oranges and Lemons" is an old English nursery rhyme and singing game. Its origins are said to be related to public executions, but I like to think the song rose out of mimicking street vendors who would call out "oranges and lemons" to sell their fruits. The song has come down to me through my mother's side of the family and I have sang quite a few children to sleep with the song (using only the pleasant lyrics).

—by Margaret Lange

Lawns to Food continued

How to Convert a Lawn to Food

We have had a series of workshops to demonstrate how to convert a lawn to a food forest. This multi-layered permaculture-inspired design creates a complete ecosystem to attract beneficial insects to control pests and disease without the use of pesticides or herbicides. We began by sheet mulching the grass with layers of cardboard, manure, hay and compost. After a few weeks, we planted bare root trees, followed by perennial shrubs, herbs and flowers, and finally annual vegetables and insectary plants.

Community Connections

We wouldn't have made it this far without all the organizations and individuals who have worked with us along the way.

In January 2011, the TPRFG joined forces with the CRFG to present the winter fruit tree pruning workshop in Centennial Park. CFRG members Joe Sabol and Bob Tullock arranged to have Art DeKleine, a retired Cal Poly professor, come and demonstrate proper pruning techniques.

Art did this

and more, keeping a small crowd of forty or more Paso neighbors engaged and entertained for two hours. He brought detailed handouts of the methods he recommended in color! Art and his wife Gloria brought something else very special for the crowd: some ripened pineapple guava. While many have heard of this hardy, drought tolerant shrub, very few have ever tasted the fruit of one. Many people stayed afterward wanting Art to share more of his knowledge and to ask questions about the garden itself.

TPRFG believes that the CRFG is a natural and much valued partner for the demonstration garden group because of CFRG's great experience and knowledge base—their members include hands-on growers and teachers of horticulture science.

They are extremely generous with their time and knowledge.

In the Spring of 2011, Allyson Nakasone, a Master Gardener, gave a very fun and instructive workshop on how to build compost bins the easy way, out of pallets, while filling us in on soil science and the critters who break it all down. She offered to give everyone more assistance with starting a worm composting bin as well.

We worked with the YMCA after school program to dovetail into their curriculum to show the kids, grades K-6 how to plant seeds, water and tend the garden, and reap the benefits of the harvest. In return, they donated funds for the irrigation system.

The Multiflora Garden Club of



The Transition Towns Paso Robles Food Group Demonstration Garden

Lawns to Food continued

Paso Robles has been a generous donor of shrubs, trees, and volunteers. As we laid the sheet mulch and planted the bare root trees, Club volunteers lent their energy and time. In our first year of existence, the Club gave us two beautiful pineapple guava shrubs in celebration of Arbor Day in the Demo Garden. Then, to celebrate Arbor Day 2011, the Multiflora donated two bare root jujube trees and several coffee berries, excellent productive and resilient plants that are perfect for the Garden.

We have an ongoing partnership with The Food Bank. Almost all of our harvest goes directly to the Food Bank or Loaves and Fishes. This season we are

are looking forward to a fruit and nut harvest next year from the trees we planted in 2010; almonds,



apricots, jujube, fig, and pistachio.

A recent collaboration which we value very much is with the One Cool Earth organization; they are dedicated to restoring and replenishing the Earth one plant at a time. One of their projects is running

a plant nursery at Liberty High School. We are fortunate to join with them in celebrating our Harvest Day coming up Saturday, October 8th, later this year. Please see our website for details.

A group that deserves our sincere gratitude for their efforts in showing up regularly to volunteer in the Garden is PathPoint, a

nonprofit organization that “assists individuals with disabilities or disadvantages to overcome

barriers to employment.” The volunteers are efficient and reliable.

As we go into our third year in the Garden, we are looking forward to building out the remaining one third of the Garden. In the next few months we will develop the west side of the garden with paths, bare root fruit and nut trees, and a windbreak hedge. We are also designing a medicinal

herb garden in the round on the east side of the garden.

Get Involved

We are always happy to welcome new members to our group to help plan or just to drop by to harvest and maintain the garden. Please consider joining us! We welcome your donation of time, expertise, or money.

