



Central Coast Chapter CRFG

January 2022 Newsletter
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January Meetings 2022

There was no "regular/second Saturday" pruning workshop meeting at our CRFG Demonstration Orchard at Cal Poly.

There will be some pruning demonstrations and "Mini Scion Exchanges" at the end of January and early February. Seth McMillan is having a public scion exchange (described below).

Several other exchanges will be **open to members only**. Tucker is hosting one on January 29th. Dick Pottratz sent out an email to members on January 16th describing the events and their locations. Please refer to that email for details.

Seth's "Mini Scion Exchange South SLO County" -- January 28th!!!

One of our Co-Chairs, Seth McMillan, is hosting a scion exchange at his place in Nipomo. Seth is calling it the "2022 CRFG Mini Scion Exchange South SLO County" and it's open to the public.

- DATE/ TIME: Friday, January 28th from 1pm to 4pm
- LOCATION: McMillan Farmstead Nursery and Orchard., 601 Camino Caballo, Nipomo
- CONTACT INFO: Seth McMillan (805)714-5937
mcmillanfarmstead@gmail.com



Seth and Keri

"It's a pruning demo and scion swap. Come on by and pick up a few scions and peruse the nursery. I will be out in the orchard doing our winter pruning. Bring your scions to share!"

SCION WOOD AVAILABLE: Several apricot, peach, plum, pluot, nectaplum, and nectarine varieties, in addition to avocado.

SEEDLINGS AVAILABLE: White sapote, cherimoya, and avocado rootstock will be available for sale through the nursery. All rootstock proceeds will be donated to the CRFG scholarship fund.

Pruning Information

January is the time to start pruning your deciduous trees and saving your best producing scion wood. This scion wood can be used to graft onto your other trees of same species or trade with other fruit growers. There is some great information about pruning in previous newsletters. Check out the archived January Leaflets on our Website. Each pruning presenter has something valuable to offer.

<https://www.crfg-central.org/newsletters>

- January 2020 features Dean Harrell, Cuesta College North County Instructor.
- January 2019 features Tom Spellman, Dave Wilson Nursery Salesman. There is a good article about Backyard Orchard Culture (includes Pruning) at his Website at <https://www.davewilson.com/tom-spellman/>
- January 2018 features Dr. Laura Garner, Cal Poly Fruit Science professor. She shared her top 8 tips for Successful Fruit Tree Pruning.

The CRFG, Inc Website has some good pruning videos. Go to the section called "The Orchard," then click on Video Gallery. You'll find 5 pages of videos demonstrating how to prune, graft, and propagate your fruit trees. Our own video star Joe Sabol is in several of these videos. Here's the Website address:

<https://crfg.org/home/library/crfg-inc-video-gallery/>

Our local chapter Website has a pruning page with some interesting information. You can find it here:

<https://www.crfg-central.org/pruning>

Finally, John Valenzuela produced an excellent video about saving scion wood. You can find it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=042ugo3x-TY>

Looking Ahead: February 2022 Meeting

There will be no "regular" annual scion exchange at Cal Poly that was traditionally on the 3rd weekend in February.

February 4th & 5th

Robert and Carol are having two Mini Scion Exchanges. See Dick Pottratz's January 16th email. Please refer to that email for instructions on signing up. These events are limited in size and you must email Robert & Carol before attending.

There may be some more Mini Scion Exchanges to be determined and announced later. They may be open to the public or only members of our local Central Coast Chapter.

So, if you or a friend wants to be notified of those by email, be sure to join our organization. For membership applications to our Central Coast Chapter and the parent organization CRFG, Inc., see the "About / Join Us" section on our Website:

<https://www.crfg-central.org/about>

South County Bounty!



Here's what's being harvested now on the South Coast of SLO County. Strawberry guava, late apple, orange, passion fruit, lemon, feijoa, green sapote, goldenberry and tangerine.

