



The Central Coast Leaflet

Central Coast Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers
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May Meeting



For years there had been talk about the possibility of our chapter holding a citrus budding workshop. This “talk” became a reality at our May meeting. Due in large part to the efforts of Joe Sabol, we acquired 98 Carrizo citrus seedlings from Mulholland Nursery in Orange Cove. The owner of the Nursery, Tom Mulholland, is a former Ag Leadership Fellow and his sister lives in SLO. She happened to be visiting Orange Cove, so she graciously agreed to bring the seedlings back to the Central Coast

with her. She delivered them to Joe’s house a few days prior to the meeting and they were inspected by the SLO County Ag Department. Thanks for this inspection and other help with this project goes especially to Martin Settevendemie and Jenny Weaver (shown in Joe’s greenhouse checking the seedlings). Even though they came from a non-quarantined area of the San Joaquin Valley, we were taking no chances of spreading a virus! Certified budwood was also obtained from our friends at C and M Nursery in Nipomo--their generosity was greatly appreciated.



The venue for the meeting couldn’t have been better. Over 80 of us met at the old Rios Caldonia Adobe in San Miguel for the learning experience. Grafting knives and Buddy Tape were provided. With the knowledge of some great teachers being demonstrated, everyone there went home with a well-budded citrus tree that should be growing strongly by now! Thank you to everyone who made this event one we will remember! (This photo shows the “two-knee-hold” budding technique suggested by Joe Sabol.)

June Meeting



Lupine Meadow Farm, the delightful home of David and Joan Maislen, was the site of our June gathering. While we had a meeting and barbeque there just a year ago in July, there was still so much to see and learn about—from bees to gophers—that it didn't seem like we'd been there so recently at all! David is a very enthusiastic speaker and he held everyone's interest. The tour of his new greenhouse was a special treat. (Contact David if you want one like his!)

The plant raffle was the highlight of the afternoon and anyone who didn't go home with something really extraordinary just wasn't paying attention! Not only was that a good deal for the 80 plus attendees, over \$250 was raised for our coffers for programs such as high school apple grafting and scholarships!

Andrew Cook also gave a surprise demonstration on compost bins. There were loads of "freebies", too: pepper plants, tomato plants, dragon fruit cuttings, pots, and even some lemons and oranges. Best of all, there was plenty of "free" advice! (These photos are from Joe Sabol. They were taken last year, but Dave and his orchard both still look just as good—if not better!)



Do You Espalier?



A few weeks ago I went to the home of Robert and Carol Scott to gather information to write an article on the art in their garden. The Scotts have an amazing number of plants packed into their small acreage, thanks in part to Robert's love of the art of espalier. While this photo (taken by Joe Sabol) only shows one small portion of his work, it is representative of it. His plums and pluots are absolutely loaded with fruit this year.

I started thinking about what a great way espaliering a tree is to provide fruit in a compact area. Of course, this has a self-centered meaning for

me. My husband and I are moving from the five acres we have now in Nipomo to a city lot in a golf-course subdivision in Palm Desert. This means we have lots of open land behind us, but virtually no yard or garden space of our own.

One of my least favorite things is shrubs that don't flower or produce something edible for either man or beast, yet that is what I am stuck with on the side of the house that my new kitchen window overlooks. So, I thought, it would be great if I could plant something that fruits and have it not only look beautiful, but produce something I'd like to eat. However, with that tiny space between the sidewalk and the wall, the plant would have to be an espalier. Could I even do it? Or would it take the years of expertise of Robert and Carol to perfect the idea?



I did some research via the internet and here is what I came up with. Maybe you have a space you are ready to put to use in this way, too.

1. Start with a simple design idea. Fan or T-shapes are especially good for the beginner. Draw your design idea out and provide at least 12-16" between the branches for the fruit. This also allows your design to be more visible. You will need approximately 7 feet in width for your tree to mature.
2. When growing against a solid wall, provide a wire framework set 6-8" out from the wall to allow air circulation and light penetration. The wire should be 12 or 14 gauge and you will need the correct wall mounts for the type of wall your plan to train your espalier against. Six inch eye bolts work very well. You can get them for wood or concrete.
3. Provide a deep and well-amended planting hole. Make sure adequate water will be provided.
4. Choose a small container grown plant that has long, well-spaced branches. (I think "spindly" might be good!) Semi-dwarf or dwarf varieties work very well here. You may even find "pre-planned" espalier trees at the nursery.
5. If the branches are stiff, take a bonsai growing hint and wrap the branch with a wire that allows you to gently bend it into shape. Tie the branch to your wire frame with soft twine or gardening stretch tie. (Or cut those old panty hose into strips and recycle them as nearly invisible ties!)
6. Apples and pears make especially good espaliers, but other stone fruits work well, too, as do loquats, pomegranates, persimmons, and figs. (Keep in mind that some fruits, such as cherries and plums, fruit off of the previous year's growth so you will need to take that into consideration when you are pruning to train your espalier.) Berry vines and other fruiting vines such as grapes can usually be adapted to this method of growing, too.
7. In general, prune your espalier in late winter or early spring.
8. Be patient with your training and pruning! This is not an "instant gratification" art!

