

The Leaflet

Newsletter of the Central Coast Chapter
of California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.

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Pushing the limits and the range
of fruit cultivation worldwide!

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Central Coast Chapter Hosts Annual Scion Exchange

—by George Frisch

Looking for some new, delicious fruit? What about an apple called Allen's Everlasting, or Caville Blanc, or Petingill, or Mollies Delicious, or King of Tompkins County? Or a Newcastle apricot, or a Stanwick nectarine? These are but a few of the tasty varieties you will never find at most commercial outlets. For these and many, many, many more, you must be invited to private backyard orchards like those of many members of the California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG).



A crowd gathers as the scion wood is set up for the exchange.

On February 18, the Central Coast Chapter of CRFG held its annual Scion Exchange. Always a well-attended event, this year drew visitors from as far away as San Dimas, Fresno and San Francisco. Over the course of the afternoon, they and some four hundred other participants visited at a dozen large tables in the center of the Cal Poly Crops Unit yard where they selected free scion wood for new stone or pome fruit trees. Stacks of labeled bags on one table offered twigs pruned from over 50 varieties of apple. Another table offered scions for 30 kinds *continued on page 7*

Did you know?

Scion Exchanges were conducted over 1000 years ago. More on *Food in History* on page 5

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



Our last frost date here in Nipomo is April 19th, a day which this year, after the most frost days of any winter I've seen, rose to a high of 87 degrees, as if to prove the point.

Our garden needs a lot more weeding before it's ready for

planting more veggies (yes, that and the newsletter are a bit late this season), but now that Jack Frost has packed up and headed back to the Arctic, the seedlings will have a good chance of growing. Two hawks are starting a family in the tall Eucalyptus south of our yard, and so we are hoping that they will find plenty of food in the form of gophers for their young ones.

In this issue of The Leaflet, we feature our Central Coast Chapter's mission to educate young ones, human kids that is, in the art, science, and craft of grafting. George Frisch has done a great job of capturing the excitement and details of our Chapter's

annual scion exchange. Margaret has compiled facts of food and agriculture in England in 1000 CE, including scion exchanges and pruning routines from that era. And read about our Chapter's own pruning workshop and annual "prune-a-rama" at our Cal Poly Demonstration Orchard.

My thanks to all those who contributed to this issue. I hope it makes for a good read during your breaks from tending your gardens, orchards, and yards. Until the next issue (coming soon)...

Happy Planting,
Gary Fourer

The Leaflet

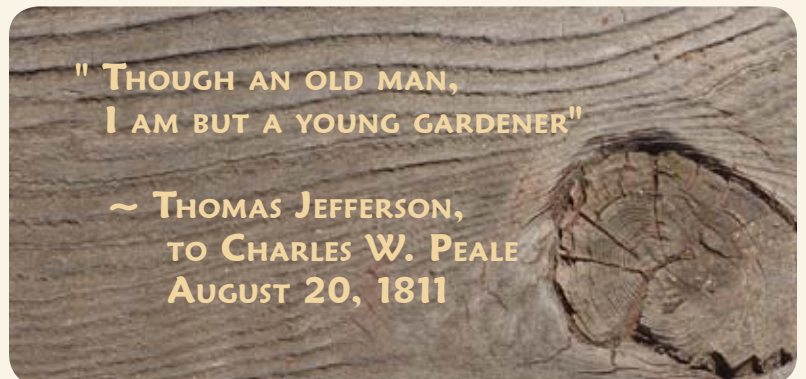
Distributed bimonthly by the Central Coast chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. to share ideas, news, and activities of interest to our local chapter.

Editor:
Gary Fourer

Graphic Design:
Margaret C. Lange

Contributors:
George Frisch
Joe Sabol
Paul Moyer
Margaret Lange

CRFG PROMOTES THE ENVIRONMENTALLY-SOUND CULTURE of any and all edible plants in the home landscape by encouraging and helping to facilitate public and scientific research, education, and preservation of plants worldwide that have edible seeds, fruit, leaves, stems or roots. The CRFG mission is to share knowledge acquired from these activities with home growers in particular and with anyone else in the world having an interest in edible plant cultivation.