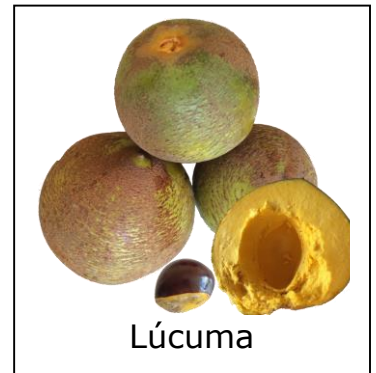
Spotlight on Fruit

Lúcuma (loo cu ma)

Genus species: *Pouteria lúcuma*

Family: Sapotaceae

Lúcuma is a bit of a mystery to some CRFG members. Sharon Lovelady introduced it to many of us at our December 2021 Holiday meeting. She is a bit of an expert since it turns out her late father, Alfredo Chiri, introduced the fruit to the United States about 30 years ago.



See the separate interview with Sharon in this newsletter.

Here's the description of lúcuma fruit from Wikipedia:

"*Pouteria lúcuma* is a species of tree in the family Sapotaceae, cultivated for its fruit, the lúcuma. It is native to the Andean valleys of Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru. When eaten raw, the very sweet fruit is bright yellow and has a mealy and dry texture. In Peru, it is more commonly used as a flavor in juice, milk shakes, and especially ice cream. Its unique flavor in such preparations has been described variously as being similar to sweet potato, maple syrup, or butterscotch. In Peru, manjar de lúcuma (dulce de leche with lúcuma purée) is a dessert."

Nutrition: "Lúcuma pulp has a 64-72% moisture content. The pulp also contains glucose, fructose, sucrose, inositol, citric acid, and succinic acid. However, only limited nutritional information is available for lúcuma powder, indicating moderate content of protein and iron, each providing 14% of the Daily Value in a 100-g (3.5 oz) serving, which supplies 420 Calories."

Research on the Web reveals there are lots of products on the market. Lúcuma in powder form seems to be the easiest to obtain. There are products for people and pets (Chewy.com)! I have yet to find a source for the frozen fruit but Goya Brand sells it. Let me know if you find a good source for fresh or frozen fruit and I'll share it in the next newsletter!

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Robert and Carol Scott grow lúcumá. Carol said some of their fruit is ripe NOW!! She also shared some info about the texture: "We cut it in half and ate it plain. It has the consistency of a hardboiled egg. We choked it down! It is much better in smoothies."

Robert wrote this about his several trees that are over 15 years old. These trees are grown on the Arroyo Grande Mesa.

"I have two from Alfredo Chiri that I got at a CRFG conference in Orange County or Pomona many years ago. There are mainly two species, one from Lowlands and one from Highlands. I have *Pouteria lúcumá de Palo*-ssp. *obovata* 'Inca Gold' and *Lúcumá de Seda* -*pouteria Lúcumá* ssp. *bitera* and I have two other seedlings from different sources. They (two) have fruit holding right now too!

Jack Swords, another long time CRFG member, grows lúcumá in Nipomo. He wrote this in an email message:

"As far as lúcumá, I have a tree about 20 ft tall that has fruit on it. The fruit is not ripe now and falls when it is ready. The tree is about 25 years old, has been frosted back considerably-- back before global warming. Has not suffered any frost damage for over 10 years. Nice evergreen tree, self pollinates, strange little flowers that don't accept my attempts at pollination, a fruit that, to me, resembles a sweet potato, but some people think it is like caramel or maple. It is rather dry, not particularly juicy. It is pleasant and not a bit offensive. I have several others from different localities all resourced from Peru and/or Chile (originally). Seeds from fruit are viable and grow quickly initially. Seed scar needs to be planted down."

"Is it worth growing? Of course, as a novelty and pleasant out-of-hand fruit to eat. Apparently some have ascribed health benefits to the fruit and powder made from the fruit. I have not tried drying the fruit, but drying white sapote, persimmons, etc. usually concentrates the flavor of the fruit. I dry quite a bit of fruit to use backpacking. Now I need to try Lúcumá this year..."



