



California Rare Fruit Growers – Central Coast Chapter

February 2018 Newsletter

by Lori Bright

Meeting February 13, 2018



Attendees browse through hundreds of varieties of scion wood to find treasures they will graft to their own trees. Photo by Joe Sabol.

Our Scion Exchange was a Fabulous Success!

The Central Coast Chapter's 2018 Scion Exchange may have been our best attended exchange ever! Over the course of the day, hundreds of people browsed through hundreds of bags of scions from hundreds of varieties of trees. At this event the aspiring grafter could find everything he or she required from scions to rootstock, watch



grafting demos by experienced grafters, and even be tutored by the same. All of this was provided either for free or at reasonable cost. The money raised will be used to provide scholarships for future Cal Poly students.

The CRFG Central Coast Chapter's Annual Scion Exchange is a community affair, to which members and the public are welcome. The goal: to promote learning and awareness of the almost magical possibilities of grafting!



Special permission was given for attendees to park along Mt. Bishop Road- and that stretch was filled with cars as far as the eye could see! Photo by Joe Sabol.

The event includes: the scion exchange itself; experienced grafters demonstrating the art of grafting and various grafting techniques; a store selling grafting supplies; a store selling rootstock and potting services; a stand manned by Cal Poly students selling Cal Poly fruit; and as always refreshments free of charge provided by the members of our chapter.

While the event is run by



Lori Bright pots up rootstock for attendees, with potting soil requested by Lori and generously donated by Kellogg (G&B)! Photo by Joe Sabol.

volunteers from our chapter, folks from within and without our county engage in this fun and informative event. Cal Poly came through in a big way: Joe Sabol requested and was given permission to use the Crop Science site at Cal Poly to house the event. He also requested and was granted special permission by Marlene Cramer, Cal Poly's Senior Parking Officer, for attendees to park along Mt. Bishop Road where no parking is normally allowed. We are appreciative of that permission, as that stretch was filled with cars as far as the eye could see! The Ag Engineering Department at Cal Poly loaned us 12 big folding tables. And... the generous and amazing donation of potting soil created, cultivated and made by Lori Bright with the Kellogg (G&B) friends!

Preparation is a big deal, and many people helped make it happen. About 35 people came to the Friday night work-night the night before to prepare scion tables, label rootstock, fill vials of grafting goop, and package pheromone strips. Joe Sabol, who months before had placed orders for the rootstock sold at the event, also bought a bale of bird netting to be sold at the store. On Saturday, Art DeKleine brought his huge tent to give shade and add to the festivities. One of the highlights of the morning is watching Art direct the crew as they set up the big tent! Several volunteers came from Santa Barbara county to help us set up, sort scion and assist new grafters/members.

We had special CRFG Guests from out of town... from Sequoia Chapter (Visalia) from Redwood Chapter (Napa) and Santa Barbara Chapter. Two faculty members and several students came from Monterey Peninsula College!! High school ag teacher, Sam Swanson,

brought his wife, son, and Camarillo students to our event. They also took 100 apple roots to go to Camarillo High school to be grafted by the CRFG Chapter in Los Angeles. Paul Bingham shipped a box of low chill scion wood to us from San Diego and then, he came to our event! Mr. Steve List, Ag teacher from Sylmar, came to our work-night and picked up 500 apple rootstock to take to the L.A. CRFG chapter to graft apple trees in So. California. Saved us time and money!!



Attendees begin to gather outside of the Scion Exchange room. Here they learn to graft avocados from Craig Righetti under Art's big tent (left), eat snacks and drink coffee or tea at the refreshment table (middle), and buy fruit from Cal Poly Fruit Science students (green tent to the right)! Photo by Joe Sabol.



Dr. Lauren Garner, Cal Poly's own professor of Fruit Science, with her students and guests from Monterey Peninsula College... at the

Cal Poly fruit sales area. Eight of Dr. Garners' students signed up to get "e-blast" news from Joe Sabol. Photo by Joe Sabol.

The Scion Exchange The scion exchange itself was led by Carol and Robert Scott. It takes place in a warehouse-sized room filled with over 20 tables laden with baggies filled with scion wood. People brought scion wood and cuttings to share with others. Our own Jack Swords donated many different varieties of avocado scion wood to the big exchange. John Valenzuela, from the CRFG Golden Gate Chapter, brought a ton of scion wood from the northern chapters. Our great scion exchange wouldn't be quite so great without the large bags full of scions that he collects from the various northern chapters and then driven down to us from the Bay Area by him. And, he stays to help out all afternoon. Carol and Robert Scott hosted John and his guest in their home for two nights. John has been making this trip for several years now and we would certainly miss him if he didn't come.

Volunteers sorted and organized the many varieties of apple, peach, nectarine, plum, apricot, pear, cherry, persimmon, sapote, cherimoya... and wait, there's more! They also brought cuttings of figs, grapes, mulberries, pomegranate, and dragonfruit for other attendees to take home and plant. Attendees browsed through these items to find treasures to bring home... and make the magic happen in their own backyards!

Gifted Grafters Walter Thoma came from Porterville and put on a great grafting show with his block plane. Craig Righetti came and taught "avocado grafting" all afternoon with a huge crowd. Other gifted grafters who taught grafting all afternoon: Marv Daniels, Art DeKleine, Roger Eberhardt, Pat Moudakis, Dick Pottratz, and Dave Christie and his friend, Dana. For several hours they shared their knowledge, demonstrated various techniques, answered questions, and assisted novice grafters with grafting their selected variety of scion to rootstock.