Perhaps one of these days I will be able to send a photo to this newsletter and show you my success! All I have to do now is figure out what fruit will grow in the 114 degree heat! Maybe I can get a pitahaya or two to grow along that wall. Pitahaya need to being trellised, which is similar to an espalier, but I'm not sure, even if they do belong to the cactus family, that they can take the desert heat. But wait—have you ever heard of an espalier date palm?

Change Is Inevitable



As of May 4th, our wonderful chapter secretary resigned her position as she is shifting to a new phase of her life. Helen Wigham, who has been our secretary for the past several years, is moving from the Central Coast to New Mexico! We wish her the best as she pursues her dreams.

This is also the FINAL edition of the newsletter that will be edited by Lennette Horton. This is a job I've been doing for nearly seven years! Time has flown and I've had a ball, but I am

moving to Palm Desert in September and now Gary Fourer will be taking on this fun task! I hope to keep my hand in writing articles for CRFG by sending them for publication in our national magazine. (I have just done one highlighting Robert and Carol Scott's garden and orchard that will be published in the *Fruit Gardener*.) Thank you all for the encouragement over the years. (Both of these photos are by Joe Sabol.)



Announcements

WELCOME NEW or RETURNING ASSOCIATES: Marvin Blackburn, Duke G. Johnson, Charlotte Hee, Arlene Sackman, Patrick & Pam Forgey, and Mary Jo DeSio.

JOIN THE NATIONAL 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 \$3.00 a month? That's less than one trip to that specialty coffee place! Dues are **\$36 annually** or **3 years for \$100**. 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. (If you prefer, you can save more by subscribing to the magazine by **e-mail only** which is just **\$25** per year!)

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER FEES: Please be sure your chapter newsletter fees are current and save our treasurer, Dick Pottratz, lots of work. Newsletter fees are due January 1 of each year. The annual fee is a pittance at \$6 or \$25 for five years.

Calendar of Meetings – 2010

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. **No pets** at any meeting, please! Pet Daniels suggests we **bring our own bottled water** to drink, too. What fun it is to be a member of **CRFG!**

July 10—1:30 PM—Pioneer Park—Paso Robles: Plow up your front lawn! Join us for a barbeque, socializing, and learning meeting. No refreshment team needed. We'll be grilling the hot dogs and hamburgers. Please bring an appetizer, side dish, salad or dessert to share. Find out from a speaker from the City of Paso Robles how to make your front yard into a functional and beautiful place!

To get to Pioneer Park from the south exit Hwy 101 at Hwy 46 east. Turn left onto 24th Street then left on Riverside Avenue. Pioneer Park and Museum are directly adjacent to the Midstate Fairgrounds. From the north take the 16th Street exit and then turn right on Riverside. There is plenty of parking on Riverside or turn east onto 19th Street and park in that parking lot. Pioneer Museum has a nice collection of early SLO County agricultural machinery, vehicles and buildings.

August 12-15—Festival of Fruit—3801 W. Temple Ave. Bldg 35, Pomona: Celebrate the Year of the Pitahaya! (No local meeting.)

September 11—Garden of Melinda Forbes—17100 Walnut, Atascadero: Melinda Forbes has a B.S. in Crops Science, MS International Agriculture, spent 2 years in Costa Rica involved in Small Farmer Cropping Systems Research, and over 30 years teaching experience in gardening, herbal studies, cooking, and art classes. She is a lifelong gardener, lived on 1.5 acres of land since the mid 1980s and her garden was included in the San Luis Obispo Botanical Society's annual garden tour fundraiser, focusing on North County gardens. She will have fruits, ground fruits (including heirloom tomatoes), vegetables, and flowers for us to see. She is proposing that we have food sharing and book information sharing activities. Her water is limited so we will likely have a port-a-potty available. This is a meeting you won't want to miss! Refreshments will be provided by the **A-G** team.

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