Location: Centennial Park, 600 Nickerson Drive, Paso Robles

Open Garden Days & Times:
Monday 9-11am, Wednesday 6-8pm, 4th Saturday 9-11am
Fall Harvest Day:

October 8, 2011, 9-11am

Items needed: plants, urbanite (broken concrete), helping hands.

Website: <http://www.pasoroblesdemogarden.org/>



growing tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers, kale, chard, collard greens, grapes, eggplant, melons, and of course, lots of squash. We

The Leaflet Review



Mid-August Lunch (Pranzo di Ferragosto)

a film by Gianni Di Gregorio, a Zeitgeist Film

Having just returned from an Ohio family reunion, I particularly enjoyed this quiet but entertaining Italian film that focuses on family, flavor, and food for living well. Directed by Gianni Di Gregorio who also plays the lead role of Gianni, the 50-ish son of a genteel lady in her 80s, *Mid-August Lunch* (Pranzo di Ferragosto) takes place in a nearly-empty Rome. With so many Romans at the beach for the August 15 holiday of Pranzo di Ferragosto (the Feast of Assumption), the city feels emptied to those who stay behind.

Gianni's life, however, has never seemed more full of people (actually, ladies) and he's busier than ever during this down time for the city, having become the temporary minder of three ladies in addition to his Mama. Suddenly responsible for a set of four sweet but strong ladies in their 80s, Gianni confronts the challenge with eventual verve

that he propels with numerous bottles of white wine. The food featured in *Mid-August Lunch* inspires the action and brings the individual characters together for meals at key points in the narrative. So central to the story are these two meals that their recipes are included in the DVD booklet.

Soon after she arrives, Maria, the most demure of the four ladies in the film, begins immediately to produce her famous Pasta Al Forno. As the pasta bakes, Grazia arrives with a list of foods and drink she must avoid, per the direction of her son the doctor. After too many years of "no tomatoes, no alcohol, no pasta" and other prohibitions, Grazia seizes the moment and raids the fridge late at night to finally get her fill of some outstanding pasta casserole. "You've eaten all the pasta!" cries Gianni, who was supposed to prevent the ladies from eating or doing anything forbidden. However, he's only one man against four powerful older ladies so he has his work cut out for him. Not surprisingly, the ladies win.

From the start of the film, Gianni comports himself as the good son he clearly was for his own mother, and he extends that kindness to the other ladies in his care during the holiday. After a night of octogenarian debauchery that included discovering Grazia's pasta raid and retrieving youthful Marina from a neighboring restaurant but only after drinking with her for hours, Gianni wakes to find the ladies making plans for another meal together at what has become for them a most



pleasant vacation from their more structured and monitored normal lives. He had planned to have the ladies all back to their respective families by noon, but they have made other plans.

The small moments of the ladies in this film capture so much truth of human relationships as we age, such as when we see just a glimpse of Maria happily trying on Valeria's collection of fancy hats through a distant doorway. The opportunity for freedom does not often present itself so easily to these great women as it did over the course of this Pranzo di Ferragosto holiday. Loathe to lose the freedom they have discovered at Gianni's, they plot to keep the party going. Their children may have thought they were escaping responsibility, but it was the ladies who experienced the true liberation and companionship.

—by Rachel Duchak

This review was first published on the Central Coast Foodie website and is reproduced with permission. It has been abbreviated here; for the complete version including recipes for Pasta Al Forno go to www.centralcoastfoodie.com.

LEAFLET CHRONICLE

July Meeting—A Ranch in Bradley

On July 9th we held a dinner meeting at the home and ranch of Kathy and Marvin Blackburn, 20 miles north of Paso Robles just over the county line in Bradley. We met in the late afternoon at 5



The crowd gathers

p.m. when the wind whips up to cool off the day. The Blackburns generously offered to provide our main dish and CRFG members brought an array of delicious salads and desserts. While Marvin Blackburn was busy getting the chicken going on the oak pit BBQ, our chapter co-chair, Patti Schober, got the meeting going.

We started a new game at this meeting and it is already a hit. The winner of this game, "Guess the Guests," correctly guessed that there were 73 in attendance and was awarded three bags of fertilizer. For three guests, it was their first time attending a CRFG meeting; they came from San Miguel, Paso Robles, and Atascadero.

