

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
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2007 – The Year of the Mango

Go to the Festival of Fruit!



You still have time to make plans for the 2007 Festival of Fruit being held **August 10-11 at Southwestern College in beautiful San Diego!**

Don't miss out on this chance to select from over 20 different presentations related to propagation, growing, maintaining and enjoying the most delicious and unusual fruits that can be grown in California. You will hear special guests discuss their

experience in growing temperate, subtropical, and tropical fruits. You will also have the opportunity to taste fruit grown in California, as well as to take advantage of the offerings from fruit tree nurseries and other vendors. You will have the chance to meet and exchange information with experts, as well as with hobbyists who have "learned by doing".

Take guided and self-guided tours through some of the fabulous gardens of the local chapter member's groves and gardens as well as the fruit garden at Quail Botanical Garden. There will also be a day trip to the markets of Tijuana to sample the herbs, spices and fruits of Mexico.

Do you have children or grandchildren who think they would be "bored" at the Festival? No problem! San Diego has many family oriented activities such as Sea World, the San

Diego Zoo, Old Town, and the beaches! It is a LONG drive from the Central Coast to the southern end of our state, so make the most of it and spend a few days before or after the Festival at some of the other wonderful attractions San Diego has to offer.

For more information, or to register, visit the Festival of Fruit website at: www.festivaloffruit.org (If you don't have internet access, either visit your local library or ask a friend for help!)

Remember, there will be no Central Coast Chapter meeting in August!

Blueberry Propagation

By R. J. Blakey

The May chapter meeting was held at the Cal Poly test garden maintained by Dr. Mark Gaskell attended by over 80 members and guests. The following information is from notes taken by one of our chapter members, Ron Blakey.

Blueberries are available bare-root or in containers. The best time to plant them is in autumn. Position the crown so that it is flush or no deeper than $\frac{1}{2}$ in. below the ground. Don't cultivate close around plants as blueberries have fine roots near the soil surface; keep them moist, but don't subject them to standing water. The plants are intolerant to drought, require good drainage, and love sandy soil.

Planting: Mix in $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 gallon of peat moss into each hole. A mulch of 3 – 4 inch thickness of sawdust or ground bark will help to conserve moisture, keep weeds down and protect the roots. A spacing of 18" to 24" apart and 6' between rows is recommended. If containerized, a soil mixture of $\frac{1}{4}$ peat moss and perlite and $\frac{1}{2}$ potting soil should be used. Use acid forming fertilizers such as "90 Tiger Sulfur" or "Dispersoil", mix in thoroughly and water well. Do not use pelleted sulfur as it does not spread uniformly. Later, if yellowing of leaves occurs, chelaeted iron can be used for short term greening as iron is part of the photosynthetic process.





The biggest challenge is to get the ph down to between 4 ½ & 5 and keep it there. For larger growers an acid injector system can be employed. For hand applications use two pounds of sulfur per 100 foot of row and 80 grams of nitrogen per plant in growing season and 4 – 5 pounds per week in winter.

Watering: Grasp a handful of soil from root level, compress it in your hand, if it falls apart, you need to add more water.

Pruning: After crop has been picked in late June, pruning can be done. Keep 1st year plants from bearing by stripping off the flowers. Trim to create an upright cup shaped bush, remove some old branches each year and remove weak shoots, cut back ends of branches to promote new growth. Fruit is produced on older wood and on last year's wood.

Frost: If your bushes are hit with a hard frost, they generally will survive but will be set back 65 –70 days.

Varieties: For the Central Coast Area, you need to choose the Southern Highbush varieties. Plant at least two varieties for better pollination, choosing kinds that ripen at different times for long harvest and plant two plants for each household member. At the Cal-Poly test nursery there are some twenty five different varieties to see. Some of them by name are: Emerald, Jewel, Misty, Sharpblue, Marimba and Windsor. Each has its own characteristics of size, flavor and growing habits. Some can grow up to six feet high. Other varieties that might grow here are Georgia Gem, Sunshine Blue and Misty. For more information on blueberries go to www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/research/blueberry.html and check for more of Dr. Gaskell's tips and insight.