Through the Fence

Grafting Lessons

Our team of grafters has again been travelling up and down the Central Coast teaching, from elementary school to college students, the art and science of grafting apple trees. See the faces in these photos - are they happy or what? They will never forget these days, especially if their trees get some care for the next 50 years!!!



San Gabriel School Grafting Class



Nipomo High School Grafting Class

Through the Fence continued



The Red Apron Team at Grizzly Academy

Gene Santos

I am saddened to report that Gene Santos, a gifted grafter and supporter of our chapter for many years, has passed away after living with cancer for 10 years. Gene was a great coach and a strong member of the CRFG

Grafting Team. He LOVED to teach young people to graft apples.

His story telling and strong philosophy of life made an impression on his students, as well as all of those who traveled to the schools with him.

Avocado Database

Larry recently sent us a link to an avocado website, Avocado Source, that has an extensive database of avocado varieties. Astonishingly, there are a total of 1002 varieties listed!!! See the full list at:

<http://www.avocadosource.com/AvocadoVarieties/QueryDB.asp>

Tree Collards

After reading the article on Tree Collards in the last issue you may be wondering where you can get this wonderful food. My plant, which is now 3 feet tall, is due for thinning out, and I will have some cuttings which you can root and have your own plant. Send an email to LeafletEditor@aol.com to arrange for yours.

Gene at work, helping young people to graft an apple tree.



FOOD IN HISTORY

England in the year 1000

From The Year 1000, What Life Was Like at The Turn of the First Millennium, by Robert Lacey and Danny Danziger, Little, Brown, and Company, 1999

In the year 1000 the principal source of sweetness was honey. It was so valuable that taxes were often paid with it. Beeswax was used for candle making, and propolis (the reddish resin used by worker bees as a building material) was used as a healing balm.

Another source of sweetening was the crushed pulp of grapes left after wine making. England supported over 30 vineyards around the year 1000. This was the period known as the "Little Optimum" during which temperatures in the northern lands were 2 to 4 degrees F. higher than present day. England had a climate then similar to that of France's Loire Valley now.

The word "orchard" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Orceard*, which comes from *ortgeard*, a combination of the Latin *hortus*, and Anglo Saxon *geard*, meaning garden enclosure, or plant yard. In September, orchards in medieval England yielded such fruit as apple, pear, plum, fig, quince, peach, and mulberry. Plums were developed at Glastonbury by grafting onto the rootstock of a native sloe bush, according to a period manuscript.

EARLY SCION EXCHANGES

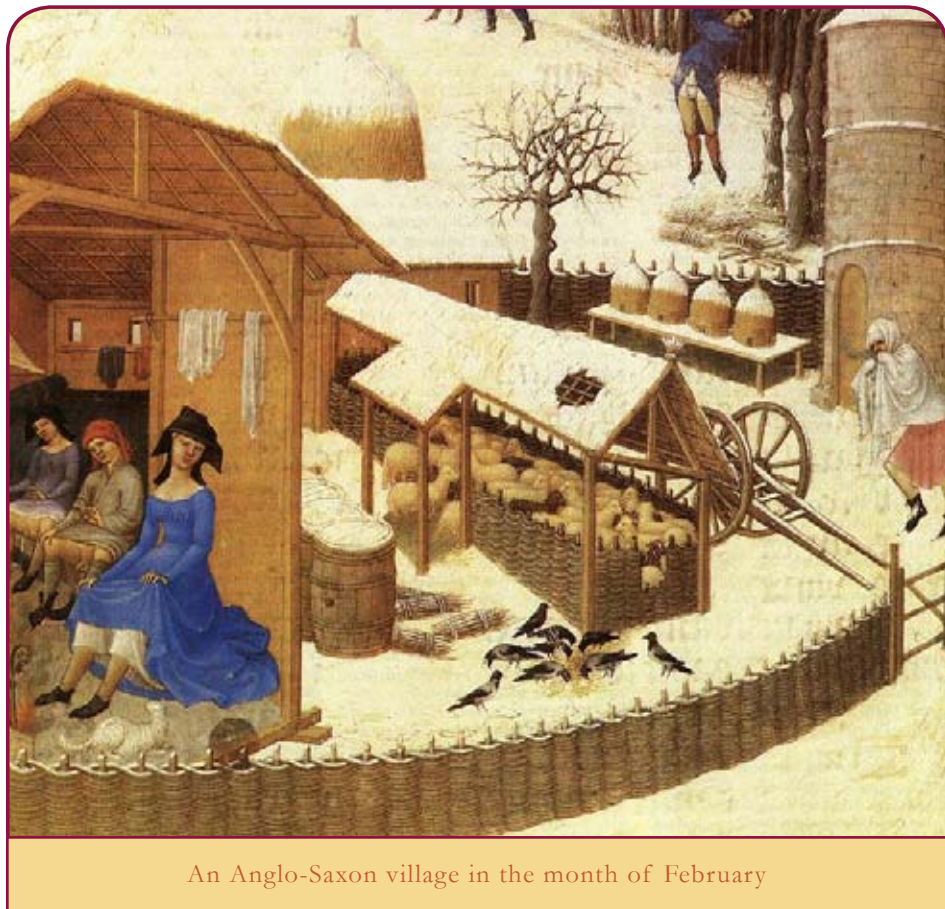
Fruit grafting was an annual task. Fruit grafts and plant clippings were exchanged throughout monastic communities. A monastic estate might also include nut trees such as

chestnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, and walnuts, and a kitchen garden might include onions, leeks, celery, radish, carrots, garlic, shallots, parsnip, cabbage, parsley, dill, chervil, marigold, coriander, poppy, and lettuce. By tradition, pruning started on St. Vincent's Day, January 22. Long, flat iron blades called "serps" were used to control the most vigorous growth.

Land was cultivated using a wheeled and iron-bladed plough pulled by up to eight oxen. The heavy iron plough was a technologic advancement that enabled the tilling of damp clayey soils. With the heavy

plough, it took only two men to tear up an acre of soil in one day. Land cultivated by the plough produced oats, wheat, barley and rye for human consumption, and hay for farm animals for winter feeding. The bread of the period was round, course and flat, and made from wheat, rye, or barley, with wheat being the preferred grain. Almost every village had a watermill for grinding grain.

The peasant diet was predominantly grain-based: bread, and porridge with vegetables. Vegetable based diet was supplemented by various animal based



An Anglo-Saxon village in the month of February

LEAFLET RECIPES

Spiced Sautéed Carrots with Pecans

Give your carrots a special treatment: cardamom and pecans are the perfect complement to their flavor.

from Margaret Lange

- 1 small dried red pepper, 1/2 to 1 inch in length
 - Seeds from 3 dried cardamom pods
 - 3 allspice berries
 - 3 pound fresh carrots
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 tablespoon butter
 - 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
 - Sea salt to taste
 - 1/2 cup broken pecans pieces
1. Grind the dried red pepper, cardamom seeds, and allspice berries until they reach a fine consistency. Remove to a small bowl and add 3 gratings of nutmeg.
 2. Peel carrots; trim tops and bottoms. Cut carrots to about 3 inches in length, and slice lengthwise so thicknesses are uniform, with none larger than 1 inch.
 3. Heat a medium-sized skillet over medium low heat. Pour spice blend into skillet and sauté for 1 minute. Add olive oil and butter to the skillet and continue cooking the spices for 1 more minute.
 4. Add cut carrots to the skillet and toss to coat. Add black pepper. Cover and cook carrots until tender, stir and turn the

Wanted: Your recipes! For publication here, send them along with a picture to the editor.



carrots three times during the cooking period, approximately 20 minutes total..

5. Remove carrots to a heated serving dish. Toss with sea salt. Sprinkle pecans over the top of the carrots.

England in the year 1000 continued

proteins. Farm animals - cattle, sheep, and poultry - were mostly fed by the free-range method in fields and woodlands, with a resulting high protein and low fat quality of the meat. River fish such as eels, pike, minnows, and burbot, trout and lampreys were caught by use of fish weirs. Game birds, venison, and wild pig were also important in sustaining the farmer and householder through the winter.

