



Central Coast Chapter CRFG July 2021 Newsletter

by CRFG CC Chapter Members
Edited by Dara Manker

August CRFG Meeting

Residence of Seth and Keri McMillan & McMillan Farmstead Nursery

Date: August 14th, 2021

Time:

1-1:30 p.m.: Gathering and socializing

1:30 p.m.: Meeting begins

Where: Residence of Seth and Keri
McMillan & McMillan Farmstead Nursery

[601 Camino Caballo, Nipomo CA](#)

Directions:

1. Take Hwy 101 to Nipomo.
2. Take the Tefft St. exit.
3. Turn West on to Tefft St.
4. Turn Right on Pomeroy Rd.
5. Turn Right on to Camino Caballo.

Refreshments: Last names A-I bring snacks.

From Seth:

It's been 6 years since Keri has seen her husband, Seth. He has been outside ever since they bought their home on one acre in Nipomo with the finest mesa sand. There were a few established fruit trees when they moved in. Quickly Seth knew he needed to start with a Hass avocado and planted it in the lowest spot on the lot (he had a lot to learn). Keri pitched in with a SweetHeart Apricot, Collette Pear and a Burbank Elberta Peach tree. Then she did it, Keri got Seth a



membership to the CRFG and they attended their first meeting with the Central Coast CRFG.

Since 2016 Seth has become a full blown fruit addict planting thousands of seeds, citrus, stone and pome fruits as well as Paw Paw, Cherimoya, White Sapote and many more avocado trees in their orchard. They have brought in hundreds of yards of wood chips, compost and horse manure to promote soil health and keep water use to a minimum. They emphasize building soil and no spray in their orchard. They have built Hügelkultur mounds and are pushing the limits of a not so favorable growing site.

Last year Seth started a commercial nursery where he grows rare avocado, cherimoya and white sapote among others. Their favorite space is the new 1200 sq ft green house where it's always summer!

Seth and Keri's address is 601 Camino Caballo Nipomo. Ample parking is provided on the street. There is no need to RSVP for the August CRFG meeting. If you are interested in visiting the nursery at any other time, please feel free to call or email Seth at (805) 714-5937 or email mcmillanfarmstead@gmail.com Follow them on Face Book and Instagram @mcmillanfarmstead

September CRFG Meeting

Zoom meeting: Tom del Hotal will discuss proper watering. See his article below in this newsletter.

October CRFG Meeting

We are in the process of looking into meeting at [Mighty Cap Mushrooms](#) in Paso Robles, CA. MCM grows "high end artisanal gourmet [organic] mushrooms for the central coast of California." If we do go to this facility for our October meeting, spaces will be limited and sign ups will be necessary, per our host. There will be a late morning tour and an afternoon tour, with our meeting in between the two tours. Stay tuned for updates!

Meeting Places Needed

Contact Alisha and/or Tucker if you would like to volunteer your place for a future meeting.

Articles Needed For The August Newsletter

Thank you to those who contributed articles over the past year, keeping our newsletter alive during the Pandemic.

Articles are still needed. The next newsletter's deadline is Sunday, August 18th, 2021. Please send your contributions to crgccnewsletter@gmail.com.

Another Fruit Fly Pest! Black Fig Fly by Jenny Weaver

You may have noticed the Public Service Announcement on the main page of CRFG Inc's website recently that read, "Urgent PSA For All California Fig Growers." <https://crfg.org/>

Because I grow 13 fig trees and many of my neighbors and CRFG members grow figs, I contacted our local SLO County Agriculture Department to find out what they and the California Department of Food and Agriculture are doing about it.

I received the following Pest Detection Advisory (No. PD08-2021).

Background

*The black fig fly, *Silba adipata*, a fig pest common in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions, has been detected in Los Angeles, Orange, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. Adult flies are 3.5-4.5 mm in length and feed primarily on exudates from figs or fig-tree sap exuded from an injured plant.*

*The only known host for this species is edible fig (*Ficus carica*). There are reportedly 4-6 generations per year. Since *Silba adipata* can cause major fruit drop, there could be a major economic impact to California's fig industry. The most effective known attractants are hexanol and ammonium sulfate solution, which have been tested elsewhere in McPhail traps. Fig sap is also reported to be attractive.*

Damage occurs after the adult female lays eggs in the fruit, which hatch into larvae that tunnel through the flesh of the fruit making it unfit for consumption. Infested figs may change color and will often prematurely drop from the tree before ripening. Dropped figs may have larval emergence holes (approximately 1 mm in diameter – please see Figure 1 below for an emergence hole from when larvae leave the fruit to pupate) and larvae may be present inside the fruit (please see Figure 2 below for larvae feeding damage). The presence of larvae in dropped fruit that is still in relatively good condition is an indication that the fruit drop is a result of an infestation and any larvae found should be submitted to the Plant Pest Diagnostics Center as potential black fig fly. To help with the early detection of the black fig fly, please find below some photos to aid with identifying suspects.

