

# Central Coast Chapter CRFG



**California Rare Fruit Growers – Central Coast Chapter**

**October 2018 Newsletter**

**by Lori Bright**

**October 13, 2018**

## **Great Successes**

Thanks to all the volunteers that helped at the [September Work Day](#) in the CRFG Demonstration Orchard. Great strides were made, including the removal of a huge brush pile! With your help, we are making the orchard look fabulous! Manny and Dara thank you for all of your help.

Tucker says that both of our events on Sept. 29th were successful. We simultaneously manned two booths that day. One at the Arroyo Grande Harvest Festival, and one at the Master Gardeners' Fall Fruit Festival at the Garden of the Seven Sisters in SLO. All money raised will support future scholarships for Cal Poly students!

Robert Scott brought a mystery fruit, a lumpy, bumpy ugly green thing. Turns out it is an Osage Orange! Gotta love those "Show and Tell" items. In the Great Plains Osage Orange limbs are still used for fence post.



*Osage orange*

Larry sent a link to share this National Geographic article entitled ["What a Gold Rush-era orchard could mean for the future of food"](#):  
*"Scientists are beginning to study whether rare heirloom plants, revived for their flavor, might also be suited to enduring a warmer world."*

Next month we will be visiting Tucker and Keri Schmidt's house/garden. I'm so excited!

## **Scholarship Meeting this Month!**

Our chapter presented scholarships to eight Cal Poly recipients.

We were glad to see Prof. Lauren Garner, who came by for the event.

And the Awardee Winners are... Joni Shaffery, Jose Munoz Jr.,

Geena Rohr, Victor Guadian, Vincent Koster, Mitchell Moreda, Emma Sertich and Heidi Burgess (not present).

Congrats to them all.



*Les presents the scholarship awardees to the chapter, and congratulates them on their accomplishments.*



*2018 awardees: Victor Guadian, Jose Munoz, Emma Sertich, Vincent Koster, Dr. Lauren Garner, Mitchell Moreda, Joni Shaffery, and Geena Rohr. Not pictured: Heidi Burgess, who is studying abroad in Italy this fall.*

---



*CRFG Central Coast chapter members and guests learn about kiwis from Bob Criswell at his Mallard Lake Ranch. 10 acres of kiwis surround his home.*

### **Meeting on October 13, 2018: Mallard Lake Ranch**

Our venue this month was a visit at Kiwi Bob's Kiwi farm.

Wow, what a magnificent place!

Upon parking our cars we were greeted by several, sweet ankle-high dogs. Alejandro, (the principal orchard worker and overseer) was also there to welcome us. We circumvented a large pond and saw ducks and chickens all roaming freely.

Bob Criswell and his wife Kirsten were our hosts. Kiwi Bob's parents bought the farm about 1988. Bob helped his parents run the farm and sell fruit at farmers markets as a teen. In 2004 Bob and Kirsten moved back to the area and decided to develop the kiwi farm and production. Bob has chosen to stay local. He sells to our local schools, CSA's and Farmer's Markets.

Kiwis were originally from China, they became popular in Australia (thus the name "Kiwi") and then moved to the States. Bob has one fruiting variety 'Hayward' (the female). The vines are planted in a ratio of 10 females to 1 male. Bob has the reputation of having super sweet kiwis. He thinks it might have something to do with the pond that he uses as a reservoir for irrigation. Maybe the fish poop from the pond? Hmmm.

Each  
year  
the



*Evelyn checking out the ripe kiwi fruit in the 10 acres of vines.*

Criswells have Honeybees brought in to insure good pollination. The kiwis are big drinkers so they are watered well. They have no pests to speak of. Winter chill plays a role in good kiwi production too. This last year saw a very low chill total, and Bob believes that that may account for an overall lower production this year. After several methods of pruning, he believes the optimal method is to simply remove old and tangled wood. Opening them up to good sun exposure. Maximum sun exposure is important. The whole kiwi orchard is harvested with-in 3 to 5 days, generally around the first week of November. Kiwi, unlike some citrus, don't have a good "hang time" and need to be harvested right when their Brix (sugar) content is at 7%. With the right conditions, kiwis can be stored for as much as 6 months. Kiwi have twice the vitamin C of an orange and equal amounts of potassium to a banana. Kiwi Bob also grows a lesser crop of Avocados, Mandarins and Chayotes. If you want to buy some of Kiwi Bob's produce you can visit him at our local Farmers Markets. He sells at Arroyo Grande on Wednesdays and in SLO on Saturdays.

Thanks Tucker for introducing us to our new friend Kiwi Bob!



*Tucker, Keri, and Bob in front of the lake.*



*Tucker thanks Bob and presents him with a CRFG hat.*

---

#### **Recently Updated in Website**

- Updated the "About" page with [2018 scholarship information](#).
- Updated the [Orchard History](#) page with the 2018 September Work Day information.