

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
Volume 8 • Issue 5 • May 2005



2005--The Year of the Apple

Apple

Rosaceae—Malus

Could You Be the Next Granny Smith?



Maria Ann Sherwood Smith, AKA Granny Smith, was born in England in 1799, but moved to New South Wales in Australia with her husband and family in 1838. The area where they settled was famous for its orchards so the Smiths planted orchards, too. By 1868, Maria was showing people a very special tree that grew near a creek on her property. The apples were large, green, sweet-tart, firm and excellent keepers. She explained that the seedling had developed from the remains of some French crab apples grown in Tasmania. The Granny Smith apple is now recognized as a fixed mutation or 'sport'.

We all know that to keep an apple tree true to variety, we must graft a scion from the tree we desire propagating onto rootstock. But—if you want to grow a NEW variety of apple then you must plant a seed! Seeds have a combination of chromosomes contributed from the tree which had the blossom (female) and the tree which supplied the pollen (male). Apple seeds will always produce apple trees, but, by the very nature of their development, they will be different from either the male parent or the female parent—just like children are different from either of their parents, while showing certain characteristics of both. If you are lucky, you may create a tree better than the parents. However, the odds of a seed producing a better variety are very low--less than 1 in 10,000--so the strategy is to plant many seeds and then select the most promising of the seedlings. Of course, choosing the seedling this way just deals with tree vigor. It will take you another 5 to 8 years to assess the quality of the fruit! Thus, the birth of a new variety is not easy. Many varieties, such as the Granny Smith, were discovered as chance seedlings, requiring no human intervention or patience.

First, identify trees with characteristics you wish to combine. Then, to get the proper pollen to pollinate the proper tree, you must pull all the petals from the blossom. Cover the blossom with cheese cloth to keep insects (the main pollinators) from getting another, undesirable pollen to the blossom. Use a small paint brush to stroke across the blossoms of the pollinating variety to collect the pollen and then rub the pollinated paint brush over the de-petaled apple blossom under the cheese cloth. This should



ensure that the proper pollen is the **only** pollen getting to the blossom. You know who the mother is; the trick is to guarantee you know who the father is also!

Once your “fertilized” fruit has ripened, collect the seeds and plant them. Here is one way to do that. Prepare a garden-soil plot in the fall as you would for planting any other type of seeds. Make a furrow that is no more than 1-2 times deeper than the longest dimension of the seed. Cover the seeds with a light covering of soil and add an inch or two of sand over the row. The sand will prevent crusting of the soil which inhibits germination. In March or April, watch the seeded area closely for newly germinated seedlings.

When the plants are 6 to 8 inches tall, apply 1 to 2 tablespoons of urea along each 12 inches of row in a band on one side of the seedlings. Keep the fertilizer about 3 inches away from the plants. Water them every 10 to 12 days, or more often if you live in a windy area.

To transplant the seedling, cut the taproot by pushing a spade under each plant. The spade should be pushed into the soil to cut the taproot about 5-6 inches below the surface. Your new apple seedlings should be allowed to grow through to July or August of the second year before any budding is done.

Your apple development goals will probably be much different than those of commercial ventures. You probably want something that just tastes good. Or you might be searching for something else entirely, as was **Henry David Thoreau** when he wrote:

*Nor is it every apple I desire,
Nor that which pleases every palate best;
'T is not the lasting Deuxan I require,
Nor yet the red-cheeked Greening I request,
Nor that which first beshrewed the name of wife,
Nor that whose beauty caused the golden strife:
No, no! Bring me an apple from the tree of life!*

Granny Smith Apple Pecan Cake

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 cups finely chopped Granny Smith apples

PREPARATION:

In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, brown sugar and butter. Blend with an electric hand-held mixer at low speed until crumbly. Stir in nuts. Press 2 3/4 cups of this mixture into a 9 X 13-inch baking pan lined with waxed paper or parchment paper. To remaining mixture, add cinnamon, baking soda, sour cream, vanilla and egg. Blend well. Stir in apples. Spread evenly over base. Bake at 350° 35 to 40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

April Meeting

Following are the minutes taken by our secretary, Rhonda Underwood, for the meeting held on April 9 at Camp Sticky Monkey in Los Osos. (We are sure glad you are able to attend the meetings again, Rhonda!)