The month of July was a precarious time for the poor of medieval England. The summer

hay for the livestock had been harvested, but the spring crops had not yet matured, and many of the poor faced "the hungry gap." Grain and bread prices soared as stocks of food dwindled. The slender diet of the peasant at this time was often supplemented by forage. The hungry gap ended when the first loaf could be made from the new harvest. Lammas Day, one of the oldest English country festivals, marked this occasion. Celebrated on August 1, the word "Lammas" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *half-maesse*, or *loafmass*. The seasonal

cycle of planting and harvest on an estate in the year 1000 required great labor which was rewarded by celebrations such as harvest feasts after reaping, drinking feasts for ploughing, rewards for successful mowing, a meal at the haystack, and a rick-cup at corn carrying.

Judging by the skeletal remains excavated from Anglo-Saxon graves dating to 1000, hard work, country living, and a wholesome diet had its benefits, as the remains reveal a tall people with sturdy limbs and healthy teeth.

Scion Exchange continued



CRFG GIFTED GRAFTERS:
CRAIG ART BOB MARV
ART ROBERT DICK DAVE



Joan Tomooka runs the "canning service" with the Scion Exchange store in the background.

of peach. Multiple varieties of plum, pear, Asian pear, apricot, plumcot, fig, nectarine, cherimoya, and cherry scion wood filled the bags covering the other tables. As he did last year, John Valenzuela, Chair of the CRFG Golden Gate Chapter once again brought a big selection of amazing scion wood from the northern scion exchanges.

Elsewhere in the yard, Pet Daniels, Nell Wade, Maureen Moudakis, Larry Hollis, Don Jeung, Gary Fourer, Jane Baker, Dana Matthews, Jack and Donna Groom, Carmen

Merril, George Frisch, Larry Rathburn, and other Chapter volunteers ran the Chapter "store" providing grafting materials and helping participants select the proper rootstock to match their new scion wood, while Joan Tomooka and Jim Ritterbush offered rootstock potting in one gallon cans, all at nominal cost.

Thanks to the store staff and to Carol Scott, who has chaired this event for the past 10 years, both the "store" and the entire event ran smoothly all afternoon. Around the periphery of the yard, master grafters Dave Christie, Marv Daniels, Art DeKline, Art Henzgen, Dick

Scion Exchange continued

Pottratz, Robert Scott, and Bob Tullock showed how to join scion to rootstock, and explained the magic of the cambium layer beneath the bark, whose generative effects would weld the two pieces into a brand new tree. As he has in each of the past five years, Craig Righetti, of the Righetti Avocado Farm, also demonstrated the techniques of avocado grafting, a must to have a productive avocado tree.

The highlight of the afternoon was the introduction of Sally DeVincenzo, and the presentation to her of a special gift in honor of her husband, Dr. John DeVincenzo, and their contributions to the Chapter. "Dr. D." as he was known, was one of the most accomplished and well-liked apple growers in SLO County. A local orthodontist, horticulturist, visionary apple breeder, owner of

Gopher Glen Apple Farm, CRFG member, and 2006 Festival of Fruit speaker, his ambition was to create the perfect apple for San Luis Obispo and for the apple industry! Over the years, he made many crosses between top apple varieties in pursuit of the perfect apple. The seeds from these crosses were planted in his well-hidden nursery. The seeds grew and produced about 3000 seedlings that he proudly showed us when our Chapter met in See Canyon in September 2007. Sadly, Dr. DeVincenzo died unexpectedly in 2009 and never saw or tasted any fruit from these apple seedlings. Last fall Sally D. on behalf of Dr. D's family, invited us to collect scionwood from these precious seedlings. This spring, Dr. Joe Sabol led a cohort of CRFG'ers to collect the scionwood from Dr. D's seedlings.

Said Dr. Joe, "We pruned over

2,000 foot-long sticks from Dr. D's trees. Then we cut them into four inch pieces with at least three buds each. Then we put them in baggies, six to a bag. And now we are giving a baggie to everyone here to take home, graft to their apple tree, and bring back one apple next year for a tasting contest to find the perfect apple that Dr. D dreamed about."

