

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
Volume 12 • Issue 2 • MARCH-APRIL 2009



2009 The Year of the Olive

Pomegranate

Punica granatum L.



To me, pomegranates and olives **belong** in the same garden. If you were among the fortunate to get in on the fabulous buy of a Wonderful or Early Wonderful pomegranate tree that was available at our February meeting for only \$8, you might be interested to know something about your “wonderful” plant besides the fact that it has to be one of the most fun fruits to eat!

Like the olive, pomegranates have an ancient history. The name “pomegranate” derives from Latin *pomum* (“apple”) and *granatus* (“seeded”). The genus name *Punica* is for the Phoenicians, who were active traders throughout the Mediterranean and were effective in expanding its cultivation.

A native to Iran (Persia) and the Himalayas in Northern India, historical evidence suggests that the pomegranate was cultivated for the first time in Persia sometime around 4000 BC. Carbonized exocarp of the fruit has been identified in Early Bronze Age (3300–2000 BC) levels of Jericho, as well as Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BC) levels of ruins on Cyprus and Tiryns. A large, dry pomegranate was found in the tomb of Djehuty, the butler of Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt. Mesopotamian cuneiform records mention pomegranates from the mid-Third millennium BC onwards. Some Jewish scholars believe that it was actually the pomegranate that was the “forbidden fruit” of the Garden of Eden.

Appropriately, as a fruit with many seeds, the pomegranate is the traditional representation of fertility for many cultures and that was definitely one of the reasons the Phoenicians so avidly promoted its cultivation. It also was important to the Hebrews where the symbol of a pomegranate was woven into the high priest's robes, and brass representations were part of the Temple's pillars. It is mentioned six times in the Song of Solomon. In modern times the pomegranate still holds strong symbolic meanings for the Greeks. It is traditional to break a pomegranate on the ground at weddings. Pomegranates are given as house warming

presents and placed under the home altar of the house as a symbol of abundance, fertility and good luck.

Pomegranates became widely cultivated in Spain after they were introduced there by the Moors about 800 AD. It was the Spaniards who brought the fruit to the New World—first to Mexico about 1521 and then to California in the 18th Century. The English settlers tried growing them in the early Colonial Period (I think they were members of the Massachusetts Rare Fruit Growers) and Thomas Jefferson grew them at Monticello.

The pomegranate has also had a long history for medicinal use. Perhaps the Phoenician sailors were so successful on their long sea voyages because they didn't suffer from scurvy if they ate pomegranates, which we now know are high in Vitamin C. Scientists say pomegranate juice may help with heart disease, cancer and problems associated with aging. It's loaded with antioxidants, vitamins, potassium, folic acid and iron. Pomegranates are considered the new "super food".



In 1896, a Porterville farmer named Mr. Bearss brought pomegranate cuttings from Florida to California and began propagating them. This variety was sweeter and juicier than the others he had, so he named it the **Wonderful** variety. If you purchased one of the plants at the sale, soon you will learn just why Mr. Bearss thought the taste was so "wonderful".

Pomegranates are easy to grow in our local climate. Plant your Wonderful or Early Wonderful where it gets full sun in well-drained soil. Once established, the plant is quite drought tolerant, although it benefits from regular irrigation. They are susceptible to rotting diseases (from overwatering or too much rain) and some pests. The fruit ripens about a year and a half after blooming. You could have your first crop from the plant you purchased at the February sale in 2 ½ years!

January Meeting

The January pruning meeting was **huge!** Joe Sabol said he quit counting after he reached 350. Fortunately, the day was warm and sunny so the crowd could gather outside the Ag Classroom to hear Art DeKleine's great talk on how to prune fruit trees for the home gardener. (Where else can one grow deciduous fruit **and still** wear shorts in January?) The bright sun left something to be desired for the illustrations Art used to make his points, but his verbalization of correct procedures made it simple to follow. Art then reinforced what he taught in our Community Orchard where "many hands" got to put the technique into practice, guided by other members of our organization who know what they are doing when it comes to pruning deciduous fruit. The pruning information from Art is detailed in another section of this newsletter.

We also voted on the slate of officers and other office holders. That report, too, follows. Meanwhile, take a look at some of the photos taken at the event. Even if you were attending, you wouldn't have gotten the same perspective as Paul Moyer gives us in his photo on the next page showing some of the crowd. Yes, the word is out and many more people now know—what fun it is to be a member of CRFG!



The viewing conditions weren't the optimum for a Power-point presentation, but Dr. Art DeKleine (photo on left), our "guest pruner" and a math professor at Cal Poly proved he can teach in any situation! Another "expert" pruner, our chapter treasurer, Dick Pottratz, shows how to prune a Pluot in the orchard.