(Note from Norman Beard, another of our chapter members.) "I purchase all low chill Blueberries from a Southern grower. I sell them in one gallon containers for \$5, packed in peat moss, in which I know they grow in your area. One should only plant blueberries when they are dormant. My personal opinion, the best are Sharp Blue, Misty, Blueridge, Sampson, and O'Neal. These are good for -10o to 30o or warmer climates. If anyone wants to place an order with me, I can have them sometime around the first of year, 4" to 8", one year plants."

Double June Meeting

The June meeting was a first—it was held at two locations beginning at 9:45 am at C&M Nursery (avocado and citrus tree growers for commercial orchards) and 10:00 am at Ana's Roses. Both locations are in Nipomo.

C&M provides trees for commercial orchards, garden centers, and chain stores, and is California's second largest producer of avocado trees. To maintain its status as a state-certified nursery, C&M must sterilize all potting media. For 28 years, the nursery made more than 30 methyl bromide applications annually. In 1999, C&M developed a practical steam sterilization facility that allows it to treat large truckloads of potting soil and media at a cost comparable to fumigating soil with methyl bromide, eliminating the nursery's need for the highly toxic pesticide. C&M has presented information about its innovative steam treatment facility to other nursery growers at industry conferences and proceedings and was the recipient of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's 2000 IPM Innovator's Award because of this practice.



Ana's Roses is the "love" project of Lori (Ana) Moffit. She has more than 250 varieties of roses listed for sale and June was a good time to see them in bloom! Lori loved her CRFG host hat with Ana" embroidered on it. She plans to use it for her fishing hat when she retires to Georgia! Tour-goers purchased many of her roses to enjoy in their own gardens. (Photo by Billy Mounts)

After the tours, the crowd gathered together at the beautiful home and garden (or, as Art DeKleine described it, demesne) of Gary and Marcia Epstein for a brief business meeting and gourmet pizza lunch! The day was perfect and "tour-goers" were most enthusiastic as evidenced by the photos below! (Thanks, Joe Sabol!)



PEST ALERT

Getting Rid of Ground Squirrels in Your Yard

By Tom McShane

Santa Clara Chapter of CFRG

Over the last few years the squirrel population in my Cupertino neighborhood has exploded. They have become a huge nuisance, especially because they love to take a bite of most any type of fruit. Last year I lost most of my apricots, cherries, persimmons to these "rats with tails" and I decided to get serious about ridding my yard of these pests.

I read where the City of Mountain View was trapping squirrels because several folks who fed them at Cuesta Park had been bitten. In the article they mentioned a circular trap that was quite effective. I went to Google and entered "tube trap squirrels" in the search box and found:

http://www.forestry-suppliers.com/product_pages/View_Catalog_Page.asp?mi=4449

I ordered 3 traps last October and placed one on the top of each fence that surrounds my back and side yards. By Christmas I had trapped 50 of them plus 3 rats. Over the next 4 months I got 3 more. I went on the internet and read that they live in packs of 30-50 and if you are trying to rid your neighbor of squirrels you'll need to get at least 30 to make a difference.

I am happy to say that we are free of squirrels in my area. I just picked 3 lugs of golf ball sized Bings and Raniers. I am watching my plums, apricots, persimmons, and pluots ripen with not a squirrel to be seen.

The trap has a very strong torsion spring that releases instantly when a critter touches a flat plate inside. The heavy spring snaps down so hard and fast that they are killed immediately. Since the squirrel is inside the tube it is hidden from view. You can tell that you trapped one by noticing that the bar attached to the spring is vertical, or you'll see part of the tail extending from the tube. Just pull the spring back to release the squirrel into a plastic bag for disposal.

I used peanut butter for bait initially. After getting 40 or more I stopped using any bait at all. They like to use the fence top as a raceway and have no fear of entering the tube. So bait is not needed and once in there they are dead.

I hope I have not offended any animal lovers in the chapter but for me I am so pleased with the trap that I felt I should recommend it

Name that Peach!

