

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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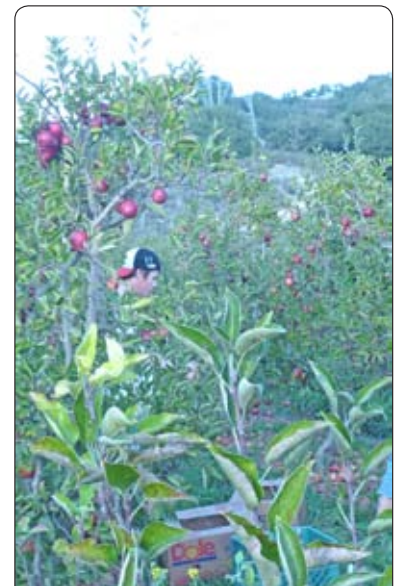
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Gleaning Possibilities

—by Carolyn Eicher

EVER WONDER WHAT TO DO with excess fruit? Do you have more than you and your neighbors and everyone else you know can eat? Or are you a farmer and have excess to share? Well, we can help out! A group of us from San Luis Obispo County have been picking fresh fruit to donate to the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County. Inspired by previous efforts of a non-profit called Backyard Harvest, we are piloting a similar program here in SLO. Gratefully, farmers and home owners have heard about what we are doing and have been donating excess produce to help those in need.

One example is at a 40-acre apple orchard called SLO Creek Farms (www.slocreekfarms.com) owned by the Gable family. Their U-Pick orchard had a bumper crop this year, and they have generously given us access to pick as much as we can for the Food Bank. SLO Creek Farms grows Empire, Early Fuji, Gala, Sundowner, Granny Smith, Braeburn, and more. They welcomed us to eat as many of their



Gleaning at
SLO Creek Farms



pesticide-free apples as we wanted while we were gleaning, a treat they also extend to their U-pick customers.

On a recent November day, a group of 15 of us picked 3,601 pounds of Sundowner apples in under three hours! The Gables asked only that we leave the adjacent rows of Granny Smith apples, which were in high demand. Margaret Lange and Gary Fourer of CRFG were there to help out.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



In this issue, Margaret reviews a book called *The Great Book of Pears*. Reading a chapter entitled *Pears in the Kitchen*, I was struck by a tip suggesting that this fruit benefits from some time in the refrigerator before setting out at room temperature to ripen. Having nearly given up on my pear tree, which has developed plenty of

poor quality fruit for the last 10 years, I was again driven to action.

Already I have dealt with the infestation of codling moths—another topic dear to many in our group. Also, years ago, I had learned how pears only ripen after being removed from the tree, but still, my pears generally rotted before softening, or they were grainy, or they had a sour taste. Now with this new knowledge, I headed out to the orchard. It was November, and many of the pears had already been fed to the chickens, but there were more than a dozen large, unblemished fruit left hanging. I gently picked them all and put them in a crisper drawer in the fridge and set the slider to “less humid.” Three weeks later,

two of my pears were honored with a place in the fruit bowl on the kitchen table, along with the avocados and bananas. Fast forward another week—peel and pare the first pair of ripe pears (say that 3 times fast), serve at a family holiday breakfast, and hear the words, “This is the best pear I ever tasted. What kind is it?”

“They look somewhat like Keiffer pears, but I’m not sure.” The tree was planted years before we moved here. But what matters most is that they are soft and creamy and very sweet—as if they have been stewed in syrup with a pinch of brandy.

Happy New Year, and as always, Happy Harvesting,
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
Designer and Writer: Margaret Lange

Contributors:
Jaleah Brynn
Carolyn Eicher
John Crowe
Gary Jenks
Joe Sabol
Pat Valdivia
Idell Weydemeyer
Sue Wilcox

CRRFG 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.

THERE ARE TWO SEASONAL DIVERSIONS THAT CAN EASE THE BITE OF ANY WINTER. ONE IS THE JANUARY THAW. THE OTHER IS THE SEED CATALOGUES.

