

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!

CONTENTS

Garden of the
Seven Sisters 1

Treasure
Hunting in See
Canyon 1

Editor's
Message 2

Featured Plant:
Tree Collards 3

Through the
Fence 4

Food in
History:
Cranberries 6

Recipes:
Frozen Dessert 7

Review:
Handy Farm
Devices 10

Leaflet
Chronicle 12

Calendar 17

The Garden of the Seven Sisters

The SLO County Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden

—by Andrea Peck, Master Gardener

With the UCCE building full of eager and energetic Master Gardeners sitting just a parking lot away, the empty lot and single 100+ year-old English Walnut tree just didn't stand a chance. Hiding behind the lot's significant slope and unruly weed cover, sat



the tree and enough space to house a garden that would fulfill the need for visual, hands-on and experiential learning for the community. The site is sizeable enough to give fair representation to a large variety of sustainable gardening practices that are scaled to fit inside an urban yard. Abundant landscape plants that grow readily in San Luis Obispo county are located throughout the space. *continued on page 8*

Treasure Hunting in See Canyon

Continuing Dr. D's Apple Breeding Experiment —by Joe Sabol

See Canyon is apple country for San Luis Obispo county. There are many fine apple orchards up this canyon. One of the most interesting and well liked apple growers in See Canyon was Dr. John DeVincenzo. He was more than a grower, he was a member of CRFG and a good friend of our chapter. He was also a visionary apple breeder. He was working hard to find the perfect apple for See Canyon, for San Luis Obispo and for the apple industry!!

He made many crosses between top apple varieties that he thought might create the perfect apple. The seeds from these crosses were planted in a well hidden nursery in See Canyon. The seeds grew and produced about 3,000 *continued on page 11*

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



You may have noticed that I did not send out an issue of this newsletter last November (thanks to all those who asked when they would receive their next issue).

Margaret and I took some time off for holiday visits and

the all-too-common deadlines that our careers load up at the end of the year, and now my attention has returned to publishing this issue of *The Leaflet*.

Margaret had already written some very interesting stories and reviews, and as I began collecting up all the news sent to me by our chapter members, I realized that the last four months of news was going to take up a lot of space!

As a result, this is by far the longest issue ever, at 17 pages! The Master Gardeners had already sent me the story on the Garden of the Seven Sisters, while the story

about Dr. DeVincenzo's apple orchard experiments could not wait. And I received plenty of news stories, plus running the Chronicle for three meetings and the Festival of Fruit.

Fortunately, there's not so much work to do in the garden this time of year, and I have pruned my fruit trees and sprayed the stone fruit trees for peach leaf curl. At least I'm not behind on that. Now I'm ready for the big pruning meeting this weekend. So for this winter, I wish you—

Happy Pruning,
Gary Furer.



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.

"LOVE THY NEIGHBOR, YET PULL NOT
DOWN THY HEDGE"

~ FROM HANDY FARM DEVICES
(REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE)



Featured Plant

Tree Collards

Brassica oleracea
var. acephala

by Michael DiBenedetto

Tree Collards are one of the most amazing and interesting perennial veggies I've ever grown. After 20 years of growing them, I'm still amazed at their multi-dimensional nature. My love affair with TCs has motivated me to send plants to six states. The TC has put a spell on me! Some people mistakenly call them Tree Kale or Walking Stick Kale or Tree Cabbage, but those are different plants. California Hybrid Tree Collards have withstood even light snow in Oregon as well as temperatures in the 90s and 100s here in Walnut Creek, CA.

The Tree Collards I have are probably of the famous strain that passes from neighbor to neighbor and at certain permaculture plant sale circles in the East Bay Area. They have decidedly purplish leaves in late fall and winter with a slightly ruffled margin. This California strain is reputedly more tender and palatable than

Last year at the Golden Gate chapter scion exchange, I collected a little stick of a cutting from something called Tree Collards. Having never heard of this, I had to give it a try. That stick is now a 3-foot tall plant from which I recently starting harvesting. It makes for the sweetest and most tender greens ever, when braised for only 10 minutes! -ed.

other tree collard strains, which are reputedly tough and cabbagey. I've been growing them in a hot Summer climate for 10 years and they have adapted well to the heat.

These perennial veggies are great for the backyard organic vegetable gardener or mini farm as they never stop producing. Tree Collards are high in Calcium and are Sweeter and Tastier than regular collards, especially during the fall, winter, and spring when the weather is cooler and the leaves turn purple.. And it's one of the favorite foods for our chickens.