That very early and tasty peach (TXW1194) in the Cal Poly/CRFG Community Orchard now has a real name—Tropic Prince—and, if you want one or more trees for your own orchard, join with the 20 plus who have already jumped at this opportunity to purchase this truly low chill peach that does so well in this area. (See note below from Tom Burchell, President and Owner of Burchell Nursery.) Tom gave us about 25 low chill fruit trees many years ago (including TXW1194) to plant in our Cal Poly/CRFG Community Orchard! Call Joe Sabol

(544-1056) if you want to get in on the order,

"Hi Joe!

Good to hear from you! Thanks for the update on the peach. Texas A&M has patented and named that peach 'Tropic Prince' plant patent 12,965 on September 17, 2002. The patent lasts for 20 years which means that someone can't propagate it without permission. We grow several thousand trees of that variety each year for growers in Texas, Southern California and Mexico. If any one wants to buy one it will be \$10 per tree (\$2.50 royalty to Texas A&M + \$5.00 for the tree + \$2.50 shipping/handling). Let me know if anyone is interested.

Hope you are doing well!

Tom"

Get in Some Orchard Time!



Remember the work we did pruning our Community Orchard last January? It is paying off in spades now! My soon-to-be-five grandson, Seth, loved helping haul pruned branches to the pile in January, so my husband, Bernie, and I decided he should get to enjoy some of the fruits of his labor. We made a family outing to the orchard. Seth loved sampling peaches and nectarines right off the trees and loved running through the "forest." My mother went along, too, and enjoyed getting back to her roots (a Fresno fruit picker!) but she was really glad she didn't have to earn a living that way any longer! I spent some time thinning apples and plums. Then we went home and ate sliced peaches and nectarines over low carb pecan ice cream. A summer afternoon doesn't get much better than that.

Joe Sabol says: "There is an abundance of very ripe fruit at the orchard. People need to pick a bag full from the ripe trees and save the branches from breaking!!!!!! More fruit will be ripe next week...and more the next. It is a good year for that little orchard. (Normally, we ask that people only take a few fruits so that everyone can get a taste, but there is so much fruit this year that it is rotting on the branches, so we are relaxing that rule.) Take notes so you know what varieties to purchase for your back yard next January. Remember, this is your orchard so, while you pick, you need to do some weeding or raking or general maintenance.

I put the barrel of tools up against the far fence so people can use the tools to do the weeding and maintenance instead of bringing their own. (Tools were purchased with the donation from Clifford Chapman.)

Please chop the weeds under ONE tree, rake them away. Toss all bird damaged or dropped fruit over the fence (Stenner Creek Fence). Check both lemon gates to be sure no deer can get back into our orchard!!! Hand water (use the green hose) all the new trees while you pick the fruit."

So, grab a kid—a friend—a neighbor—and head out to the orchard! Eat some fruit, do some weeding, take some fruit home! Eat it with ice cream! You'll have a great day!

Summer Pruning

We all know what pruning a dormant fruit tree does to help grow a strong tree with optimal fruit. But what is summer pruning for? Should you try it? Should you care?

According to new chapter member, Thomas Ogren, in an article he wrote for the online publication, *emilycompost*, summer pruning, or pinching, as he prefers to call it, is the best way to keep your deciduous fruit trees at a manageable height.

As Tom says: "Like most people who grow deciduous fruit trees (apples, peaches, plums, cherries, apricots, etc.), I used to do lots of serious heavy pruning every winter...despite my best intentions and hours of work spent pruning, each season the trees still seemed to be a bit taller than the year before.

A few years ago I made a major switch and started doing almost exclusively summer pruning, pinching really. Every few weeks from mid-spring on, whenever I noticed a new branch growing rapidly, I pinched off the end of it. If you had to use a pair of pruning shears to do this, we'd call it a "hard pinch," but what I started doing was a "soft pinch." I merely pinched off, with my fingers and thumbnail, the last inch or two of each fast growing branch.

The more often you pinch the more bud breaks you get and the bushier your tree becomes. I have found with very vigorous branches that in a season of growth, I may have to pinch the same branch three or four times, but it seems well worth the effort. The end result of all this tip pinching is a shorter, more compact fruit tree...and one that won't need much pruning in winter. The tree benefits too, since it no longer has to pour all that energy into re-growing all that wood each spring. This same energy can then be converted into producing a larger crop of fruit.

