

CENTRAL COAST CHAPTER CRFG

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Next Meeting

Saturday, December 13th, 2025 Annual Holiday Potluck & Plant Exchange

This meeting is for members only. Information about this meeting, including location and the schedule, was emailed to all members on 11/15/2025. It was included in their version of the November newsletter.

Chapter Website:

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

Facebook Page:

[Facebook-CRFG-Central Coast](#)

YouTube Channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/
@californiararefruitgrowers718/
videos](https://www.youtube.com/@californiararefruitgrowers718/videos)

Chapter chairs contact:

central_coast@crfg.org
(underscore between 1 and c)

For article submissions:

crfgccnewsletter@gmail.com

Announcements

2026 CRFG Central Coast Chapter Nominees

We will be voting on these positions at the December meeting.

Positions still needed are in red text. Information about these positions is on the next page.

A big thank you to these volunteers for their willingness to step up and make our chapter viable.

2026 Chapter Officers

Co-Chairs: Linda Robertson, Manny Magaña

Secretary: Terri Monell

Treasurer: Evelyn Ruehr

2026 Committees & Team Members

*** Welcoming & Membership Committee:** Dara Manker, Chair;

Sharon Lovelady, **volunteers needed to help at sign-in table**

*** Apple Grafting Team Coordinator: Needed (we will help you learn the process)**

*** Nominating Coordinator: Needed**

*** Volunteer Coordinator: Needed**

Program Committee: Sharon Lovelady, Chair;
Claudia Callwood, Dean Harrell, Steve Johnson, Teresa Lees, Elaine Rathbun, Don Shealy

Hospitality Committee: Drina Burns and Madison Rasmussen, Co-chairs;
Seth Waite, Elaine Rathbun

Scholarship Program: Linda Robertson, Chair;
Rebecca Bishop, Patty Morrison, Dean Harrell, Lauren Garner (ex-officio)

Plant Propagation Team: Tucker Schmidt, Lead;
Marv Daniels, Larry Hollis, Manny Magana, Dara Manker, Gabrielle Robbins,
Robert Scott, Jack Swords

Demonstration Orchard Co-Managers: Dara Manker, Manny Magaña, Jesse Englert

Publicity - Media Manager: Sheri Thompson

Newsletter Editor: Michael Kurland

Webmaster: Dara Manker

CRFG Inc. Liaison: Linda Robertson

Master Gardeners Liaison: Linda Robertson

Raffle Team: Nell Wade, Lead; Kathy Longacre, Jenny Weaver

Scion Exchange: Manny Magaña, Lead

Scion Exchange Store Manager: Terri Monell

Rootstock Procurement & Sales Team: Manny Magaña, Dara Manker

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Manny Magana and Linda Robertson at crfg_central@crfg.org.

Volunteer Descriptions

Welcoming/Membership Committee

Sign up to sit at the welcome table for a few meetings. You'll greet attendees, help members find their nametags and guests to make nametags, tell newcomers about CRFG and our chapter, help with handouts and membership forms. You don't need to attend every meeting to volunteer in this role.

Apple Grafting Coordinator

Join us in teaching the art and science of apple grafting! We will help you learn this role. We're looking for a coordinator to lead our high school grafting outreach program. In this role, you'll connect with high school teachers on our list to schedule grafting workshops, arrange mutually convenient dates and times, confirm class sizes, and organize the purchase of rootstock.

On workshop days, you'll visit schools with a team of experienced grafters to demonstrate what grafting is, why it's valuable, and how to do it effectively. After the demonstration, our team—along with Cal Poly Fruit Science students when available—will guide students as they graft their own apple trees.

Nominating Coordinator

You would be looking for nominees for the various committees but actively seek out potential volunteers from July-November. Annually by mid-November, we want to seal the deal with all volunteers! You will be provided a copy of the current descriptions of each committee so you can encourage volunteerism.

Volunteer Coordinator

Recruit volunteers for events such as the Scion Exchange, Propagation Meeting, AG Harvest Festival, and Orchard Maintenance. Maintain volunteer lists and send correspondence prior to the events. Welcome volunteers on the day of each event and help them locate their assigned work area.

Rootstock Pre-Orders For 2026

Our chapter has purchased the following rootstock for 2026. It is due to arrive Mid-February, and will be available for pickup at the Scion Exchange (Saturday, Feb. 28).

Members get a pre-order discount rate up until Friday, Feb. 27th. Members should plan to place their pre-orders at the December and January meetings, cash and check are preferred. Member rootstock orders will not be accepted via email.

Note: Due to the interest of one of our members, we purchased 50 apple “Geneva 969” rootstock for our members to experiment with. These are only available to members and are limited in quantity, so if you are interested, please place your order at the Dec. or Jan. meeting.

For details about these rootstock, see: <https://tinyurl.com/mtu2fpwh>

2026 Rootstock			
Rootstock	Variety	Members Only Pre-order Price	Price at Scion Exchange
Apple	MM-111	\$3	\$4
Apple	Geneva 969 (new – for members only!)	\$3	\$4
Cherry	Prunus avium “Mazzard”	\$3	\$4
Plum/Apricot/ some almonds	Prunus marianna 2624	\$3	\$4
Plum/Apricot	Prunus marianna GF 8-1	\$3	\$4
Pear	Pyrus OHxF97	\$3	\$4
Peach/Nectarine	Prunus persica “Nemaguard”	\$4	\$5

Successful Orchard Workday

November 1, 2025

Weeds were pulled, and loads of Sycamore leaves and Cal Poly-donated mulch now cover the back of the orchard (where most of the toughest invasive weeds tend to grow).