If you and your family, friends, neighbors eat lots of greens, it's worth it to have at least three tree



The author's Tree Collards

collards growing for abundant, continuous harvests. I've grown plants up to 11' tall and 3' wide and recently heard of them getting to 18' when attached to a wall.

As the plant matures and gets woody, the leaves get smaller on the many side branches. The main

trunk will continue to have super large leaves until you have to prune it. You can limit the main trunk to whatever height you want, and you will still get plenty of the smaller leaves from the side branches.

Propagation

Tree collards rarely go to seed,

continued on page 10



Gary's little Tree Collard plant

Through the Fence

Down South

The Santa Barbara chapter of CRFG is in the process of reorganizing and rejuvenating its group, and they have invited us to attend their meetings. They purposely plan their meetings as to not conflict with the dates of ours.

Marketplace

You may remember that last year the long-time manager of the CRFG, Inc. marketplace, Jack Burgard, retired and the search was on for a new manager. Congratulations to all of us, because the Central Coast Chapter has assumed responsibility for the Marketplace! Nell Wade and Art DeKleine are now managing the effort. The sales materials will be retrieved from their present location in Riverside, and a permanent new location is to be decided soon. Anyone who would like to work on getting individual issues of the Fruit Gardener sold via the internet, please contact Art.



Stephanie Rotter, Dr. Lauren Garner, and Darren Lubich

Scholarships

As we reported last year, Darren Lubich and Stephanie Rotter each received a \$1,000 scholarship from our chapter—the first ever scholarships awarded by our chapter. These were handed out by Dr. Lauren Garner, Professor of Fruit Science at Cal Poly.

Community Service Award

A \$250 grant was awarded by PG&E, to our Central Coast chapter. Marv Daniels applied for the grant. The money will help support our apple grafting program with the local schools.

Donation for Rootstock

It's time to get ready for the 2012 season of apple grafting classes in local schools. This year, we just learned that the Los Olivos Rotary Club Foundation sent us a check for \$130 to cover the cost of 100 apple rootstock for the Santa Ynez High School. Many thanks to Gabrielle Robbins, an active grafter in our chapter, for her work with the Rotary Club and securing this generous donation to us.



Through the Fence continued

Afternoon in the Orchard

Fall is time for housekeeping in our demonstration orchard at Cal Poly. We had a huge pile of compost to spread on the orchard, and Lisen Bonnier donated 2 bales of straw. A great team of volunteers came and worked hard for 90 minutes and got the job done! The straw was spread around each tree and then covered with compost and watered in.

In Memory

Our orchard work day volunteers completed their day by planting a tree in memory of Dr. Tom Ruehr. It is a multi-grafted apple tree with a Fuji central leader and two side-grafted branches of Honey Crisp.

Tom was a soil scientist at Cal Poly whose generous help with establishing the orchard lives on, though he left this world too soon for all of us.



Relaxing after a Good Day in the Orchard

A Good Looking Bunch of Tasters

Joe Sabol's eagle eye noticed that a photo of our Team 1 at the Dave Wilson Nursery 2010 Fruit Tasting was chosen for the new Dave Wilson brochure. The

tasting entailed taking about 100 bites of fruit a day. (Larry quipped that Joe is still bouncing around from all the sugar.)

Backyard Apricots

Do you have a healthy, productive apricot tree south of the grade? Paul Rys is searching for the best apricots that will produce in SLO, and the Scion Exchange is just around the corner! If you have such a tree and wish to donate some scion wood, please send a note to the Leaflet Editor and bring some scion wood to the Scion Exchange. Be sure to indicate where it is grown and what month the fruit ripens.

Get Certified

The Fruit Gardener has a new advertiser: Washington State University. They offer a certificate in Organic Agriculture. Check out their ad in the current issue.



Planting the tree in memory of Dr. Tom Ruehr.

FOOD IN HISTORY

Cranberries

Since ancient times, citrus fruits and fatty meats have been paired; the acid in the fruit cuts the fat in the meat, making the dish more easily digestible. Examples are found in many cultures and cuisines: pork and applesauce; fish & lemon, and duck a l'orange. The Germans and Scandinavians popularized the notion of eating cranberries (the fruit of several small creeping or trailing plants of the genus *Vaccinium*) with meat in the English-speaking world.

