



CENTRAL COAST CHAPTER CRFG

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Photo from The Leaflet February, 2023 ed

Next Meeting:

February Scion Exchange! Open to the Public!

When: Saturday February 17, 2024

Schedule:

- 10:00 - Members that would like to volunteer with set-up should arrive
- 11:00 - People with scion wood to share with the exchange should arrive
- 12:00 - Chapter members and people who contributed get early entry into the exchange
- 12:30 - All guests are welcome to enter the exchange

Chapter Website: <https://www.crfg-central.org>

Facebook page:
[Facebook-CRFG-Central Coast](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaRareFruitGrowers)

YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/@californiararefruitgrowers718/videos>

Chapter chairs contact:
central_coast@crfg.org
(underscore between l and c)

For article submissions:
crfgccnewsletter@gmail.com

Announcements



February is a fun month for our chapter!

- The meeting will be our annual scion exchange.
- If you want to volunteer inside the room, contact Tucker
- There will be a store selling items to benefit the scholarship fund
- Part of the money raised from the rootstock sales also goes to Cal Poly scholarships
- See [page 3](#) for more information

Hats are now available for \$20!
See the bottom of [page 14](#)

If you arrive early, you can explore the outdoor events! There will be grafting demonstrations, a store, and rootstock sales!

Please bring cash or checks. Sorry, no credit cards will be accepted.

Where: Cal Poly Crops Unit, Highland Drive x Mt. Bishop Road, San Luis Obispo. Look for the CRFG signs.

Parking: Will be free. Park in dirt lot in front of Crops Unit. **Do NOT park next to fire hydrants where curbs are painted RED. You will be towed.**

(See [map p.3](#))



Photo from The Leaflet February, 2023 ed

Scion Exchange Parking:



Scion Exchange Store:

Terri Monell will be running the store this year.

At the February Scion Exchange, we will once again have a store! You will find: birdscare tape, pre-cut bird netting, pruners, green tape for grafting, Buddy Tape, grafting knives, Doc Farwell's grafting goop, trowels, No Cry gloves (to be sold as a single glove) great for grafting and when using a mandolin for slicing food, aluminum ID tags, How To Prune books, pheromone loops and succulent arrangements (some in ornamental containers and others just for replanting).

We will also have an area for gently used items donated by members! If you have any garden related items you would like to donate, please bring them to the store at the February meeting! Feel free to price the items for easy sale ahead of time. All items donated that are left over will be taken to the thrift store for donation.

Scion Exchange Information:

Do **NOT** bring any Citrus stems, buds, or leaves to Cal Poly! **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

All Scion wood must be clean, pest, and disease free! Do **NOT** bring patented varieties.

All bags need labels, unlabeled scions will be discarded.

How to Collect Scion Wood for the Scion Exchange:

(Taken from: <https://www.crfg-central.org/contributing-scions>)

CRFG members and guests are invited to bring scions from unusual or lesser-known varieties of trees.

Please label your bags of scion wood. You can print these labels and tape them to your bags, or print them on Avery label #8164. Write the specific varietal: scions of unknown/unmarked varietal will not be accepted. Please also include the variety's chill hours and whether or not the variety is self-pollinating, if you know that information.

Please arrive at 11 a.m. to donate your scions to the exchange. By donating, you will also be among the first to choose scions.

How to select and cut scion wood:

It is a good idea to clip the top of the scion at a 45 degree angle to distinguish it from the bottom. For more information, watch this video: [CRFG Scion Exchange Collecting Scions](#).

Step-by-step instructions:

- "[Selecting and storing scion wood for grafting](#)" provided by Michigan State University Extension
- "[How to Collect and Save Scion or Bud Wood.pdf](#)," is a helpful instruction sheet created by Tom Del Hotal (CRFG San Diego chapter). Please note his strong emphasis on checking the dormant buds!
- "[Collecting and Storing Scion Wood](#)" provided by the Watauga County Center

This flyer from the Golden Gate chapter explains when to cut scions from certain varieties and how long the scions will last:

[Collecting and Grafting Evergreen Scionwood](#)

January 13, 2024 Meeting Notes:

Articles and Photos By Dara Manker

It was “standing room only” for our 2024 Annual Pruning Meeting!