~ HAL BORLAND



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LEAFLET REVIEW

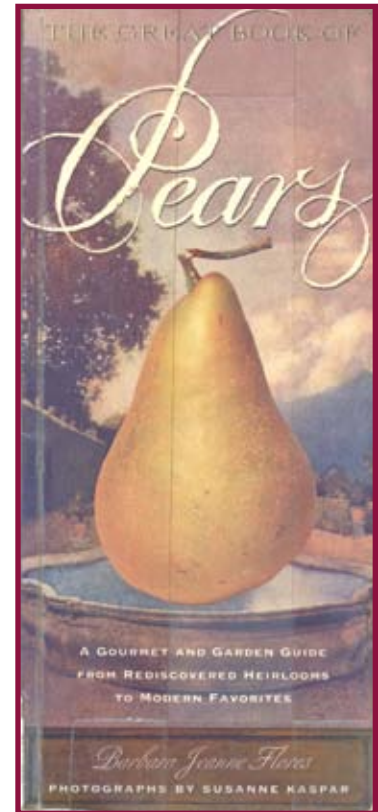
The Great Book of Pears

Written by Barbara Jeanne Flores
Photographs by Susanne Kaspar
Published by Ten Speed Press,
Berkeley, California, 1999

The hearty pear tree (*pyrus communis*) has been cultivated for over 4,000 years. Homer described it as "the fruit of the gods". In her work *The Great Pear Book*, Barbara Flores artfully and thoroughly showcases the pear, an effort that does justice to the beautiful and delectable fruit. Ms. Flores also designed the book in an unusual shape, 10.5 by 4.5 inches, suggesting the elongated shape of the pear. Historical photographs, paintings, and drawings augment the exquisite photographs by Ms. Kaspar. Vignettes are inset throughout the book:

Pears in Mythology (the pagans used pear wood as kindling for crop magic); the hidden meaning of the Partridge and the Pear Tree (it has to do with propagation...of humans that is); and the Pears of Monticello (Thomas Jefferson's horticultural achievements).

The *Great Book of Pears* begins with a history of the pear; Ms. Flores traces the pear's journey through human culture. Its earliest cultivation was by the ancient Chinese and Greeks, then it was adopted by the Romans. During the Middle Ages, France and Italy dominated the cultivation of pears in Europe where orchards flourished in castle and monastery gardens. The Belgians added to these developments in the 1700s. In the New World, the Spanish brought cuttings with them to start orchards at the California Missions. The oldest pear tree in California, planted in 1810, is still producing at Mission San Juan Bautista.



The West Coast climate has been very favorable to the pear. Ms. Flores showcases the Filoli Estate, 30 miles south of San

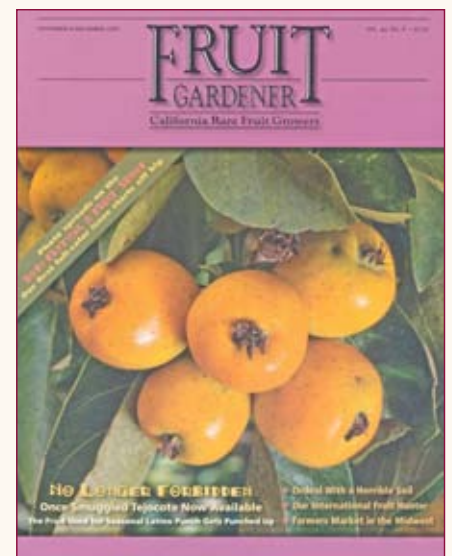
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The Fruit Gardener in Brief

The *Fruit Gardener* is published bimonthly by California Fruit Growers, Inc. (www.crfg.org). Recurring departments include answers to readers' question in "Ask the Experts," recipes in "From Grove to Stove," and details on going organic in "Organic Gardening."

Here are highlights of features from the November/December 2010 issue.

- Ever heard of Tejocote? The fruit, native to Mexico, is now grown domestically. David Karp tells all about it.
- Growing muscles instead of plants. Nick Lolonis tells tales of his battles with rocks in his yard that was a former river wash.
- Got fruit will travel. David Karp's journeys around the world and his efforts to revitalize rare fruits are featured by John Torgrimson of Seed Savers Exchange.
- Bev Alfeld tells of her visit to the Nichols Farm and Orchard in Marengo, Illinois.



Through the Fence

Adventures in a Rented Garden —from Sue Wilcox

Early last year my husband and I moved into a rented house in San Anselmo, just north of San Francisco. With a large south facing meadow of garden it seemed perfect for fruit trees. It was a chance to try out the theory that planting trees close together (i.e., six to eight feet apart) would limit their mature size but make the fruit more reachable. The landlord was set on planting a row of Laurels to screen the garden from the neighbors; I offered to plant a row of citrus trees instead and go halves on the expense.

We planted nine varieties including Grapefruit Oroblanca, Lisbon Lemon, Kaffir Lime, Owari Satsuma, and a Buddha's Hand Citron. We planted a circular grove of plum and peach trees, and a circle of olive trees—Frantoio, Moraiolo, Pendolino, Mission, and Manzanilla—around an old stone circle planter.

After all the work of planting, we didn't get to enjoy the trees for very long. We had to move two months before the end of drought season. Now what to do for my trees? I couldn't move them. I had to just hope they could survive with a new tenant in charge.

