



Central Coast Chapter CRFG

December 2021 Newsletter

by New Newsletter Editor, Jenny Weaver

January 2022 CRFG Meeting

NO meeting is scheduled due to the increase in Omicron variant. Stay safe!

February 2022 Scion Exchange is still undecided. Check our Chapter website calendar for updates.

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

Announcements

Larry Cottingham has Boysenberry plants he is giving away from his Pismo Beach garden. Contact him to make arrangements:

Larrycottingham@att.net



Holiday Potluck!



Dick Pottratz ("Underpaid" Treasurer) and Sue Sunderland

December 2021 Meeting

On December 11, we met at the SLO Guild Hall for our Holiday Potluck.

Many thanks to Sue Sunderland, President of SLO Guild Hall and Kay Gore for allowing our CRFG Chapter to rent it at a significant discount. Our usual PGE site was not available.

It was a beautiful afternoon and we were able to have the entire meeting outside which was the safest way to have a potluck and meeting. We had a delicious potluck lunch with plenty of homemade treats from Apples to Ziziphus! After visiting and eating, we held our annual election of Chapter Officers and a raffle.

Thanks to everyone who brought good cheer, food and plants to raffle.

ANNUAL ELECTIONS for 2022



Alisha, one of our current Co-Chairs announced that Tucker Schmidt is stepping down from Co-Chair. THANK YOU TUCKER FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE! We appreciate all the meetings you have arranged and chaired since 2017!

Dara Manker also stepped down from doing this monthly Leaflet. THANK YOU DARA FOR YOUR INFORMATIVE, CREATIVE AND FUNNY NEWSLETTERS!



Dara with Manny (2 of our 3 orchard managers)

The rest of the Officers and Board Members will stay on. Please check out our fantastic CRFG Central Coast Chapter website under "About" and see who does what. These wonderful volunteers deserve a lot of thanks!

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

Alisha Taff, Co-Chair, held nominations and elections and the following new volunteers were elected:

Seth McMillan will serve as Co-Chair with Alisha. You may remember Seth held a wonderful meeting at his home and nursery in Nipomo. Email address to contact Co-Chairs is central_coast@crfg.org

Jenny Weaver will serve as Newsletter Editor. For Newsletter submissions and ideas, email Jenny at crfgccnewsletter@gmail.com. Tom Sheldon, Jenny's patient IT husband will be her newsletter Technical Consultant.

RAFFLE

Alisha and Christie ran the plant raffle at the Holiday meeting.

Earthscapes Landscapes in Los Osos donated many Dragon Fruit/Pitaya (Selenicereus sp) plants for the raffle. Thanks to Lori Olson for letting Dara know that Earthscapes was willing to donate the plants.

Some unoccupied bee boxes and crop heaters were also donated for the raffle!



Alisha



Christie



Dragon Fruit plants from Earthscapes



Bee Boxes

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR CHAPTER OFFICERS, BOARD & 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 interviews with more to come.



Keri & Tucker Schmidt

Conversation with Tucker and Keri.

December 2021

Tucker was Co-Chair from 2017 through 2021. He is still serving on the Scholarship Program Committee. He and fellow committee members review scholarship applications submitted by Chair Dr. Lauren Garner. Our Chapter donates money to several worthy Cal Poly Agriculture students.

Tom: What's growing in your garden?

Tucker: Many trees. Many, many trees of all sorts. I started with apple trees. I learned to graft and then I learned about all the different varieties of apples. I met some really cool people who knew about grafting.

Tom: How's the grafting working out?

Tucker: This is my favorite time of the year. It's a good time to graft. It's like creating a new tree from what was once a root stock. You're adding a new variety of tree to an established root that hopefully someday will give you good apples.

Tom: How many different grafts do you have on one tree?

Tucker: I have a couple of trees that have at least 20 grafts, but I'm steering away from multi-grafting. I like single variety trees, because of growth habit. You know, certain varieties of apples grow more vigorously than others. It's hard to balance out the tree.

Tom: Did you pick trees that are best for your soil? What's your soil like?

