

Central Coast Chapter CRFG



California Rare Fruit Growers – Central Coast Chapter

June 2019 Newsletter

by Jenny Weaver



Photo by Linda Robertson.

June 8, 2019 Meeting: Gabriel Frank's Demonstration Gardens

As it turns out, it was a perfect day in Morro Bay. We visited the home of Gabriel Frank, who owns [Gardens by Gabriel inc](#). His entire yard is dedicated to a demonstration garden that shows his wonderful landscaping and mature plantings. We enjoyed a clear view of the Rock and

bay while visiting and snacking before the official meeting started at 1:30.

We enjoyed delicious snacks brought by members. Thanks to all who arrived early to put up set up tables and to manage nametags, snacks and beverages.



Photo by Tom Sheldon.



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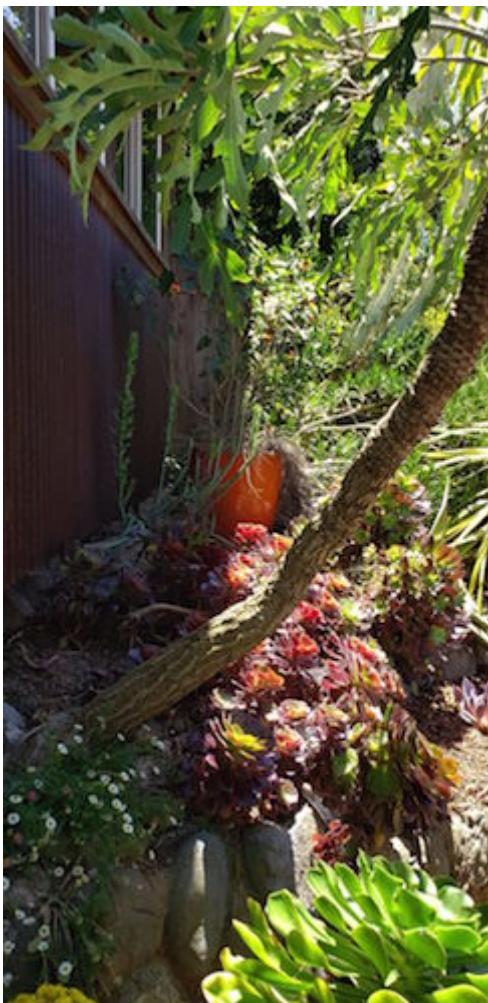


Photo by Tom Sheldon.

Information shared at meeting:

- **July's meeting** will be held at the CRFG's Orchard at Cal Poly. We'll have Fruit-tasting. Bring your favorites.
- **This year's Festival of Fruit** main event location is at the Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia CA 91007. The [Festival of Fruit website](https://festivaloffruit.org) is now selling tickets. \$75 for CRFG members who register before June 21. <https://festivaloffruit.org>. The festival takes place August 17, 18 and 19.
- **Sad news: Doris Henzgen**, a longtime member and former Secretary to our local chapter passed away on May 23, 2019 at the home of her son John, in Lindsay CA. Several local members attended her funeral in Los Osos. She was laid to

rest near her late husband, Art Henzgen. Art was one of the founding members of our chapter. Doris created many scrap books to chronicle the meetings in the early days.

- **Good news:** Joe Sabol reported that the state CRFG has a Scholarship Program (in

addition to our Central Coast Chapter Scholarship Program for Cal Poly students). The state CRFG program is for high school students who participated in the Apple Grafting Project. One

winner was

Taylor Krebs, who graduated on June 7th from Arroyo Grande High School.

He stood before us a proud winner and told us about himself. He will be continuing his education in an electrician program. We hope he attends another of our meetings and continues to graft apple trees.

- **FREE COFFEE GROUNDS** are available from [BlackHorse Espresso & Bakery](#) at 796 Foothill Blvd in San Luis Obispo, (805) 541-9300. CRFG (aka Joe!) has agreed to pick up the grounds every Thursday and Friday. The grounds are great for your garden. Your plants will grow like crazy during the day and according to Joe, they'll even stay awake at night to grow! The bags weigh about 100 pounds so you need to take buckets to transfer the grounds and a dust pan to clean up! Joe goes around noon when the bulk of the grounds are available. But he is up to his neck in coffee grounds and caffeine! Please contact Joe Sabol to arrange for a Thursday or Friday to pick up the grounds. Joe's home phone # 805-544-1056 jsabol@calpoly.edu

After our co-host Tucker presented Gabriel Frank with a CRFG hat and a low chill "Hawaii" apple tree, Gabriel began his presentation, assisted by his dog Cody, who was making the rounds through the crowd!



Photo by Joe Sabol.



Photo by Tom Sheldon.



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Photo by Linda Robertson.



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Gabriel gave us an overview of his delightful corner lot, which he has nurtured into quite a garden. He and his family moved to the location 7 years ago. He always liked nurseries that had a demonstration garden to see plants in their mature state instead of in pots, so he used that idea to develop his own garden. His website notes that he is a graduate of the New York Botanical Garden School of Professional Horticulture. We are glad he has brought his talents to the Central Coast.