Robert and Carol Scott next to their 20-year-old lúcumá tree.

The following video about lúcumá is by Edgar Valdivia and Alfredo Chiri.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWxAqoi6p30>

The article in this link called “Cultivation of Neglected Tropical Fruits With Promise” has information about lúcumá and related fruits. It is a Dept of Agriculture document from 1978.

<https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10524/49150/canistel.pdf>

SPOTLIGHT ON CHAPTER OFFICERS & MEMBERS

This will be part of an ongoing series. Tom Sheldon has been interviewing some of our officers so everyone can learn what committees they are on and what they are doing. He’s also interviewing members so everyone can share information about what they are growing, their soil, their location, their microclimate, and their successes and challenges.

Here are two more interviews taken at the December 2021 holiday meeting.

Conversation with Sharon Chiri-Lovelady and Larry Lovelady.

I interviewed Sharon and Larry at the Holiday meeting. Later, during the regular meeting, Sharon was asked to stand and talk about her father (her comments follow the interview below). We also had a side conversation about some volunteer work she is starting at Paso Robles High School. She wants to donate some trees and start a rare fruit orchard and also get the students involved in plotting out the location of rare fruits grown by CRFG members on a county map. She is hoping to gather information from members about what they are growing and the location.



Editor’s note: Sharon is our chapter’s newly elected Program Committee Chair. She is busy finding locations and presenters for future chapter meetings or speakers for Zoom meetings. If you want to join her committee, contact her. See recent email from Dick Pottratz.

Tom: Tell me about your orchard, what you're doing and where do you live?

Sharon: We live in San Miguel—actually Independence Ranch--Hog Canyon area. So we have dragon fruit, calamondin, probably about six or seven varieties of figs, pomegranates, cherries, oranges.

Tom: What's the size of the orchard?

Larry: Five acres, the different orchards combined are only on about an acre of the property.

Tom: How's your water supply?

Sharon: We're on a well. We have plenty of water. What else? I was just trying to think about the orchard. We have a variety of berries, grapes...table grapes. We have mini-orchards around the property.

Tom: Do you have a design in mind?

Larry: It's hers.

Sharon: Yeah, my Dad was a master gardener and a rare fruit grower down in Huntington Beach. He ran the arboretum at Cal State Fullerton. He brought the first lúcumas to the United States. Our family is from Peru. Unfortunately, I can't get them to grow well where I am, but anybody on the coast can.

Tom: So what are you harvesting now?

Larry: We just got a bunch of oranges.

Sharon: We still have figs so I brought some fig muffins and fig paste today. I guess it is kind of rare that we still have figs on the trees. It's been really hot up there...up until today. It was 25 degrees when we got up this morning. Of course our citrus is doing really well. We've got navel oranges. We have what is called an Orangelo in the United States. It usually doesn't produce fruit until February. I don't know what this cold weather is going to do. I hope it doesn't knock off all my flowers. We've got Calamondin and for some reason the one tree my dad gave me...I get fruit all year! It must really like where it's growing. We just harvested pomegranates.

Tom: What are you doing with the pomegranates? It takes me about a week to eat one.

Sharon: We give a lot away and I freeze them. I freeze them whole and that way they keep their flavor. We juice them too. There are only so many pomegranates that two people can eat. The grandkids love them.

Tom: Your grandkids will enjoy your orchard for years to come I'm sure.

Sharon: Oh yeah, they love the fruit and help in the orchard all the time. We just planted about 70 acorns. We have an oak tree...

Larry: It has dropped thousands of acorns.