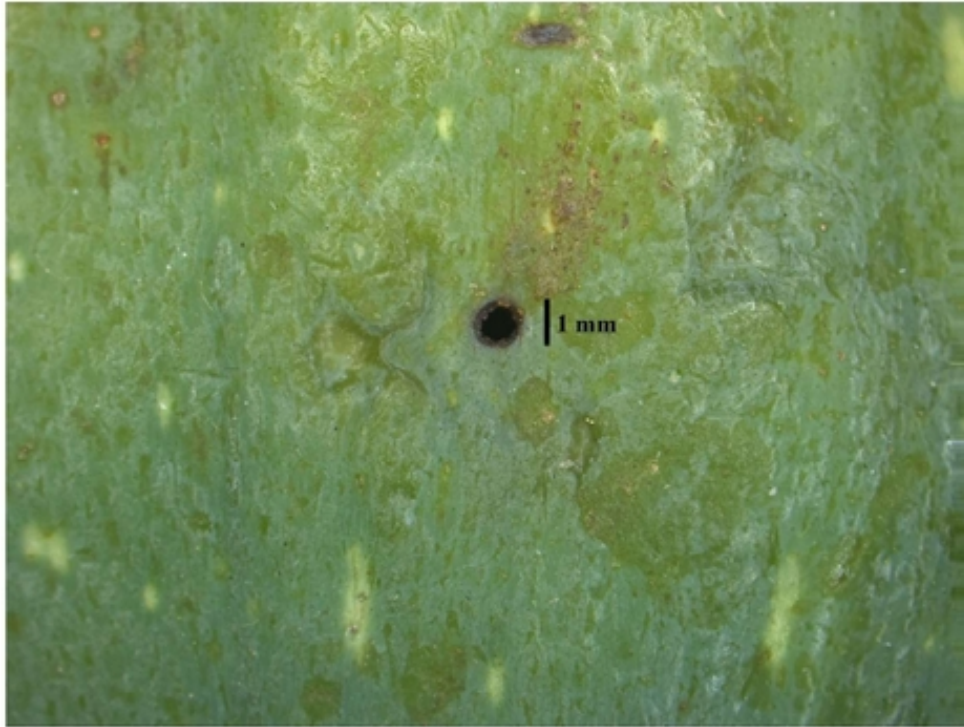


Figure 1 – Black fig fly emergence hole



Figure 2 – Black fig fly larva feeding damage

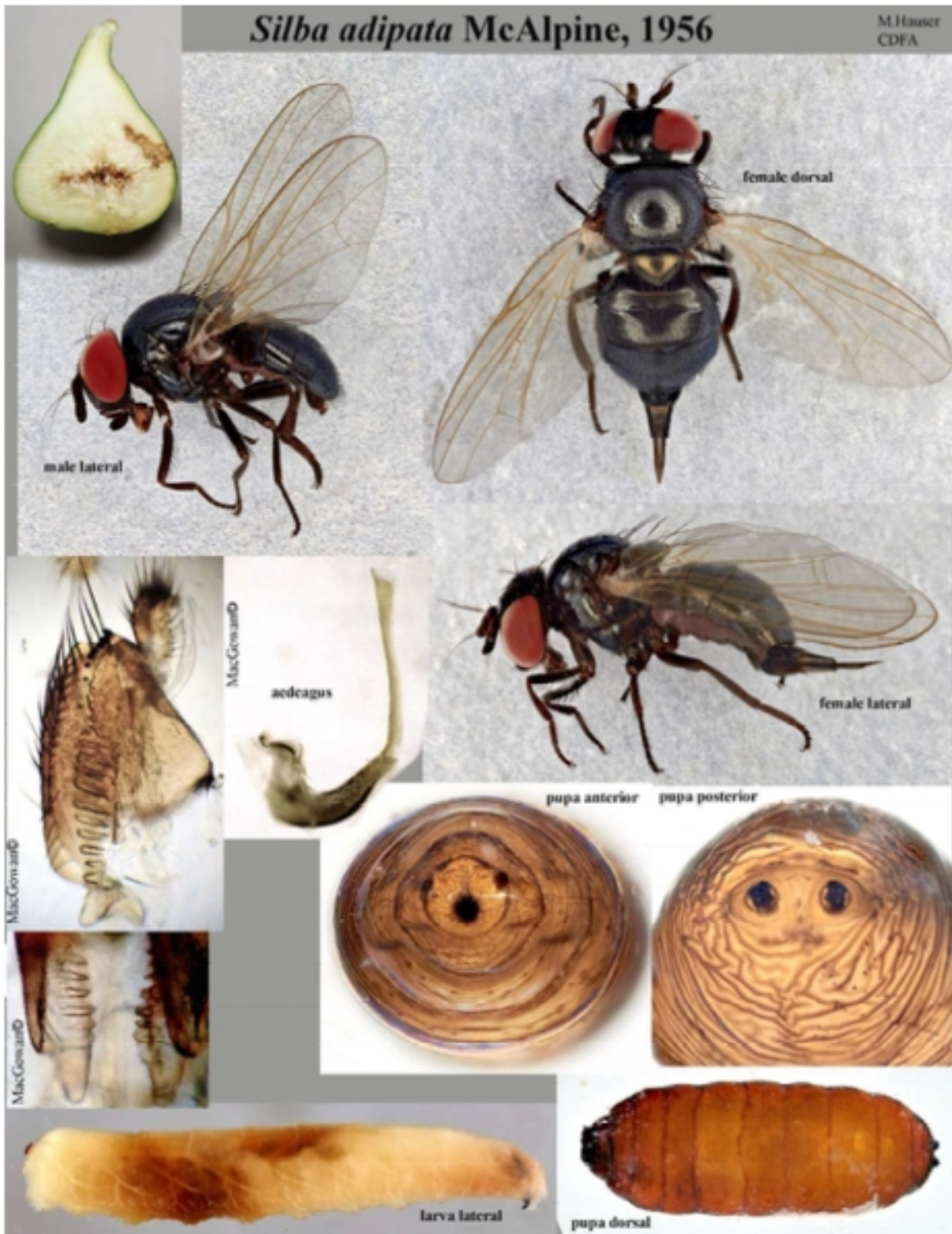


Figure 3 – Identifying black fig fly

If you believe you have found Black Fig Fly, please put the fig in a sealed bag. Call the nearest Agriculture Department office. Because of Covid-19, they may have limited hours or ask you to make an appointment to drop off the sample.

Arroyo Grande Office 805 473-7090
