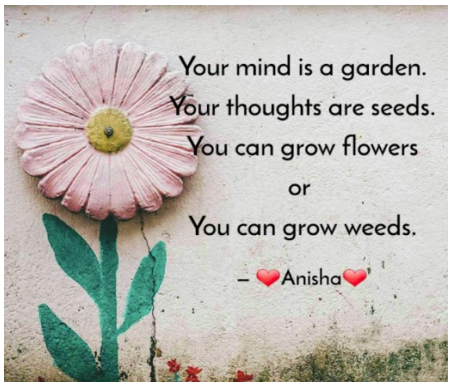
Central Coast Chapter CRFG
January 2021 Newsletter

by CRFG CC Chapter Members
Edited by Dara Manker

A Thought For The New Year
by Paul Rys



I have a quote that is for the new year, since some people like to forget about the year that is ending, and are ready for the new year. Another way to rephrase this is "What you seed is what you get."

Successful January Meeting!

We held the CRFG Central Coast Chapter's first-ever Zoom meeting on January 9th. It was also our first meeting in 10 months. It was a delight to see your familiar faces again! You'll find a summary at the end of this newsletter.

February Meeting Notice

February's meeting will be held on Saturday, February 20th from 1-3pm. It will be held on Zoom. The agenda is still to be determined. Look for details closer to the event on our website:

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

Articles Needed For The February Newsletter!

Thank you to everyone who contributed articles to the January newsletter!

We need articles for next month's newsletter and are eager to see what you've been up to! Send your story and pictures to crfgccnewsletter@gmail.com. The February newsletter deadline is Sunday, February 21st, 2021.

Please consider contributing your own articles. They can be a few sentences or span several pages. You can send your text and pictures in different emails... whatever is easiest for you.

Scion-Sharing Spreadsheet for Chapter Members

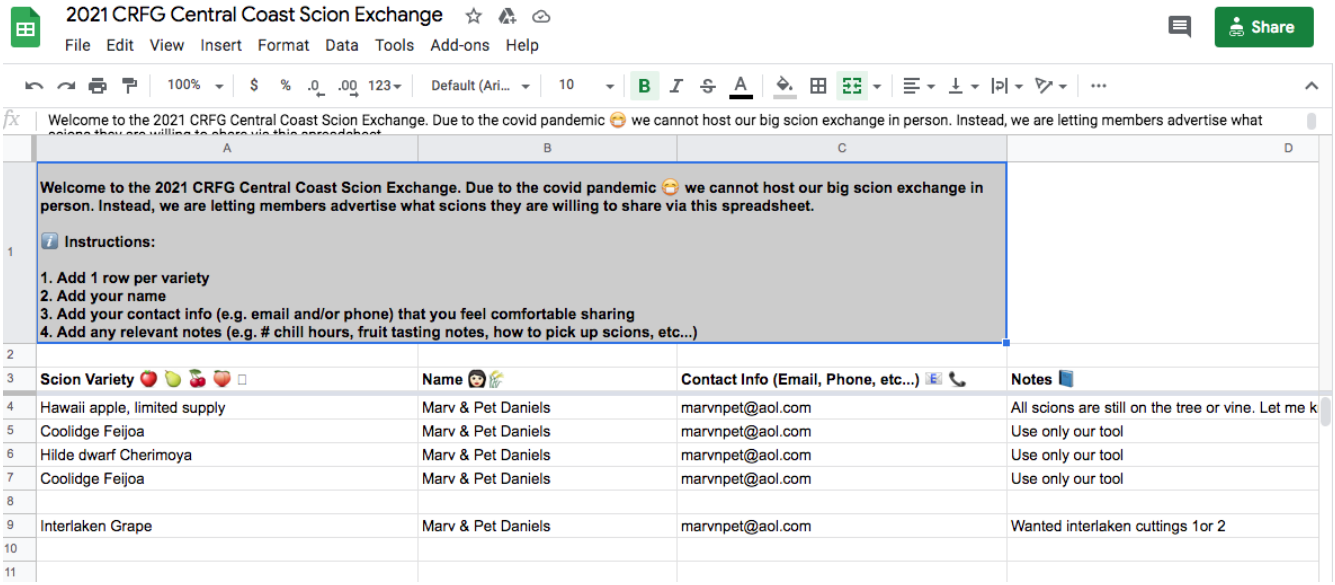
Jesse Englert has come up with a solution for coordinating sharing scion wood:

Jesse Englert

One idea is to use a shared Google spreadsheet that anyone with the link can edit. This reduces the chances that random people will access it as only those with the link will be able to. We can easily share the link via our chapter email list and not post on the website.