Even though we have to live in rental properties, I still want to plant fruit trees. It's nice to think of the pleasure they bring to others who will move in and discover they have fruit they can pick in their own

garden, as I know I've loved the rare moments when I've found an orange, lemon, or loquat tree in my new gardens. So I hope someone who loves fruit will move into my ex-home and enjoy picking the fruits of our labors.

Apples for Okra — from Jaleah Brynn

Here is a picture from my backyard okra patch. I live just south of the airport in SLO. There was not enough heat to really mature the pods and, of late, the baby pods have been dying on the stalk. Okra is in the cotton family; the yellow blossom is beautiful as are the leaves. My total crop was probably less than 20 mature pods. That is not really enough for a skillet full of fried Okra so I ate



Okra plant in flower

my meager harvest lightly steamed. Will trade apples for Okra!

Fruitfull Schools

Thanks to Idell Weydemeyer for sharing a link to this fascinating program in England:

"... a programme which will support children and young people to research, graft and grow at least 2,000 heritage fruit trees and establish orchards in 200

schools throughout England. On the way we'll be engaging 65,000 children, young people and community members in activities to improve understanding of the cultural diversity and benefits of locally produced food."

<http://www.fruitfullschools.org/about/index.php>

From Slovakia —note from Gary Jenks

I am currently living in Martin, Slovakia, but I do not want to lose my connection with CRFG.

My wife and I are teaching English to Slovakian students of all ages. CRFG folks might be interested in what is offered in the store for fruits and vegetables: many kinds of sweet peppers (typically bells and many others), always cucumbers and always tomatoes. Tomatoes, cukes and peppers are served with virtually every meal (including breakfast). They also have many kinds of cabbage.

You can take Slovaks out of the farming villages, but you cannot take growing stuff out of the Slovaks. When going thru a village or town by train, there will be small garden plots with veggies, flowers and often fruit trees on both sides of the RR tracks.

The Bible School area has several apple trees in not very good shape, so I suspect I will be doing lots of pruning. I would really like to do a little grafting to improve these trees. Buying tools here is a challenge. Banks, cafes, clothing stores, grocery stores and anywhere tourist-orientated, generally have English

Through the Fence continued

speaking clerks. For hardware and garden and farm supplies, I need a Slovakian translator (you want a what kind of knife?).

Below is info on where we are staying for those interested.

Jenks Year Long Mission:

slovakiayear.blogspot.com

St' John's Short Term Mission:

slovakiamissionca.blogspot.com

Happy Holidays to everyone!

Report on Rootstock

Advance sales of rootstock for use at the February Grafting Event were available for a great discount at the December meeting. A *big* thanks to Dave Christie for taking care of the pre-order rootstock sale last Saturday. Total revenue from the rootstock pre-sale was \$662.50.

What's Ripe in November/December in Suey Creek Canyon —update from John Crowe

Pomegranates just started ripening at the end of October and were in full swing by November. We wait for fruit to "volunteer to be picked" by cracking open. By mid-December only wonderful azadi and sirenevyyi are left on the trees.



Wonderful pomegranate

The main sweet citrus crops are just coming into season and won't fully ripen for a month or two. Owari satsumas are just beginning to ripen mid-December this year,



Flying dragon

a little later than usual. Rootstock citrus (citrus trifoliata – flying dragon, and Carrizo citrange) are dropping off the trees as are sapote. Calamondin are ripe.



Grappalo olives

Olives this year ripened unevenly and late but were a good crop. We processed olives using three different methods: salt, water, and a brine cure. As of mid-December there are still olive varieties that have not ripened and haven't been picked.

Persimmons are eaten fresh until the birds and ripening encourage drying which this year was mid-December.

Quince, which just started dropping in October, ripened with alacrity in the next two months. By mid-December, quince were completely harvested and processed into jam or frozen to be added to cranberry sauce.

The Kieffer pear was the last pear to be harvested and



Kieffer pear with first crop of Sirenevyyi pomegranate

remained on the tree until mid-December processing.

Finally the vegetable garden was cleaned up and winter crops planted. This is always difficult since many of the summer crops are still producing and volunteer winter crops like bok choy, endive, cilantro, and chard are coming up. Crops planted so far are garlic, shallots, onions, radishes, beets, carrots and various greens. The hot peppers are still producing so they didn't get pulled. Instead they get tucked in with a frost blanket on cold nights.



Winter "eggplant"

FOOD IN HISTORY

Were Figs the First?