The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. by Bob Tullock. No Secretary report was available. Dick Pottratz gave the Treasurer's report: we're solidly solvent, the bills are paid and we have \$5,006 in the bank.

Bob discussed the possibility of getting a bus for the next CRFG meeting. Anyone interested should see Janet to

sign up. A \$20 deposit per person will hold a seat until the final decision is made about reserving the bus.

We've ordered more bird netting, which is due in May, at the cost of 0.50 / ft.

Bob talked about the successful season of apple grafting, and shared a photo taken at the school in Bradley. Joe thanked the more than 30 volunteers that helped with the project.

Paul Rhys discussed the giant pumpkin seeds he's offering from his genetics project. He has information on growing pumpkins, and is offering each person 4 pumpkin seeds. See Paul after the meeting.

Patty reminded us about the 4th annual Greenhouse Grower's tour on April 23 from 9 am to 3 pm. See Patty for details and flyer.

Jerie Garbutt gave us a brief overview of Camp Sticky Monkey, then introduced our guest speaker Ted Peterson, owner of Earth-Wise, Inc. Bob gave Ted a CRFG hat just before the presentation.

Ted gave an excellent lecture on the business of making compost tea. He began with how he started in the business, then how the business branched out to bioremediation. He explained that he uses compost derived from native plants to make the compost tea he uses to reinvigorate the soil. Compost tea controls disease through out-competition of resources in soil; bad organisms are replaced with healthy ones via the compost tea biology. Compost tea is not fertilizer, but is biology found in compost, only magnified.

He discussed topics such as treating root problems, using microrhiza for fruit trees, adding fungi to compost piles, animal waste in compost, and the problems with using a chemical mentality for fertilizing plants.

He talked about the best ingredients and quantities to make a standard compost tea formula (with native biology), the shelf life,

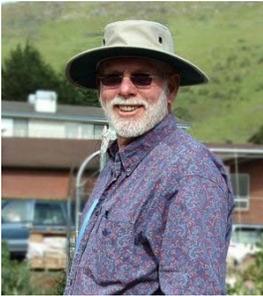


temperature, pH, and the optimum moisture content. He passed around a sample of the compost for us to see and touch. He said that the compost tea is as good as the compost you create. For further information, he suggested reading an excellent book called “Field Guide to On-Farm Composting.”

He had an interesting and informative Q&A session at the end of the lecture.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:55 pm.

Goodwill Ambassadors Encourage New Members!



Marv Daniels retired from PG&E on April 1st and since then he has been an even **more ready** volunteer to promote CRFG around the area. Marv, his wife, Pet, Norm Beard, and several others of our members staffed booths first at the Santa Maria Home Show and then at the Morro Bay 19th Annual Garden Show & Tour where at least four new members to our local group were added, as well as at least two who joined the parent organization. Perhaps “Goodwill Ambassador” isn’t an official title, but it should be! All of us who are so enthusiastic about CRFG certainly are spreading goodwill and encouraging others to join us in the FUN! (See how happy Marv looks!)

Ask an Expert

Question: I want to grow my apples organically, but the codling moths are driving me to distraction! Got any good ideas for control of these pests? *Tom Muran*

Answer: Again, Tom, I’m no expert, but I did find a wealth of information out there about how to at least keep codling moth damage on your apple crop at a manageable level. If it is any consolation to you (and I know it isn’t!) in our area codling moths do more damage to apple crops than any other pest or disease. Here are a few ideas that may work for you.