CRFG member Walter Thoma came from Porterville to be a volunteer grafting instructor. Here, Walter teaches Alisha Taff about block plane grafting. Photo by Joe Sabol.

The Stores
The grafting supply store was headed by June Gelling with assistance from her mom, Grace. The items for sale included grafting knives, grafting "goop" and tape, bird netting, and gopher traps. The store opened at noon and ran out of everything by about 2-2:30 pm!



Art DeKleine, gifted grafter, makes learning fascinating for attendees. Photo by Joe Sabol.



Dick Pottratz, gifted grafter, ably demonstrates the whip and tongue graft. Photo by Joe Sabol.

For the first time ever, we sold 1,250 feet of birdnet. We will have to up the inventory by 20% for next year and 2 bundles of bird netting! Dr. Bob Tullock provided a knife

sharpening service for most of the afternoon. We netted about 45% more than last year. Great news for future scholarship recipients!

The rootstock, potting (& dragonfruit) store was headed by Nell Wade, and the rootstock team canned up more rootstock than ever before!! They sold Dragon fruit cuttings for the first time ever... and 27 named cuttings sold for an amazing \$10 each. We were shocked and delighted at the enthusiasm for red fleshed varieties!! A CRFG Member from Sacramento donated a huge bag of dragon fruit cuttings, gave them to John Valenzuela to bring to our big scion exchange. Nell sold most of them!! Our good friends with Kellogg Garden Products donated all of the potting soil for canning up the rootstock, thanks to a special request from Lori Bright!! Thanks Lori and Thanks Kellogg!



High School Ag Teacher, Sam Swanson, center, and his son, picking up 100 apple roots to go to Camarillo High school to be grafted by the CRFG Chapter in Los Angeles. Photo by Joe Sabol (standing at left).

Those of us working the "Stores" had fun doing so and learned plenty from other members as well as from the patrons making the

purchases!

Refreshments Evelyn Ruehr and her team Karen Kolba and Elaine Rathbun kept us all well fed at the exchange and behind the scenes. Friday night volunteers were treated to a taco night buffet feast. Saturday's 40+ volunteers enjoyed pizza and fruit. Attendees at the exchange were invited to partake of free coffee, tea, cookies, fruit, and more!

Cal Poly Fruit Stand Shun Toida, a Cal Poly student and winner of one of our scholarships, was on duty in the Cal Poly Fruit Sales booth all day long, cheerfully selling mandarins and other fruit grown on the Cal Poly campus.

Gleanings From the Past

by Marv Daniels

In 1998 CRFG Central Coast Chapter members Joe Sabol and Art Henzgen started the High School Apple Grafting project. Joe asked if I'd like to help teach at the high schools.. I said to Joe, "Why would I go, I don't know anything about grafting. The next year Joe said, " Marv" did you learn to graft? I said No. He said, "Do you want to learn to graft?" I said, yes. He said, "SLO high school 8:00 AM Tuesday morning" and abruptly walked away. I knew if I wasn't there, I'd given up my chance to learn to graft. "I was there and started grafting apple trees with Dr. Joe Sabol on the high school apple grafting team that morning in 1999. In 2000 the team

consisted of he and me for the next few years. Grafting really grew on me when I grafted a rootstock and it grew. I got hog wild and bought a lot of apple root-stock year after year. Wasn't long until I thought what am I going to do with all these trees. My wife, Pet, nurtured the trees keeping them watered and she talked with them everyday. They were happy and grew nicely.

I saw an article in the New Times weekly asking for raffle prizes for CCCMB trailblazers. I called the number and left a message. I received a call from Greg B.

Greg said, "a grafted apple tree that will grow and produce apples on the Central Coast, Wonderful" He went on to say, " I don't have anybody available to pick up the tree. Can you deliver it?"

I said, Yes, I can deliver it to Morro Bay State Park and when is the drawing?

Greg B said, about 1:30 PM Saturday. "Just as I was saying "OK" He said can you come earlier like at 8:30 and bring your gloves and work on an adventure trail with us in Morro Bay State Park? Lunch will be provided followed with the drawing...

That was the beginning of my interest in giving trees away to nonprofits and building trails. Twenty years later I'm still grafting apple trees, and giving them away to nonprofits for their fundraisers.

In the nineteen years I've given nearly 400 trees away to nonprofits. A few years ago Tucker Schmidt volunteered to help and we've increased the number of trees we are buying and giving to nonprofits.

Apple grafting forever, Marv Daniels

Announcements:

Annual Propagation Meeting March 10th, 1:00 at the Master Gardeners Community Garden

Bring your seeds, seed packets, seedlings, cuttings, propagated plants, empty or full six-pack or other plastic containers to share with others! Have a 6 pack of seedlings you bought but didn't use all of them? Bring the remainder to share and swap!

Bring vegetable and flower starters, propagable fruit tree and berry cuttings: anything we can grow in our gardens. But please do not bring any type of citrus, because it is illegal. A Sharpie and painter's tape to label your new plants will be invaluable!

Larry Hollis will demonstrate grafting. You can buy your own rootstock at this meeting and learn to graft your own tree! Members will be on-hand to guide you!

Bird netting will be on sale, while it lasts. Rain does not cancel this

event, so bring your rain gear, just in case!

Joe Sabol recalls that **teaching the students at Santa Maria High School** on Feb 27, 2018 was a big success. An "Excellent day of grafting apples..... Not one cut finger!!

A Big Thank you to each of you for your help with the **Master Gardeners Grafting Lesson** on March 6!! Those Master Gardeners will NEVER forget this day!!