810 West Branch St., Arroyo Grande

San Luis Obispo (Main Office) 805-781-5910
2156 Sierra Way, San Luis Obispo

Templeton Office 805 434-5950
350 North Main, Templeton

How To Pollinate Passion Fruit by Jesse Englert



Passiflora edulis with many fruits hanging from a wire trellis in my backyard

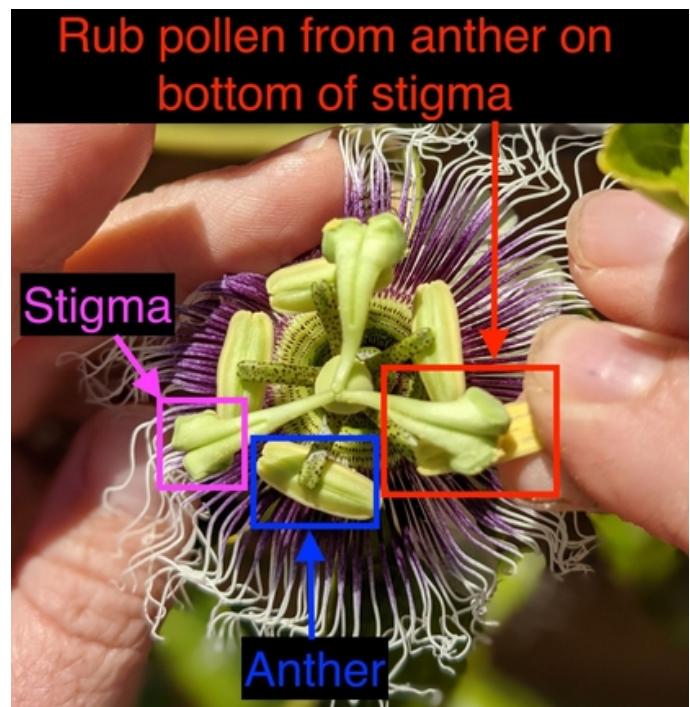
Passiflora edulis is a delicious and easy to grow vine that can pollinate itself. The Fredericks cultivar is popular and grows well in SLO.