It is not certain that the Pilgrims ate cranberries at the first Thanksgiving, held in October of 1621, but it very well may be that the Native Americans brought them to the feast at a

time when the cranberries were at their ripest in that region. In 1796, cranberries were served at the first celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims. By the time Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving in 1863, the pairing of turkey with cranberry sauce was well established.

Native Americans Uses for the Cranberry

The American cranberry (*V. macrocarpon*) is found wild in the greater part of the northeastern United States. Native Americans used cranberries both raw or sweetened with maple sugar.

They also recognized the natural preservative power (benzoic acid) in the berries and often mixed them into pemmican, a high protein combination of crushed cranberries, dried deer meat and melted fat, to extend its shelf

life. Cranberries were also used as a wound medicine and as a dye for rugs and blankets.

A Cranberry by Any Other Name is Just as Tart

In medieval times, cranberries in Britain (*V. oxycoccus*) went under a variety of names such as marsh-wort, fen-wort, and moss-berry. The term cranberry did not appear until the late seventeenth century in America. The name may derive from the name, "craneberry", so called because the small, pink blossoms that appear in the spring resemble the head and bill of a Sandhill crane. These birds are also fond of the berries which grow in bogs where cranes make their home.

In 17th century New England cranberries were sometimes called "bearberries" as bears were often seen feeding on them. Cranberries are also known as bounceberries, because they literally bounce if dropped when fresh. The Native Americans of New England called them sas-samensesh or ibimi. In Canada, cranberries are often referred to by their Amerindian name of atoca.

Cranberries Customs in Early America

In 1550, James White Norwood made reference to Indians using cranberries. In James Rosier's book "The Land of Virginia" there is an account of Europeans coming ashore and being met with Indians bearing bark cups full of cranberries. In 1663, the Pilgrim cookbook appears with a recipe



Cranberry vines growing in a bog photo by www.JohnHarveyPhoto.com

LEAFLET RECIPES

Evelyn's Berry Buttermilk Frozen Dessert

from Evelyn Ruehr

- 1 pound fresh strawberries, (raspberries or blackberries can be used, or any combination of two or three.)
 - 2/3 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 Tablespoon kirsch or vodka (optional)
 - 2 cups buttermilk
 - 1 teaspoon fresh squeezed lemon juice
1. Rinse and hull the berries. (I usually remove some of the seeds as I do this.)
 2. Slice berries into bowl. Add sugar and kirsch or vodka (if using). Stir, cover and let stand at room temperature for 1 hour.
 3. Purée the berries, any liquid, buttermilk and lemon juice in blender or food processor till smooth. (If you are fortunate enough to have an immersion blender, purée directly in bowl.)
 4. Refrigerate for a minimum of one hour
 5. Process in an ice cream freezer according to manufacturer's instructions.

Cranberries continued

for cranberry sauce. In 1667, New Englanders sent to King Charles 10 barrels of cranberries, 3 barrels of codfish and some Indian corn as a means of appeasement for his anger over their local coining of the Pine Tree shilling.

Within the 1672 book "New England Rarities Discovered" author John Josselyn described cranberries, writing: "Sauce for the Pilgrims, cranberry or bearberry, is a small trailing plant that grows in salt marshes that are overgrown with moss. The berries are of a pale yellow color, afterwards red, as big as a cherry, some perfectly round, others oval, all of them hollow with sower (sic) astringent taste; they are ripe in August and September. They are excellent against the Scurvy. They are also good to allay the fervor of hoof diseases. The Indians and English use them mush, boyling (sic) them with sugar for sauce to eat with their meat; and it is

a delicate sauce, especially with roasted mutton. Some make tarts with them as with gooseberries."

Cranberry Cultivation and Production

Cranberries grow on vines and require an acid peat soil, an adequate fresh water supply, sand, and a growing season that stretches from April to November, including a dormancy period in the winter months that provides an extended chilling period, necessary to mature fruiting buds.

In 1816, American Revolutionary War veteran Henry Hall first commercially grew cranberries in East Dennis, Massachusetts on Cape Cod. In the 1840s, the Howes and Early Black varieties were cultivated in Massachusetts.

By 1871, the first association of cranberry

growers in the United States had formed. Cranberry sauce was first commercially canned in 1912 by the Cape Cod Cranberry Company which marketed the product as "Ocean Spray Cape Cod Cranberry Sauce." Currently, U.S. farmers harvest approximately 40,000 acres of cranberries each year. An undamaged cranberry vine will survive a very long time; some vines in Massachusetts are more than 150 years old.