Spray **Dipel 86** for first-generation codling moth larva approximately two weeks after petal fall. Repeat every 3 to 5 days at twilight over a two-week period. (**Dipel 86**, unlike many chemical insecticides, may be used anytime a specific caterpillar appears. Treated vegetables and fruits may be picked, washed and consumed anytime after spraying. People and animals can return to the treated area immediately after the spray has dried. The active ingredient in Dipel, *Bacillus Thuringiensis v. Kurstaki*, has been proven to selectively affect only leaf eating caterpillars.)

In July spread a band of sticky Tanglefoot around the trunks of trees to trap the caterpillars. A garlic spray can be useful against the codling moth and the natural sulfur in garlic doubles as a fungicide. Make a trap for the ones that get away: Mix together 4 1/2 cups of water, 1/2 cup of honey, 1/2 cup of molasses and 1 tablespoon of yeast. Put this into an empty plastic milk jug in which you cut an entrance hole near the top. Run some rope through the handle and hang in the tree. Use two traps per mature tree. Keep the traps up for 2 months and empty weekly. Another bait mixture you can use is sassafras oil and glacial acetic acid.



In the fall, practice good sanitation and clean up any fallen fruit and leaves—this is very important! Codling moths over-winter in the pupa stage and emerge in the spring when local temperatures are right.

Codling moths don't fly very far, so trapping the adult male moth by attracting him to pheromone traps before he has a chance to mate with a female is another quite effective way to protect your fruit crop. The traps only last a month, though, and need to be replaced. They are rather pricey, though, at about \$15 each and you need one per tree in your orchard.

Snippets from Doris Hentzgen's Poetry

Submitted by Susan Atlee

"Orchards so enormous--that lie in the
Enchanting valley of such beauty!"

"Beauty of moonlight on the groves
of the shadows of the night..."

"...to walk in the vineyards of grapes
of the lovely valley
so precious and protected for centuries..."

From "Beauty of Vineyards...of France"



(Photo of ripe Syrah grapes in Horton's Rim Rock Vineyard –okay, so it's not France!)

Orchard Update

We are planning a couple of hours work at the CRFG Orchard located at Cal Poly. May 28, 8:30 AM

Things that need to be done are:

1. General clean up. A little more spring pruning needed.
2. Grass and weeds need to be removed from perimeter fences and other locations, some weeds were sprayed but there are still quite a lot of weeds that were skipped.
3. Move limbs to rear gates for shredding.
4. Thinning of the fruit, especially on those poor little trees that got sprayed late and are suffering.
5. Spread mulch.
6. Eat and socialize, not necessarily in that order.

7. Drink water.

It was beautiful in the orchard last month. We did get a lot done but there is still plenty to do. Thanks to those people that helped!

Tools needed will be rake, shovel, weed eater, pruner, pitchfork, wheelbarrow, cookies <g> and willing people!

Pet and Marv Daniels

Stay Safe Out There

Safety was a big issue at the high school grafting classes, and rightly so. During those lessons, young, inexperienced people were using very sharp knives. Without specific direction before the class begins, or constant supervision by volunteers during the process who are really aware of the potential for injury, we'd probably have to shut the program down because of all the blood!

If you volunteered during one of those classes, you know how aware of safety everyone involved is. But how safe are **you** when you are working in your yard, orchard, vineyard, or on your farm? Has your work become such a routine that you don't give a thought to what you are doing or to the proper use of the tools and equipment you are employing?

Inattention to the task, especially when operating equipment, is the leading cause of agriculturally related accidents. Taking a shortcut or improperly using a tool for something other than for what it was intended are the second greatest causes for death or injury in this area.

Take a moment before beginning any work in your garden or orchard review what you plan to do and to make sure you have everything at hand to finish the job. Be sure any equipment is properly maintained. Wear safety goggles, gloves, ear plugs, or face masks if the application applies—don't just "make do." Especially, keep children away from any equipment that they are too young to operate. Remember, most accidents are preventable! Don't let yourself become an accident statistic!