To help keep it local, this link is only included in the version of the newsletter sent out by Dick Pottratz, not in the version posted on the website.

You'll find it very easy to use. Here's what the spreadsheet looks like:



2021 CRFG Central Coast Scion Exchange

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help

Share

Welcome to the 2021 CRFG Central Coast Scion Exchange. Due to the covid pandemic we cannot host our big scion exchange in person. Instead, we are letting members advertise what

Welcome to the 2021 CRFG Central Coast Scion Exchange. Due to the covid pandemic we cannot host our big scion exchange in person. Instead, we are letting members advertise what scions they are willing to share via this spreadsheet.

Instructions:

1. Add 1 row per variety
2. Add your name
3. Add your contact info (e.g. email and/or phone) that you feel comfortable sharing
4. Add any relevant notes (e.g. # chill hours, fruit tasting notes, how to pick up scions, etc...)

Scion Variety	Name	Contact Info (Email, Phone, etc...)	Notes
Hawaii apple, limited supply	Marv & Pet Daniels	marvnpet@aol.com	All scions are still on the tree or vine. Let me k
Coolidge Feijoa	Marv & Pet Daniels	marvnpet@aol.com	Use only our tool
Hilde dwarf Cherimoya	Marv & Pet Daniels	marvnpet@aol.com	Use only our tool
Coolidge Feijoa	Marv & Pet Daniels	marvnpet@aol.com	Use only our tool
Interlaken Grape	Marv & Pet Daniels	marvnpet@aol.com	Wanted interlaken cuttings 1or 2

How Do I Cut and Store Scion Wood?

Information on when and how to cut and store scion wood can be found on our website. See the "How to select and cut scion wood" section for links to videos and flyers:

https://www.crfg-central.org/contributing-scions

Essentially, choose pencil-sized branches with dormant buds. Clip the top of your scions at a 45 degree angle to distinguish the top from the bottom. Dampen a paper towel and wrap it around the base of your scions. Put the bundle(s) in a ziploc bag and label the bag. Put the bag in your refrigerator.

Seth McMillan's Nursery: McMillan Farmstead

We learned during the Zoom meeting that Seth has an nursery in Nipomo. Among other items, he has avocado seedlings.

You can make an appointment with Seth:

- Phone (805)714-5937
- Email: mcmillanfarmstead@gmail.com
- Instagram: @mcmillanfarmstead

Seth (left) helped install this honorary plaque for Joe Sabol in the orchard in April 2019. He also helped weed whack in the orchard.

Seth, Manny, and Joe pay their respects to a great man.

Meals That Connect Needs Volunteers

CRFG member Terri Monell forwarded this information to alert our members of this need. If you are interested in volunteering for this worthy effort, please see the contact information below.

LLCC Wants to Help *Meals That Connect* Find Volunteers to Pack Up and Deliver Food to the Senior Population in SLO County

Over the years LLCC has collaborated with organizations throughout San Luis Obispo County to further their causes along with ours. *Meals That Connect* needs volunteers right now to help pack up and/or deliver daily meals to our homebound seniors. All county pandemic safety requirements are undertaken in this process, both for clients and volunteers. Drivers do not enter clients' homes.

Due to Covid-19, *Meals That Connect's* most popular service to clients--the Daily Meal Program at its ten meal service centers--has been curtailed.

As a result the organization has had to alter its mission by expanding its delivery service routes to bring approximately 170 daily meals to the homes of people who need them. Sometimes this meal is the only one that a person eats in the day it's delivered.

Also because of the pandemic, this organization has seen a loss of staff and volunteers. New volunteers are desperately needed.

In San Luis Obispo, food is prepared by professionals at the Nutrition Center at old General Hospital, then delivered to the Anderson Hotel where it is packaged and distributed to drivers. Many other cities in the county have a similar *Meals that Connect* food preparation and distribution program.

