

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
Volume 8 • Issue 3 • March 2005



2005--The Year of the Apple

Apple

Rosaceae—Malus

The History of the Apple—Part Three Apples in California



The Gold Rush that began in 1848 at Sutter's Mill between Sacramento and Placerville brought tens of thousands of people to California—people intent on making their fortunes in gold. By the end of the year following that first cry of "Eureka!" nearly 100,000 people were living in the Coloma Valley. Many of these people were miners, but there were those who saw an even bigger opportunity for "making a pile" than by spending their time in the cold streams and rivers with a pan or sluice box. Farmers in the states of Oregon and Washington especially saw a lucrative outlet for their produce.

Since about 1826, apples had been grown around Ft. Vancouver in Washington State. Then, in 1847, an Iowa nurseryman and pioneer by the name of Henderson Lewelling, his wife, eight children, and four wagons arrived in Oregon. In the wagons were 350 fruit trees that survived the grueling trip—all that were left of the 700 1-year-old grafted trees that Lewelling had started out with. Lewelling's first crop of 100 apples came off the trees in 1850 and he rushed them south to San Francisco where he supposedly sold them for \$5 per apple to fresh-fruit-starved miners! Even three years later, in 1853, four bushels of apples sold in San Francisco for the phenomenal price of \$500! (A bushel of apples weighs 42 lbs. and consists of about 125 medium-sized apples, making those apples worth about \$1 each!) Apples became so valuable that subsequent shipments from Washington and Oregon were made in locked iron crates to prevent theft!

Many new immigrants to California began to plant their own orchards. One year after California became a state in 1850, miners in the Pajaro Valley began farming. They first planted potatoes, and then turned to fruit growing. Immigrants from Serbia and Croatia, who helped to settle one of Pajaro's earliest communities, Watsonville, also began to plant rooted apple saplings. Commercial production of their apple orchards expanded so rapidly that the town had earned the nickname "Apple City" by the turn of the 20th century. Another immigrant colony, located in the Russian River Valley, gave rise to magnificent European cultivars. Between 1870 and 1890, Gravensteins and Pippins from the orchards of Sebastopol became as prized as those grown 3,000 miles away on the East Coast. Before Sonoma produced its modern (post-WW II) vineyards, much of that valley's agriculture was devoted to apple growing.

One notable immigrant was Stephen G. Martinelli, a young Swiss, who settled in the Pajaro Valley in 1859. Here were grown apples of exceptional quality for cider making. In 1868 he started his cider business in his brother's barn, using apples from California's first commercial orchards. The original products were bottle-fermented champagne cider, hard cider, and carbonated soft drinks. Deliveries were made by horse-drawn wagon. In 1885 he moved his expanding business to the center of Watsonville, where it is still located. A steam-powered cider mill was constructed, new tanks and bottling equipment were installed, and a 40-acre apple orchard was planted to assure a supply of the best varieties.

Stephen G. Martinelli, Jr., while a student at the University of California, Berkeley, developed a process for making unfermented apple juice. In the summer of 1917 the company produced the first few thousand cases of unfermented pure apple juice, pasteurized in pint bottles.

After World War I, the fermenting tanks were dismantled, and the apple juice facilities were expanded. Thus the company was able to grow during the prohibition years by specializing in non-alcoholic apple juice products, including the first non-alcoholic sparkling cider.

But cider apples weren't the only apples grown in the Pajaro Valley. With 2 1/2 million boxes of apples sold in 1909, the Pajaro Valley was producing and shipping more apples than any area in the **world!** Pajaro Valley growers, and most of the other apple producing areas in California, rather than trying to grow the red apples that were dominant in the East and Midwest, concentrated on apples of the color that had made California what it was—**GOLD**—chiefly in the form of Newton Pippin and Bellflower (shown in the photo on the right). Technically, these apples are yellow-green, but gold sounds better! The area around Sebastapol in Sonoma County concentrated on Gravensteins, which made wonderful applesauce—and were, for years, the county's main source of agricultural income.



Hundreds of years of conditioning apparently makes we humans believe that “apples should be red.” This tyranny of the red apple is a bane to California's apple industry. California versions of the fruit never get as red as apples from colder climates. California has climbed to the number three top producer of apples in the Nation, but that is on the back of a non-red apple, the Granny Smith! Some areas of northern California do produce decent looking red apples—Rome Beauty and Jonathans being fine examples, but even these aren't quite as “red” as the same varieties being grown in other parts of the country.

