

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
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January Pruning Meeting

The largest regular meeting ever was our January pruning event! If you were there, you know there are only about 48 chairs in the Crops Unit classroom and, unless you were a **very** early arrival, you were one of the 84 plus people who had to stand! (See photo below taken by Paul Moyer to get an idea of what at least 132 people look like in that space!)



Fortunately, the business meeting to elect 2008 officers didn't take much time (results in the next article), and pruning expert Dr. Bob Tullock, Professor Emeritus at Cal Poly Pomona kept his presentation short and sweet, so we didn't have to be "sardines" for long. (Next year, perhaps we could move all the tables to one side and members could bring their own chairs for seating, as they do for regular meetings. The Cal-Poly chairs could be for guests. Those tables take up lots of prime viewing space and the **people** are stuck at the back of the room!)

Dr. Bob's pruning presentation was great. His premise for pruning a home orchard is: "A tree that puts fruit on above where I can reach is not a fruit tree—it's a bird feeder." Birds seem to be Bob's main pests at his Paso Robles orchard. His favorite method of controlling them is keeping his 19 cats hungry enough to hunt during fruit ripening season! When asked what branch of the Audubon Society he belonged to, he didn't miss a beat when he replied, "The Winchester Branch."

The meeting adjourned to the Demonstration Orchard just down the



block from the classroom where Bob continued his exhibition of pruning techniques for “reachable” fruit. By the end of the afternoon, all the trees had been pruned and were amazingly uniform, especially considering that there were over 100 people cutting away!



About 3:00 PM we took a break from pruning and watched as two memorial low chill cherry trees were planted. The trees were Royal Lee, located by Bob Tullock. With family members of honorees Bill Furtick and Clytia Chambers assisting, the trees became a wonderful addition to our orchard. Clytia’s daughter, Michele, came up from Pasadena and daughter, Clytia, drove down from Oakland. Bill’s wife, Anne, was also enthusiastically involved!

As if all this activity wasn’t enough, our “resident expert” in fertilizing, Tom Ruehr was busy putting nutrients on the soil. (Read his great comments on soil testing later in this issue.)

New Chapter Officers are: Larry Hollis and Patti Schober, co-chairs; Helen Whigham, secretary; and Dick Pottratz, treasurer.

This was truly a meeting to remember!



February Grafting Meeting and Scion Exchange

One just needed to be there to appreciate the efforts it took to put together and rewards participants got from this annual event. There was no way to take a “head count” with everyone coming and going, but as you can see from the photo on the following page, there was a parking lot full of people!

According to Joe Sabol, “The Rootstock/Canning service and Merchandise Store” did an outstanding bit of business! It has evolved into a MAJOR EFFORT for our Chapter!” The volunteer storekeepers kept their cool when they were mobbed by people wanting one of the 100 Tropic Prince low-chill peach trees that our good friend, Tom Burchell, flew in. (Tom had



agreed to sell us these trees for \$10 each. When he learned that is the cost we sold them at, he tore up the check for \$1000 and had Dick Pottratz write another one for \$750! That translated to a \$250 donation from Tom!) They didn't lose it when they were bombarded with requests for \$2 Lovell roots, or asked how to use the Doc Farwell's goop, or if they could get more than one "grafting kit." In a few

short hours, these wonderful people, led by cashiers Billy and Ruth Mounts, brought over \$2270 into our chapter treasury! (I'm not naming everyone who helped because I might forget to mention someone, but YOU know who you are and what a wonderful job YOU did!) Our chapter thanks you!

The grafting technique demonstrations were led by six or eight chapter members and were enthusiastically received. (That's "gifted grafter" Dave Christie below showing a seriously concentrating fellow how it is done!)



One lady, who drove all the way from L.A. with her father said, "Just wanted to thank you and your entire group for a terrific event. My father and I were so glad we had made the trip up and back from L.A. We've both been busy grafting our newly acquired scions with better technique and greater confidence after watching the demonstrations."

There were tables of scions to choose from, too, shared by members who had carefully followed the rules of scion collection.

Scion Wood Collectors Know How!