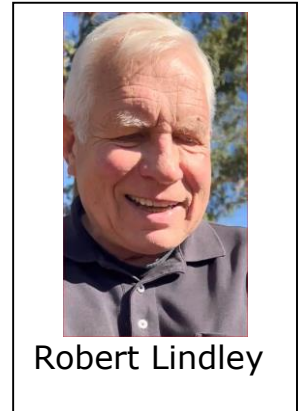
Sharon: The Farmers' Almanac says that in years when you are going to get a lot of rain, you get a lot of acorns. So the kids and I potted them. Then on arbor day in April, we are going to plant some on parts of the property we don't use. We also want to donate some oak trees to members.

Later, during the regular meeting, Sharon Lovelady was asked to stand and talk about her father.

Sharon: My father was Alfredo Cheri (pronounced "keeri") and he managed the arberatum at Cal State Fullerton. (some members in the audience responded that they knew Alfredo). I got the love of growing rare fruits from him. My family is from Peru. My father brought the lúcuma here probably 30 years ago. He had been on a visit to Peru and brought some lúcuma back with him in his pocket. He wouldn't even put them in his luggage. At the house where he and his wife lived, there are two huge lúcuma trees that are at least 12 feet tall. Edgar Valdivia continued with the lúcumas at his place (more response from members who know Edgar). So I tried growing them at my house but didn't have much luck. It's good to hear that others are growing them. A lot of my dad's friends down in Southern California are growing lúcuma. It makes great ice cream. My daughter, who has a masters in ag, teaches ag at a youth authority in Texas. One of her senior projects was on marketing lúcuma. I have a lot of recipes for lúcuma I can share. (crowd applauds).

Conversation with Robert Lindley and Robert Scott

I recorded this interview with Robert (Bob) Lindley while standing in the food line at the CRFG Holiday meeting. Robert Scott was also in line and contributed some comments later in the interview. Newsletter editor Jenny Weaver added the scientific names.



Tom: Tell me your name for the recording, where you live, and what's going on.

Bob: I'm Robert Lindley, Robert or Bob, and I live in Los Osos. In my front yard I have two oranges, I have two guavas, a pineapple guava and a strawberry guava. I have a blackjack fig and an elderberry. And a loquat. In the back yard, I have *Pouteria*...

Tom: I don't know what a *Pouteria* is...

Ed note: Bob is referring to genus Pouteria, species lúcumá

Bob: It's the same thing that Robert Scott was talking about...*lúcumá*. And I have two apples and a pear with a couple of different pears on it.

Tom: How old are these trees.

Bob: About 5 to 7 years. They are not getting very big. Los Osos is sandy soil and it seems to stunt things.

Tom: Have you planted anything out there that just didn't grow?

Bob: Yeah, a lot. The tangerine didn't grow. I think it needs more heat. The pears are doing really well. The guavas are doing really well.

Tom: What are you harvesting right now?

Bob: Guava! (laughing) Right now. They come in December. I want to put a persimmon out there. I just haven't been able to get it with the pandemic. Shipping is a problem. Last year I couldn't get it. Maybe this year.

Robert Scott joined the conversation here as we moved closer to the food table. The conversation turned to lúcumá.

Robert Scott: I brought a couple of lúcumá seedlings for the drawing. There is one with moist fruit. Not moist like a peach. The Inca Gold are moist. They drop out of the tree.

Bob: Do they break when they hit the ground?

Robert Scott: No. Not usually. The other seedling has dryer fruit. Have you ever had eggfruit...canistel (also known as yellow sapote). It's very dry and it's sweet and good but it's like egg yolk.

Bob: They say it is good if you blend it. Is there other *Pouteria* fruit?

Robert Scott: Oh yeah. There is green sapote (*Pouteria viridis*). There is mamey sapote (*Pouteria sapota*). All of those are in the *Pouteria* genus.

Bob: I don't know mamey.

Robert Scott: It's a big fruit. It's kind of russeted on the outside. You cut it open and it tastes like sweet potato.

At this point, we started loading up our plates so I stopped the recording.