If you feel comfortable and are interested in helping *Meals That Connect*, please contact Janine Lloyd at 805-543-0469 or send her an email at mtc.slo.ah@gmail.com If you live outside the city of San Luis Obispo, Janine can direct you to someone at the center closest to you.

Please let Janine know you learned of the volunteer need through Lifelong Learners.

To review *Meals That Connect's* mission and services prior to Covid-19 please go its web site www.mealsthat connect.org

Thank you for considering this volunteer opportunity during these trying times.

Why I Live In California
by Paul Rys

Photo taken December 20, 2020

One of the advantages of taking a risk and planting late in the season.

Thoughts on Propagating
by Tom Ogren

Cuttings: Just a reminder that many kinds of fruit trees can be grown from cuttings. Mulberries, figs, grapes, and all kinds of plums are usually easy to grow from direct stuck (where you want it to grow) long (12 inches or so), pencil-thick, dormant cuttings. For me, these grow as fast, or faster, than grafted trees and I've had no problems with them.

I've had little luck at rooting apricots, peaches, avocados, feijoas, or persimmons. I have had plenty of luck though at rooting most forms of roses, hibiscus, bougainvillea, and fair luck at rooting pomegranates.

Note about seeds: Most stone fruits (plums, peaches, apricots, etc.) need some hours of chill before they'll sprout. I have a bag of seed from Damson Plums in my refrigerator now...will plant them in another month or so. Damson comes "true" from seed, so no need to graft (it is also easy from dormant cuttings). I find that a lot of seedling apricot trees turn out to produce good fruit. I've a seedling apricot tree that is excellent, and ripens 3-4 weeks earlier than Blenheim or Royal. (If a seedling apricot ends up having few fruit, or lousy ones, then just graft it with some good scion wood...I find apricot very easy to graft)

Protecting Sprouting Plants And Their Seeds From Birds
by Paul Rys

Sweet peas are a favorite flower for many, with their beautiful colors and heavenly fragrance. However, various birds destroy the plants when they begin to sprout: they eat the young shoots and soft seeds. And even if you protect the sprouts with strawberry baskets or similar covers, as the plants outgrow the baskets, the birds eat the leaves, especially this year, with the drought. Then what is the solution?

After much research and thinking about several years of frustration, I concluded the only viable solution is to exclude the

birds completely, using netting similar to what I have used to keep birds from eating fruit such as persimmons.

Of course it took time and energy to build a frame above the wire fence the sweet peas will grow on, but I and those passing by will enjoy the beauty. Flowers improve our natural connection with nature, promote the growth of healthy chemicals that our bodies produce, causing us to feel better about living. Flowers are good news!

Just visualizing how beautiful the flower-filled trellis will be this spring puts a smile on my soul, and increases the endorphins in my body. And it is not work, but action with a passion. And the fragrance of sweet peas is infinite- there is still fragrance even after hundreds of people take it in. (To be continued until springtime 2021.)

Orchard News
by Dara Manker

In our January meeting we forgot to tell you a few important things:

- First of all, if you're working in the orchard be sure to **guard yourself against the insidious No-see-ums!** These #$@*#!!! insects will bite you with neither hesitation nor remorse. They delight in snacking on your knuckles, ears, elbows, and knees. What part of your body are they not willing to bite, you ask? Well, take a guess!

  Nope, they'll bite that part too. And in an example of the breathtaking unfairness of the universe, the itch-factor in their bites is not proportional to their tiny size. The itch will last for days. So...

  … Please wear insect repellant, long pants, long sleeves, gloves, and a hat. When we are thus armored, we are seldom bothered by this dastardly pest.

- **Do not prune the Mulberry tree. On pain of death!** Manny has big plans for grafting it and wants it just as it is. Have you ever seen a wrathful Manny? No, of course not! And believe me, you do not want to. Do not touch the Mulberry tree. And if you must look at it, it might be safest to do so only out of the corners of your eyes.