Apple growers in California's Central Valley have found a few varieties that get a respectable shade of red, but only very early or very late in the season. Apple growers near Three Rivers a little above the Southern San Joaquin Valley floor, get Annas at the start of the summer that are red, because they come to maturity before summer sets in—as well as red fruit from Arkansas Black trees, a variety that hangs on the trees until December. But in the prime time for apples, late summer and early fall, valley growers are out of luck in the hunt for red, although they insist that doesn't prevent them from growing outstanding apples—apples with great taste and crispness, even if they are the “wrong” color!

What makes a red apple red? Red color development in apples is due to the formation of anthocyanin pigments in the apple skin. Anthocyanin production, and therefore apple color, is influenced by a range of environmental factors, but probably the biggest factor is the temperature during the preharvest period, with the critical coloring period being two to three weeks before harvest. Optimum temperatures for red color formation vary among cultivars, but are generally between 20 and

25 °C. Cool night temperatures (18 °C) from a few weeks before harvest enhance color development of the fruit and are necessary to produce fruit with a high percentage of red color.

So, it is pretty clear why California's red apples aren't as red as apples from other places. Our weather is just too good! It doesn't stop Californians from continuing to grow apples, though! Here on the Central Coast, the micro climate of See Canyon produces some amazing apples in various small orchards. Rome Beauty, Braeburn, and Arkansas Black are three varieties that not only do well there, but are mostly red to boot! Of course, North County, including the areas around Paso Robles and Templeton are mighty proud of their apple growing prowess, too—just ask our co-chair, Bob Tullock about his apple trees. He'll be only too happy to tell you how great they are!

APPLE-PECAN SALAD WITH CRANBERRY VINAIGRETTE

— ingredients —

1/4 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, thawed
 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
 1 tablespoon chopped red onion
 1 tablespoon sugar
 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 1 cup vegetable oil
 10 cups mixed baby greens
 2 Red Delicious apples, cored, thinly sliced (or use a California apple that isn't so red!)
 1/2 cup chopped pecans, toasted

— preparation —

Puree cranberries in processor until smooth. Add vinegar, onion, sugar and mustard and process until well blended. With processor running, gradually add oil and process until well blended. Transfer to a medium bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper. (The dressing can be made 1 day ahead. Cover; chill. Bring to room temperature and whisk before using.) Combine greens and apples in large bowl. Toss with enough dressing to coat. Sprinkle with pecans. Pass remaining dressing separately. This recipe makes 6 servings.

February Scion Exchange Meeting



(Thanks to Sandy Ahearn for taking these minutes in the absence of our secretary, Rhonda Underwood, who has been recovering from surgery.)

The February 12, 2005 meeting of the CRFG was called to order at 1:45 pm by Art DeKleine. He thanked everyone for the scion wood that was brought. There were approximately 150 varieties. In lieu of introductions due to the large crowd (150 people—a chapter record!) new attendees were asked to raise their hands.

Doris Henzgen lost her mother. A card is available to sign. David Maislen gave a presentation on a rodent trap. He explained how to install in a gopher hole. He will order several cases for the March meeting. Sign up sheets were available to help at the high school grafting classes.

Joe Sabol spoke on the March meeting which will be in Arroyo Grande at a Mushroom farm. Bring your pick up truck to get a load of mushroom compost. The May 14th meeting will be a trip to the San Joaquin Valley. David Maislen

offered to get a bus. Cost will be \$20.00 per person.

Chuck and Susan Atlee have been heading up the refreshments. Chuck is retiring and was presented with a joke book.

Walter Thoma, the quest grafter was introduced and presented with a CRFG hat. Walter brought 42 varieties of apple scions for our chapter grafters. He explained how he has been grafting for 12 year. He didn't have much luck with the conventional method. His method has a 98% success. He gave us a demonstrating on his method of grafting and attaching identification tags. Due to the large crowd Walter continued to show his grafting to the back half of the room while the front of the crowd went outside to get their scion wood.

Also outside items for sell included: root stock, budding tape, grafting knives, Cal Poly trees and Norm Beard's Blueberries. The meeting was adjourned. Members and quests went outside to pick up scion wood and see additional grafting demonstrations.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 12th at the Arroyo Grande Mushroom Farm.



Scion Exchange Area (Photo by Paul Moyer)

Ask An Expert

Question: *Who owns this land—me or the gophers? They pretty much do as they please, so I guess the answer is—the gophers! Is there really a better gopher trap?*

Answer: The Black Hole has been the most successful gopher and mole control strategy I've found. They work so well that I've developed a source where we can do a group buy. The local availability of the Black Hole is more difficult now that Home Depot no longer sells them. They are available at OSH for \$14.89 and at Farm Supply for \$16.08 (both prices with sales tax included). We can get them for \$11.00 buying in quantity. I had 10 of them at our grafting meeting Saturday and they sold out so fast I hardly got the box on a table. I took a quick polling of those that wanted more of them and got quite a few hands so I thought I'd provide the information for the whole chapter, including those not at our Grafting Party, and then have them at the next meeting in March.