Researchers from Harvard University in the USA and Bar-Ilan University in Israel have discovered carbonized figs that they believe may mark the point when humans turned from hunting and gathering to food cultivation. The figs, recovered from early Neolithic villages in the Jordan and Euphrates Valleys,



Ancient fig (left) is smaller than modern varieties

are an early domestic crop rather than a wild breed. Before the recent find, it was thought that the oldest cultivated fruits, olives and grapes in the eastern Mediterranean, were about 6,000 years old, and millet or wheat were about 7,000 years old. The research team, writing in the journal *Science* (June 2006), make the case that humans began developing horticulture of fig trees by at least 11,700 years ago. But the cultivation of rice may have predated that of the fig. Ancient carbonized rice found in the Hunan Province of China dates from about 12,000 years ago, so determining the exact origins of agriculture is not a simple matter.

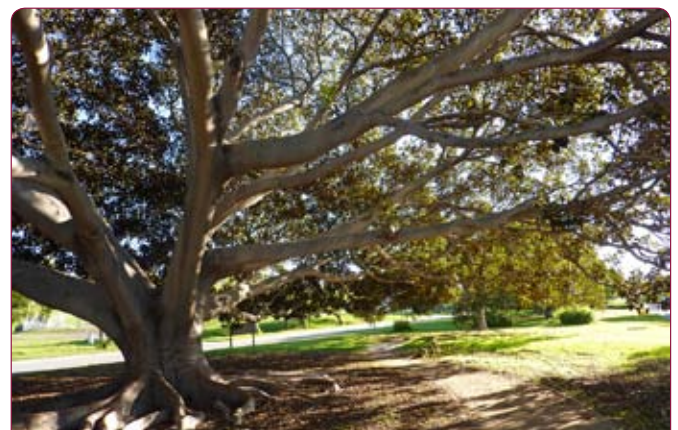
The case for the early domestication of fig trees is based on the lack of embryonic fig

wasp remains in the unearthed specimens. Fig trees are pollinated through an intricate symbiosis with the fig wasp. Somewhere during the 60 million years or so of the fig tree's evolution, a mutation occurred that enables the tree to bear fruit without pollination by the fig wasp. This kind of fig is called parthenocarpic because it produces edible fruit without pollination. Parthenocarpic fig trees are propagated by removing a shoot from the tree and replanting it. As the ancient figs show no evidence of having been pollinated by fig wasps, they must have been propagated by human beings. Ofer Bar-Yosef, an author on the *Science* paper, said: "In this intentional act of planting a specific variant of fig tree, we can see the beginnings of agriculture. This edible fig would not have survived if not for human intervention."

When the Earth began warming after the last ice age, the Neolithic, or New Stone Age, began (roughly 12,000 to 5,000 years ago). People moved from hunting and gathering to experimenting with agriculture, improving stone tools, corralling wild animals, and staying in one place. The figs unearthed in the Fertile Crescent were found together with wild barley, wild oats and acorns, indicating that people in the early Neolithic

mixed food cultivation with hunting and gathering. The early fig farmers would have had to wait several years for the tree to produce and this suggests that they had long-term ties to land. The early long-term interest and care of fig trees may be the reason why the tree has had such a significant influence on ancient cultural and religious traditions. The Book of Genesis describes how Adam and Eve fashioned "swimwear" of fig leaves. Some Jewish scholars believe that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil mentioned in this book was actually a fig tree rather than an apple. In ancient Cyprus the fig tree was a symbol of fertility and was considered sacred. In Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Islam, the fig tree is featured as a source of enlightenment, creation, and a symbol of unity.

With its deep roots throughout our diverse history, *Ficus religiosa*, the Sacred Fig tree may well have marked the beginning of the human venture into cultivating wild fruits.



Moreton Bay Fig Trees (*Ficus macrophylla*, native to Australia) Palos Verdes Estates, California

Gleaning Possibilities continued

Also present was Rob Coghill, operations manager of the Oceano Food Bank warehouse. He drove the Food Bank truck into the orchard, brought all necessary bins and crates, and taught volunteers how to glean. So far, our gleaners have been Food Bank employees and board members, community members involved with various groups such as Cal Poly's SUSTAIN initiative, Cal Poly's STRIDE center, Transition Towns, and the SLO Grown Kids organization, along with elementary, middle and high school students, and the Grizzly



with the Backyard Bounty group in Santa Barbara County. We have researched other gleaning models including Village Harvest in San Jose, the Portland Fruit Tree Project, and City Fruit in Seattle. We are looking at defining what crops would be most used

or appreciated as donations, and are working out the logistics of transportation and storage. Our steering committee meets monthly and is chaired by the Executive Director of the Food Bank, Carl Hansen.