- We see from the Zoom chat notes that we did not tell you that only one of our two Pawpaws met with an untimely end. The other is still going strong. Robert had some informative comments:
  - Robert Scott: Better to have two paw paw for cross pollination.
  - Alisha Taff : Thank you Robert! Good suggestion.
  - Alisha Taff: Robert, what 2 varieties do you recommend for our orchard?
  - Robert Scott : Your talking Paw Paw- then Sunflower is self fertile and new Neal Peterson varieties. Or another seedling.

  We are still looking for a Pawpaw donation. Any of the varieties or a seedling as Robert mentioned would be great!

We went to the orchard recently to cut down the sickly Dapple Dandy Pluot, put new emitters on Joe's newly planted Arkansas Black apple, and do other maintenance tasks. We noticed that the majority of peaches and nectarines there are in bloom!

Death of Violette De Bordeaux

We planted the Violette De Bordeaux fig tree months ago in a protective metal basket, but the critters went overland and killed it.

We'll be planting another one, this time with protective fencing.

Orchard Weeds Identified! Volunteers Helped Eradicate!

Thank you Carmela Vignocchi and Mark Skinner for your work in the orchard. Thank you also for educating us on the names of the weeds! Now we can refer to them by their proper names of Bristly Oxtongue and Ripgut Brome, rather than "@#$@%!!!" We can reserve that name for the no-see-ums.

Carmela wrote the following email:

> *Dear CRFG members,*
>
> *Using ZOOM for the meeting was a very good idea and it worked well from our end too. Thanks everyone for your efforts in making this happen and for the email announced the meeting.*
>
> *Thank you Manny for talking about the needs in the Orchard.*
> *Mark Skinner and I, (Carmela Vignocchi) went to the orchard today and worked for about 3 hours on the projects you recommended..*
>
> *Mark reduced the height of a Wonderful Pomegranate and an Ein Shermer apple.*
>
> *I used my garden fork to uproot and removed 4 of the top invasive weed species: Bristly Oxtongue, Black mustard, Ripgut Brome, Vinca, plus 3 other weeds: Oxalis, Scarlet pimpernel, and Wild oat. We moved the clipped canes and 2 black 35 gal trash bags now full of weeds next to the fence by the Shed/Message Board.*
>
> *I started at the NW edge by the Chuck and Susan Atlee memorial and removed the invasive and other weeds from a small area.*
> *Most of the Bristly Oxtongue, Brome and Oats were about 2' high.*
>
> *Covering the cleared area with a 6" layer of wood chips would help keep the weeds down and retain the moisture in the the soil. Not so positive about the manure due to the weed seeds that might be included with their deposits...*
>
> *Mark has used goats to reduce cape ivy and fennel on two restoration projects. The herders could advise if their animals would eat the invasive weeds, especially Bristly Oxtongue, in the Orchard.*

January Zoom Meeting
by Dara Manker and Linda Robertson

On January 9. 2021, the CRFG Central Coast Chapter held its first-ever Zoom meeting. We had 44 participants. It was a delight to see everyone's faces again.

Many thanks to Art DeKleine for organizing and hosting this event, and to Keri Schmidt for providing tech support. Thanks to those who got together for several trial runs and exchange of ideas.

Thank you also to Linda Robertson, who as our secretary took notes during the meeting. What follows is a summation of the meeting using Linda's and Dara's notes.

Agenda for the January Meeting

- 10 minutes Welcome and Introduction.
- 5 minutes Tucker's welcome
- 2 minutes Alisha's welcome and hopes for the future
- 3 minutes Joe's welcome and comments
- 6 minutes Winter gardening from Tucker's viewpoint.
- 3 minutes 2021 Officer Election - Larry
- 1 minutes Treasurer's financial and membership report
- 3 minutes Scion Exchange ideas - Larry
- 3 minutes The Leaflet Editors' Report - Dara
- 3 minutes CRFG Orchard report – Manny & Dara
- 15 minutes Winter tree pruning - Larry
- 15 minutes Water issues to consider - Art
- 1 minute New Business and General Comments

TOTAL TIME 1 hour, followed by a time for socializing

Welcome and Introduction

Art welcomed everyone to the meeting and relayed several announcements.

Tucker's Welcome

Tucker welcomed everyone and thanked everyone who has made our newsletter, The Leaflet, possible during the pandemic.