Steps:

1. Pick one or more anther(s) off
2. Rub pollen from anther on to stigma

Each flower usually has 5 anthers and 3 stigmas although I've seen 1 mutant flower with 6 anthers and 4 stigmas.

Picking the anther off allows you to identify which flowers have already



been pollinated. When my wife does her daily mid-morning pollination, she looks for flowers that are not missing any anthers. When you're pollinating 10 new flowers per day, this trick will help you keep track.

When the flower first opens, the pollen in the anther is sealed up for a bit and will eventually open.

Key Principles Of Proper Watering by Tom Del Hotal

Alisha forwarded the following email and article from Tom Del Hotal. Many in our CRFG Chapter will remember that Tom was the guest speaker at our January Pruning meeting several years ago. Tom, a member of the San Diego CRFG Chapter for many years, is extremely knowledgeable on a variety of subjects. In fact, he has made quite a few of [his handouts and presentations](#) available on the State CRFG website.

Tom's paper, "Key Principles of Proper Watering" appears on the next few pages. Tom introduces his paper below.

Email from Tom Del Hotal:

Good morning EVERYONE! I hoped that you might consider sending out or publishing an article that I wrote on principles of proper watering. Water conservation is an important topic that we all need to focus on, especially with the growing population and warming climate we are experiencing. Landscapes all need irrigation during the initial establishment period and most need irrigation all year in southern California and in other arid areas.

Unfortunately MANY homeowners do not water in the best way nor do they understand the principles of watering required to establish and maintain their landscapes. I am enclosing the article that I wrote and hope you will use in your newsletter or other ways to help teach the public about watering.

Thank you and hope to hear back from you in the near future. TAKE CARE EVERYONE! Although I now live in the Olympic Peninsula, my heart will always be with the CRFG and I hope to be able to contribute and participate with our organization once we get settled in.

