

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
Volume 8 • Issue 10 • November 2005



2005 – The Year of the Apple

Malay Apple

A.k.a. Mountain Apple

Syzygium malaccense



Like the “apple” featured last month, this “apple” is also from the family *Myrtaceae*. It is such a beautiful tree, that even if it didn’t have edible fruit, it would be worth growing. The fruit is edible—it is mostly eaten raw—although the flavor is mild and considered “insipid” by some. The flowers are really lovely, almost magenta in color, and they bloom profusely along the upper trunk and along leafless portions of mature branches in short-stalked clusters of 2 to 8 blossoms. The skin of the fruit is waxy red and the form is oblong to pear-shaped. (I think it looks like a stretched out fig!) The glossy leaves are evergreen.

It is considered a native to Malaysia (hence the name Malay Apple!), but it has widely naturalized in other parts of the tropics, taken from its native habitat by pioneers and explorers and spread wherever the climate was warm enough and moist enough (needs about 60” of rain per year) for the trees to thrive. The Polynesians brought the fruit with them when they migrated to Hawaii where the wood was especially popular for their carved idols. When the missionaries arrived in the Hawaiian Islands, according to early records, the only fruits available were bananas, coconuts, and “mountain apples”. The mountain apple was a fruit sacred to the Hawaiian volcano goddess, Pele. Captain Bligh, of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame, took several specimens from the islands of Timor and Tahiti to Jamaica in 1793 where it naturalized.

Malay apple seeds sprout easily and often the ground beneath a wild tree is covered with seedlings in various stages. It is also one of the first seeds to sprout in a lava flow. Again, though, the best trees come from seedlings that have been budded. Air-layering has been successful and cuttings have been rooted in sand in Hawaii. The fruit ripens in about sixty days from flowering. It is grown commercially in many tropical areas, but it must be hand-picked and carefully packed so it doesn’t bruise. It is not widely available to purchase outside of producing countries. (When we lived on Maui, I enjoyed buying “mountain apples” at the local farmer’s market. I didn’t know anything about them, except that they were pretty and different, so I added them to salads along with star fruit. We ate lots of what my family called “interesting” salads back then!)



The **bad news** about this lovely tree is that it will only grow in California or Florida under “special circumstances”, according to Julia Morton in her book, *Fruits of Warm Climates*. That means it isn’t likely you will find one growing locally since the trees don’t enjoy lower elevations, especially sea level! Even Jack Swords doesn’t have one thriving in his tropical haven in Nipomo! You, like Jack, will probably have to grow a “cousin” to the Malay apple, *Syzygium cumini*, or Java plum. It is easier to grow in our area and it is an attractive tree that can stand some frost once it is established. It **will** grow at sea level. So why didn’t I report on it? ‘Cause it’s not an **apple**, it’s a **plum!**

October Meeting



Our regular monthly meeting for October was held on October 8 at Chris Chaney’s Protea Farm. Nearly 100 *passionately* enthusiastic potential Proteas growers attended the meeting and, according to reports, they didn’t want to leave! (Note the “passionate” enthusiasts in the photo on the left taken by Joe Sabol.)

Following are the minutes of the meeting taken by **Rhonda Underwood**, our chapter secretary.

The meeting was brought to order at 1:40 pm by Art DeKleine. There were approximately 94 people in attendance. Art thanked

everyone that brought snacks, and announced that Jaleah Brynn is looking for someone to help make coffee for the meetings.

Art thanked Sandra Pirghaibi and Lennette Horton for putting together the scrapbook with photos.

He also noted that Pet Daniels and Joe Sabol are leading the team for next year’s Festival of Fruit. Planning meetings are every third Tuesday of the month from 5 to 8 pm at the Prime Outlets in Pismo. Everyone is invited. We need to form committees to prepare for the event, which is scheduled for September of 2006. See Pet if anyone is interested in hosting a backyard tour. There will also be many other volunteer jobs as planning continues. We’ll need a lot of help when we host next year’s Festival of Fruit, as we are expecting around 400 visitors.

Mr. Paul Janetski was presented a blue ribbon for the ugliest pumpkin.

Our chapter was presented with a 2005 Service Award, thanks to a letter Sandra Pirghaibi submitted.

Dick Pottratz gave the treasurer’s report. He said “we’re solid”.

Joe has a little bird net left if anyone is interested in purchasing.

Mary Andrews is looking for anyone ordering blueberry plants, as she wants to add her order to the list.

Norm Beard talked a little bit about Azomite, a fertilizer from Utah made from volcanic rocks. It contains lots of minerals, and is good to put around fruit trees. See Norm if anyone is interested.

Also, Norm has information if anyone is interested in representing the local CRFG chapter at the Santa Maria Home Show.

If anyone is interested in ordering Poinsettias, see Mary Walcher. They're ready for bulk shipment.

Patty brought San Miguel dry land watermelons for those interested in trying some.

If anyone is growing pumpkins for the Tank Farm pumpkin contest, see Joe for more information.

Jenny Weaver and Carol Scott introduced our host Chris Chaney, and gave a very brief bio. Carol then presented him with the CRFG hat.