Tucker: I have sandy soil. Yeah, so it's important to pick the right root stock for your soil type because of certain diseases or root fungus. Water drainage is important. Another reason to pick the right root stock is for the size of the tree.

Tom: What else are you going to plant? You still have a lot of room out there, right?

Tucker: We're kind of at a stand-still. Well, I have tons of stuff that needs to be planted in the ground. There's a lot of decision-making involved like where am I going to plant these trees?

Tom: (to Keri): Are you involved in that?

Keri: Well I say "no!"

Tucker: (laughing) Well, I'm waiting for spring time to roll around so I can start plugging them in, because I've gotta preserve my collection. I spent a lot of time gathering all these trees from friends who have pretty extensive collections of avocado, cherimoya, figs, and, well, I may have to consider buying more property...

Keri: No!

Tucker: ...to find a home for them.

Keri: So he's got a greenhouse. We had a small greenhouse, but he had to have a bigger greenhouse. He's got that one filled up now, so it's like, maybe we should get a big, big greenhouse.

Tom: I think you should have a tour.

Tucker: We have had a tour, but I think it would be more exciting sometime in the near future, like this coming year (2022), after I get a chance to do some pruning and clean up the yard a little bit. One of the coolest things is I've got this big collection of trees and I am running out of space to plant them so my thoughts are if I give the trees to a friend then I can go over to my friends and enjoy the tree and the fruit. It's sort of like extending your own orchard.

Conversation with Dick Pottratz

December 2021

Dick is our long time treasured Treasurer of Central Coast Chapter CRFG and maintains the membership rolls. He has an orchard and vineyard in San Luis Obispo.

Tom: What's going on in your orchard?

Dick: I've got a few fruit trees. Apple trees, and citrus trees. Plum trees. And an avocado tree that doesn't produce any more. It gave up. Most of my trees that are doing any good are in my yard. Apple trees in my vineyard always get eaten by the gophers. Gophers just love those apple tree roots.

Tom: What about the gophers?



Dick: I must have lost a dozen apple trees in my vineyard. I put all my grapes in wire baskets. The wire has been deteriorated for years, but I have never lost a grape to a gopher. I'm on this hillside and the soil is just tilled up with gopher mounds.

Tom: I have a feeling a lot of the people I interview are going to be complaining about gophers.

Dick: Yeah. It's not as easy to catch gophers as it was when I used to trap them in Minnesota. I used to trap them for a nickel a piece. The farmers might pay me a buck and a half or so.

Tom: Why was it easier back there?

Dick: I don't know. My success rate here is about 10%. I set 10 traps. If I get one gopher, I am happy.

Tom: What trapping method are you using?

Dick: Macabee, the little clamps.

Tom: You were telling me earlier about your grapes and wine. How many bottles of wine are you producing per year?

Dick: Well, this year, I've got a little over 20 gallons coming out of my vineyard in 5 gallon jugs and maybe 6 or 7 liters on the side. I'll end up getting ... (calculating out loud)... I'll get 8 or 9 cases, 12 bottles per case. That's enough to keep me in wine all year... almost.

Tom: And it's good?

Dick: Yeah. I like it. My wife has different feelings on some of it, so I still buy her some every once in a while.

Tom: Tell me about the fruit.

Dick: I've got one row of Syrah grapes and one row of eating grapes, and the Syrah is the best producer and it makes the best wine, but this year, I'm just going to put it all together. It's going to be good.

SUGGESTED VIDEOS AND LINKS

Our Co-chair, Alisha asked that we share the link below to a very informative Ted Talk. It's about research conducted by Suzanne Simard that shows how trees "communicate" and share nutrients through their root system with the help of fungi mycelium.

https://www.ted.com/talks/suzanne_simard_how_trees_talk_to_each_other?language=en

Here's a link to a related article about the Pando Aspen Grove which is thought to be the oldest living organism on Earth. That's singular. The entire grove has been genetically tested and shown to be a single plant with each tree being a clone of the other. They are all connected by their root system.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/pando-aspen-grove-utah-oldest-largest-organism-2016-7>

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!