The Garden of the Seven Sisters continued

The garden's main goals – to demonstrate sustainable gardening practices for the people of San Luis Obispo county and act as an outdoor classroom for teaching conservation of natural resources, supporting wildlife and demonstrating safe methods of producing food, while keeping scale appropriate for the average homeowner – are clearly represented and ample in scope.

Divided into sections, the garden hosts specific areas all with a defined purpose. Upon entering, a circular bed meets visitors with a mass of towering hollyhocks and sunflowers that sway as if in greeting. The pathway traverses the hill and to the left of the entrance is a neat array of drought tolerant lawn alternatives. A series of raised vegetable beds made from a variety of recycled materials, such as broken concrete “urbanite” and cinder blocks, gives gardeners a sampling of what is possible with



the “leftovers.” A bed designed for wheelchair access points out that gardening can be enjoyed by all.

Further down the hill are the "Pollinator Garden," and "Sunshine Garden." This area claims a portion of the younger community – a demonstration for teachers and parents that need a place to learn more

from blue-colored rock and a boat sit ready for play next to a terracotta whale. A small bridge leads from the magical place to an open space that will be designed with fire-safe landscaping in the future. An orchard of trees follows the upswing of the path. Pear, persimmon and citrus make up a small portion of the multitude. Some of these fruit trees have been planted within the same hole to demonstrate multiple trees in a small space. The use of mulch pits in order to let water permeate thoroughly into the soil, and berms to catch runoff, are sustainable methods used to conserve precious resources. A succulent and cactus garden, California native section and wildlife station, complete with bird, bat and raptor homes show more ideas for conserving and providing habitat for local

about garden-based learning. Butterfly and bird homes are functional and aesthetic, while imagination runs wild in the “Storybook Garden.” Here Peter Rabbit and his siblings have room to roam while an ocean made



Ripe tomatoes in October.

The Garden of the Seven Sisters continued

wildlife. Along the perimeter, the fence holds grapevines, blueberry, blackberry and raspberry bushes, as well as espaliered fruit trees. Tomatoes poke up throughout the garden, while a mallow, a gift from a bird, remains as a testament to the beauty in the unintentional. A weather station, that records rainfall, wind, temperature and soil moisture, keeps watch in the middle of the garden.

Creating the garden was not all rosy. The slope had its ups and downs in the beginning. Most difficult was adhering to code in order to get approved for wheelchair access. The level was a familiar tool along the pathway during hot construction days. Creating garden areas that did not negatively impact surrounding residences in terms of water runoff was another consideration. This problem ended with berms

and swales that slow and utilize water where needed. Weeds were often resistant. Lasagna/sheet mulching with cardboard, compost and wood chips proved a good method in most places.

Monthly workshops are held to a packed house at this Garden of the Seven Sisters. These "Advice to Grow By" workshops take place under the arbor and throughout the garden. Master Gardener volunteers research and demonstrate a wide range of topics from composting, pruning and water conservation to the particulars of growing vegetable and landscape plants. Visitors learn the ideology behind sustainability and the latest science-based gardening techniques.

The exact cultivar of the English



Weed abatement

Walnut tree that resides on the property continues to elude UC specialists. Though it persists in anonymity, it is no longer alone.



The Garden of the Seven Sisters is home to monthly gardening workshops held by the Master Gardeners of San Luis Obispo. Their schedule is available at: <http://ucanr.org/sites/mgslo>

A sample of upcoming events:

January 21, 2012
Workshop: Pruning Fruit Trees

March 17, 2012
Workshop: Rodent Control

April 21, 2012
Workshop: Plant Propagation

The Leaflet Review

Handy Farm Devices and How to Make Them. by Rolfe Cobleigh. Published in 1909 by Orange Judd Company and published again in 1996 by The Lyons Press