Chris gave a very informative discussion on the evolution of the business, the microclimate on his property in Nipomo, and growing Proteas in general. He hosted a great question and answer session for everyone interested in growing Proteas.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 for the nursery tour.

What is a Protea?

If you missed the meeting on October 8 (as I did), you may well be wondering what a Protea is. I do know what they are (another result of horticultural knowledge picked up when we lived on Maui), but I sure didn't know everything about them. So, I went to the California Protea Growers website. Here, for the benefit of those who missed Chris Chaney's interesting and informative tour are some facts.

"The Proteaceae are an ancient family, probably one of the oldest groups of flowering plants. Scientific probes into the early history of plant life have shown that the ancestors of today's Protea were present 300 million years ago. Proteaceae are best represented in South Africa along the south and south western coastal mountain ranges. The other sub-family is located along the south and south western coastal areas of Australia. No genus is naturally common to both South Africa and Australia. There are some 329 known species of Protea in South Africa. The South African species consist of Protea, Leucadendron and Leucospermum for the most part, while the Australian species is the Banksia. In these areas the flowers are mostly harvested in the wild, though in later years many flower plantations have sprung up for the commercial growing of the flowers. Not all species are commercially viable for one reason or the other." (The above photo was taken by Ron Blakey at Chris Chaney's Protea Farm.)



"These beautiful flowers were first grown in the United States in San Diego North County, as well as some ranches in the Santa Barbara area about forty years ago. They were later grown in Hawaii. The climate and soil in these places most nearly duplicates their natural habitat. Most growers in this area are small farmers with 5 acres or less, there are also several large ranches. They are shipped from here all over the United States, Japan and Europe.

Proteas can be grown in climate zones as defined in Sunset Garden Book 21, 22 and 23 are generally acceptable except for cold spots in low lying areas. For zones 19, 20 and 21 plant on high ground only. Protea can survive for two (2) hours down to 28 degrees F. with minor new leaf damage. Ideally Proteas thrive in well-drained soil such as decomposed granite, in full sun with good air circulation. Do

not plant them in areas, which have been fertilized with phosphorous or old grove areas contaminated with Phytophthora Cinnamoni. Generally speaking, avoid planting them with other garden flowers, which need continuous damp soil and phosphorous bearing fertilizers. Virgin soil with native brush in place is ideal. Generally it is best to plant in the fall and winter from November through February.

Obtain plants in one (1) gallon cans, dig a hole three (3) times the can diameter and three (3) times the depth. Space the Protea plants about six (6) feet apart, Banksias six (6) to ten (10) feet apart depending on the mature size of the plant. Avoid holes with rock bottoms, drainage is vital. Fill the hole with water and let it soak in. Back fill the hole raking in any rotted vegetable matter around the hole and place the plant with the original soil level even or a little above the surrounding soil level. Tamp the soil down with your hand and add more water to the area around the plant.

Proteas like to have wet-dry cycles so set them up with a drip system and water them once a week with approximately one (1) gallon of water each week during cool months and more during the hot, summer months. One (1) dripper about two (2) inches from the stem will be adequate until the plants mature, then add a dripper on each side about six (6) inches from the stem and remove the original dripper. One (1) gallon per hour drippers are generally used.

It is best not to fertilize Proteas as they have evolved in poor nutrient areas. DO NOT apply any fertilizer with phosphorous or ammonium nitrate type fertilizer. If you feel a vital need to fertilize, use a small amount of ammonium sulphate dissolved in water."

Carol's Great Apple Cake

Another thing those of us who didn't attend the last meeting missed was a taste of Carol Scott's delicious apple cake. By request of those who **did** taste it and wanted more, Carol graciously shared her recipe.

"This is an old favorite; I have made this recipe for 30 years!"

ANNIE'S FRESH APPLE CAKE

4 cups chopped fresh apples (do not chop too fine)

2 cups sugar

MIX THE ABOVE THOROUGHLY & ADD

1/2 cup oil

1 cup nuts, chopped

2 eggs, well beaten

2 tsp. vanilla

MIX THESE DRY INGREDIENTS & ADD TO ABOVE

2 1/4 cups flour

2 tsp baking soda

2 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp salt

Pour into greased 9x13x2 inch pan and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour, or until it shrinks from edges of pan. Lower the temperature to 325 degrees if you are baking this in a glass pan.

ENJOY!

(I got my mom to make this at our house. She added a fresh lemon glaze while the cake was still warm. It was yummy!)

The Nametag Fairy



Gloria DeKleine deserves a big gold star. At the last meeting, she took charge of the mess of name tags and really cleaned them up. She promised Joe Sabol that he would never have to take them home to **his** messy garage ever again! (That's Gloria getting down to the nitty-gritty in the photo on the right, taken by Joe Sabol.) Thank you, Gloria!