Thank you to the hard working, dedicated volunteers who showed up to make this happen!

Next Orchard Workday: January 3rd, 2026:

Help prepare the orchard for the annual pruning meeting.





November Meeting: LeFort's Organic Farms

LeFort's website: <https://ccof.org/directory-member/leforts-organic-crops>

Roberto LeFort was our host when we visited his organic farm in Creston, CA.

In 1997, Roberto began transforming this former goat farm, covered in trash, to the certified organic, and Certified Humane® farm it is today. There are currently Granny Smith, Honey Crisp, Gala, Golden Delicious, Fuji, Arkansas Black, and Pink Lady apples growing on the property. There are also cherries, pears, loquats, and nectarines. The farm sells a variety of produce including carrots, basil, tomatoes, and kale. Roberto sells eggs from his free range chickens. He distributes his products through various venues including a local school district and farmers markets in Templeton, Morro Bay, and the SLO Saturday morning market.



As we toured his farm, we marveled that he now manages the entire farm by himself, with occasional help from family, friends, and temporary help. Unbelievably, though, Roberto has two other jobs: running LeFort Tractor Services, and also mentoring two other growers.



← Roberto explained the variety of traps he has used to deal with the mice, rats, gophers, ground squirrels, and raccoons on his property. It is important to wear latex gloves to avoid getting your scent on the traps, especially where the gophers are concerned.

Clockwise from top left: --> Electric zapper (works well, \$30, when it contains a dead mouse it beeps and a light blinks). A24 mouse trap kills the rodent via CO₂ powered piston (has only caught 1 mouse in 5 years, \$200);. Standard mouse trap (reliable, cheap).



← Bucket trap (catches 1 mouse/day, \$8 for platform with lever flap, use any appropriately sized bucket)



← His favorite gopher trap: its prongs are closer together than in most gopher traps, and are longer, allowing them to be inserted farther into the gopher hole. \$17.

He has found that morning is the best time to set the traps.

To locate the tunnel, he uses a long screwdriver and a spade. He probes the ground around the hole with the screwdriver to determine the tunnel's direction by feeling where the soil is softest.

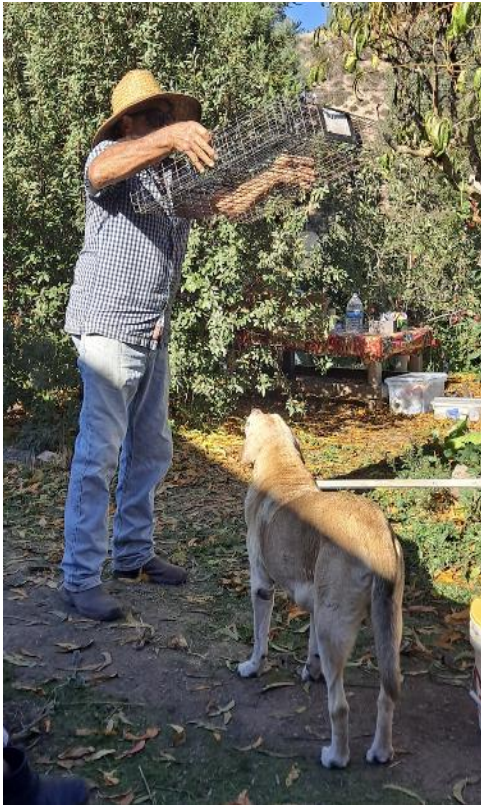
He secures a long metal stake to his traps with wire and drives it into the ground, ensuring that animals or his dogs cannot drag the traps away.

He suggests that some people place dog hair in gopher tunnels as a repellent.



← Roberto respects the creatures. When driving the tractor, he uses a bag attached to a long pole to gently lift snakes out of the way, ensuring he doesn't run over them.

Deer are no longer a problem as he has fenced his entire property.



← Roberto's dog Honey pays rapt attention as he explains how to use this trap to catch ground squirrels. She learns that chicken scratch is used as bait, and to place the trap in the shade so the animal does not suffer from overheating once it is captured.

Below, Roberto demonstrates how he covers his vegetables with netting. Although it's hard to see in the photo to the right, he sets up two criss-crossed wire arches by pressing their ends into the ground, then throws the roll of netting over them. To secure it, he weighs down the corners with soil. Roberto has perfected this method since he usually works alone. Tip: Roll the netting around a stick beforehand to keep it from tangling.





We check out the many vegetables.





Trees laden with apples, including Fuji, Pink Lady, Arkansas Black, Granny Smith, Honey Crisp, and Golden Delicious.

Below, damage caused by the fungus *Venturia inaequalis* (aka apple scab). To help prevent it, keep the area beneath the tree free of weeds and leaves. Prune the tree to allow air inside the canopy.





Another section of the apple orchard.



A fuchsia attracts many bees.



Dean tells us about fireblight (cut any affected limb a foot down from the affected area, and throw the limb in the trash (not green waste or compost)).

Roberto discusses how to improve the soil: cardboard is laid down, and then leaves and compost are spread on top. All gradually decompose. You can compare the soil on the left with that in its native state on the right.



This seeder is used to plant cover crops, currently a seed mix of Swan oats, common vetch, Dundale peas, yellow peas, and Ceres Graza radish.



By all accounts, the meeting was both informative and engaging. We look forward to returning to the LeFort Organic Farm for a future inspiring visit.