SINCERELY, Tom Del Hotal

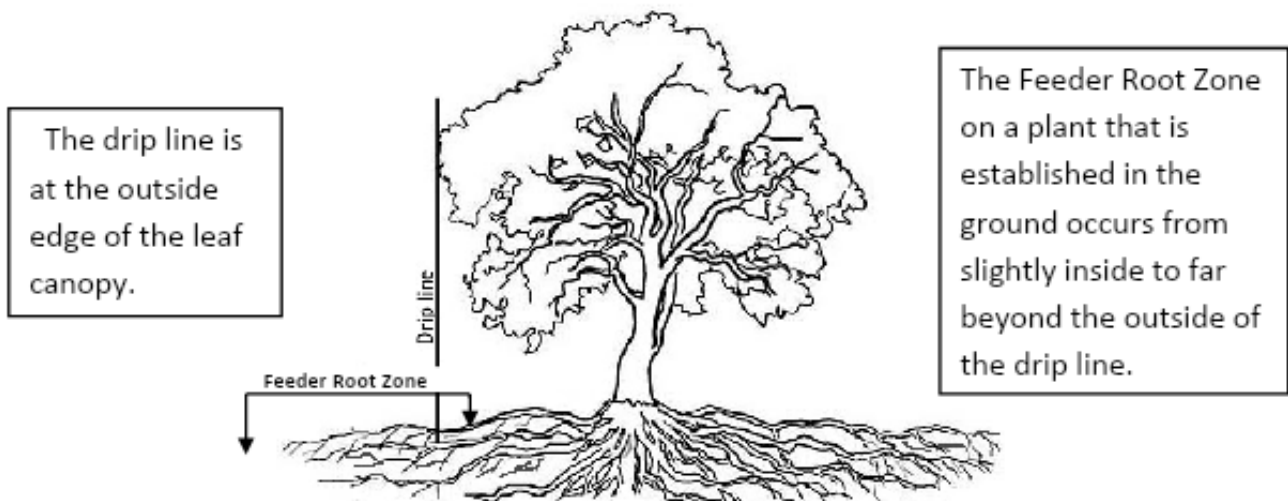
Key Principles Of Proper Watering

By Tom Del Hotal

One of the most common causes of plant death or poor plant performance is the misunderstanding of what is meant by proper watering. This becomes a more significant issue when the weather conditions become drier and hotter and rainfall must be supplemented or replaced with irrigation water. Questions about irrigation that are commonly asked are: What is the best type of irrigation system to use or what is the best way to water my plants? How long do I water or how much water do I give my plants at each watering or irrigation cycle? How often should I water my plants?

There is no one way to correctly water plants. Any method used to water plants, such as a bucket, a hose, flood irrigation, sprinklers, bubblers, a drip system, micro-spray or any other watering method can be used to properly water as long as 4 principles are followed.

Since a plant absorbs water (in most cases) through its root system, we need to understand what is going on below the ground and what are the primary functions of a plant's root system. The root systems on plants have 3 main functions. One function is to anchor the plant so that it stays upright in the soil or growing medium. A second function is to store food and carbohydrates to sustain the plant during the dormant season or when the leaves are removed or are lost from the plant's canopy. (This is especially true on deciduous plants during the period when there are no leaves on the plant or when a plant is heavily pruned.) A third function is to absorb water and nutrients. The roots that absorb water and nutrients are called feeder roots or hair roots. These very fine, delicate roots are constantly being generated and are constantly dying off due to soil conditions and other factors. Water absorption by an established plant in the ground occurs primarily within the Feeder Root Zone.



A plant's root system needs both air and water for survival and healthy growth. Soil conditions that are too wet exclude available air and roots may drown or be killed by fungus diseases. Soil conditions that are too dry may lead to plant wilt, plant desiccation and root or plant death. A careful balance of water and air in the soil must be maintained for best plant growth and development. During dry weather this balance must be maintained by proper irrigation methods.

The 4 key principles of proper watering are:

#1 Water the proper area – the Feeder Root Zone!

- Water near the trunk or stem on newly planted plants so that you thoroughly wet the original root ball.
- Water slightly inside the drip line and well beyond the outside of the drip line on plants that are established in the ground. (The plant may take from a few weeks to one year or more to become established depending on the type and size of the plant, the time of year that it was planted, soil conditions, cultural practices and other variables.)
- Water farther away from the trunk or stem as time progresses, as the plant grows larger and/or the plant's canopy expands in diameter.

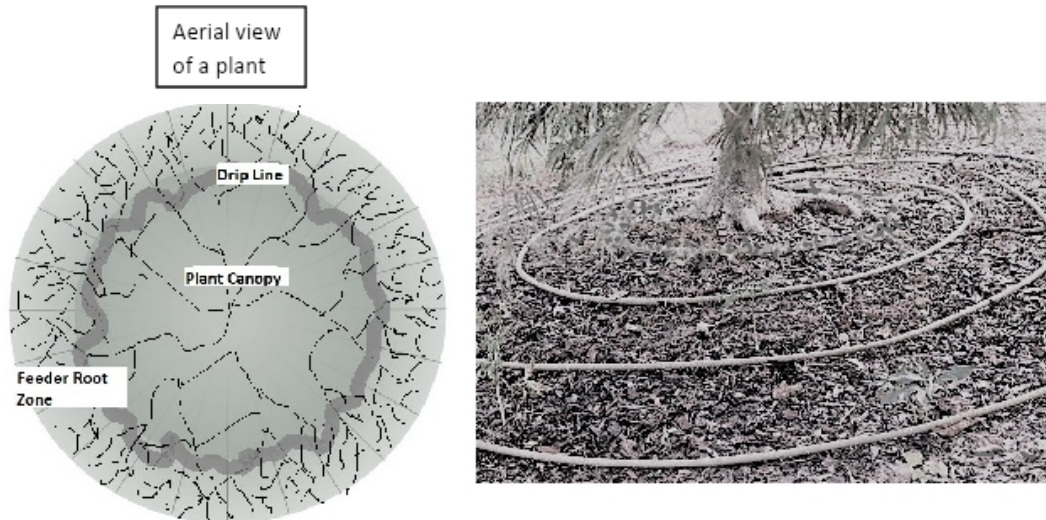


#2 Apply water to a sufficient area of the Feeder Root Zone to support the canopy of the plant and to maintain a strong and healthy root system.