Pet Daniels was excited to display a vegetable, purslane, that she had discovered at Vallarta market. For comparison, she brought some purslane from her garden - purslane is a common edible weed around

here, which also has some beneficial effects as a companion plant. After a taste test at our seats, we agreed that the one from the store was better for eating. We are not sure if it is due to cultural differences, or if

it is a different variety.

Patti told us that Owen, our previous attendance monitor and Helpful Guy, asked her to say "hi" and that he "loves his new job" (see *Through the Fence* for his comments).

Olive Trees in Iraq and SLO

As many of you may remember, our chapter orchestrated a shipment of olive trees to Iraq, which were planted in Balad on Christmas Eve, 2006.

At the time of

the planting, our Central Coast Chapter also planted olive trees at our Foothill Boulevard orchard. The woman who organized the Iraqi planting, MSG Patty Marsano, came back to the US and brought the US and Iraqi flags that flew over the base when the trees were planted. She recently sent these flags to Joe and they were proudly displayed at our meeting.

Marketplace Manager Opening

Jack Burgard is retiring from the job of manager of The Marketplace and CRFG is looking for someone to fill his place. The new Marketplace manager would need to keep a storage unit on his or her property, keep track of inventory of publications, and fill orders for publication. Read more on this topic in *Through the Fence* of this issue, then check out page 27 of the July and August issue of *Fruit Gardener* for a sale going on now from The Marketplace.



LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

July Meeting continued Scholarship Program

Congratulations to two very deserving students of Dr. Lauren C. Garner at Cal Poly, Darren Lubich and Stephanie Root. They were each awarded a \$1000 scholarship from the Central Coast Chapter, CRFG. These two scholarships are the "first ever" scholarships awarded by our chapter. Rachel Land also prepared and sent us an outstanding scholarship application, too bad we had to pick only two.

Kathy Speaks about the Farm and Ranch Operations

The farm's owner purchased the property with the goal of creating a sustainable model of producing pesticide-free food. It was just unused barren land at that time. Then the Blackburns were hired to operate the farm. They have been on the property for one and a half years now, and it has really come to life! They are busy from dawn to dusk, Kathy said, and they can't keep track of the days any more, but it doesn't matter.



Blackburn's olive trees

They may not get many hours of sleep, but after all that work each day, its quality, not quantity.

The Orchards

Kathy and Marvin planted an orchard of fruit trees growing on root stock that we provided. These were planted last summer and throughout the winter, and, per Bob Tullock's advice, they mixed up the varieties and didn't plant the same ones together. This way, if there is damage or infestation to one block of trees, they will still have all the variety, and the trees benefit by avoiding a high concentration of pests that can occur with a high concentration of the same tree.

In another area, they planted seven hundred olive trees. These will be put on a trellis system, with four branches run like a grape vine, head high. Marvin also keeps bee hives for pollination and honey. These trees are all just getting started and we look forward to another meeting here in a few years to taste the fruits of their labor.

The Barn and Livestock

The Blackburns built a new barn on a hill to the southwest of the house last summer. They put in an irrigation well and water mains, and they have great water quality. Horses, cattle, pigs, chickens, turkeys, live on the farm. The hens and pigs make for



Blackburn's orchard of fruit trees

friendly neighbors. Most of the turkeys ranged in a pen near by, except for one who is convinced she is a chicken and would rather hang out with the hens.

Let's talk about the chickens – they have enough mature hens to produce eggs for sale daily, and just added 1000 more chicks, at ages from a few weeks to several months! All these pullets (as young hens are called) running around the henhouse was a sight to behold. There were pens for the smallest ones, although most had free reign of the area. There were chickens of all sizes and colors running around everywhere. Several cats and kittens kept a watch over the chickens, although they much enjoyed the humans that came to visit. As we stepped

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued



Kathy Smith befriends a kitty

carefully to avoid the blanket of poultry on the ground, we made friends with the cats, too.

Kathy said, "Our goal is sustainability, to give back to

eat bugs and fly larvae in the manure. Then they water the grass to bring it back.

The Vegetables

The farm includes two small vegetable plots. One is near the house, with onions and squash maturing. The other is a ways across the farm, with heirloom tomatoes just starting to emerge. We were all invited to help ourselves to some veggies. Future plans include planting 15 acres in wheat, oats, barley, and grain with which to make their own flour.