We also had Cal Poly students, such as Jan, on hand to sell freshly picked oranges and beautiful avocado trees. Thank you, Joe Sabol, for these photos.

February Meeting

Another huge event was the scion exchange, grafting lessons, and tree sale on Saturday, February 21. Our fellow CRFG members from the north sent a surprise package with over 80 varieties of apple scions and a large assortment of peaches, plums, nectarines, and more included. Our own chapter had a great selection, too! As Joe Sabol says, it was a record breaking February meeting because:

1. Biggest February crowd in our history, estimate: over 300 people came!!
2. Greatest number of CRFG volunteers working before, during and after the event!!
3. Largest number of Gifted Grafters working hard, demonstrating all afternoon (Craig Righetti, Dick Pottratz, Art DeKleine, Bob Tullock, Marv Daniels, Gene Santos, and Dave Christie)!
4. Largest number of different scions.... in our history!!
5. Largest number of rootstock (variety and total number) ever!!!
6. Greatest number of rootstock canned for a buck (by Owen and Jim)--200!!
7. Greatest number of one fruit tree (Pomegranate) sold...96!!
8. Most grafting knives sold (36 of them). Shucks, we sold out of Buddy tape, Grafting Kits, and nearly all of the "Grafting Seal" we had!!
9. The Most "vendors" adding to the event (Cal Poly students, Pink Tools and M.G. Worms). Congratulations to Jim R. for winning the Pink Clippers!!
10. Greatest number of ribbons or tags put on plants...over 1000 knots tied!!!!!!
11. Fantastic food and drinks and at no cost to our guests!
12. No serious problems--no rain, no fights, no cars towed.

Joe also said, "I would guess we had 50 of our CRFG members who were teaching today. The rootstock sales area was a classroom with 1000 questions being answered. It was the same story in our Grafting Supply Store and canning service area. In the Scion Exchange area, there were 8 to 10 of our members on duty answering questions and helping people select the correct varieties. The **entire event** was educational. Many other chapters charge visitors money to come and collect scion wood. Not our Chapter. We charge nothing and do our best just to cover our expenses on the rootstock and sale of pomegranates. Education is the focus!"



The photo on the left, taken by Paul Moyer, shows the big rush about to begin as the scion exchange area opens, while Carl Righetti shows rapt students how to graft an avocado. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard before, during and after this event to make it the huge success that it was!

Central Coast Chapter California Rare Fruit Growers - 2009

Chapter Officers

Co-Chairs:	Larry Hollis and Patti Schober
Secretary	Helen Whigham
Treasurer	Dick Pottratz

Committee Members

Program Coordinators	Art DeKleine, Joe Sabol, Bob Tullock, Roger Eberhardt, Robert Scott
CRFG Board Member & Recruitment	Joe Sabol
Newsletter Editor	Lennette Horton
Newsletter Mailing	Art & Doris Henzgen and Linda Hauss
Web Master	John Crowe
Web Assistant	Art DeKleine
Publicity	Joe Sabol
Raffle Directors	Morris Tracy and Owen Baynham
Apple Grafting Coordinator	Joe Sabol
Apple Grafting Assistants	Marvin Daniels and Patti Schober
Community Orchard Coordinators	Joe Sabol, Marvin and Pet Daniels
Historian/Archivist	Joan Tomooka
Librarian	Marie Moyer
Photographer	Paul Moyer
Assistant Photographers	Ronald Blakey and Joe Sabol
Refreshments	Volunteers Alphabetically Designated
Coffee	Evelyn Ruehr
Name Tags	Gloria DeKleine
Greeters	Suzie Allen, Choung Crowe
Scholarship Program	Lauren Garner, Chairperson, Carol Scott, Barbara Mathews. Sandy Ahearn, Joe Sabol, Lark Carter
Board of Directors	Above listed Officers and Committee members plus: Chuck and Susan Atlee, Lark Carter, Nancy Lehman, Lloyd Mathews, and Jenny Weaver

Pruning Deciduous Fruit Trees

By Art DeKleine

Goal: To maintain healthy trees that produce high quality fruit!

1. Pruning opens the canopy for optimal light and air penetration. Photosynthesis in the leaves is the tree's source of energy. Light and air are essential for bud production and optimal fruit set. Sugar optimizes flavor and quality. It takes 55 leaves to produce an apple.
2. A strong healthy frame supports tree growth and production. Fruit is typically grown on new growth. Proper pruning increases sunlight and air, decreases disease and insect problems, removes less productive wood and stimulates new growth, and shapes the tree.