Sheri Thompson, our Publicity Coordinator, scheduled a spot on Dave Congalton’s “Hometown Radio” show(920AM KVEC), and she and Dean Harrell informed the public about the event. If you missed it, you can listen to the [podcast of the interview](#).

An audience of 67 people filled the Crops Unit classroom. The Welcoming Committee welcomed attendees, and answered their questions. The Hospitality Committee made coffee, water, and snacks available. Many attendees also brought snacks. New CRFG hats were for sale for \$20.

Our Co-chairs kicked off the meeting: Linda announced the February Scion Exchange and Grafting Clinic; Manny welcomed the attendees,

and introduced our guest pruner, Dr. Lauren Garner, professor of pomology at Cal Poly SLO.

Dr. Garner said that pruning is a combination of art, science, and executive decisions. When you prepare to prune your trees, you need to know some details about them to know where to prune. On some trees, fruit grows on this year’s branch growth, on other trees, it grows on the previous year’s.

Dr. Garner went over the big goals of pruning first, then explained how pruning citrus and avocados is different from pruning deciduous fruit trees.

Big Pruning Goals:

- Your pruning should be a balance between allowing production of flower buds and foliage
- *Tapping*: bringing down the height of a tree
Assess the height of your tree. If you need to bring the height down so you don’t have to use a ladder to pick your fruit, do it gradually over several years
- *Hedging*: reducing the width of the tree
- *Skirting*: pruning the bottom of the tree’s canopy to keep it away from the soil.
- Get rid of suckers growing out of the ground
- Thin the tree to allow enough light to get into the canopy to allow fruit to ripen, but not so much that the trunk and limbs are burned
- Thin to allow airflow within the canopy to prevent mildew and other diseases
- Prune off dead branches

Once you address these issues, you may find that you need to make fewer cuts than you thought.

The right time to prune deciduous trees is right now, in the winter, when the trees are dormant. At this point the tree has pulled back all its sap back into the scaffold and roots, so you're not removing its stored energy.

An exception are apricots. The best time to prune apricots are after you've harvested the fruit, and one month before the rainy season starts in your area. The month allows the tree to cover over and heal any cuts you've made so that microbes can't get in to weaken and possibly destroy your tree. Apricots are susceptible to the fungi genus *Eutypa*. *Eutypa* can cause Cytosporina, gummosis, and limb dieback.



Dr. Garner (center) speaks

Dr. Garner then proceeded to tell us how citrus and avocado pruning differs from deciduous trees. Both require very little annual pruning. Once your tree has achieved the shape and size you desire, you need to do very little maintenance pruning, perhaps just every two years.

She noted that because there are so many types of trees included in citrus, it's hard to make generalizations about pruning them. For example, grapefruit trees are rapid growing and hard to keep small, while mandarins are slow-growing and often grafted to dwarfing rootstock.

She recommends skirting citrus trees 2' above the soil to prevent microbes from the soil splashing up onto the bottom of the canopy. In general, this can be done every other year.

Occasionally your citrus tree may send out a long, thorny shoot. Get rid of it, unless you find that its fruit is very tasty (this is how the Cara Cara orange was discovered). These genetic mutations are called "sports" in the plant world.

Exceptions to the statement that citrus requires very little pruning are lemons and tango mandarin. A lemon can produce very large vertical growth in one year. It's not uncommon to see growth of 2 to 3 feet. You should bring down this height every year to maintain the shape of your tree.

Dr. Garner says that avocados are “supremely weird trees,” and that the industry has gone back and forth on how to prune them. People do not agree, and generally use a system that they have found works for them. The reason why folks disagree is that pruning means they’re losing some of their crop. Branches that don’t have fruit this year are next year’s crop.

Both citrus and avocados have crowded canopies. You will not be able to see through a citrus canopy, and under avocado trees it is usually dark. To prevent overcrowding, you can take down a “fairly decent size branch,” one that requires a handsaw, not so small that it can be done with loppers, nor so large that it requires a chainsaw. Choose a branch that will allow more light in the canopy. Do this in the winter to protect the bark that is being newly exposed to the sun from burning. Note that avocado flowers will only set fruit if they have sunlight.

Dr. Garner also imparted advice if your tree gets damaged by frost. Allow the limb to completely die back. Wait until it is completely dead, even crispy, before you cut it off. Allowing the tree a chance to do what it needs to do stabilize its branch will decrease the possibility of damage by disease.