The Dogs

To protect all the livestock, the Blackburns enlist two Great Pyranese. These are huge white dogs that are bred for this purpose, stalking the territory and chasing away any predators. They pretty much sleep all day and work all night. Kathy said they used to hear coyotes every night, but since they employed the dogs, they are gone. It's not all work and no play for the dogs though - once, Marvin found them playing tug of war with a horse rope in the pond.



markers for the fruit trees. As Marvin turned the chicken on the BBQ, he commented, "Mother Nature has the last word." This year, she let them get their hay crop in before the rain.

When the BBQ was ready, we filled our plates and enjoyed great food and conversation under a huge shade tree as the wind, having done its work of cooling down the North County heat for the day, settled down to an eager breeze.



the ground what we take from it." One of their sustainable methods is to take advantage of the symbiotic relationship between cattle and chickens. After the cattle eat down the grass, they bring in the chickens in portable chicken houses to

Our Hosts

The Blackburns (www.hzhharvestfarm.blogspot.com) frequently open their ranch for hands-on education. Elementary students have come for field trips. One group decorated rocks as



Marv and Kathy Blackburn

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

August Meeting—Chill out Along the Shore

This sunny cool day in August we held two meetings in one! Mr. Clifford Chapman delighted to open his grounds of his cliff-side home to us, and we all enjoyed the view of the pacific ocean in Shell Beach, along with a magnificent display of fruit trees and flowering plants. That would have been enough, but someone named Bob

importance, and the many implications for knowing the chill hours and how they work. Read more about L. E. Cook Nursery at <http://www.lecooke.com/cms/>.

Fun and Games

We played Guess the Guests again. This time, we had a door prize, too. Marv and Pet donated a great Dwarf Cavendish banana tree for the door prize. They have the mother banana plant and it produces edible bananas in our climate! Les Ferreira won, and we couldn't have had a finer winner. Les was one of the original pioneers at the very first

First Annual Apple Tree Grafting Competition

We hosted the Grafted Apple Tree Competition and exhibition at the Mid-State Fair in July. The results were reported at this meeting. Bob Tullock, Pet Daniels, and Marv Daniels were the judges. Fifteen apple trees were entered. All were judged and all received a blue ribbon. No apple trees were disqualified. The Champion received a prize of \$50.00 and the Reserve Champion prize was \$40.00.

The Big Chill

Bob Ludekens' favorite topic is "low chill." Chill is the amount of cold a fruit tree needs during the dormant hours of winter in order for its flowers to be fertile and produce fruit. Traditional varieties of apples, pears, and stone fruits did not produce fruit well in coastal and southern climates because the winters are not cold enough to generate the needed chill. When Bob started working at the nursery part time in 1946, there were no low chill varieties like we have today. People never dreamed of having an apple tree on the coast back in the 40s and 50s. Red Delicious,



read in the newsletter that we were having a meeting on "chill" and called Joe to see who the speaker was. Joe said, "You are." So we also had the opportunity to learn about selecting and siting fruit trees according to their "chill hour" needs, from one of our state's most knowledgeable growers, Bob Ludekens. He is the owner of L. E. Cook Nursery, a wholesale fruit tree nursery in Visalia. He grows fruit trees for retail nurseries all over the west, specializing in varieties that are ideally suited to homeowners. He loves the topic of chill and helped us all to understand the

organizational meeting of this chapter a century ago. (Well, it was last century, technically.) Then, for the contest, instead of trying to count the number of people as they milled about, we counted the number of entries to the door prize. Marv won a colorful bouquet of Dahlias from the garden of Joe and Jill Sabol. Now, Marv organized the contest, and he won. That's a little suspicious, no? Truthfully, he wrote his guess on the entry sheet long before all of the guests had arrived.



LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

Yellow Delicious, Gravenstein, these all require more chill. The first low chill variety of apple, Beverly Hills, was introduced in the 60s in Santa Monica from UCLA. Now there are low chill peaches and plums, too. There are no real low chill cherries yet, but he is working on it.

Math Class, for Extra Credit

Chilling is very confusing, It's not 32 degrees, its 45 degrees. Here's how it works: Sap pulls away from the buds during the first hour below 45 degrees each night, then buds gets rest for each additional hour below 45. To figure the total chill hours for a location, count the number of hours below 45 degrees each night, discard the first hour, add up the total of hours for all days from leaf fall to bud swell for your trees.