To make the apple grafting program such a success, we need scion wood to go with our sturdy rootstock. This is one collection team that went out this year to get scions at the orchards of Janet Pesenti in Templeton/Creston and Bill Spencer's in Creston. It was the eighth year in a row these two have allowed us to collect scion wood. Also pictured are collectors Art Henzgen, Larry Hollis, and Chuck Atlee. Joe Sabol was hidden behind the camera!



High School Apple Grafting Program

What a year this has been for the grafting program! All 3300 rootstock ordered from Lawyer's Nursery in Montana arrived on time and in a very healthy state. Then, on February 21, a record setting twenty-three chapter members and Cal-Poly students showed up at San Luis Obispo High to assist with the grafting and to celebrate the grafting of the **1000th** tree at SLO High! (Photo of 1st Period grafters and students was taken by Joe Sabol.)



Our grafting team, lead by the intrepid Dr. Joe Sabol, has been traveling the area generally within the three local counties for TEN years now! Bonnie McKee, who was in the first

grafting class held at SLO High, is currently a student at Cal Poly and she was able to be there to volunteer for this special celebration. SLO High also participated in another “first” this year when the senior class grafted apricots, too!



The photo on the left with all the smiling faces is of **volunteers** at the Nipomo High School grafting project. If you want to know how to graft, or to practice former skills, just sign up to assist at one of the high school events and you will get “up close and personal” instruction while you are “helping” a student! **There is still time** to join this great project. Call Joe Sabol at **544-1056**.

Also, thanks go out to Ralph Sarmento who made another great monetary contribution to this program!

Soil Sample Analysis of the CRFG Demonstration Orchard at Cal Poly

To help CRFG Central Coast Chapter provide better fruit at the Cal Poly Demonstration Orchard and to help CRFG members understand how soil testing and leaf analysis benefit their orchards, it was determined that we would have a January soil sample analyzed and a mid summer leaf analysis made with reports generated giving recommendations.

There are several testing laboratories in California, but Tom Ruehr suggested that we use A & L Western Laboratories, Inc. (For those of you who are interested, you can visit their website: www.al-labs-west.com/ to obtain your own soil testing kit.) The cost of the complete analysis (S3C) was \$32.

Following Tom Ruehr’s direction, 12 samples were taken at various spots from the top 6 inches of soil. A spade was used to dig a sample and a knife used to select a representative 1 inch by 1 inch by 6 inch sample. These samples were placed in a clean plastic bucket and mixed thoroughly. A one pound sample was placed in a Zip-Lock plastic bag and sent to the laboratory.

A Graphical Soil Analysis Report and Soil Fertility Guidelines were sent to the Central Coast Chapter via e-mail. The report contains easily understood information. I am not putting the full report in this newsletter, but here is an example of what Tom Ruehr’s in-depth analysis has provided:

“An ideal soil should have about 5 times as much calcium as magnesium. In this sample, calcium (2129) divided by magnesium (1004) equals slightly more than 2.0. This means the soil has far too much magnesium, and an insufficient amount of calcium. The Soil Fertility Guideline at the bottom of the soil analysis indicates a recommendation for fruit trees is 2600 pounds of gypsum (calcium sulfate dihydrate $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) per acre.

Last year and this year, 100 pounds of gypsum were applied to the soil in the CRFG Orchard. This orchard consists of approximately 0.2 acres. This total application represents 100 pounds of gypsum x 2 years / 0.2 acres = 1000 pounds of gypsum / acre. This means the soil will need three more annual applications of 100 pounds of gypsum to the orchard to provide a total of 2500 pounds of gypsum per acre. This will provide the required gypsum to correct this soil problem.

However, this is only the amount of gypsum required to correct the surface six inches of the soil. The next six inches (6 to 12 inches of soil) will require a total of 2600 pounds of gypsum per acre or 260 pounds of gypsum per orchard. This will insure the soil condition will improve in the surface foot of the soil. The amount of potassium should represent about 5 to 6 % of the total cations on the CEC sites.”

If you are interested in a copy of Tom’s full report on the orchard soil test and needs, please request it at: truehr@calpoly.edu

One Tall Tree!

Matt Ritter, a biology professor and head of the Cal Poly Plant Conservatory, and three of his students recently discovered what is thought to be the tallest Karri Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) tree in North America. They recorded the tree at a height of 154 feet, a diameter of seven feet, with a 75-foot wide crown--almost 100 feet taller than the previous North American record holder, a San Clemente tree only 59 feet tall. The Australian native is estimated to be between 80 and 100 years old and can be found in the bottom of Brizzolara Creek in Poly Canyon, the only Karri in a stand of Blue Gums.