Dr. Joe Sabol of CRFG attended

one of our meetings. He shared some stories, took notes and pledged that CRFG would stay involved with this effort. We would gladly welcome another member of CRFG who could share technical advice and experience about when to pick fruit, transportation issues, and even pruning tips! Down the road, I can imagine teaching recipients about the nutritional qualities of different kinds of fruits and vegetables, and about how to prepare them and cook them.

Gleaning is defined as the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested, or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. Ancient cultures have promoted gleaning. The Old Testament includes gleaning laws: as farmers reaped their crops, they were instructed to leave the corners of their fields un-harvested, and all of the remaining food was to be left for the hungry. In nineteenth-century England, gleaning was a legal right for cottagers. Today we can glean wholesome food for the needy, donated by farmers and home growers. To learn more and get involved:

- Carolyn Eicher: slogrownkids@me.com
- The Food Bank Coalition of SLO County: slofoodbank.org, 805.238.4664 (north county) and 805.481.4652 (south county)
- Cal Poly's SUSTAIN initiative: sustainslo.org
- Cal Poly's STRIDE center: stride.calpoly.edu
- Village Harvest: villageharvest.org
- The Portland Fruit Tree Project: portlandfruit.org
- City Fruit: cityfruit.org
- Backyard Harvest: backyardharvest.org
- Backyard Bounty, gleaning program of Santa Barbara County's Food Bank: foodbanksbc.org/backyardbounty.html
- The Beauty of Backyard Bounty: independent.com/news/2010/sep/11/beauty-backyard-bounty/#c44475
- "Urban Harvesters Scavenge Backyards to Feed the Hungry": altnet.org/food/145875/low-hanging-fruit-how-local-gleaning-groups-prevent-food-waste-and-feed-the-hungry



Grizzly Academy youth participate in gleaning

Youth Academy. At a gleaning in the first week of December, youth from the Grizzly Academy gleaned more than 4,000 pounds of apples at SLO Creek Farms.

At this stage of our gleaning work, we are gathering knowledge and learning from others. We are researching issues such as distribution, harvesting, volunteer recruitment, online fruit mapping, marketing, and fundraising. We have networked

Gleaning Possibilities continued

At the end of each day as a volunteer gleaner, I reflect back on what went right and what could be done better next time. I always come back to how remarkable it is that with a small group of people in only a few hours we can accomplish so much. During a recent gleaning when most of the volunteers were heading home, the winds were picking up and the sky was turning a lovely orange.



I was standing in an orchard that lusciously smelled of ripe fruit. I had gotten to know an orchard owner and volunteers and I had learned more about the varieties of apples that grow in our exquisite county. But most of all I had the satisfaction of knowing the fruit we had picked would help feed people in need. It was a perfect moment.



Carolyn Eicher is a co-founder with Jennifer Codron (both CRFG members) of a local non-profit called SLO Grown Kids (www.slogrownkids.org). The mission of SLO Grown Kids is to improve the health of SLO residents by educating students and their families about healthful eating and the origins of food. SLO Grown Kids is fortunate to have worked with

our local effort where Carolyn is happy to have helped pick some of the over 15,000 pounds of apples that have been donated to the Food Bank Coalition of SLO county this year.

The Food Bank Coalition of SLO County currently serves 200 agencies whose numbers of people total 40,000. Over 6 million pounds of food is distributed annually and currently 44% of the poundage is fresh produce. All produce, including locally-gleaned produce, is provided completely free to agencies and recipients.



The Great Book of Pears continued from page 3

Francisco. The Filoli Estate was established in the early 1900s by William Bowers Bourn II, a wealthy industrialist, who planted over 1,000 European and American varieties of pears, apples, and quince in a 10-acre orchard. The estate fell into disrepair and in 1976 it was deeded to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In the 1990s the orchard rehabilitation project began. The efforts were greatly assisted by C. Todd Kennedy of CRFG, a leading fruit preservationist. Mr. Kennedy has collected budwood from old orchards from coast to coast. He contributed 200 fruit trees, including 60 pear trees, to the Filoli orchards. The Filoli estate

is open to the public throughout the year; in early October, the Autumn at Filoli Festival features an orchard tour and heirloom pear and apple tasting.

In the Pear Collection chapter, over 40 varieties of pears are featured with Ms. Kaspar's photographs and varietal descriptions by Mr. Kennedy. An interesting entry is the Forelle, also called Trout Pear, an ancient variety from Germany. Forelle is the German word for trout, which this pear, with red spots on its skin, resembles.