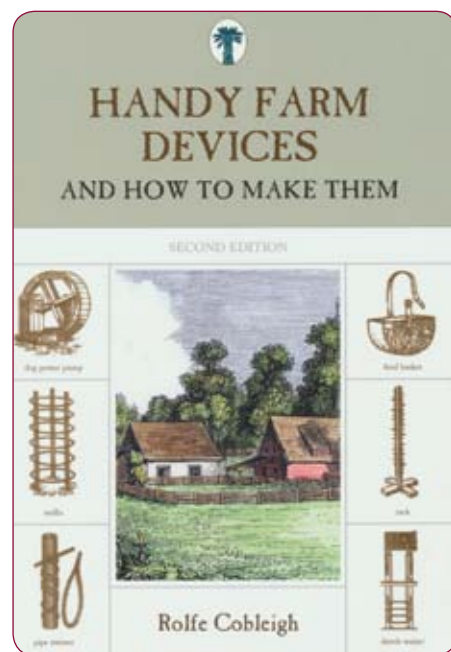
An entertaining history of farming and homesteading in America, Rolfe Cobleigh collected a large and varied amount of methods, devices, hints, and advice from his experience as a self-sufficient farmer during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Some, like "how to carry butter to town" may never be called on again, but *Handy Farm Devices* also includes many farming methods and devices pertinent to today such as "tying useful knots."

Of particular interest to the modern gardener and orchardist is the Garden and Orchardist chapter where one can learn how to build an iron hoop trellis, a shelter for newly transplanted plants, a homemade fruit picker, an orchard ladder on wheels, and also read advice on moving and transplanting trees. Other devices that might come in handy include:

- Bridge for a small stream
- Tackle and pulley system for pulling stumps
- Easy open gate and a gate that never sags
- Stalls, coops, and brooders
- Bag holder

Handy Farm Devices also preserves the know-how needed to live comfortably and healthfully on a farm in the days before electricity and refrigeration. The following methods are detailed:

- Filter system to keep cistern water clean
- Water supply for a farmhouse—hot and cold running water, water supply systems with pressure tank in the basement
- How to keep food cool in the summer by making a cooler from a barrel sunk into the ground.



Cobleigh's purpose for writing his book was to "education toward putting more thought into our work and doing what we have to do the easiest, the cheapest and the quickest way." Ultimately, he hoped his work would help readers "...make progress toward greater prosperity, greater happiness and greater usefulness," goals worth having in any era.

Tree Collards continued

and when they do, the seeds seldom grow true to the mother plant. The preferred propagation method is by rooting of cuttings. The most important aspect to making new plants is to make sure you take cuttings prior to your mother plant getting too woody. It is highly recommended that you start to make new plants for yourself and others between year one and year two. If you don't, you will end up with a mature tree collard that becomes too

woody to take successful cuttings. My three-year-old plants growing in full sun in Zone 9 are now too woody to make new cuttings. "Too woody" means that even when I cut the first 4 - 6 inches of a top branch, the woodiness has crept too close to the apical meristem (tip of the branch). Cuttings don't grow well when taken from woody branches because they have to root from the cambium layer and there isn't much of one on woody stems.

Once you have some

mature plants, please do your part in making new plants

Michael DiBenedetto operates Strategies for Healthy Living and MindBody Health Coaching, Your Path Toward Optimum Wellness, in the Walnut Creek area. He may be contacted at 925-899-2785. Visit his blog at <http://treecollards.blogspot.com/>. He is also a contributor to The Garden Web <http://forums.gardenweb.com/>

Treasure Hunting in See Canyon continued

seedlings that Dr. DeVincenzo was proud to show us when we had a CRFG meeting in See Canyon back in September 2007.

Unfortunately, Dr. DeVincenzo died in 2009 and never saw or tasted any fruit from these apple seedlings. Just recently, we learned that the nursery would have to be removed to make room for a new home!!! On very short notice, a very few CRFG volunteers were recruited to come to the nursery and collect scionwood from these precious seedlings.

The scionwood was collected and placed in cold storage. Some of the scions were clearly identified as to the parentage. In other words, we know the two varieties that were crossed to make the seedling!! Many seedlings are not identified but, we are confident he made some crosses that should produce very outstanding apples!!!

Now for the good news. If YOU have an apple tree in your back yard, you will be invited and encouraged to participate in a very special program.



Dr DeVincenzo talks among his apple seedlings in 2007

We will give you several different apple scions (three buds on each) to graft to YOUR apple tree. We will ask you to graft these scions on to your apple tree and grow at least ONE apple on each new shoot in 2013. YOU could be growing Dr. DeVincenzo's perfect apple on your tree!!! You might not be the only one growing this apple so record-keeping will be very important. Another person might be growing the same apple in a very different

location than where you live!!! YOU will be an important part of this long term project.