Since our March meeting will be hosted by Matt, I’m sure we will be hearing more about the “big” tree and its discovery. (The photo is from a Cal-Poly press release distributed in January.)

Blueberry Update

Thirty plus of us turned out at Sandy Davis’ blueberry farm in Lompoc in July where we dug up mature blueberry plants that were no longer viable for Sandy’s commercial needs. When we got our plants home, we pruned them and then planted them. I thought it would be

interesting to see how these plants survived and also, how they were treated by those of us taking over their care. The following information is from the first week of February.



Norm Beard of Goleta planted his in the ground. He says, "...they have been producing very lightly for the last two weeks, lots of bloom and green berries."

Joe Sabol of San Luis Obispo planted his in 15-gal containers and according to him, they are a mixed group. "Sharp blue are LOADED with green fruit. Misty is not doing well, no growth, no fruit...sorta dormant!!!"

Larry Hollis of San Luis Obispo says, "I pruned my berry plants fairly hard as soon as I got them home and planted them in the ground the next day. I planted them in an area that had about six inches of old plant material built up on the surface. I mixed that material into the soil along with an organic fertilizer formulated for acid loving plants. I have fed them a couple of times since then. The plants took off like a shot and put out a lot of new growth only to get a bit burned by the 110 degree weather we had

around Labor Day. Several of my plants are now flowering or have set fruit. They still look good but do have a few singed leaves leftover from that hot weather in Sept."

Bernie and Lennette Horton of Nipomo placed theirs in 15-gal containers filled with mostly peat moss. They are on drip irrigation and have been fed with acidic fertilizers. The Sharp Blues are loaded with flowers and the Misty, although it got off to a rocky start, has blossomed and is doing great.

Please contact me at handynana@gmail.com if you have any reports you'd like to make on your blueberries. Meanwhile, for some great blueberry growing information, you can visit the following website: <http://cesacramento.ucdavis.edu/newsletterfiles/newsletter445.htm>

San Luis Obispo Arbor Day Event

On Saturday, April 26, the city of San Luis Obispo will celebrate its 25th Anniversary as a Tree City USA. A city-sponsored large gathering of students and interested citizens will take place at Laguna Lake Park Commemorative Tree Grove from 9 am to noon. Trees will be planted, an art and prose contest will be showcased and the new Heritage Trees for the City will be announced.

The Arbor Day celebration hours will run from 9 am to about noon. Arrive early to view the artwork on display, visit educational booths, and enjoy free coffee, doughnuts and muffins. During the 10 am opening ceremony, the Mayor and City Council will congratulate all the

student winners, present awards and Arbor Day tee shirts to the students. At 11 am, the public will help plant several trees in the Commemorative Grove.

Our chapter will be part of this event! We will host a booth where we will give apple tree grafting demonstrations, sell four varieties of recently grafted apple trees and sign up new members. Volunteers are welcome! Contact our chapter co-chair, Larry Hollis, at L_Hollis@hotmail.com or 704-1513 to sign up. Come on out and help us celebrate Arbor Day!

Laureate School Tree Planting Party

On Thursday, Feb. 14th several of our Chapter members joined with students, staff, and parents at the Laureate School in San Luis Obispo to plant 26 bare-root deciduous fruit trees that were a donation from Dave Wilson Nursery. The goal at the Laureate School is to become self-sustaining. They are definitely off to a good start and we are proud to be included in their effort!



Announcements

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS: Anne Furtick, Kathy Peterson, Susan Bettencourt, John & Lee Mackey, Elaine & Larry Rathbun, Peggy Rodriguez, Tom Frey, Linda Seeley & Michael Wollman, Dave Okura, and Phil Whitney.

SANTA MARIA HOME SHOW: April 5 & 6--Saturday 10 am – 5 pm and Sunday 10 am – 4 pm. CRFG needs volunteers to be in the booth to answer gardening questions. We are primarily a teaching organization to promote CRFG and encourage people to join this Educational Organization. It gives CRFG a good name to have you volunteer in the booth.