Warning! Pruning causes injury. Pruning removes energy and fruit producing wood. Excessive pruning may cause excessive growth and sunburn.

Always use safe equipment (such as sturdy ladders) and keep your tools sharp. Use a solution of bleach water to dip your tools into when moving from one tree to the next. Always wear gloves!

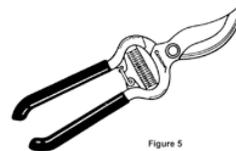
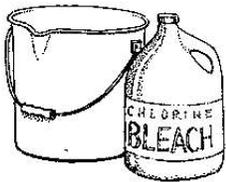


Figure 5



Figure 6

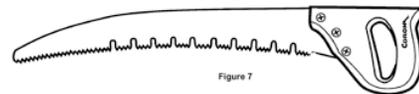


Figure 7

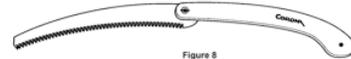
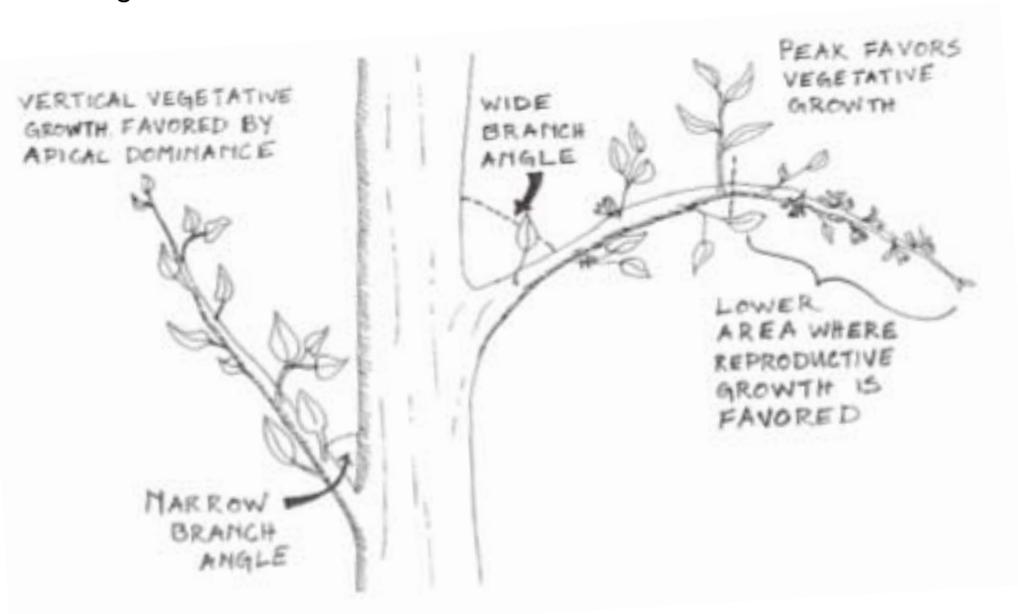


Figure 8

You have several choices in pruning for the home garden. Your main concern will be to keep the tree at a manageable height.



2009 High School Apple Grafting Program

One of the benefits of the large January and February meetings was that it gave many people the opportunity to volunteer for the upcoming High School Apple Grafting Program. Now in its **11th** year, the program is stronger than ever under the enthusiastic leadership of Dr. Joe Sabol! It is not too late to join in the education and fun. Call Joe at **544-1056** to get involved. The program began this year on February 24th and will end about March 13th. (The photo is from last year at Nipomo High School.



See how **happy** our volunteers look? I think they were thinking of the “free lunch” coming up!)

Besides in San Luis Obispo County, schools from Santa Inez in Santa Barbara County to Salinas in Monterey County benefit from the grafting program. Even the Master Gardeners of SLO County get in on the learning! The program is a huge success because:

1. Our own dedicated CRFG members and friends go to the schools, donating their time and talent, day after day, year after year.
2. Orange County Nursery gives us scion wood, rootstock, and tree seal (5 gallons).
3. People such as Bill Spencer, Janet Pesenti, Patricia Bragg, and Dr. DeVincenzo donate quality apple scion wood every year.
4. Ralph Sarmiento gave us a \$500 donation each year for the past 2 years and several hundred the year before that specifically to support high school grafting!
5. Last year we received a \$100 donation from Dr. Howard Schultz.
6. Cal Poly gives us a van and a gas credit card for three weeks of intensive travel to schools every day!
7. Cal Poly allows us to use the Crops walk-in cooler to store rootstock and additional scion wood for the schools.
8. Belmont Nursery in Fresno recently donated \$250 to support the high school apple grafting program!