Using the Black Hole is simple...all you do is find a rodent tunnel, open a large enough area so that you can set a Black Hole trap on both sides of the exposed tunnel (since you don't know which side has the gopher or mole) and by the next morning the trap is sprung and a dead gopher is inside. Don't waste a good dead gopher...don't throw it in the garbage...put it back into the tunnel and it will keep other gophers from taking the tunnel system over. Use gloves when handling the trap so that your scent isn't on the trap. Also sprinkle light dirt on top of the trap to block the few openings that allow light and air to go in. Also make sure that the trap is snugly against the tunnel and fill in around the opening so that no air or light go into the tunnel EXCEPT from the hole at the middle of the end of the trap.

It's most successful to set two traps to insure you get the gopher. I've ordered two cases of them and they will be \$11.00 each or \$22.00 for two. I plan to bring them to the next meeting at the Mushroom Farm on March 12th or you can pick them up at my home in Arroyo Grande.

As I've said, a lot of people raised their hands when I asked "who wanted to order the traps" at our grafting meeting. Please call me at 474-4010 and let me know how many traps you want. I want to make sure I've ordered enough. If you get my voicemail, please leave the information including your name and telephone number and number of traps you would like. **David Maislen**

High School Apple Grafting Time Again!



Put a smile on your face, too—volunteer as an assistant at a high school apple grafting class! Last year, I agreed to help with the grafting class being held at Nipomo High School. The school is only a mile from my house and Joe Sabol assured me that no experience on my part was necessary. I showed up, not really knowing what to expect. I sure didn't expect what I got! First of all, the kids were excited and eager to learn (or maybe they were just elated by the prospect of **legally** wielding a knife at school!) Joe Sabol held their attention (and mine) with his unique sense of humor as he explained the job we'd be doing and the safety measures we would observe. To my surprise, after watching Joe's demonstration, I was actually able to assist several students with their grafting, right along side my heroes, Marv Daniels and Patti Schober! The kids were amazed and

thrilled with the results of their work and they were very appreciative, thanking us all many times.

If you haven't done so already, get out there and give this wonderful project a try. I guarantee you, too, will be smiling! Call **Joe Sabol at (805) 544-1056** to let him know where you will help! (You never know when the skills you learn might be put to use. I am proud to say I just finished planting and grafting 10 apple trees at our mountain cabin, thanks to the knowledge and practice I gained in the high school grafting class!)

2005 Apple Grafting Schedule

(Class starting times are listed--you must make your own allowances for driving time so that you arrive at the classroom at least 10-15 minutes early. Please call Joe Sabol at 544-1056 for the latest schedule update.)

Tuesday, Feb. 22—Shandon—class starts at 1:30 Special with 6th graders, Deanna Cleek: done.

Tuesday, Mar. 1—SLO—class starts at 10:45 a.m. Three periods, Amber Madlem: this will be the 7th year of grafting apples for SLO High School!

Wednesday, Mar. 2—Morro Bay—class starts at 1:15 p.m. Peggy Flynn

Thursday, Mar. 3—Nipomo—class starts at 7:45 a.m. Shannon McNeil. Then drive to Cambria—Coast Union High—class starts at 11:30 a.m. Cyndie Wilson

Friday, Mar. 4—Van is not available—Open

Monday, Mar. 7—Lompoc—class starts at 9:45 a.m. to about 11:45 a.m. Mike Clifford.

Tuesday, Mar. 8—Templeton—class starts at 9:25 a.m. Cody Domenghini. Then drive north to Bradley—class starts at 12:30p.m. Joan Tomooka.

Wednesday, Mar. 9—Paso Robles—class starts at 1:20 p.m. Debbie Lauridsen: their 7th year of grafting with CRFG!

Thursday, Mar. 10--Righetti in Santa Maria—class starts at 10:00 a.m. Miguel Guerra. Then to Santa Inez—class begins at 12:20 p.m. Kathy Bibby

Friday, Mar. 11— San Miguel--class starts at 8:30 a.m.—Christine Wilkinson

Monday, Mar. 14—Master Gardeners of SLO County, 3:00 p.m. at Growing Grounds—Art Henzgen hosting.