Editor note: Robert and Carol Scott are our chapter's long time Scion Exchange Co-chairs. Up to 2020, they organized the scion wood exchange at the Cal Poly Crops Unit. This is their last year as Co-chairs. So, learn all about what's involved and YOU can volunteer next year!



Lúcuma Recipes

Alfredo's Bavarois de Lúcuma

by Alfredo & Phyllis Chiri

Yield: 8 – 10 servings

1 1/2 cups mashed Lúcuma
2 cups fresh cream
2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
1/2 cup sugar
6 egg whites beaten until they hold stiff peaks
Chocolate fudge (or melted bittersweet chocolate)

Boil the gelatin in 1 cup of the fresh cream. Allow the mix to cool off.

In a blender, mix together 1 cup of cream, the diced lúcuma, and 1/2 cup of sugar until you have achieved a smooth blend (use a high speed setting)

Add to the blender the cup of cream that was mixed with the gelatin and continue blending the mixture.

Pour the mixture in large bowl and gently fold-in beaten egg whites until smooth and even.

In a round cake pan, slightly oiled, pour in mixture and refrigerate until it holds (at least 2 hours.)

To unmold, place pan over hot water a few seconds and invert immediately on a large round platter and decorate with chocolate fudge.

Lúcuma Ice Cream From Fresh Fruit (Peruvian style)

by Alfredo & Phyllis Chiri

Yield: 16 – 5.5-oz. Plastic cups.

6 ripe Lúcuma fruits
1 quart non-fat milk
One 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
Two 12-oz. cans evaporated milk
1/2 cup sugar

Cut and dice each fruit and place the diced Lúcuma, and add 1 3/4 cups of non-fat milk. The 6 fruits and this amount of milk will be equivalent to two cups of fresh fruit.

Place this fruit mixture in a blender and add an additional 3/4 cup of non-fat milk. Add the two cans of evaporated milk.

Run the blender until you have achieved a smooth blend. Start with a low speed at the beginning and increase it to reach a uniform blend. The time of beating depends on the kind of blender you

are using. It takes more than 10 minutes in a household type and 40 seconds in a commercial blender.

To this mix add one can of sweetened condensed milk. Beat the mixture until it is well mixed. Add ½ cup of sugar. Beat until it is well mixed.

The total content of the mix should be about 8 cups, and if not add non-fat milk to reach this amount. Beat until it is well mixed.

Now you have the Lúcumá ice-cream mix. Put this mix in small plastic containers and let them set in the freezer until solid.

ALFREDO U. CHIRI

Father of the Lúcumá in the U.S

*This 2017 obituary was shared by Sharon Lovelady.
The first two paragraphs were written by Edgar
Valdivia*

Alfredo was long time and active member of CRFG organization. If you lived in Orange County, you no doubt saw him at the Fullerton Arboretum where he dedicated many years maintaining the CRFG rare fruit area. He was actively involved with the Orange County Chapter. He wrote many articles about rare and unusual fruit. He had planned on publishing a book about rare fruits. Many of these articles were published in the "Fruit Gardener" magazine and in the Los Angeles Chapter newsletter as well as many others.



Alfredo U. Chiri

One of the many fruits that Alfredo dedicated himself to was the lúcumá (Inca Gold). This fruit is native to his country of Peru. I always called him the Father of the Lúcumá in the U.S., because he was so successful in producing it and made ice cream from the lúcumá to share with our members. Thanks to his sharing this fruit and plants with everyone, many of us today are growing it in our backyards.

Alfredo U. Chiri was born on August 5, 1930 in Lima Peru. He grew up in Jesus Maria, Lima Peru. Alfredo Chiri passed away August 31, 2017, he was 87 years old. His love for plants started when he was a child. Alfredo was a Master Gardener and Rare Fruit Grower. A lúcumá tree was planted in his honor on May 5, 2018 in the beautiful Veterans Memorial Gardens in Long Beach.