We will all bring our "Dr. D" apples to the meeting in October or November of 2013 for the big evaluation/tasting party!!!! You will not want to miss this meeting!!!

So, if you do not feel comfortable grafting these precious scions to your apple tree, you need to pay close attention to the grafting

demonstrations at our meeting in February!!!!

The bottom line... we will all become treasure hunters, actively looking for the perfect apple that Dr. DeVincenzo had dreamed about. He made the important decisions, planted the seeds... now it is our challenge, to grow the scion and see if we can find the treasure, the perfect apple!!



The crew after collecting scion wood from those trees in 2012

LEAFLET CHRONICLE

September 10, 2011 Nojoqui Farms

Our September meeting was held at Nojoqui Farms south of Buellton just off of Highway 101 in Santa Barbara County. We began with a moment of silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the September 11, 2011 terrorist attack, and for those who have sacrificed during the subsequent years in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Larry Hollis opened the meeting. Patty was under the weather and we missed her lively contributions. Those who carpooled to the meeting were recognized. We continue to suggest carpooling to our meetings, as parking is often limited, and it also helps to decrease pollution. Maybe we could use social media

to better coordinate the logistics of carpooling. Any ideas can be passed to Larry or Art DeKleine.

Fifty-three people attended, which was the number that Harry Toy guessed and for that he won a Best Plum tree. Two in attendance were members of the Santa Barbara chapter.

Marv and Pet were unable to attend. Mo volunteered to pick the door prize winner, who was presented with an apricot tree.

Lisen Bonnier brought a big box of delicious pears from her orchard.

Al King, our speaker for the day, was introduced and took the microphone to describe the farming operations. Nojoqui is an 80-acre certified organic farm serving the New Frontiers markets. It is also a consolidation point in that they swap organic produce with other certified

farms. A major part of the soil fertility program is the compost operations. Vegetable scraps from the San Luis Obispo store are incorporated into the compost.

The number of plants growing at any given time is a moving target; currently they have 6 to 8 varieties of winter squash (some of these will go to Whole Foods Market), bell peppers, kale, chard, leeks, parsley, lettuce, onions, cabbage, and cucumbers.

As we strolled by the farmlands, Al described the various techniques used in organic farming to control pests. Cover crops are the cornerstone of the soil fertility program. He uses a product called Peaceful Valley Mix which contains barley, oats, and vetches. In the orchard, the cover crop is common vetch and annual rye grass as this keeps a low level cover crop. There is a rich biological mix in cover crops with predatory insects. He also plants flowers on the edges of the fields to encourage beneficial insects to help control aphids. Alyssum is planted with kale, lettuce, and cabbage. Calendula is also used. The pollen of the flowers encourage pollen-eating wasps who in turn lay eggs in aphids which are killed when the larva hatch. He will be ordering parasitic nematodes to help control the cucumber beetles. To control ants in his peach trees, he puts tangle foot around the trees. Old fashioned scarecrows



Al teaches us about organic farming

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

September Meeting continued

are used to discourage crows from eating seed as it is planted. Deer and wild pigs are not too much of a problem but gophers are. For these Al uses an arsenal of different types of traps and he has owl houses to invite the gophers natural predator to the neighborhood. Bluebirds are also invited to take residence in smaller birdhouses. Western bluebirds only eat insects, particularly they love Argentine ants. "Bluebirds are your friends," Al said.

Next we toured the odiferous compost piles. Nine piles were lined up starting from the newest to the oldest. The composition of the compost is about 3/4 horse ranch waste consisting of manure and bedding, and 1/4 vegetable trimmings. Al takes temperature readings with two soil thermometers: a deep and shallow reading at 6 points per pile 3 days per week. He applies water according to the temperature. When the temperature reaches about 140 degrees, he turns the compost. The turning of the compost



We inspect the compost pile

prevents alcohol production and flammability. With fresh material, the nitrogen level is higher. The ideal is to not lose nutrients into the atmosphere. The turning method is to turn the outside to the inside and the inside to the outside. "It's a sort of dance routine with the tractor," Al said. Compost is spread on the fields at a ratio of 8 yards per acre.

Our tour stopped next at the peach orchard. The seven year-old orchard produced 18,000 peaches last year. This year there were less blossoms so there may only be 9,000 produced. The orchard covers 3/4 of an acre and Al feels that about 12,000

peaches is a good average production to aim for. One of the best inventions ever, according to Al, is tree rope. This is a flat rope that is used to wrap around the tree to support the branches. It is used in lieu of propping up individual branches and should be applied before the trees leaf out. Watering of the orchard is achieved through micro-sprinklers which are set to water for 12 to 16 hours periodically throughout the year.

