

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
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How Did Your Pumpkin Grow?

The San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, in partnership with Coast National Bank, Farm Supply and other sponsors, created the First Annual Great Pumpkin Contest held on October 19 at the regular Thursday night downtown Farmer's Market on Chorro Street in San Luis Obispo. While none of the SLO entries were close in weight to the World Record pumpkin grown by Ron Wallace of Rhode Island which weighed in at 1,502 pounds, or the 1,223-pound Atlantic Giant pumpkin that won the 33rd Annual Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off in Half Moon Bay this year, the 714 pound giant grown by Jill Duncan was certainly impressive! Jill won the prize for heaviest pumpkin--\$500 which was donated by Coast National Bank. Two of our Central Coast CRFG members also placed well in the competition! Suzie Allen won a prize of \$125 from Farm Supply for growing the Most Beautiful Pumpkin (photo below on left), while Joe Sabol managed to find time to grow the Most Unusual Pumpkin which netted him a prize of \$125 from Farm Supply (photo below on right).



Local giant pumpkin grower, Paul Rhys, provided seeds for several of the entries.

With this year's competition just past and predictions that pumpkins are likely to surpass these weights next season, it is a good time to review the latest techniques required to grow "the big ones." Believe it or not, you'll probably need to start now, by preparing the site.

Plan your pumpkin patch for an area where you can allow your giant pumpkins at least 15-20 feet of growing space between hills. The area needs to be in full sun, though sheltered from the wind! You may need to provide a sun shade if it gets too warm in your location (80-90 degrees f. is best growing temperature). Actually, if you have a fenced-in backyard, it may be the best location. Otherwise, especially here on the coast, you might need to plant a "windbreak" type of crop such as corn or beans around your patch or put up a wind screen.

Soil pH of 6.5-7.0 is recommended. Soil should also be deeply tilled, high in humus and have adequate moisture available. Fertilizer, fed in abundant and balanced amounts throughout the growing season, will produce gigantic-sized specimens.

Get a head start in the spring by starting the seeds indoors in 4" peat pots about 2-3 weeks before the last spring frost or plant 2-3 seeds in each hill after last spring frost date. Space hills 15-20 feet apart. When the plants are 3-4 inches high, thin them to one plant per hill. Choose the strongest, healthiest plant. After the first pumpkin is set on a plant, remove all other fruit which may appear during the growing season. It will take about 130 days for your pumpkins to mature, so plan accordingly if you want to enter any contests!

If you want detailed information on growing pumpkins you can get a good brochure from the University of California Cooperative Extension "[Pumpkin Production in California](#) - Publication 7222--By Mark Gaskell and Richard Smith or check out www.bigpumpkins.com.

Maybe next year, YOUR pumpkin will be the 1000 plus pound winner at the Second Annual SLO County Farm Bureau Giant Pumpkin Contest!

October Meeting

The October 14 meeting at the Tiber Canyon Olive Ranch was well attended. Our hosts, Will Carlton and Chris Anderson, gave us a lively and informative tour of their 10-acre olive ranch. The ranch is located on 10 acres of old "oil-producing" land (as in petroleum!) and it has been dramatically cleaned up and planted with 1500 olive trees imported from Tuscany! We saw beautiful stone walls built by our own members Kristin Poochigian and Phil Yoshida! There were even some old apricot trees that were planted to produce dried apricots for our soldiers during WWII.

Our hosts explained that the olives on their land are hand-harvested—mostly by friends—and are milled using traditional stone wheels, and then cold pressed into late harvest extra virgin oil. Chris and Will are also master glass blowers and have made special blue tasting glasses for their tasting room. Below is a photo taken by Paul Moyer that shows our

hosts explaining the olive oil process to our enthralled group. What a beautiful setting that was!



(Photos of olives being hand harvested and of the wall with Kristin and Phil and Phil's mom sitting on it were taken by Joe Sabol.)

Prior to our tour, Marvin Daniels, a chapter member and a recent PG&E retiree presented a check in the amount of \$150 from the PG&E Community Service Award. Marvin is a tireless volunteer with our chapter of CRFG, particularly in the Apple Grafting Program that reaches out to the agricultural classes in our area high schools. This money will go toward supplies to continue the highly successful Apple Grafting Program that has been going for 10 years. It touches the lives of at least 1,000 high school students each year. It has been like a rolling ball, started by a small team led by Dr. Joe Sabol, and continued by agricultural teachers, volunteers and members of CRFG. Much appreciation was expressed by the members for this wonderful contribution!

Santa Maria Home Show Success!