The Great Book of Pears is also a handy reference covering hands-on aspects of pear production and use. Growing and Harvesting Pears in the Home Garden includes

answers to common questions regarding growing pears, including budding, one of the more difficult grafting techniques. In Pears in the Kitchen, Ms Flores gives tips on ripening, processing, and cooking with pears. She describes how to make perry (pear wine) and liqueurs like pear-in-the-bottle eau-de-vie. In the recipe section, noted chefs contributed over 30 recipes including Spiced Bosc Pear and Pepper Jack Soup, Balsamic Pear-Salmon Sauté, Spareribs Pilly-Minton, and Bette's Pear Chutney.

With her book The Great Book of Pears, Ms. Flores has achieved the difficult task of combining the beautiful, the interesting, and the informative in one work.

LEAFLET RECIPES

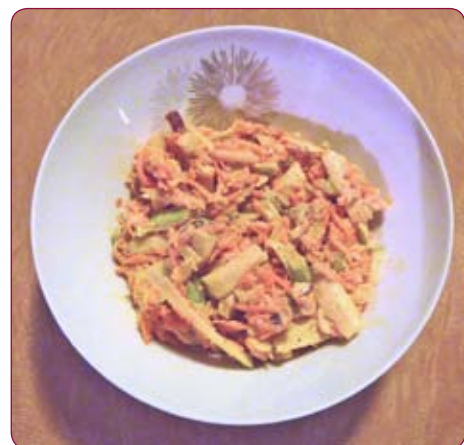
Spicy and Sweet Carrot Apple Slaw

The warmth of cardamom mellows the contrasting spicy-hot and sweet flavors in this easy recipe that is a tasty way to get your daily requirements of fresh vegetables and fruit. —from Margaret Lange

1/3 cup mayonnaise
1/3 cup of plain Greek yogurt
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
1 small dried red pepper
Seeds from 4 cardamom pods
4 gratings of nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
4 cups (about 1.5 pounds) carrots, peeled and finely shredded
2 cups of crisp apple, cored but not peeled, coarsely grated
1/2 cup pepperoncini, chopped
1/2 cup pecans, broken into pieces the size of peas

In a small mixing bowl, combine the mayonnaise, yogurt, and the juice and zest of lemon. Grind the dried red pepper and cardamom seeds in a spice grinder or coffee grinder until they reach the consistency of fine sand. Add spices to the mayonnaise mixture, along with the nutmeg, salt and pepper. Whisk all together and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the shredded carrots, grated apples, chopped pepperoncini, and pecan pieces. Stir the yogurt mixture into the carrot



mixture until well combined.

Cover and chill for at least 4 hours; mix and stir at least once during this time. Stir again before serving.

Adjust "heat" to taste: add more or less red pepper to your liking.



Indian Dessert: Sweet Yogurt Pudding

Dattatraya Paranjpe (D.P.) brought this dish to the December potluck. He noted that not everyone appreciates it, so taste it first. A traditional dessert of India where it is called Shreekhand, this sweet yogurt, or yogurt pudding, is flavored with saffron, or cardamom and nutmeg. It is popular in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka in Central and Western India. The authentic method calls for making yogurt from milk—a fun endeavor I'm sure. If you would like to try your hand at this, talk to D.P. for more details.

Non-fat yogurt, home-made using live culture (from Trader Joe's yogurt)

Sugar

Saffron for color and flavour or cardamom powder and nutmeg powder

Prepare yogurt (takes about 12 hours). Drain excess water using cheese cloth (takes about 24 hours), (1 gallon of milk makes 3 pounds, or 32 ounces of soft yogurt cheese.)

Mix sugar (about 1/2 by volume, 20 ounces) and saffron (about 1 gram, or cardamom and nutmeg powder) to your liking. Set it in the fridge for a few hours. Homogenize it.

Note: The quantity given is prepared from 1 gallon of non-fat milk. It is prepared one week back and preserved in the fridge.

To share your favorite recipes that use seasonal fruits or vegetables, send the recipe and a photo of the finished dish to the editor (LeafletEditor@aol.com).

LEAFLET CHRONICLE

November Meeting

Strawberry Fields For Everyone

The November meeting, held at the outdoor quad of Templeton High School's agricultural department, was all about strawberries, both commercially grown and backyard cultivated. The feature was a demonstration of how to construct a sub-irrigated strawberry planter. Models of a commercial strawberry field were also on display.

CRFG Central Coast chapter co-chair Patti Shober opened the meeting by thanking Dr. Joe, Dr. Art, and Dr. Larry (Patty awarded Larry an honorary doctorate degree) for their behind the scenes efforts to put on the meeting. They had previously met with commercial strawberry farmer Tom Ikeda to learn about the planting, and care and feeding of commercial strawberries.