Norman Beard, past State President of CRFG, Co-Chairman of Ventura/Santa Barbara Chapter, and owner of Beard Tropics Nursery will have plants for sale in the booth.

Thank you in advance for Volunteering!

Please call Pet or Marv at 773-9311 so that you may select your day and time that you prefer to attend. Free admission Tickets are available for entrance to the Fairgrounds in Santa Maria. Marv & Pet Daniels marvnpet@aol.com

CAL POLY ORGANIC FARM OFFERING CSA SUBSCRIPTIONS: The Organic Farm is now hosting its eighth annual Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Shares are available for pick up on-campus or at convenient county-wide drop sites. Along with the harvest share, members receive a newsletter each week detailing recipes and announcements. A small CSA share is available for \$19/week and a large share is available of \$26.50/week (plus \$1/week delivery fee for off campus pick up). For more information, please visit: www.calpolyorgfarm.com, call: 805-756-6139 or e-mail: orgfarm@calpoly.edu
ALSO: The Cal Poly Organic Farm welcomes VOLUNTEERS year round. Currently there is a need for docents to assist with the hosting of school field trips to the Farm. For more information or to be added to the Farm's volunteer contact list, please contact Anastasia Killham at: akillham@calpoly.edu or call: 805-756-6139.

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**. Membership applications are available from **Joe Sabol**. Call him at **544-1056** if you can't find him at a meeting.

Calendar of Meetings – 2008

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 8—Fisher Hall (33) Room 286—Cal Poly San Luis Obispo: Professor Matt Ritter of the Cal Poly Biology Department will give us a guided tour of the Cal Poly Plant Conservatory and points of interest on the Cal Poly campus. **The meeting begins at 1:30.** The tour begins at 1:45 and ends at 3:00. Matt Ritter gave a memorable tour at the 2006 Festival of Fruit called "Amazing Plants at Cal Poly." We have been asked to have him repeat that tour for the benefit of our Chapter members who were too busy working to attend the class. After the tour, the room will be available until 4:30 for anyone wishing to discuss farm business, farm tax advantages, farm bookkeeping, and incorporation advantages.

There is free parking on Saturday across the road from Fisher Hall (AKA Fort Fisher).

Refreshments will be supplied by the S-Z team, please.

To reach Fisher Hall from South County, take Highway 101 to the Grand Avenue exit in San Luis Obispo and then follow the signs to Cal Poly via Grand Ave. If you are coming from North County, take Highway 101 to the Monterey Street exit and then take a quick right and turn left on to Loomis Street and then take a right on to Grand Avenue. If you are coming from Morro Bay, Cambria, etc., we suggest that you enter campus from the Highland Drive entrance. In any case, proceed to Perimeter Road. Fisher Hall is at the intersection of Perimeter Road and Mountain Lane. (See map below)



April 12—Park Organic Farm—San Luis Obispo: Jim Park will host this meeting at his organic farm. Jim is an educator and long-time farmer's market enthusiast who grows vegetables and fruit for the market. He will talk about planting gardens, care of gardens, marketing produce, and other gardening concerns. We are planning a worm farm workshop as part of the meeting.

Refreshments will be supplied by the **A-G** team, please.

Directions to 230 Ranchito Lane, SLO, 93401, (805) 544-2667

Go to San Luis Obispo
 Go to the SLO Airport on Broad Street, CA 227.
 Continue past the airport to Crestmont Drive
 Right turn onto Crestmont, go .4 miles
 Turn left on Hacienda Ave. and go 0.1 miles
 Turn Right on Ranchito Lane and go 0.1 miles
 Look for 230 Ranchito on the left.

May 10—Ikeda Brother's Farm—Arroyo Grande: Tom Ikeda will give us a tour of their vegetable farm. The Ikeda Brothers farm lettuce, spinach, and a variety of Oriental vegetables. Tom will discuss growing practices and talk about early spring vegetables.

Refreshments will be supplied by the **H-R** team, please.

June 14—Open

July 12—Open

August 9—Open

September 13—No Local Meeting in September—Attend the Festival of Fruit!

October 11—Talley Farms—Arroyo Grande: Details to follow.

Central Coast Chapter CRFG Contact Information: Larry Hollis, co-chair, lhollis@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.