Now for the hard part: The results vary greatly for different places in your yard, even if you have only a little land. In Los Osos, one enthusiast planted Fuji and Granny Smith apples on the East side of a house in a low spot. With the afternoon sun blocked by the house, and the cold air collecting in the low spot, they got enough chill to have plenty of fresh apples. If the ground stays cool, there will be more chill. Yet, right next door, these same apple trees would not produce any fruit. Another factor is the ground surface. Plantings near pavement will be the hottest. A layer of mulch can keep the dirt a bit cooler, and a lawn is even cooler.

The Search

How does an orchardist create new, low chill varieties? It is a continual search. Every seed grows with some characteristics that are different from its parents. And sometimes a single branch on a tree will be different from all the others. So, close examination of thousands of trees can result in developing new varieties. L. E. Cook has 90 acres of orchards, all grown for scion-wood. Bob continues to find individual branches, known as "sports," that will fruit with lower chill. His talk here today was part of his search, maybe someone here has a tree with exceptional performance that he can get some scion wood from to experiment with.

Cliff Chapman's yard is the perfect stage for this low chill discussion. Right on the Pacific Ocean there is very little chill. But by planting many trees, some have found the right combination of genetics and location to produce excellent fruit anyway.

Questions and Answers

Joe promised that we'd have a chance to ask Bob lots of questions. Did we ever! Here are some of his answers:

Q. Does stripping leaves off in fall help? I have a Granny Smith that won't drop its leaves. I've got a Fuji that won't drop its leaves.

A. If leaves are holding on, it is a low chill variety. Normally, by early January the leaves are off. I don't know if stripping leaves will help, I've never needed to try it. Leaves supply food to the tree, so stripping them may help to start dormancy.

Q. Does rootstock make any difference in the chill requirement?

A. No. It may make a tree start fruiting in fewer years, but does not affect chill requirement. A tree will try to reproduce if it is suffering, so if the rootstock not as compatible, a tree may start to fruit earlier.

Q. How old is the typical tree in a retail nursery?

A. Smaller ones are June-buds which are just 1 year top, one year root, 5/16, 3/8 caliper (trunk diameter). 5/8 or 3/4 caliper ones are one-year top, 2 year root, budded during summer. The age of the top is what sets time before fruiting, so you get a bigger tree, but you won't get fruit any earlier.

Q. Does root stock affect cold tolerance?

A. Yes, here are two examples: Nemaguard peach is best for coastal climate; it's not so cold tolerant but resists nematodes that are prevalent there. Trees on Lovell or Siberian are better planted inland. Mariana rootstock for apricot and plum grows close to surface and is good on the mild coast. Farther inland, use Myrbolan, which grows deeper.

Q. Is there a good dwarf Cherry?

A. Compact Stella. I don't like regular Stella, but Compact Stella I do.

Q. Is heat needed?

A. Heat makes a difference in the amount of sugar and flavor developed in the fruit. This is very important when choosing a low chill tree. You have to pick one that will work with your summer temperatures, too. Here's

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

an example: When Anna apple was first introduced as a low chill apple, it was planted all along the coast. Turns out there was not enough heat to produce good flavor. La Joya, National City, no no. Anna is very good in El Cajon, Escondido, San Diego, places with low chill and hot summers. Peaches have the same issue.

Q. How do you develop low chill trees?

A. Take Santa Barbara peach – I got a call from Goleta, someone bought a Ventura peach, says he got an Alberta instead. It looks like Alberta peach, but it is fruiting in Goleta. Alberta would never fruit there, there's not enough chill. I got another call 2 years later, "I have an Alberta peach right here on the coast, bought it from you." Then I went out to our bud-wood orchard when the trees were fruiting, one limb of one tree had a completely different fruit. Ventura is round, Alberta has a point, and Ventura is juicy, colorful. Alberta has a smoother texture preferred by women. The result? We called this sport the Santa Barbara peach, our number one seller today.