The gift giving ceremony was a poignant and memorable conclusion to the day's festivities. Unbeknownst to Sally D., Dr. Joe had a picture taken during our 2007 visit to See Canyon. It showed Dr. D. standing in a field among 3,000 knee-high apple seedlings, microphone in hand, telling us how he had selected and hand-pollinated each individual apple flower,

collected the fruit, and then saved and planted the seeds to achieve what we saw about us. This picture was reproduced on a 3' x 6' tapestry. As the tapestry was unfolded and presented to Sally, we all saw and shared a little bit of her love for Dr. D. On his endeavors to create the perfect apple, 'It is an art that doth mend nature'.

— William Shakespeare.



Larry, Joe, Bob, Sally, John ... and Dr. D. pictured in his orchard on the throw

The Leaflet Review

Golden Gate Gardening

3rd edition published in 2010 by Sasquatch Books.

Reviewed by Anne Chambers

As a San Francisco Bay Area vegetable and fruit gardener, I relish a gardening book tailor-made for me. I've planted year-round crops in my Oakland backyard for 10 years, but consider myself a perpetual beginner. I've had many successes and failures over the years, am not always sure why and would never pass up the chance to pick up a few pointers. My garden harbors a selection of vegetables and herbs and several fruit trees: three apples, one pear, one apricot and one lemon.

In the Bay Area we are used to the microclimates; we know which areas are "socked-in" with fog all summer, which areas have early morning and late evening fog with sunny days, which areas are hotter than others and which areas have chilly summer coastal salt breezes. I happen to live in what my local nursery staff calls the "banana belt," meaning that we have relatively sunny

This review appears on the website of CRFG, Inc. and is used here by permission. If you choose to purchase a copy of this book, remember that a percentage of your purchase will be donated to CRFG when you access <http://www.crfg.org/pubs/books.html> and use the search tool at the bottom of that page to begin shopping on Amazon.com.



weather. Of course, this variety of Bay Area weather patterns makes for challenging gardening, which is why this book is so welcome.

Golden Gate Gardening was conceived as a regional food gardening book (Bay Area and Coastal California) for year-round growing by a 25-year veteran San Francisco vegetable gardener, Pam Peirce. The book is organized

into two major sections, eight chapters devoted to gardening activities such as starting seeds and preparing the soil, followed by chapters on specific vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers.

Finally, five appendices cover topics such as microclimates, pesticide toxicity, mail-order seed companies, resources and suggested reading.

The Leaflet Review continued

The chapters on basic gardening techniques are useful for both beginning and experienced gardeners, and include many easy-to-use charts and detailed how-to suggestions. Several handy charts on optimum planting times in fog or sunny conditions for more than 40 vegetables are included along with a short section on vegetables that tolerate salt spray best. Peirce provides details on framed beds, best building materials, soil composition and specific vegetable planting depths in the chapter "Planning Your Garden."

She gives practical tips on starting seeds and describes techniques that work for our climate such as creating a seed glass, floating row covers, building and using cold frames, tire-ringed beds and water frames. I'm a "hit or miss" seed starter, so I was happy to find several new ideas to try next season.

Many Bay Area gardeners have either sandy or clay

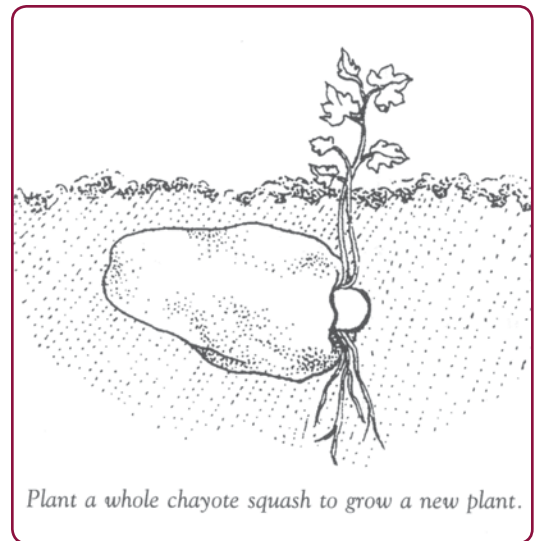


soil. The chapter on soils and soil amendments was adapted to our local circumstances and again, includes useful and very specific advice.