Alisha's Welcome and Hopes For The Future

Alisha would like to get your feedback on this meeting and your thoughts on topics for future Zoom meetings. You can email Alisha at 72ali.tee@gmail.com and/or Tucker at tucker.schmidt@gmail.com.

Joe's Welcome and Comments

Joe says for obvious reasons there will be no High School grafting instruction by our Chapter this year. He will be ordering some rootstock (update: he already has). He recommends you label and save your scion wood in your fridge until we see what we're going to do about sharing them. (Update: see link to Jesse's scion-sharing spreadsheet above.)

Tucker's Winter Gardening Tips: Grafting Avocados

- Rootstock
  - Use Mexican varieties for cold tolerance
  - You can grow your own rootstock from seed
  - You can also get seedings from Seth's nursery, McMillan Farmstead (see above for contact info).
- Graft when trees are starting to push but budwood is not
- Parafilm
  - Practice stretching it out- it breaks easily!
- Grafting
  - Wrap all but bottom of scion wood in parafilm- it needs to be sealed well!
  - Graft your scion to the rootstock
  - Wrap your graft all the way up to the previously-placed parafilm
  - Wrap the graft area with a rubber band or nursery tape. Tucker prefers the former because the rubber band will eventually disintegrate.
  - January is a good time to graft

2021 Officer Election – Larry

Because of the COVID situation, Larry proposed that we keep the current state of officers. No one stepped down. Members present voted to approve without dissent.

Treasurer's Financial And Membership Report

Bank account is in good shape. All bills have been paid. Dick has sent emails to those whose membership is past due. We have 279 members who renewed for this year.

Scion Exchange ideas – Larry

Larry Hollis talked about ways of exchanging scions. He agrees with Joe Sabol's suggestion that when we prune this winter we save our scion wood until we figure out a way of exchanging wood. Anyone with ideas for sharing should e-mail Alisha or Tucker. (Update: see above link to Jesse's scion-sharing spreadsheet.)

The Leaflet Editors' Report – Dara

Dara thanked those who have made The Leaflet possible by contributing articles during the pandemic. She gave a brief overview of some articles in past newsletters to inspire you to write your own, and is looking forward to seeing your contributions to future newsletters.

CRFG Orchard report – Manny & Dara

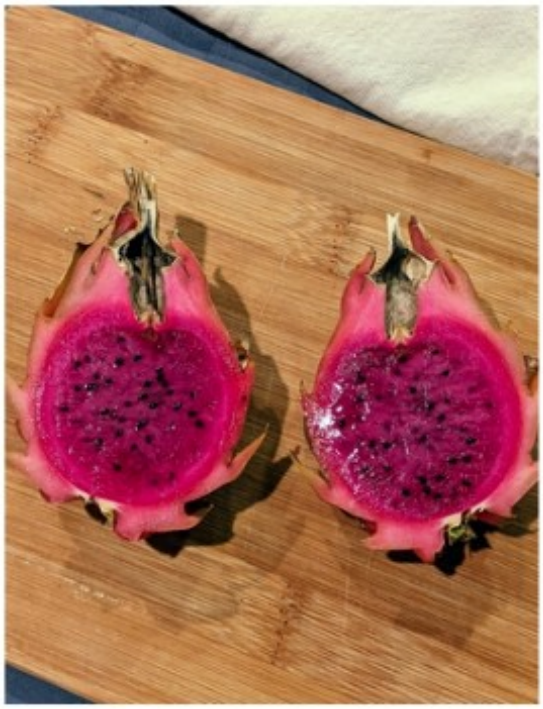
Manny and I had some technical difficulties during our presentations. We thought we were sharing my screen during his presentation, but reviewing the chat notes later we saw that this was not the case. Below are the graphics we meant to show you.