Al checks the moisture level of the orchard by taking measurements with a hand held meter of two probes that are buried 18 and 30 inches deep.

Rows of cucumbers were growing just west of the orchard. To control downy mildew on the cucumbers, Al uses compost made of the cucumber leaves. To grow cucumbers that are straight and green, Al ties them up so they dangle, letting gravity do its work on them.



Winter squash storage at the farm

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

September Meeting continued

Our tour came to an end and Al said that he had fun and it was good to be part of the Central Coast Chapter again. "I hope you learned something," he said. And we surely did.

October 8, 2011 The Garden of the Seven Sisters

As a result of the Festival of Fruit being held in November, our last "official" Central Coast CRFG meeting was October 8th and held at the SLO Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, named "the Garden of the Seven Sisters."

Although 85 (I think!) was the number that won in the "name how many attended" contest at 1:30, there were over 100 people when the meeting got underway!

The Demo Garden is a young garden (only 2 years since breaking ground), yet there's much going on—from the turf replacement plot, pollinator garden, sunshine garden (our Garden Based Learning plot), kitchen garden and new orchard, to the speaker/meeting area. There's still more to come, such as Landscaping for Fire Safety, propagating area, etc. Many thanks to Joe Sabol, Larry Hollis and Tom Spellman of Dave Wilson Nursery with their direction, aid and free fruit trees.

Besides having an amazing fruit tasting going on, the agenda was chock full. Larry and Patti updated us on CRFG news. A couple Master Gardeners talked about the history of the garden and Charles Davis, lead gardener



Marv's clinic on sharpening garden tools

of the Orchard, spoke on the orchard, then brought people to the orchard to answer specific questions. Marv Daniels also had a demonstration on how to sharpen garden tools. But the highlight of the meeting was the talk by the Beach Tractors!

What, you might ask, is a Beach Tractor? It's not a piece of machinery that works only on sand, rather it's a group of people from Morro Bay that took on a challenge thrown down by Sunset magazine (who tried this with staff first before opening it up to a contest to all its readers, narrowed it down to 10 teams from the Western states) and they won! Three representatives of the group came by to talk to us, and what a talk it was!

The concept of the challenge was simple – put together a feast that your group made, but the follow-through was anything but simple. They needed to submit a

menu of what they would make and then figure out how to make it. This sounds easy right? But when you throw in the requirement that not only do you have to cook a meal, you have to personally create the ingredients, and this became intense. They seeded and grew oysters; drew and processed gallons of ocean water to make sea salt; raised (and "harvested") chickens for both eggs and meat; raised grain for beer; took care of a succession of goats for milk, and of course grew several vegetable gardens. Whew!

There were a few things that made them unique from the other teams. For instance, since they lived relatively close to each other, bicycles became the mode of transportation. Another big difference was they actually created two feasts on two separate days. One was the expected version (a unique twist was it was staged on a large boat cruising the harbor,) but the second was the kid's feast.

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued



The Beach Tractors group gets a basket of tomatoes

The children of this group (over a dozen of varying ages) had their own garden which they tended and cared for themselves. Part of their feast was squash fritter faces that they “decorated” with their produce, and lemon ice for dessert.

There were things that worked real well for them (sea salt), and others that didn't work at all, (tomatoes and peppers, creating sugar from sugar cane). But overall, they had an amazing – and costly - experience. It opened up the world of gardening to some (imagine tackling a project like this without ever having grown a radish!), a true sense of community to others and a sense of purpose for all. They have said they want to figure a way to keep the children's garden going in the future, as it was such a success. To find out more about the Beach Tractors, check out the April issue of Sunset magazine.

As both a Master Gardener and a CRFG member, I was thrilled

to have this meeting take place in the Demo Garden. I hope this can become an annual event where we can learn from each other!

-Nell Wade

November The Festival of Fruit

The poster for the Festival of Fruit, held by the Arizona CRFG

chapter, advised us to ...Prepare to be surprised and amazed by the varieties of fruiting plants that can be successfully grown and propagated in the low desert of the Phoenix Arizona area.