Gabriel's company does custom design and installation of garden environments focused on wise water use. He plants a lot of succulents and edible plants. His work crew includes 2 teams and about 15 employees, including a professional designer, Khavee.

Gardens by Gabriel designed and installed the town of Harmony, so they are also "Townscapers".

Tom and Jenny, members of the group, can vouch for the high quality work done by Gabriel and Khavee. Their backyard design of boulders, fig and apple trellises, olive tree and sedge lawn has grown into a successful garden.

In a lighter moment, Gabriel said he thinks of our group as "Fruit Nuts"! Some of us are fruits and some of us are nuts!! But either way, he was happy to have us all visit.

His garden is divided into vignettes or rooms. They are California Natives, Mediterranean, Winter (Aloes and Proteas), Danger (Cacti), Edibles and Meadow (patio). There is a lot of stonework, gravel and pebbles making it an "Organic" design of "Controlled Chaos".

Irrigation is initially provided as drip but once the plants are mature, he turns off the drip and they survive on natural rainfall. The Edible area gets supplemental water. So does the Meadow, which Gabriel admits is gopher territory. Gabriel's trapping method is metal traps, but he says they are often buried by the gophers. So, he has root caged most of the plants on his property.

He is currently out of room for any new plants. But when one occasionally dies, he then has the opportunity to plant a different plant specimen.

Since his yard had narrow paths, the group divided into 2 groups and we circled the house. We ended up passing in the peaceful patio area where music was drifting out from the bamboo hedge. Gabriel mentioned that before the stonework was laid, he had placed electric lines for the fountain and wires for hidden speakers.

The Edible section is mostly culinary herbs. Gabriel grows oregano, sage, thyme, cilantro, and parsley. He lets them go to seed and naturalize. Did you know that when cilantro goes to seed, the seed is coriander?! He also grows tree collards and sunflowers.

The edible garden is where Garbiel is nurturing his obsession—FIGS. The oldest fig trees are about 4 years old. He got some from [Fig Bid](#) and from cuttings at our February Scion Exchanges. He has figs on trellises and in the metal troughs . Some herbs were enjoying thyme with figs in the trough. He even had a some mystery figs he called “Franken Figs”. Some trees were grafted. He’s had great success growing Black Mission Fig.



Photo by Tom Sheldon.



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Photo by Linda Robertson.



Photo by Tom Sheldon.

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structures
that

There were several clumps of Bamboo including clumping-type Himalayan and Mexican Weeping Bamboo. The running kind type of Bamboo is one that Gabriel avoids because it will run you into trouble with your neighbors by spreading into their yard! Gabriel even planted an office at the top of the hill in the bamboo grove. It had an incredible stain-glass door reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Gabriel reminded us that you can espalier most fruit trees, not just the traditional apple and pear. You can even espalier an avocado tree!

The back patio had many espaliered fruit trees. Many people were impressed with Gabriel's custom trellises-- rebar shaped and welded into

themselves looked like plants, but served to support the fruit trees. Lemon and cherimoya were following the supports along the house and above the windows and doors.



Photo by Tom Sheldon.



Photo by Linda Robertson.



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There were very large Cacti specimens in the “Danger” garden and lots of Aloes, Agaves and Echiverias in the succulent beds.

Approximately 65 guests were at this meeting and many lingered enjoying the patio and asking Gabriel questions about his handiwork.

If you want to learn more about Gardens by Gabriel Inc., check out his website www.gardensbygabriel.com

Demonstration Orchard:

Manny and Dara are the Orchard Managers. Talk to them if you have trees you'd like to donate and plant there. Gabriel has a few extra Fig trees he would like to donate. If you can, **please come to the Orchard Work Day on Saturday June 29 from 9-12** at our CRFG Demonstration Orchard at Cal Poly. Bring water, gloves, pruners, loppers, hat, appropriate shoes, sunscreen and insect repellent. If you have a weed whacker please bring it! Snacks will be provided.

July 13th will be our next chapter meeting at that same Demonstration Orchard where we will taste the fruits of our labors. Also, **EVERYONE IS ON THE REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE!** Bring ripe fruit from your yard to share. We will have fruit salads and smoothies!

Larry's 3.5 Pound Cherimoya

Larry Hollis shared these pictures of his 3.5 pound cherimoya!



Remember this secret word for the July Meeting: Cherimoya!

"The Last of His Kind Farming Fruit in the Silicon Valley"

Many of those who attended last year's Festival of Fruit visited Andy Mariani's orchards for a massive fruit tasting event.

Growing Produce featured CRFG lifetime member **Andy Mariani** in [this article](#) by David Eddy.

Website Updates

- Updated CRFG Orchard map now includes the three new figs donated by Gabriel. You'll find it on the [Orchard](#) webpage.

- The [Orchard History](#) page has been updated with [June 29, 2019 Work Day](#) information.