Manny presented the following:

CRFG Orchard Update

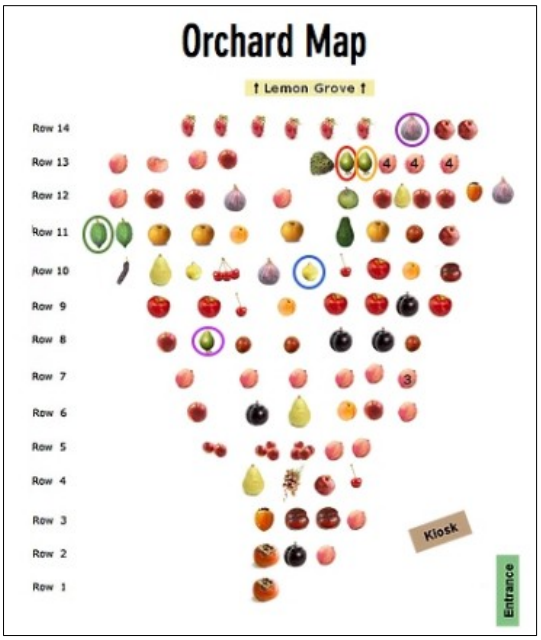
November newsletter contained an article on the orchard, maintenance done, new trees planted, trees to be removed due to sickness or non-productivity.

First Dragon Fruit thanks to Jesse and Joe:



New Trees In The Orchard

1. Conadria Fig (Row 14)	Larry
2. Red Guava (Row 13)	Manny
3. Lemon Guava (Row 13)	Larry
4. PawPaw (Row 11)	Larry
5. Russian Quince (Row 10)	Larry
6. Guava (unknown variety) (Row 8)	Tucker
7. Cherimoya	Jenny
8. 2 Sprite/Delight Cherry Plums	Richard
9. Arkansas Black Apple	Joe



Trees To Be Removed

These trees are scheduled for removal in 2021 either for low to no crop yields, sickness, or to make room for more variety within the orchard.

Row 13: 3 grafted peach trees. Grafts include Eva's Pride, Desert Gold, May Pride, Florida Prince, Mid Pride: These trees bear little to no fruit. And unfortunately, we don't know the specific variety of each branch any more because the signs have fallen over time.

Row 12: Desert Dawn Nectarine, Arctic Star White Nectarine: These trees bear little to no fruit.

Row 9: Anna Apple: sick

Row 8: Dapple Dandy Pluot: sick

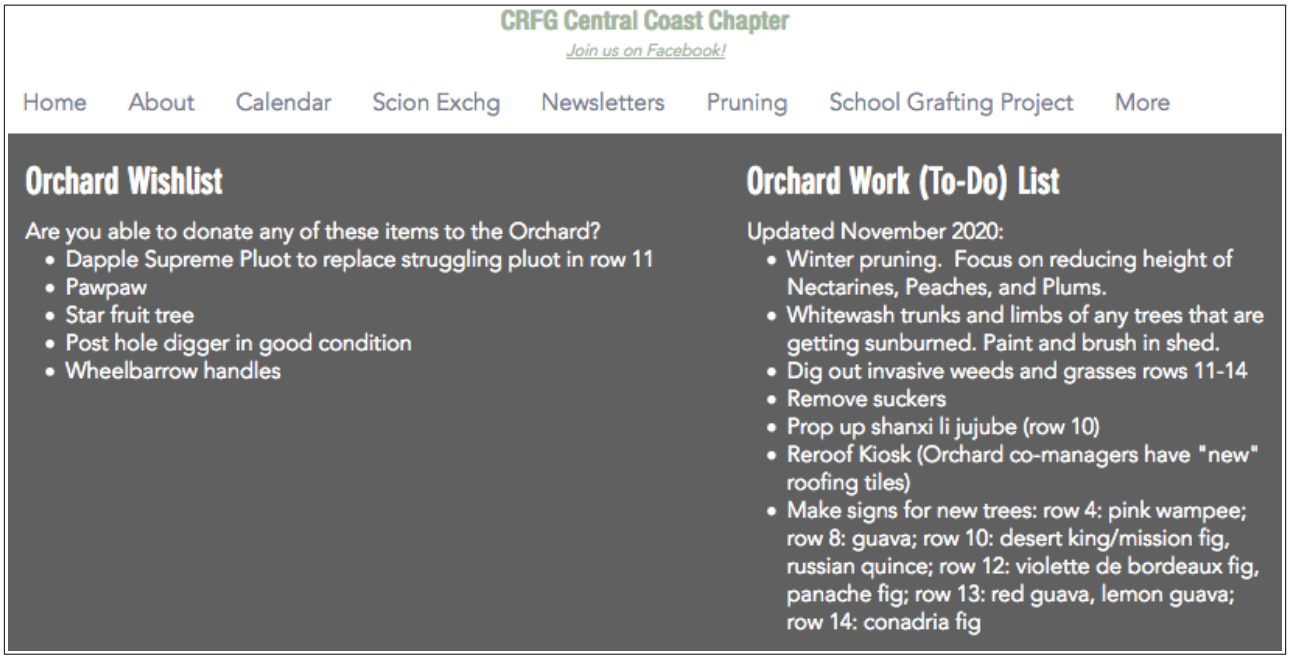
Row 2: Plum of unknown variety: never fruits