Community Orchard Report

By Pet Daniels

On Sunday, January 11, the morning after THE BIG PRUNING MEETING, Marv and Pet went out to the CRFG Orchard to see what we needed to do to clean up from the herd of 350 attendees that went to our pruning workshop on Saturday.

We were amazed! With the exception of two trees in the very far back corner of the orchard, all the trees were beautifully pruned and looking marvelous! It goes to show that Art DeKleine is an excellent pruning expert and instructor, and Central Coast residents are wonderful students!

After pruning the two trees and picking up a few stray branches, we were rewarded for our efforts by finding the first bloom of our newly refreshed orchard on the Tropic Sun Peach tree!

Dr. Tom Ruehr CRFG Friend

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Dr. Tom Ruehr on Jan. 7, 2009, at his home in Los Osos. He was the Cal Poly Soil Science Professor and a major supporter of our Community Orchard. The photo, by Joe Sabol, was taken in January of 2008 when Tom was spreading fertilizer on the trees at the orchard—fertilizer which he **donated**. When finished late that same afternoon, he gave many of us a lesson on how to take a soil sample. He also analyzed the soil reports and made recommendations for the orchard. Tom is survived by his wife, Evelyn Burky Ruehr (also an active member of our chapter), two children, Denise Kaub and Brent Ruehr, and two granddaughters, Sierra and Paige.

Later this year we will be planting a tree in his memory at the Community Orchard where he spent so much productive time.



Why Was There No Citrus Budwood at the Scion Exchange?

According to Dr. Lauren Garner, who teaches California Fruit Growing, Citrus and Avocado Fruit Production and Pomology at Cal Poly, “When grafting we always try to use the healthiest possible scion wood, but keep in mind that citrus trees can be sick for many years without showing any symptoms of disease. Two such diseases are the Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV) and the bacterial disease Huanglongbing (HLB). A tree infected with HLB, also known as Citrus Greening Disease, will eventually produce only bitter, lopsided fruit and will

ultimately fail to yield any fruit. Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV) results in general tree decline and death. These diseases are two of the most serious recent threats to the CA Citrus industry and can easily be spread through our backyard orchards. By not exchanging citrus bud wood we can help to preserve the health of all of our orchards.”

How to Construct a Good Macadamia Nut Cracker

By Norman Beard



Cut an exterior 2' x 2' piece of exterior plywood, approximately 11/16" thick. Lay a yard stick on top of the plywood and scribe a grid with a pencil, then at all intersected lines, drill out a 3/4" hole.

Lay your new nut cracker on top of a concrete slab, fill all the holes with one macadamia nut, minus the hull, use a sledge hammer as a stamp, by holding the handle straight up, working it up and down cracking your macadamia nuts.

Announcements

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS: Christine Braun, Leonel & Monica Palomarez, Tom Soeten, Steven Alvarez, Scott & Sharon Nauman, Michael T. Johnson, Dennis L. Voss, Stephen R. Marsden, Roxane Malone, Jane Hind, Jennifer Codron, John S. Roulston, Bill Palmer, Philip Yoshida, David Wells, David Okura, Carole Cain, Bob Roos, John W. Taylor, Janet Melbourne, Clark Bashore, Chuck & Lois Crotser, Hugo Alameda, Cameron Tapp, Mavis Wong, Robert Kimmell, Art Duarte, Jill Morris, Jim Grow, Craig Griswold, Jeanne Blackwell, and Jack Givolo.

JOIN CRFG: If you **haven't** joined the national organization of the **California Rare Fruit Growers**, why not? With your membership you receive a wonderful color magazine, **The Fruit Gardener**, filled with great articles on fruit growing, news, many chapter activities and contacts. You can also vote on important membership issues and even elect the governing board. Where else can you get so much for a mere \$2.50 a month? That's less than one trip to that specialty coffee place! Dues are **\$30 annually** or **3 years for \$87**. Membership applications are available from **Joe Sabol**. Call him at **544-1056** if you can't find him at a meeting or sign-up online at www.crfg.org

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER FEES: Please be sure your chapter newsletter fees are current and save our treasurer, Dick Pottratz, lots of work and begging. Newsletter fees are due January 1 of each year. Looking to save some money? Then pay the five-year rate of \$25 and you will save \$5 (since the **annual fee is \$6**)!