Wednesday, Mar. 16—Soledad—class starts at 9:30 a.m. Rochelle Richmond. Then drive to King City—class starts at 12:02 p.m. Marti Chambers and Debbie Benson

Thursday, Mar. 17—Atascadero—class starts at 7:48 a.m., O.H. Class, Andrew Weatherly, 90 minutes: this is the 7th year of grafting for Atascadero High.

Still to schedule—Grizzly Academy—50 trees on a Friday.

Announcements

Welcome New Members: Dale Norrington, Richard and Mei Hoh Phillips, Alice Hamrick, Jim and Kathy Trask, Amber Madlem, Delbert Herschback, Andy Allen, Ben and Carolyn Middleton, Jim and Bridget Ritterbush, Otto Schmidt, Christie Cutter, and Benjamin Chow.

SLO Farm Bureau Women 16th Annual Ag Awareness Tour—Saturday, March 5: This annual tour serves as an ongoing public outreach program, providing an opportunity for people to see and learn about various facets of the local agricultural industry. Everyone is welcome. The cost for the full-day tour is \$40, which includes bus transportation, lunch and dinner. For more information call 543-3654.

Web Site: Check our site at: www.crfg-central.org to see what our web-master, Art DeKleine and his assistants, John and Choung Crowe and Pet and Marv Daniels are doing to keep us all informed.

Join the Parent Organization: Many of our chapter members are also members of the Parent association and, for those of you who aren't, perhaps you **should** consider joining. With parent organization membership you receive a wonderful color magazine, *The Fruit Gardener*, filled with great articles on fruit growing, news, many chapter activities and contacts. Dues are **\$30 annually or 3 years for \$87** as of January 2004. Applications are available from **Joe Sabol**.

Calendar of Meetings – 2005

Meetings are held the **second Saturday** of the month and begin at **1:30 PM** unless otherwise indicated. Bring a friend, think about car pooling, and **bring a chair** for all in your party. What fun it is to be a member of CRFG!

March 12: The Mushroom Farm in Arroyo Grande—1:30 P.M.--Hosted by Mr. Art Lopez, Operations Manager. Bring a pick-up or small trailer and, at the end of the tour, it will be loaded with **FREE** mushroom compost! Our chapter visited this farm many years ago and those who went all wanted to go again! This will be an educational and memorable meeting in the beautiful Huasna Valley, just east of Arroyo Grande. Address is **4000 Huasna Road**, Arroyo Grande. **Refreshments: A-G please.**

Directions to the Arroyo Grande Mushroom Farm: Take Highway 101 to Arroyo Grande. Exit Grand Ave. in Arroyo Grande and follow the signs/directions to Lopez Lake. The road to Lopez Lake is called Grand Ave then Huasna Rd. then Lopez Drive. After you leave town look for the right turn on Ceechetti Rd., then follow the directions printed below starting with number 7. Watch for CRFG signs.

7. Turn **R** on **CEECHETTI RD** - go **0.5** mi
8. Turn **R** on **BRANCH MILL RD** - go **0.4** mi
9. Turn **L** on **SCHOOL RD** - go **0.5** mi
10. Continue on **HUASNA RD** - go **1.0** mi
11. Turn **R** on **EVERGLADE RD** - go **< 0.1** mi (This is a dirt road, please drive slowly.)
12. Arrive at **4000 HUASNA RD, ARROYO GRANDE**, on the **L**

April 9: Earth-Wise, Inc.—1:30 P.M. This is a company devoted to promoting healthy soils through the use of compost and compost teas. Ted Peterson, owner, will be our speaker. He designs and builds tea “brewers” for a wide variety of applications. His customers include Morro Bay Wastewater, Wild Horse Winery and the City of San Luis Obispo. Jerie Garbutt, our own CRFG member, is responsible for lining up Ted Peterson for this meeting to be held at **Camp Sticky Monkey in Los Osos**, which is at **60 Costa Azul**. Directions will follow. **Refreshments: H - R please.**

May 14: Kern County – Special trip to the southern end of the great Central Valley! We are planning an all-day cherry and berry tasting adventure and a tour of Steve Murray’s fascinating fruit orchards in Arvin! More plans are evolving. We will car pool or bus. We may go to Walter Thoma’s place in Porterville, too. Save the whole day for this super trip to the San Joaquin Valley! Other Chapters may join us on this special day.

June 11--Setting up a Drip Irrigation System—Farm Supply—SLO—1:30 P.M.--Mr. Joe Decker, Farm Supply, will be our speaker and host. Meeting will be at the new Farm Supply store on Tank Farm Road. Directions will follow later. Thanks to Jerie Garbutt for suggesting this program! **Refreshments: S - Z please.**