Dormant pruning would still be used to remove any dead wood, criss-crossing branches, and to shape the tree. If there is a large branch that needs removing, the time to do

that is always in the dormant season. One word here about dormant pruning of fruit trees: in mild winter USDA zones 8-10 it is best to do your dormant pruning just after Christmas." (For more information on summer pruning, visit the *emilycompost* website at: www.emilycompost.com/summer_pruning_pinch_an_inch.htm).

Our good friend (and another Tom!), Tom Spellman, of the Dave Wilson Nursery has given us several winter pruning lessons. Tom maintains that, since most of us want backyard orchards, not to grow trees commercially, it is very important to keep those trees at a manageable height.

As the Dave Wilson website says: "There are several reasons why summer pruning is the easiest way to keep fruit trees small. Reducing the canopy by pruning in summer reduces photosynthesis (food manufacture), thereby reducing the capacity for new growth. Summer pruning also reduces the total amount of food materials and energy available to be stored in the root system in late summer and fall. This controls vigor the following spring, since spring growth is supported primarily by stored foods and energy. And, obviously, pruning is easier (and more likely to get done) in nice weather than in winter."

So get out there! The weather is perfect for shaping up and to pinch an inch (or two)!

Pacific Beach High School Plants a Memorial Apple Tree



We donated a one-year old Fuji Apple Tree to the Pacific Beach High School at the conclusion of our apple grafting activity with them. Teacher, Terry Jacobson, and her students decided to plant that tree at the school in memory of one of their students who had died. The informal, but heartwarming ceremony was held on Friday, May 25, and was attended by several of our grafting team members. What a wonderful tribute—one that will keep growing and growing! Thank you grafting team for inspiring

these young people! (Photo was taken by Joe Sabol.)

Announcements

Welcome New Members: Vince & Verna Rubatzky, Wynette Winkler, Lynne Harkins, Paul Ogren, Thomas Ogren, Susan Tye, and Jerome White.

Huge Thank You: Our long-time chapter co-chair, Art DeKleine, had a serious heart attack on May 27 which resulted in his undergoing a triple by-pass on Monday, May 28 (and a subsequent repair a few days later). He is now doing fine and he and his wife, Gloria, sincerely thank all those who sent him good thoughts, prayers, and get well cards. Art and his brother still run the family farm back in Michigan and Art usually heads back there to help with the cherry harvest in early June. This year, there was no cherry crop—it froze—so at least all that work didn't fall on Art's brother. Is that a cloud with a silver lining?

In Memory: Long-time chapter member and friend, Bill Furtick, passed away on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara. Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife, Anne. A memorial service was held on Saturday, June 9 at the Congregational Church in San Luis Obispo. Our chapter plans to plant a memorial tree for Bill in our community orchard at a time to be announced.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI): This is the best thing since the Saturday afternoon Matinee. It is continuing education from Cal Poly but better! No tests, no homework and almost all the classes are in San Luis Obispo County.

The teachers are all volunteer, all students must be 50 years of age or older and wanting to learn something exciting! The classes are from 1 1/2 hours to several sessions, they vary. To mention a few classes: History, Finance, Field trips, Lunch trips, and so many others you need to go to www.osher.calpoly.edu to look and see and read what is available presently.

Summer session is going now and August 19 is the Social event that is held at the beginning of the fall quarter to acquaint the prospective students to the new classes that will be offered. In order to go to this Social you must call in to sign up and get the information on time and place at 805-756-2053 or toll free 866 225-7659, another way is osher@calpoly.edu and send an email.

This commercial has been brought to you by *Pet and Marv Daniels* at 773-9311. If you have any questions please call or e-mail marvnpet@aol.com.

Cal Poly U-Picks: I'm pleased to let CRFG members know that U-picks are planned for every Saturday and some weekdays throughout the summer (U-pick hotline: 756-2224). For more information contact:

Dr. Lauren Garner

Horticulture and Crop Science Department California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

805-756-2479 (office)

805-756-6504 (fax)

The Face behind the Mask: Rhonda Underwood, past secretary of our chapter, has taped a short segment on her passion for collecting masks for the television program, *Secret Lives of Women*. It will air on Tuesday, July 3 at 7:00 pm on the WE channel. Rhonda's husband, Doug Allen, and grand-daughter, Grace, will also be featured briefly.