Before the strawberry planter presentation, there were a few diversions. David Maislen displayed the gopher traps that he has for sale for \$11.00 each. He is also selling Australian grafting tools at \$45.00. The tools can cut a key into scion wood that snaps into host, resulting in a 99 percent take. He also has grafting liquid and extra blades. Patti, who took her doctor's advice and is back to her usual self, asked to see David's selection of bargain-priced Rolex watches, too.

Rachel Duchak with Central Coast Foodie mentioned that she is interested in finding a bilingual

chef to help with Spanish/English recipes for her website. (Contact her at rad@ccfoodie.com or 805-234-6331 if this is an opportunity for you or someone you know.)

Art DeKleine had just returned from the USDA National Clonal Germplasm Repository for Fruit and Nut Trees in Davis, where he learned an easy way to get the seeds, or arils, out of pomegranates. He demonstrated the technique: you need a big bowl of water, cut the pomegranate in half, cut down sides in line with pulp area and whack on back of pomegranate above water. The white pith will float and the arils will drop to bottom of water. For his next trick, he juggled five pomegranates and a bowling ball.

Seriously though, next, Art began the demonstration of constructing a sub-irrigation box from common materials. He outlined some of the advantages of using sub-irrigation for strawberries: it enables easy and consistent watering, simplifies pest and weed control, it can be easily moved, it can be heated, it can be used for vegetable and flowers, and it can be staked for tall plants. Instructions for constructing the sub-irrigated strawberry planters were handed out to each member (they

are also posted on the CRFG Central Coast chapter website: www.crfg-central.org).

Art announced that CRFG is donating 100 dollars to the agriculture program at Templeton High School and



Erin Thompson and the Templeton High School students

then introduced agricultural teacher, Erin Thompson.

Erin thanked Art and Joe for expanding the program from San Luis High School where she used to work to her current school, Templeton. She gave us an overview of the ag complex at the high school, and introduced the three students who were to perform the demonstration. The students, Sarah, Vanessa, and Mikeala, took us



Mikeala, Vanessa, and Sarah build sub-irrigation boxes

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued

November Meeting continued

through the steps of building the sub-irrigation boxes and we were able to see the process from



Model of commercial planting row

start to finish. An impressive project it was, as it teaches math, physics, and shop skills plus the science of growing edible foods.

After the demonstration, we went to the area behind the quad to see the commercial planting box where the students and the three doctors had constructed a replica of the planting methods used in a typical commercial strawberry field. Larry Hollis described the details: the mounds and furrow are made by farm machinery, and then a machine lays the black plastic and punches holes into which the plants are then placed by hand. The black plastic helps retain moisture and the chemical additive, it the heats soil, and it helps prevents overwatering. Also a time-released nutrient, is applied. The question of what is organic and what is "no-spray" was asked. Larry noted that there is a big difference between organic and no-spray. No-spray connotes strawberries that have not been

sprayed just before harvest, but still may have been grown with chemicals such as methyl bromide.

In an aside, the origin of the name "strawberry" was discussed. One member thought it originated because before the use of plastic, straw was used as mulch. Another member thought the name originated from a time when children sold berries skewered on straws or pieces of straw. No consensus was reached.

We then congregated around the three stations set up for the hands-on construction of sub-irrigation boxes. A few eager souls got their hands on the construction, while others were content to "supervise." Then, strawberry plants were distributed to each member.



Members build a sub-irrigation box

December Meeting All About Olives

Our holiday potluck and December meeting was held on December 11th. Judging by the spread of food over two tables, CRFG members and friends take their potlucks seriously. There were baked ham and chicken,

green salads, root vegetables, pies, cakes, pudding, and lots more.



While we indulged ourselves in this feast, Art DeKleine presented a virtual multimedia tour all about the production of olive oil. We



Giant straddle-harvester

saw a modern harvesting machine progressed down a row of olive trees, enveloping them one at a time. After vigorous shaking and bending, each tree emerged unscathed from the other side while the freshly freed olives rode a conveyor up to a hopper. In the old country, olives were hand-picked and huge stone wheels crushed them to extract the oil.

After the olive show, Joe Sabol recognized those who had specific tasks and duties with our Central Coast Chapter of the CRFG throughout the year and presented them with thank you gifts: bags of Kellogg Natural and Organic fertilizer. These were generously donated by Gisele Schoniger,

LEAFLET CHRONICLE continued



category manager and organic gardening educator with Kellogg Supply, Inc. (www.KelloggGarden.com). H. Clay Kellogg Sr. found the roots of his family's tradition



in an unlikely place: the bottom of a dry Santa Ana riverbed.

