



California Rare Fruit Growers – Central Coast Chapter

December 2017 Newsletter

by Lori Bright

Meeting



Ashley calls out dozens and dozens of numbers as members check their tickets and claim their new plants.

December 9, 2017

Our Year's End Meeting was started off with an amazing plant raffle! Thank you to our gracious growers for their wonderful contributions. We had everything from Avocado, Banana, Cherimoya, Dragon Fruit, Eugenias, Fig, Ice cream Bean, Kale Tree, Macadamia, Moringa, Pepino, Pineapple and Pomegranate. No one left empty handed!

A nominee list for our [2018 Officers and Committee Members](#) was handed out. All nominees were voted in with a big Yea!

Our Potluck Dinner was perfect and delicious, and all the while we ate we enjoyed a 2017 slide show of our group. Great Photos! Thanks Joe!



A wide variety of plants lovingly grown by dedicated members, including Robert and Carol Scott and Marv and Pet Daniels, await their new homes.



Members donated gardening books for sale by silent auction and direct purchase. All money will be used for scholarships. Keri, June (whose idea this was), Tucker, and Grace (not pictured) helped sell the books.

Announcements:

See Nell for **pre-order of Rootstocks**

January 13 is the date for our regular meeting to be held at the Crops Science Building. We will have the indefatigable Tom Spellman from Dave Wilson Nurseries there to talk Pruning Backyard Fruit Trees.

February 17, (The Third Saturday this Month) We will put on our [Fabulous Scion Exchange and grafting party!](#) Don't forget to keep saving those bags for rootstock. Nell will collect them.



Table filling up with tasty dishes for our potluck meal!

A bit of sad news: L.E. Cooke has announced that they will be closing their doors for good.

All of us who got to see [Ron Ludekens last month](#) were so very privileged. I have to guess that he knew what was in store, but he none-the-less did a great presentation focused on the history of their company. He gave great accolades to his grandmother and his grandfather. How fortunate we were to spend this time with him. That being said, I know I will be making another sojourn up to Bay Laurel Nursery to purchase those items that might not be on the market in the near future, as Dave Wilson and other nurseries begin to fill L. E. Cooke's big shoes. L.E. Cooke, you Will Be Missed!

Our Presentation this month was done by Marcel Mueller.



Marcel is a Cal Poly Student (though through his presentation we learn that he is wise beyond his years).

We were taught to **BEE BETTER!** Marcel began his love of nature and the environment at a very early age. By age 11 he began bee keeping and found it magical. Marcel has looked into the decline of our European Honey Bee and has studied correlations between pesticide sprayings and Bee mortality. Pesticides aren't the only thing of concern to our Honey Bees, the Varroa mite, some bad bacteria and beetles can threaten

Marcel Mueller talks to the membership at the December holiday luncheon.

hives as well. Even when Bee Keepers try to spray for Varroa Mite they kill bees. There is a sensitive balance that must be

respected when Bee keeping. Marcel asserts the necessity of using clean hives, clean equipment and clean methods of bee keeping. Marcel is fostering better communication between Growers and Bee keepers, thereby lessening inappropriate pesticide sprayings. The Bees ARE doing the work of pollinating the Growers crops AFTER ALL. :-) Marcel has endeavored to start a breeding program to introduce tougher genetics into the Honey Bee population. He has found that our rich diverse environment here in SLO has a large gene pool of Native Bees to dip into. An amazing undertaking.



Marcel

Marcel's BEE-autiful slides, information and passion captivate the membership

encourages us to:

- Plant flowering plants and trees
- Buy Local
- Reduce Pesticide use (When pesticides are necessary, read the label and spray at night)
- Donate to groups for the advancement of Bee health

Marcel was an inspiration, and we wish him all our Best!

Immerse yourself in the magical world of seeds at EcoFarm's Seed & Scion Swap on Jan 25!

Location: Asilomar in Monterey

The new year invites new beginnings. Soon, winter will give way to spring, and more hospitable conditions will invite sleeping buds to bloom and dormant seeds to awaken. Use this season to gather your seeds for [EcoFarm's Seed & Scion Swap](#), a special [EcoFarm](#)

[Conference](#) event on Thursday, January 25th. [Register now!](#)

Expand the biodiversity of your farm or garden by collecting seeds from fellow seed savers and seed companies. Swap labeled, non-hybrid, non-genetically engineered varieties of seeds, as well as scion wood or cuttings from fruit, nut, and berry crops or any other perennial edible plants. Bring scions (tip cuttings) that are well-labeled, and disease and pest free. No citrus or patented cultivars are permitted. Don't forget envelopes and bags!

Experts from the California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG) and Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC) will be on hand to answer your questions, as well as many other seasoned seed savers at this special EcoFarm Conference event.

Fresh out of seeds? Have no fear - you can still join in the fun and begin a new tradition of seed saving and swapping!

Plus, don't miss these seed-centric workshops offered at EcoFarm Conference:

- [Tips and Tools from Experienced Seed Savers](#)
- [Fruit Tree Propagation](#)
- [Seed Saving for Crops that Suit You Best](#)
- [Honoring Land, Food Systems, and Community](#)
- [Indigenous Food Systems: Models of Food Sovereignty](#)

[Explore the schedule of 70+ workshops, keynotes, special events and more...](#)