Bird Net by the Bale: Joe Sabol has placed an order for two bales of bird netting—in two qualities and price ranges. Hopefully, it will have arrived in time for the July meeting at Righetti Ranch. Come and buy!

Join the Parent Organization: Many of our chapter members are also members of the Parent association and, for those of you who aren't, perhaps you **should** consider joining. With parent organization membership you receive a wonderful color magazine, *The Fruit Gardener*, filled with great articles on fruit growing, news, many chapter activities and contacts. Dues are **\$30 annually** or **3 years for \$87**. Membership applications are available from **Joe Sabol**. Call him at **544-1056** if you can't find him at a meeting.

Calendar of Meetings – 2007

Meetings are held the **second Saturday** of the month and **begin at 1:30 PM** unless otherwise indicated. Bring a friend, car pool, and, for most meetings, **bring a chair** for all in your party. Pet Daniels suggests we **bring our own bottled water** to drink, too. What fun it is to be a member of CRFG!

July 14—Righetti Avocado Ranch—San Luis Obispo: A serendipitous visit to the 200 acre Righetti family avocado ranch awaits us! Craig Righetti will discuss avocados – propagation, growing, marketing, and orchard maintenance. Don't be surprised if he shows us some of his other citrus, fruit, and nut trees. If you missed the June C&M Nursery tour, now is your chance to learn about avocados. **Refreshments team is the S to Z group.**

Directions to the Righetti Ranch:

From San Luis Obispo and points north: Exit one of the San Luis Obispo exits and proceed to the San Luis Obispo Airport on Broad Street. Tank Farm Rd and Broad St is a major intersection north of the Airport. Take Tank Farm Rd east. Tank Farm Rd becomes Orcutt Rd as one drives south-east. Continue south on Orcutt Rd for about 2 miles to a blinking red light (Righetti Rd). Turn left on Righetti Rd and travel north-east 1.3 miles (past Coyote Canyon Rd), over a gravel section, to the end of the road.

From Pismo Beach and points south: Take Price Canyon Road north-east to Edna Valley Road (Highway 227). Turn left toward San Luis Obispo. At Biddle Ranch Road, turn right and travel about ½ miles to Orcutt Rd. (If you cross the railroad track or pass the airport, you have gone too far!) At Orcutt Road turn left and travel ½ miles to a blinking red light (Righetti Rd). Turn left on Righetti Road and travel north-east 1.3 miles (past Coyote Canyon Rd), over a gravel section, to the end of the road.

August 7-12—Festival of Fruit—San Diego: No local meeting.

September 8—Jack Creek Farms—Near Cambria: The Barlogio family orchard and roadside stand is located on Highway 46 between Paso and Cambria on the inland side of the mountain. They grow many fruits and vegetables. We can expect to see many summer and fall crops: beans, veggies, tomatoes (possibly presenting up to 40 heirloom varieties), squash, gourds, and heirloom pumpkins (possibly presenting up to 100 varieties). (More detailed directions will follow.) **Refreshment team is the A - G group.**

October 13—Clearwater Color Nursery—San Luis Obispo: Elliott Paulson will host a joint greenhouse meeting with local FFA high school students. He was very enthusiastic about helping high school students develop an interest in greenhouses. He has lots to show us and tell us about propagating and growing plants. He also has some constructive opinions about marketing. This location is an amazing color nursery with bedding plants and perennials all over the property!

Art envisions having each high school chapter present a 15 min. discussion about a feasible project that they might pursue in their greenhouse. Elliott would follow this with a discussion about his operation and a tour of the facilities. **Refreshment team is the H - R group.**

Central Coast Chapter CRFG Contact Information: **Bob Tullock**, co-chair, tullock@tcsn.net or 238-2868; **Larry Hollis**, co-chair, L_Hollis@hotmail.com; **Art DeKleine**, program chair, adeklein@calpoly.edu or 543-9455; **Joe Sabol**, publicity, jsabol@calpoly.edu or 544-1056; **Dick Pottratz**, treasurer, pottratz@sbcglobal.net; or **Lennette Horton**, newsletter editor, handynana@gmail.com or 474-6501.