He called his new discovery Nitrohumus®, as he had it analyzed and found it was rich in nitrogen and humus. Gisele also provided Kellogg Garden Products' commemorative reusable tote bags, handed out to the first 50 lucky participants who arrived for the meeting.

Larry Hollis thanked everyone for being part of CRFG, for coming to the meetings, and for being involved.

Our featured speaker for December was Erika Wincheski, manager of a store called We Olive in San Luis Obispo at 958 Higuera Street (slo.weolive.com). She really knows her stuff—olive-wise, and is a nutritionist as well. After a brief lesson in the benefits of olive oil we learned the techniques of tasting, and were invited to taste a selection of three very different extra-virgin olive oils. First was the

golden Mission olive oil: a delicate and buttery variety best used as a finishing oil. Then came the fruity Arbequina with its grassy notes and spicy overtones, good for all-around use. Lastly was the robust oil exemplified by the Frantoio olive: a peppery oil outstanding as a compliment to steaks, meats, and sauces. Did I say lastly? There was another treat, We Olive's 18-year aged traditional Balsamic vinegar of Modena. It was thick, tangy and sweet, smooth and rich. You can now add me to the list of We Olive's customers.

We also learned that the lack of strict standards means the U.S. is awash in low-quality, adulterated oils sold under the guise of



Erika Wincheski of We Olive, our featured speaker

Extra Virgin olive oil. The U.S. Department of Agriculture may soon reveal new standards to define what can be sold as "100% extra virgin" olive oil. After this tasting, I see the importance of shopping at a reputable seller to ensure I'm getting the real thing.

Outside the PG&E center the annual plant exchange took place. Members brought a good assortment of fruit trees, shrubs, bulbs, and vegetable plants to exchange with other members. I'm sure the plants have all found good homes.



Gloria and Erika filled cups for tasting

We are grateful to PG&E for providing and to Marv Daniels for arranging the use of this facility. The PG&E Energy Education Center is only available to companies or organizations whose vision supports economic development, education, environmental stewardship, local civic programs or energy-related functions. As an extra challenge to us, PG&E had just installed new furniture and carpet in the room, and the open house for the revamped center was to be held a few days after our meeting! We were all very careful and didn't spill a drop of olive oil.

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.

January 8, 2011.

Annual Pruning Meeting.

The corner of Highland and Mt. Bishop Road, at the Crops Unit on the Cal Poly campus. 1:30 p.m.

February 19, 2011.

Annual Grafting Event and Scion Exchange at the Crops Unit on the Cal Poly campus. This meeting will be on the **third** Saturday. 1:30 p.m.

Check the website for more details.

www.crfg-central.org/calendar.htm

January 8:

Our annual pruning workshop at the Crops Unit on the campus of Cal Poly. The Crops Unit is at the corner of Highland and Mt. Bishop Road, close to the railroad tracks. This is a very popular meeting so plan to join the crowd.

Refreshments will be provided by the A through G group. (This means that if your last name begins with one of these letters, it's your chance to bring refreshments!)

A small demonstration orchard will be used for the pruning lesson which will be followed by actual practice in the CRFG orchard. Trees to be pruned include plums, peaches, nectarines, Asian pears, pluots and cherries. No experience is necessary, and it is an important job and pure fun! Bring your pruning shears, clippers, loppers, handsaws, and gloves if you want the most hands-on opportunity. The featured "Guest Pruner" and instructor

will be Tom Spellman, a professional nurseryman with the Dave Wilson Nursery. Many of our local retail nurseries offer the great selection of high quality fruit, nut, and shade trees grown by the Dave Wilson Nursery.

Winter is an excellent time to prune deciduous fruit trees. The CRFG demonstration orchard has a wide variety of over 80 fruit trees, some with close plantings to provide the backyard fruit gardeners an opportunity to prune using several techniques.

"There are many reasons for pruning, including increasing fruit size and overall yield" said Larry Hollis, co-chair of our local chapter. "This is an excellent opportunity to practice pruning and have an expert coach you and answer your questions as you prune a tree." Light rain will not cancel this event. "Bring a friend, your clippers and your questions," said Joe Sabol.

February 19:

Please note that this meeting will be on the **third** Saturday, for our annual Grafting Event and Scion Exchange. This has been the most heavily attended meeting of past years! You can start your own fruit trees on this day, and you can learn how to have several varieties of fruit on one tree. Plan on coming early for grafting lessons and the best selection of free scion wood to graft to the rootstock you purchase, or to your own mature trees. There will be rootstock and grafting supplies for sale. Cal Poly students usually have some great plants for sale at this meeting, too!

Refreshments will be provided by the H through R group.

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