Sick Anna Apple

Dapple Dandy sick with Gummosis. Big thanks to Jenny for researching and identifying this disease. Other trees in the orchard will be inspected for this disease and removed.

The “Orchard” webpage contains:

- Orchard Wishlist: request for items needed in the orchard
- Orchard Work List: jobs that need to be done



How to get to the Orchard website page:

The orchard is a beautiful place to be!
Ideal for social-distancing during the pandemic.

Winter tree pruning – Larry

Larry Hollis demonstrated pruning a young tree in 3 ways, for low growth, central leader, and vase styles.

He has written the following article specifically for the newsletter to include all the information he intended to share during the presentation.

January 9, 2021 Pruning Presentation, continued…

by Larry Hollis

During my pruning demonstration at our January Zoom meeting, I failed to cover several points that I intended to make, so here are a few of those missed details. I know many of you know more about pruning than I do, but others of you are still hesitant to prune for fear of making mistakes. Although we can make pruning mistakes that are difficult to repair, most can be corrected.

My topic was Winter Pruning, which includes formative pruning of our new bare-root trees which are sold and planted in winter, and detail pruning of our older trees. This latter aspect assumes that in summer, after fruiting, we prune our established trees to reduce size if necessary, and slow further growth.

When we purchase a new tree it frequently has already been pruned to some extent, but if our desire is to have a tree that is short enough that we need not use a ladder to pick, thin, and prune, we may have to prune the new tree closer to the ground. That first pruning cut is one of the most important cuts we make. As our friend and guest pruner Dan Lassanske often said, "prune low, branch low, fruit low".

Regardless of whether we want our tree to have an open vase or goblet form, often suggested for stone fruit, or become a spindle bush, popular for apples and pears, we first need to prune the central leader, I suggest between 12" and 24" from soil level for goblet form, and 24" to 36" for spindle bushes. If there aren't already well-placed laterals this will stimulate several buds below the cut to push out new laterals that will become our scaffold. We will later in the year, or in the second year, need to select three to five of these laterals and prune them back, and prune off any others. Ideally, we want laterals that are evenly spaced around the central leader, like spokes in a wheel. We also want them to be spaced apart vertically.

In the third and fourth years we need to prune back the new laterals to stimulate branching and avoid long unbranched shoots. We may need to

use spreaders or tie the branches down to stakes to create an open center or less vertical growth. As our tree begins to fruit, we need to remember not to allow the tree to set fruit when it is still small or we will slow its growth, our first priority should be to grow the tree, the fruit will come later.

A book on Pruning & Training with diagrams and photos can be a good way to improve or refresh our skills. Even after we learn the basics of formative pruning and can maintain our various varieties of fruiting trees in the desired forms, a good pruning text can help us with other forms, both unrestricted and the more demanding restricted forms like cordons, espaliers, fans, arches, and tunnels.

There are also a number of videos on the various aspects of pruning and training on YouTube. I suggest you compare the style of Tom Spellman, of Dave Wilson Nursery, with that of Tom Del Hotal, an arborist and San Diego CRFG chapter member. Both of whom have been guest pruners at our January pruning meetings. Tom Spellman's videos are also on DaveWilson.com, along with vast amounts of other useful information about fruit trees. As you watch, remember that pruning isn't an exact science, there are many variations on a given theme.