San Francisco Flower & Garden Show: Don't miss the 24th Annual San Francisco Flower and Garden Show on March 18th. It is being held this year at the San Mateo Event Center and you won't even have to drive to get there! Dave Maislen, a member of our Chapter and a wonderful driver, will take you on his great luxury bus to see all the display gardens and hear free talks and workshops on gardening. For only \$79 you can relax and enjoy the ride, engage in stimulating conversation, and have fun learning! Call 805-545-8400 to sign up now!

Hesperia Hall Apple Grafting: Friday, March 20, 5 PM in Hesperia, California. Join Marv and Pet Daniels as they enjoy another fun time at the Hesperia Community Hall. They will be giving a grafting demonstration and then assisting community members as they graft their own trees. They had so much fun there last year that they have agreed to do it again! The class is followed by a wonderful potluck dinner. Contact them at: Marvnpet@aol.com

Lavender Growers Alliance Meeting: March 28th from 1-4pm at Green Acres Lavender Farm at 8865 San Gabriel Road, Atascadero. Lavender growers from around the world are coming together to join area farmers in the Central Coast Lavender Grower's Alliance to celebrate the global growth of lavender. In March 2009, over 20 lavender lovers will be coming together to discuss all the growing trends in rural tourism. It will be held on the inspiring grounds of Green Acres Lavender Farm. The Central Coast Lavender Growers Alliance was started this past spring, by Janice and Bob from Green Acres, from a growing local desire to give lavender farmers opportunities to work together. "We are going into our 6th year now, and we see the growth, and those of us who work together, are the ones who will lead us into the future," says Janice. For more information, you may contact Janice by calling **805-466-0837**.

Lotusland Bus Trip: The Central Coast Chapter of California Rare Fruit Growers had such a wonderful time on the Lotusland trip last year we are doing the same trip again on **Friday, July 10** with the **OLLI** (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) group. This will be your opportunity to take this marvelous bus trip and walking tour of the spectacular Lotusland gardens in beautiful Montecito, south of Santa Barbara. Registration is now open for the Lotusland field trip as well as many other wonderful classes in the current **OLLI** catalog and on line at www.oli.calpoly.edu Click on Course Offerings. (805) 756-7635

You can go to the Lotusland website at www.lotusland.org and take a peek at the wonders of this most enjoyable garden! If you have questions, call or email Pet Daniels 773-9311 or petmarv@aol.com

Writers Wanted: **We need articles for this newsletter!** Share your knowledge—or even your bad experiences—with other chapter members. Explain how to grow your favorite rare fruit—even if you haven't done it yet! I will be happy to help you edit it if you wish. Send your article to me at: handynana@gmail.com

2009 CRFG Festival of Fruit—Plan ahead to attend the 2009 Festival of Fruit hosted this year by the Redwood Empire Chapter on **August 15** at the Santa Rosa Junior College campus.

Calendar of Meetings – 2009

Meetings are held the **second Saturday** of the month and **begin at 1:30 PM unless otherwise indicated**. Bring a friend, car pool, and, for most meetings, **bring a chair** for all in your party. Pet Daniels suggests we **bring our own bottled water** to drink, too. What fun it is to be a member of **CRFG!**

March 14—Orchard Management and Work Detail—CRFG Community Orchard at Cal Poly: We will study the irrigation needs and put in a new irrigation system illustrating several types of emitters. We will study the soil report and apply recommended fertilizers. We will consider pest management issues (including gophers and deer) and try to address some concerns. We will evaluate the trees, plant some trees, spread mulch, and clean-up. You will learn many things that will be valuable to you in your own home orchard. The refreshments are to be provided by the **H-R Group**, please.

Directions to Community Orchard: From San Luis Obispo, take the HWY 101 Santa Rosa exit (Hwy 1) towards Morro Bay. Go to Highland Avenue and enter the Cal Poly campus. You will see our orchard on the right. Parking is available near the Crops Unit Classroom where our last two meetings were held.

April 11—Organic Farm Visit—Details to be announced.

May 9—Avocado or Tomato Workshop—Details to be announced.

June 6—Dave Wilson Fruit Tasting—Cal Poly—Tentative: Please note that this date is the **FIRST SATURDAY** of the month.

Central Coast Chapter CRFG Contact Information: Larry Hollis, co-chair, l_hollis@hotmail.com or 704-1513; Patti Schober, co-chair, pwolfy@tcsn.net or 467-2706 ; Art DeKleine, program chair, adeklein@calpoly.edu or 543-9455; Joe Sabol, publicity, jsabol@calpoly.edu or 544-1056; Dick Pottratz, treasurer, pottratz@sbcglobal.net; or Lennette Horton, newsletter editor, handynana@gmail.com or 474-6501.