By Pet Daniels

We had a successful showing of Members of the CRFG Central Coast Chapter at the recent Santa Maria Home Show! Those that volunteered to help Pet and Marv Daniels and Norman

and Kay Beard were: Choung Crowe, Owen Baynham, Stanton and Delene Keck, Larry Hollis, Don and Marlene Jeung, Karen Kolba, and Ben Middleton.

Members were asked that while in the booth with the plants that member Norman Beard brought for sale from his home nursery in Goleta, to please encourage those interested to join our State CRFG, become members for \$30 /year and they would receive a Fruit Gardener magazine every other month.

The volunteers were encouraged to say what a great magazine it is and what is in it. Also they were to get them to subscribe to the local chapter newsletter for \$6/ year. It gives the information on the local meetings. Many questions were asked and the answers were interesting!

It was a fun weekend for Marv, Pet, Kay, and Norm. We all enjoyed speaking with people who were interested in growing rare fruits. I think the volunteers all had fun too! There were big smiles and lots of laughter was heard! Several went home with some wonderful new plants to add to their collection!

Thanks to all who helped our chapter get new members!

Rare Fruit of the Month—Cranberry

By Norman Beard

When people see my cranberries they usually say, "I thought they had to be raised in a bog!" So, to set that idea straight, the answer is no! The bogs are for harvesting hybrid cranberries. In commercial operations, since the bog is there, it is flood irrigated.



The cranberries I have are like the original cranberries that the pilgrims first saw when they landed near Plymouth Rock. They noticed the cranes where tramping through the bogs eating the berries. Yes, you guessed it--that is how they got their names, by the pilgrims calling them Crane Berries.

Cranberry plants need shade the first couple of years until they get established. My plants get about five minutes of drip irrigation per day. They can reach a height of 10 feet if left to grow, but they can be pruned to look like a hedge. So we are very lucky that the pilgrims chose cranberries to be served at the first American Thanksgiving

along with the turkey. It has always been a tradition since. (Photo of Norm's cranberries was taken by Joe Sabol.)

Announcements

Join the Parent Organization: Many of our chapter subscribers are 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.

Free Mulch: The City of SLO is giving away mulch on **November 4** from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Corp Yard located at 25 Prado Road. There will be staff and equipment available to help with loading. For more information, please visit: www.ci.san-luis-obispo.ca.us/whatsnew.asp

Fruit Display Day: A date has been set for the 2006 Fruit Display Day at UC Lindcove. The Grower's Day will be **December 15** and the Homeowner's Day will be **December 16**. Mark your calendar now and watch this space for further information.

ATTENTION ALL CRFG MEMBERS

Come and join us for the 2007 Festival of Fruit in San Diego, California
August 7–12 2007

THE YEAR OF THE MANGO

This will be the greatest festival yet, with some innovative improvements such as: **TWO** days for visiting and purchasing from our vendors and **TWO** dinners to celebrate the Year of the Mango. On Friday Night, we will have a **MEXICAN FIESTA** with **Mariachi entertainment**. On Saturday night, we will go out in style with a **LUAU** and a spectacular **POLYNESIAN REVUE** for your enjoyment. **Both** evenings **together** will cost about 60 dollars per person and will truly make your stay in San Diego one to remember!

We will also offer a fantastic array of speakers, contests, giveaways, and fruit tastings. And don't forget our famous climate, Balboa Park, Zoo, Wild Animal Park, SeaWorld, Lego Land, sport fishing fleets, and nearby Tijuana. Don't just come for a day. Come for a whole week! Make this your summer vacation. Take tours. Visit wineries. Play on the beach or in the bay, but save **Friday August 10 and Saturday August 11** for the 2007 Festival of Fruit!

Calendar of Meetings – 2006

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!

November 11 — Master Gardener’s IPM and Water Quality for the Backyard Fruit Grower—Cal Poly Crops Unit—you don’t want to miss this outstanding and helpful meeting. No matter what your gardening level, you will learn something here! **Refreshments group S-Z please.**

Directions to the Crops Unit: From San Luis Obispo, take HWY 101 Santa Rosa exit (Hwy 1) towards Morro Bay. Go to Highland Avenue and enter the Cal Poly campus. You will see Mt. Bishop Road to the left. Turn in immediately and park. No parking fees on Saturday!

December 9—Annual Holiday Potluck and Plant Raffle—PG&E Community Center—Details to follow.

Central Coast Chapter CRFG Contact Information: Art DeKleine, co-chair, adeklein@calpoly.edu or 543-9455; Bob Tullock, co-chair, tullock@tcsn.net or 238-2868; Joe Sabol, program chair, jsabol@calpoly.edu or 544-1056; Dick Pottratz, treasurer, pottratz@sbcglobal.net; or Lennette Horton, newsletter editor, handynana@gmail.com or 474-6501.