- Irrigate as much of the area around all sides of the plant as possible, not just one side or in one area.
- Water will spread out to an average of 1-2 feet at a depth of 2-3 feet when applied from a source such as a drip emitter or soaker hose.
- If irrigating with a drip system or with soaker hoses, provide enough drip

emitters or concentric rings of soaker hose to wet a significant area of the Feeder Root Zone – NOT just a few spots or a single line.

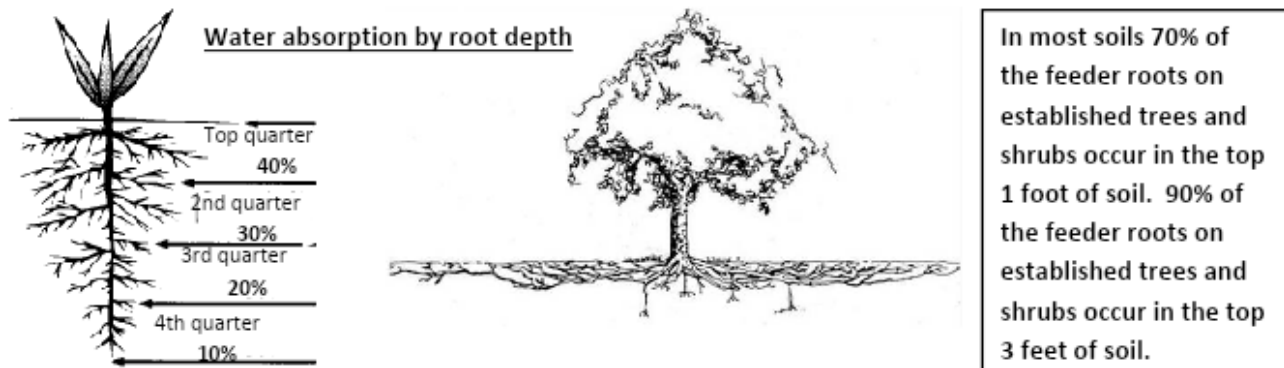
- Adjust and expand the region irrigated as the plant grows to promote the expansion of the root system into the surrounding soil. In order to support the healthy development of the plant's canopy and for the plant to grow larger it must have a larger root system.



#3 Apply a sufficient amount of water – enough to thoroughly wet the entire depth of the Feeder Root Zone.

- 1 inch of water penetrates the ground 1 foot in sandy soil, it takes 2 inches of water to penetrate the ground 1 foot in clay soil.
- 90% of feeder roots are found in the top 3 feet of soil! (Of that 90%, 70% are in the top 1 foot of soil.)
- Water to an average depth of 1 foot to 3 feet at each watering for plants that have been established in the ground. Smaller plants generally have shallower root systems than larger plants. As a general rule, water to a minimum depth of 6 inches to 1 foot for plants 1 foot or less in height, to a depth of 1-2 feet for plants.
- 1-5 feet in height and to a depth of 2-3 feet for plants larger than 5 feet in height.

- For plants in containers, thoroughly wet the entire root ball and the surrounding soil in the container. At each watering use enough water to leach excess salts out of the bottom of the container.



#4 Water at the correct interval – often enough to keep the plant from wilting, but infrequently enough to allow air to penetrate the soil. Roots can drown if the soil is kept constantly wet!

- Watering frequency will vary with the time of year, location, size of the plants, soil, weather conditions and many other variables.
- **On average:**
 - Water new plants in the ground 1-3 times per week.
 - Water older established plants in the ground 1 time per week to 1 time per month depending on the above stated variables.
 - Water plants in containers 1-3 times per week.

Frequent light (shallow) watering will promote a very shallow root system on a plant because sufficient water will often be unavailable deeper in the soil. Also, if the surface soil is kept constantly wet, sufficient air may not be able to penetrate deeper into the soil. A balance of both water and air in the soil root zone is necessary to promote deeper root growth.

There are very few exceptions where plants should be watered every day! Watering too frequently will exclude oxygen from the soil and cause roots to drown as well as promote diseases!