Q. Why do the fruits in the store have so little flavor?

A. 18 years ago, universities discovered if they took the sugar out of the new varieties, they don't spoil! So all new varieties being introduced commercially don't spoil. The farmer can hold them for weeks, maybe a month or so, they can be shipped across the country and overseas. Do you ever see spoiled fruit in the market today? No. They're beautiful in

color and shape, but no flavor. I used to love Red Delicious apples. The selections they have today I can't eat. They're not any good any more! Our nursery grows for the homeowner, all these tasteless varieties that we get in, if I don't like 'em, they go right back out.

Here's another. Texas A & M introduced Sam Huston Peach. Beautiful name, beautiful peach. Immediately sold 15,000 to retail nurseries. I started eating 'em – this has no flavor. I think I can chew my newspaper and get more flavor out of it than I got out of that peach. So I went to a Texas trade show and I took another variety and Sam Houston. Had each Texas nurseryman eat the flavorful one first; every one of 'em said, "Bob, this is wonderful." Then I gave each one a Sam Houston and a paper towel. They all spit it out, every one of 'em.

Meeting, Part 2

After the question and answer session, Joe introduced Clifford Chapman. How many gardeners does he have working for him – only one! This is true, Cliff is a tireless gardener. Look at all those Dahlias! (Actually, they're begonias.)

Joe sang praises for this very deserving man, who then told us about

his 50-year adventure here. The property was developed in 1930, and was later abandoned. After years of disrepair, Cliff bought it in 1961. Now there is no trace of its past neglect; it is breathtakingly beautiful. Cliff loves to garden, and along with many mistakes that went into the green-waste bin, there were the successes that lasted. He learned from Bob today why his peach tree in the lower area behind a wall produced so well while the others were duds. (Hint: it is on the East side of a wall, in a low spot.) It was an accident, he just didn't want to plant it anywhere else. About 45 years ago Cal Poly came to him, said they would like him to try three peach varieties they were working on in the ag. dept. to see how they do in a no frost zone, rarely even down to 40 degrees. They only had a number, no name. One of them was a success. By the time it started producing, Cal Poly had no record of it! The other two were no good. This one is a dream. Joe and Bob each took scion wood cuttings.



Clifford Chapman speaks to the crowd

LEAFLET CALENDAR

CRFG Central Coast Chapter Meetings

- Unless otherwise indicated, meetings are held the second Saturday of the month and begin at 1:30 p.m. Bring a friend.
- For most meetings, bring a chair for all in your party unless you prefer to stand.
- Car pool if you can.
- No pets at any meeting, please.

Check the CRFG Central Coast Chapter website for updates. www.crfg-central.org/calendar.htm.

September 10, 2011.

We are back to our usual "Second Saturday" time. Please mark your calendar and make plans to join us! The meeting starts at 1:30 but you should come early for food, drink and fellowship. We will visit Alfred King's Nojoqui Farm, a diverse, 80-acre certified organic produce farm. Al will talk about many aspects of commercial organic farming and then lead us on a walking tour around the farm. The tour will start at the packing and shipping facility, then meander through some of his fields. We are likely to see peaches, trellised cucumbers, winter squash, early bell peppers, leeks, lettuce, parsley, carrots, beets, onions, and a new compost operation.

Bring a folding chair if you want to sit during the meeting. Bring a friend who wants to know more about organic farming. Once we leave the packing shed, we will not have access to drinking water, so please bring a water bottle. Hats and sunscreen are a good idea! Al always wears a hat and uses sunscreen at work! **DIRECTIONS** To Alfred King's Nojoqui Farm, Farm address, 1889 Highway 101, roughly four miles south of Buellton on the right: Travel south on 101 and pass through Buellton, unless you stop for lunch or a pit stop. When you see the sign for the Pork Palace and the Apple stand you are getting close. The driveway is on the right just across from

the Blueberry stand. Just before their driveway is a call box and one of the El Camino Real bells. When you pull in the driveway, go past the reservoir and there will be parking available right there. The meeting starts at the packing shed (large metal building).

Refreshments shall be provided by the H through R group.

October 8, 2011.

To be announced; please check the website or call for information. Contact information: Art DeKleine at adeklein@calpoly.edu, 805-543-9455; Joe Sabol at jsabol@calpoly.edu, 805-544-1056; or Larry Hollis at l_hollis@hotmail.com, 805-549-9176.



The Leaflet

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