Dr. Garner then stayed to answer questions, while those who wanted hands-on pruning experience walked over to the CRFG Demonstration orchard. Dean, Lori, Mark, and Tucker demonstrated how to prune a peach, nectarine, and asian pear. They answered numerous questions. We kept the wood for scions to be used at our Scion Exchange next month.

Marv sharpened pruners for a donation to our Chapter, and Nell brought cookies to the orchard: only crumbs remained by the end of the pruning session.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this a very successful Annual Pruning Meeting!

See more photos from the meeting on [page 16!](#)



Dean shows how to prune

Grafting:

While some of our club members are master grafters, others may still be learning. Here are some great grafting resources (most from our Chapter YouTube page) to prepare for the scion exchange and spring grafting! Check out YouTube for a wide variety of grafting tutorials. (Click a video for it to open in your web browser).

Robert Scott's grafting demo:



Christine's grafting demo:



Dick Pottratz's grafting video:



Larry Hollis' grafting video:



There are some great videos from Joe Sabol!

CRFG member, Remy (age 8), watched Joe Sabol's videos and was able to successfully graft avocados for her 1st grade science project!

Here's one from the SLO Co. Virtual Great Adventure YouTube page:



More of Joe Sabol from California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. YouTube page:



More of Joe Sabol from California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. YouTube page:



Orchard Workday, January 6th, 2024:

By Dara Manker

What an incredible turnout at our January workday! A total of twenty-four enthusiastic volunteers combined forces to transform the orchard, gearing up for the January Annual Pruning meeting scheduled for the following week.



Within three hours all of our tasks were completed. The area around the Sycamore tree was cleared of fallen branches and leaves. Old bamboo poles and broken pots were thrown away, and the trash cans were emptied. The wood pallets, rolls of wire, and plastic pots were tidied up and organized. Cobwebs were swept off of the kiosk and tool shed.



Before



After!

Orchard Workday Continued:

Some participants dug out a multitude of tree suckers. Others waged the continuing war with the invasive weeds in the orchard's back section including those on the lemon grove-side of the fence, and the fountain grass creeping down the hill.

Volunteers raked leaves from the entire orchard and used them to top-off the bioreactor. They even created a storage area for excess leaves that can be tossed into the bioreactor once there is room. In addition to all this activity, we also got the chance to catch up with each other, meet new people, and talk about fruit trees!

Our orchard now stands rejuvenated and primed for the upcoming pruning meeting. A huge thank you to everyone who brought their energy and passion to make it all happen!



Our orchard cleaned up and ready to be pruned.

New USDA Hardiness map

Submitted by Jenny Weaver:

“The USDA Hardiness map has been updated to take into account climate warming. There are 13 zones that show the lowest temperatures possible. Zone 1 is the coldest (Alaska). Zone 13 is the warmest (Hawaii and Puerto Rico). It's very handy because you can type in your address and it will show you the zone you live in. You can even go down to the street level.”

<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>

Do you know any low-chill fruit varieties?

Linda Robertson is preparing an information sheet for the scion exchange about low-chill fruit varieties and looking for recommendations from members growing fruit in the parts of SLO county and northern Santa Barbara county with coastal influence, that is, with mild winters and little or no frost, where we know we're not getting much winter chill. If you live in those areas and know of varieties that produce well there, please contact her at tinyapplefarm@gmail.com.

CRFG Hats are now available for sale!

If you are looking for a way to represent the CRFG, or if you just need a new hat, the chapter now has CRFG hats for sale for just \$20!



Photo by Dara Manker

Jelly Palm Fruit

At the January meeting, Seth Waite brought Jelly Palm fruit. He said the fruit “comes from the Pindo Palm or Jelly palm tree.” You can read more about it here: <https://atlantapalms.com/products/pindo-palm-trees>



Pictures courtesy of Seth Waite

More Photos from the January 13 Meeting:

Photos by Dara Manker



Elaine prepares coffee and snacks (above)



The welcoming committee welcomes (above and left)

More Photos from the January 13 Meeting:



Linda kicks off the meeting (left)

Manny welcomes the audience (right)



Tucker discusses pruning (below)



More Photos from the January 13 Meeting:

Dean answers a Persimmon question (right)



Dr. Garner talks with Lori and Manny (above)

Dara and Manny (below)