July Meeting CRFG Demonstration Orchard July 10th, 2021



The first “in-person” gathering since the Corona-19 Virus pandemic hit, our July meeting was a welcome venture back into the way things used to be, with the added appreciation for the things we took for granted little more than a year before.

Our day consisted of three events:

- The morning was spent sprucing up the CRFG Demonstration Orchard;
- At noon a delicious luncheon provided for us via Lassen's of SLO and coordinated and delivered by Alisha;
- In the afternoon we held our meeting, followed by a plant exchange where we offloaded all those extra plants we'd grown during the pandemic, and gained others we'd always wanted.

Orchard Maintenance

An amazing turnout: 34 workers! And what didn't we do? From 9 am to 12 pm, we hoed weeds, dug out invasive grasses, removed suckers, protected the small trees with wire fencing to prevent the deer from snacking on them, painted trunks and limbs to prevent sunburn, and started replacing the worn kiosk roof.

Thanks to a dedicated coalition of volunteers, weeds were cleared from almost every tree.

Bebe, Clark, Alfredo and Gideon clear weeds from under the trees.



Roxy, Christie, and Dick hoe weeds and Alisha greets the workers.



New member Peggy whitewashes tree trunks and branches, Else cuts off suckers, Carmela hangs tree signs, and Jenny prunes dead branches.



Tom volunteered to reroof the kiosk. This turned into a larger project than anticipated as we decided to replace the underlying plywood, and was delayed due to a run to Home Depot for plywood. Here Tom slices off the old kiosk shingles, cuts the plywood sheet in half at an angle by hand since Home Depot couldn't cut the wood at an angle, and Dick and Tucker help hold the new plywood so Tom can screw it on to the frame.



Tucker, Joe, Mark, and Peggy work together to wrap wire fencing around a little tree to protect it from rapacious deer.



Mark dug out invasive fountain grasses: 90% with his shovel, and 10% with his Corona digging fork. He even dug out the grasses on the lemon orchard side of the Orchard. Terri hauled all these weeds off to the brush pile.



Lunch

Alisha deserves a huge "Thank You!" from all of us for buying us lunch. She purchased our lunch from [Lassen's](#) of SLO. We dined on delicious vegan turkey club, vegan hero, Egg salad, tuna, and chicken salad, and turkey sandwiches and a selection of chips. Elaine made us gorgeous cupcakes piled high with icing for dessert. Thank you everyone who helped with this fantastic lunch!





Alisha not only provided us with the special treat of a tasty and healthy lunch, but provided free samples of dried jujubes which she grows commercially. The jujubes are a delicious treat.





It was a delight to see long-time members as well as new faces. Mo, Elaine, and Pat were there, and Pat brought his neighbor David.



Meeting & Plant Exchange



Alisha welcomed everyone to our first in-person meeting in over a year.

New members were invited to choose a plant from the plant exchange. Everyone was encouraged to join the State CRFG organization as well as our local chapter. As Elaine says, "Join CRFG and you will never be lonesome again."

Joe brought bird netting to sell at a member's request. At left, Joe emphasizes that it's stupid to park on the street in front of the Orchard because Cal Poly officers are dedicated to the campus and like to ensure its safety. Also, it's illegal and you will definitely get a ticket.



Alisha expressed her disappointment that of the 300 members who were sent a survey soliciting their input on their desires and dreams for our local chapter, only 25 responded. If you haven't responded and would still like to, please check your email for the link to the survey.

Several survey respondents expressed an interest in visiting the UC Davis plant repository. Alisha asked if members would be interested in this, and a great many were. Tucker will look into making this happen.

Members were also interested in learning more about soil health, fertilizer, pest control, and water.

Let Alisha and Tucker know if, in a future meeting, you would like to talk about what you enjoy doing in your orchard, or would like to volunteer your home as a meeting location.

Folks brought over 80 plants to the plant exchange. After everyone took home the plants they wanted, we still had about 20 left. Because Manny and I have more than enough plants to take care of at home, these were distributed to Manny's soccer buddies, and the remainder were donated to the Green Living Nursery (the one that runs on the honor system) at 4320 South Higuera in San Luis Obispo. (Incidentally, did you know that "Higuera" means fig tree in Spanish?)



Jessie and his daughter Maggie pick out which plants they want from the plant exchange. They were given first choice because of the swing they made and contributed to the orchard. Maggie and Henry also scored with gift certificates to Doc Bernstein's Ice Cream Parlor!