Announcements

Welcome New Chapter Members: Michael Keeling, Gary Fourer, Paul Nash, Kathy Longacre, Ted & Barbara Tucker, Carol Hopper, and Robert Asbell.

Bird Netting: Our chapter has placed a large order (half-a-mile!) for fantastic green bird net. It should arrive in May and be for sale during the May meeting at the bargain price of 50 cents a running foot. It is 16' 4" wide excellent quality net with a 10-year warranty!! You may purchase any length you want as we will "cut to order." Several of our members are constructing permanent structures to hold the net over their trees.

Web Site: Check our site at: www.crfc-central.org to see what our web-master, Art DeKleine and his assistants, John and Choung Crowe and Pet and Marv Daniels are doing to keep us all informed.

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 – 2005

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. What fun it is to be a member of CRFG!

May 14: Kern County --All-Day Trip to the Southern San Joaquin Valley by bus (call Co-Chairman Bob Tullock, at 238-2868 ASAP for latest information on seat availability) or in your own vehicle. At our May CRFG Meeting, we will visit two diversified fruit growers, Steve Murray in Arvin and Walter Thoma in Porterville. Steve has over 150 varieties of fruit trees and should have more than a dozen varieties of **cherries** ripe for our tasting in May! He and his family have an upscale fruit stand with a picnic area where we will be eating our lunch. **(Don't forget, bring your own lunch!)** After lunch we will go to Walter and Brenda's home to see his fantastic greenhouses and fully netted fruit trees. His orchard includes many trees that are espaliered and are multiple variety trees! He has over 100 varieties of apples under the bird net! Walter loves to grow nearly all of his own food, is an excellent grafter, and is an active member of his local CRFG Chapter. The **chartered bus** for this trip **leaves SLO at 6:55 a.m. from the Cal Poly Crops Unit**. The bus will also stop in Paso Robles (OSH parking lot) to pick up North County participants. Arrival back in SLO will be around 6 p.m.

If you are taking your own transportation, here is how to get to the meeting sites:

Directions to Steve Murray's Family Farm— Drive to Bakersfield and take Highway 58 to the east, towards Tehachapi. As you enter the "foothills" take Exit 127, General Beale. Turn left; go under freeway to Murray Farms Fruit Stand. Be there at **9:30 a.m.** to start the tour.

Directions to Walter and Brenda Thoma's Home and Orchard— From the Murray Farm, drive west, back to Bakersfield on Highway 58 which becomes Highway 99 north. Go north on 99 about 4.3 miles, take Highway 65 exit and go to Porterville (about 43 miles). Look for Home Depot at Highway 190, use their restrooms and then take Highway 190 and go east, towards Springville, 9.4 miles. Turn right on Success Valley Road and go 1.1 miles to 31497 Success Valley Drive. Drive down his driveway to parking areas. Meet Walter and Brenda at 1:15 p.m. to start the tour.

June 11—Setting up a Drip Irrigation System—Farm Supply—SLO—1:30 P.M. — Mr. Joe Decker, Farm Supply, will be our speaker and host. Meeting will be at the new Farm Supply store on Tank Farm Road. **All in attendance will receive a very special coupon from Joe Decker for a discount on irrigation and drip supplies and equipment!** Directions will follow later. Thanks to Jerie Garbutt for suggesting this program! **Refreshments: S - Z please.**

July 9—The Luffa Farm—Nipomo—1:30 P.M.— We will visit the greenhouses and herb gardens of this fascinating "fruit" farm at 1457 Willow Rd. in Nipomo. Thanks to Carol Scott for setting up this program! **Refreshments: A - G please.**

Central Coast Chapter CRFG Contact Information: Art DeKleine, co-chair, adeklein@calpoly.edu or 543-9455; Bob Tullock, co-chair, tullock@tcsn.net or 674-4214; Joe Sabol, program chair, jsabol@calpoly.edu or 544-1056; Dick Pottratz, treasurer, pottratz@sbcglobal.net; or Lennette Horton, newsletter editor, handynana@hortons.us or 474-6501.