The reference chapters on vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers are likewise in-depth and tailored for the region. One hundred pages describe as many vegetables suited to Bay Area conditions, including some out-of-the-ordinary ones such as amaranth, Bolivian sunroot and bitter melon. This rich selection has inspired me to expand my backyard farm in the future beyond the tomato-lettuce-peppers-chard routine I've followed the past few years. The common format for each vegetable covers an introduction, growing instructions, harvest information including curing and storing, typical varieties and common pests.

I was pleased to discover several pages of explanation on onions, their sensitivity to day-length, which ones are likely to thrive in Bay Area climates and a long discussion about why they may go to seed without bulbing. My current onion crop is going to seed, which was baffling to me since they are always characterized as "easy to grow" on the onion set packages. Now I know what to do next time (plant them in March instead of the fall).

Scattered throughout the vegetable reference section are interesting-looking recipes, but probably no more than 20 or so. They seem to be there for a little reading variety rather than as a reason to buy the book. The many



pen-and-ink illustrations also make for easy reading.

I highly recommend this book to all Bay Area vegetable gardeners, whatever their ability. I was delighted with the in-depth information and specific techniques oriented for our peculiar weather conditions. I plan to read, re-read and use this book as a reference, which is more than I can say about any other vegetable gardening book I can think of.

Editor's Note: You may have noticed, like I have, that so many gardening books and seed catalogs present planting dates and cultural methods that just do not work in our climate.

Although this book is directed toward the home grower of vegetables and fruit in the San Francisco area, the sub-title "...and Coastal California" hints at how useful this information is to all of us who live in coastal areas here in San Luis Obispo.

LEAFLET CHRONICLE

January 13, 2012 Fruit Tree Pruning

January is the time for our annual fruit tree pruning workshop. This year our guest teacher was Professor Dan Lassanske. Dan is equally at ease teaching a class of hundreds, and pruning trees out in the orchard. He was not even dismayed that he was to give this lesson without his favorite teaching tool, the whiteboard.

It was a great day for our CRFG Chapter members and all the guests who came to learn to prune the dormant fruit tree. People love his clear cut rules and basic principles. His mantra, "every branch, every year" was drilled and demonstrated. Some folks who had heard his talk on pruning that same morning at

Before



Farm Supply Co. even came out to Cal Poly to hear him again, and to practice in our orchard. As our saying goes, it is much easier to learn to prune on someone

else's trees than on your own!

That's our little trick - by the end of the day we have had a hundred eager fruit tree students prune our entire orchard!

After



LEAFLET CALENDAR

CRFG Central Coast Chapter Meetings

Unless otherwise indicated, meetings are held the second Saturday of the month and begin at 1:30 p.m. Bring a friend and, for most meetings, bring a chair for all in your party unless you prefer to stand. Car pool if you can. No pets at any meeting, please.

April 14, 2012
Jack Swords in Nipomo.
1:30 p.m.

May 12, 2012.
HZ organic farm
in Bradley.
1:30 p.m.

Check the website
for more details.
www.crfg-central.org/calendar.htm

April 14:
Orchard Tour at the home of Jack Swords, 582 Camino Caballo, Nipomo, 93444. We will tour the “mature” orchard which includes many varieties of avocado, macadamia nut, passion fruit and sapote. You may remember Jack from the panel discussion on Cherimoyas we had last Spring at the Righetti ranch. Call Joe Sabol for details (805) 544-1056 or email to: Jsabol@calpoly.edu

May 12:
Kathy and Marvin Blackburn have invited us back to see how much HZ organic farm has grown in the last year! This may be another working meeting with grafting to established rootstock! We're in for a treat as the Blackburns will host another BBQ for us after the work is done, so please bring a side dish, salad or desert and your own tableware to reduce trash.



Piglet at HZ Organic Farm, July 2011

CONTACTS

Larry Hollis, co-chair, L_Hollis@hotmail.com, 704-1513
Patti Schober, co-chair, iampwolfy@charter.net, 467-5097
Art DeKleine, program chair, adeklein@calpoly.edu, 543-9455
Joe Sabol, publicity, jsabol@calpoly.edu, 544-1056
Richard K. Pottratz, treasurer, pottratz@sbcglobal.net
Gary Fourer, newsletter editor, LeafletEditor@aol.com
Central Coast chapter website: www.crfg-central.org