Joe summed it up well:
"The tours were great. Hospitality warm and genuine. The food was good. The speakers were a wide variety of experts with a solid focus on Pomegranates!! Spirit was high The facilities were excellent at the University. Fruit tasting (Pomegranates)—amazing!!! Their entire team worked hard to make this Festival memorable for all. And the Arizona weather was — cool!!

"We had more Central Coast Chapter Members than at ANY other Festival (other than our own)!!! See photo of our Central Coast Chapter with Jenny Hom. We're all very proud of the Arizona chapter"



Joe, Danielle, Carol, Patti, DP, Robert, Art, Sara, John
Larry, Nell, Jenny, Patti, Choung, Mehe, Owen

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

December Holiday Potluck

Our December pot-luck meeting was a big effort and a very memorable event! As always, we had great food (fruit growers are cooks, too!), a plant exchange, sign-ups for next year's officers, and time for fellowship. But this time, we had home-made ice cream tasting for dessert! It was unbelievably good and fun. Joe was ecstatic:

"Ice cream tasting and lesson, a fantastic program!! We all learned a lot and loved tasting—over 500 scoops of ice cream were served! Everyone knew how much prep and extra work this program required. It was a team effort with Art and Evelyn



The plant sale attracts a lot of people

leading. And Art bringing a freezer to PG&E—not everyone hauls a freezer to meeting!!! Evelyn lugs those coffee makers along and has great preparation skills too!!

"The plant sale/exchange was success with quality plants and great fund raiser, many happy takers!! Rootstock pre-sales were brisk and cash was collected!! New members came and joined, gave us e-mail addresses!!

"The clean up crew might have been the best ever. The place was spotless!! John Lindsey joined us for the meeting, and will be happy when he shows up on Monday to inspect.

"Officers and Board members said YES to Lark Carter as he prepared for elections next month!!! Plenty of food (food left over!!) We had enough meat after all!!

"People wore red (as they were told.) What a cheerful meeting!! "



The crew gets ready to serve ice cream

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 and, 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.

January 14, 2011.

Annual Pruning Meeting.

The corner of Highland and Mt. Bishop Road, at the Crops Unit on the Cal Poly campus. 1:30 p.m.

February 18, 2011.

Annual Grafting Event and Scion Exchange at the Crops Unit on the Cal Poly campus. This meeting will be on the **third** Saturday. 1:30 p.m.

Check the website for more details.

www.crfg-central.org/calendar.htm

January 14:
Our annual pruning workshop at the Crops Unit on the campus of Cal Poly. This is a very popular meeting so plan to join the crowd.

Refreshments by the A through G group. (This means that if your last name begins with one of these letters, it's your chance to bring refreshments if you want!)

The featured "Guest Pruner" and instructor Dan Lassanske will speak on the "principles of fruit tree pruning," followed by a demonstration and then a real "hands on" pruning workshop in the CRFG Demonstration Orchard.

Trees to be pruned include plums, peaches, nectarines, Asian pears, pluots and cherries. No experience is necessary, and it is an important job and pure fun! Bring your pruning shears, clippers, loppers, handsaws, and gloves if you want the most hands-on opportunity.

The Cal Poly Farm Stand and orchard u-pick will be open from 10:00 to 2:00 on this day. They will be sure to have u-pick Satsuma! In case you haven't eaten a Satsuma, it is a small citrus fruit, Citrus unshiu, similar to a Clementine or Mandarin orange, which has a loose skin that is very easy to peel, and the fruit is very sweet and usually seedless. In addition, the farm stand presently has walnuts left

as well as Organic carrots, rutabagas, cilantro, kale and assorted squash.

February 18:

You can start your own fruit trees on this day, and you can learn how to have several varieties of fruit on one tree. Come early for grafting lessons and the best selection of free scion wood to graft to the rootstock you purchase, or to your own mature trees. There will be rootstock and grafting supplies for sale. Refreshments by H through R group.

A trove of useful information on preparation for a scion exchange has been posted by the Golden Gate chapter at http://www.crfg.org/chapters/golden_gate/scionex.htm, including:

- What is a "Scion Exchange"?
- What Should You Bring?
- How Do You Prepare and Store Scion Wood?
- Making the Best of the Scion Exchange - What to Bring, How to Choose Varieties, What to do with the Scions
- Labels for Scions You Bring to the Exchange
- Expired Plant Patents (previously-patented plant materials allowed in 2012 Exchange)

CONTACTS

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