As we move from formative pruning our new trees, to pruning our cropping trees, the fruiting and growth habits of the various varieties should inform how we prune them. We should be aware that some trees fruit on the current year's growth, like persimmons, some on the previous year's growth, for instance, peaches and nectarines, and some on two years old and older wood and fruiting spurs, like apples, pears, plums, and apricots. Many fig cultivars produce two distinct crops, one on the current year's growth and one on last year's growth.

Some varieties, like peaches and nectarines, need annual pruning to stimulate the growth of new fruiting wood. Every year we need to prune back last year's shoots by 25 to 75% to stimulate the growth of next year's fruiting wood, but if we forget these fruiting habits and remove all of last year's shoots, we will get no fruit this year.

Apples, pears, plums, apricots, and sweet cherries produce fruit on two-year-old and older wood and on fruiting spurs, so they do not require annual pruning to stimulate fruiting, and may only need light annual pruning after they reach their desired sizes.

Regardless of variety, we need to remove any dead, damaged, or diseased wood, and branches that are rubbing each other, or that are growing

through the tree from one side to the other, or branches that spoil the shape of the tree. Before you grab your pruners and run out in the rain to get started, it is advisable to avoid pruning stone fruit varieties, especially apricots, in damp weather to avoid disease entering the cuts. If you feel compelled to prune Prunus varieties during the winter you can reduce disease danger by limiting your pruning to small branches and wait until spring or summer to remove larger branches.
A tip for removing larger branches is to make a cut part way through on the bottom of the branch a few inches away from where the branch is attached, and then another cut on top of the branch slightly farther out on the branch.This will prevent the bark from tearing when the branch falls. Once the branch's weight is removed you can cut any remaining stub just outside the collar so that it will heal over cleanly.

We often find that much of our pruning is done to control growth. Since pruning stimulates growth, it might be wise to use techniques like drop-crotch pruning which redirects growth, tying-down branches to slow growth, or planting any new trees on rootstock that will limit our trees to a size that will fit the space we have available for them.

Varieties that are usually grown on their own roots, like cherimoyas, white sapotes, and pomegranates, and other large varieties like avocados, will likely require quite a bit of work to keep them small, but it can be done with good formative pruning and regular maintenance. I recently visited the orchard of some longtime CRFG members and complimented them on the fine looking white sapote, cherimoya, and avocado trees in their residential neighborhood orchard. The trees were all older established trees and were under 8' tall. The white sapote in particular was beautifully shaped and trained in sort of a mushroom shape. I think much of the ongoing maintenance is done with a hedge trimmer! Not exactly pruning by the book, but it results in a "nice looking tree, that also bears fruit," another of Dan's pruning sayings.

Citrus trees require little ongoing pruning after initial formative pruning and shaping, mostly just the removal of dead interior branches and occasional thinning and shaping. The same holds for avocados.

I'll stop here and hope I have inspired you to get out in your orchard and prune where necessary, or confused you enough to do some further research. If you are planning to plant new bare-root trees this winter, this cool wet weather would be a good time in which to do that.

As I write this my early peaches and apples are flowering, so it's too late to dormant spray them again. I'm glad I at least sprayed them once before

bud-break and the rains. Perhaps we can get another spraying in on the still-dormant trees after the rain. For those of you who grow organically, both OMRI approved mineral oil-based dormant oil, and copper are available at Farm Supply.

Happy Gardening

Water issues to consider – Art

Art DeKleine gave an informative presentation on "Watering Trees and Plants." We learned the best way to water our trees and plants, and what to consider when creating our very own watering chart for every month of the growing season.

You can find his presentation via the link above or on the FAQ page of the website under "Watering Trees and Plants."

New Business and General Comments

- Dara and Manny introduced Jesse Englert, the other orchard co-manager. They love his enthusiasm and appreciate all his hard work in the orchard.
- Marv is offering 1 complimentary feijoa seedling to each person who renews for five years their membership in our wonderful organization. Marv is extending this offer to anyone who renewed for five years in the past 6 months.

  All other feijoa seedlings for anyone else will be $5 each, and all the funds collected will be donated to the Scholarship Fund.
- Joe: there is no rootstock available right now. He will make a rootstock order and let us know (update: he already has). Order will include apple, pear, apricot, and plum but not avocado or citrus.