How to Cover a Fruit Tree with Bird Net and Stay Married

by Joe and Jill Sabol

1. Buy only semi-dwarf trees and keep them under 10 or 12 feet in height.
2. Buy only the quality official CRFG Green Bird Net with white stripe (white line is critical).
3. Net your trees only on non-windy days. Wind is not helpful when netting fruit trees.
4. Wear clothing that has no buttons, encourage spouse to do same.
5. Wear no hat, glasses, earrings, watch, or any jewelry, encourage spouse to do same.
6. Prune the tree before inviting spouse out to help. You need lots of pruned shoots at the 5 to 8 foot mark.
7. Lay net on the ground, fold at white line. Use a net that is far longer than you need. Bigger is better. Be neat, be ready. Spouse will be impressed.
8. Have a bucket of clothes pins ready; inform spouse where bucket is located.
9. Have two brooms (not push brooms) at hand; do not use them while spouse is present. Keep reading.
10. Have one ladder ready, do not use ladder. No need. Keep reading.
11. Invite spouse outside to help now, promise spouse that you two will cover only one tree today.
12. Starting at "complicated section" of tree, hang up net with white line at top. Talk to spouse. Starting at complicated part of tree makes all the rest go easy. If you have pruned it nicely, it will be hard to find a complicated section!
13. Hang white line on pruned branches at the 5 to 8 foot mark, drape net to ground. This gives you two layers of net hanging down from white line. Talk to spouse and listen to spouse, continue hanging net on the white line. Spouse may have several helpful suggestions.

14. Continue hanging white line around the entire perimeter of the tree. Clothes pin where needed, where you have no nice branches that have been pruned at the 5 to 8 foot level.
15. Do your best NOT to use the brooms yet. Do not use the ladder yet. Spouse is still with you, steps 1-14.
16. Send spouse back in house with genuine words of appreciation. All future steps are single individual tasks.
17. Using a ladder and a broom take outer layer of net and fold over the white line, over the top of the tree. Leave the inner layer of net hanging to the ground or close to it. Only the top layer of this folded net will go over the top of the tree.
18. Use clothes pins to clip this top layer to other segments of top layer on opposite side of tree.
19. If the net will reach the ground, attempt to pull it in tight, to circle the entire trunk of the tree and pin it there. This is called 'lollypopping' your tree. It keeps out birds, squirrels, and all sorts of critters. It also makes the fruit more difficult for humans to pick.
20. Stand back...and enjoy the beauty of a fully netted tree. Turn around and smile at the birds who are watching.

Report on 2006 Festival of Fruit

Dr. Joe Sabol, Pet Daniels, and her trusty pal Marv, had a special meeting October 14 over Belgian waffles complete with blueberries (a rare fruit) to get down to the business of selection of chairpersons for the 2006 Annual Festival that is happening from September 5-9 in San Luis Obispo at Cal Poly. Not all, but a few positions were selected and the appointments will be announced at the next Steering Committee Meeting to be held October 18 at the Pismo Prime Outlets conference room from 6-8 PM.

By the time this article appears we will know that Dawn King will be Graphic Arts Chairwoman, Sandy Ahearn will be Chairwoman in charge of Hospitality and several other leaders have been asked to head up Tours and also the Vendor's Chair. Joe and Pet are very excited to have such talented people sharing the ride to the Festival. We are predicting it will be the best, most fun, interesting, and informative Festival ever!

There are more positions to fill and we encourage you to contact us to join the team in the preparation for the 2006 Festival of the Healthy Grape, or whatever name we decide to give our Happening! Come and help us name it.

Also, if you grow something interesting in your yard or garden, would you be willing to host a tour during the Festival? Attendees at the 2005 Festival of Fruit requested more non-commercial site visits. Let's knock their socks off! Contact Pet at **773-9311** or at petmarv@aol.com or Joe at **544-1056** or at jsabol@calpoly.edu Pismo Pet, Co-chair

Grape Cuttings to Share

By Bob Tullock

As part of our Festival of Fruit next September we will be propagating many different grape varieties to have as gifts for those attending. Many of us have special grapes growing in our gardens and are willing to share with other CRFG people in other parts of CRFG land. If you have one or more special

grape varieties to share I will start collecting as soon as you do your pruning. Some of you may bring your cuttings to either the November or December meeting. I assume most will bring your cuttings to the "grafting" meeting in January. All cuttings must be properly identified for this project to be successful. Please follow the steps listed below to help us produce a viable group of starts from one or more of your favorite grapes.

Please just cut the cuttings about 10-12 inches long with the top flat and the bottom pointed. Put them in plastic bag labeled with your name and the grape variety wrapped in a moist paper towel and in the refrigerator. Each bundle should contain at least 10 and a maximum of 50 cuttings. If you have 100 cuttings of one variety, please pack them in two bundles of 50 each. I plan to "root" these cuttings in sand in one gallon pots and will schedule a "potting party" in the late spring to transplant each rooted cutting into a labeled one gallon pot for the attendee's to carry home from the meeting. Thanks. For more information you can contact me at: tullock@tcsn.net or **238-2868**

Want Chips?

Pet and Marv Daniels met the owner of this business when they worked the Santa Maria Home Show. Pet says she thinks the chips are FREE!

CALL "DAVE BROWN'S AMERICAN TREWORKS" FOR PROFESSIONAL ARBORISTS AND WOOD CHIPS.

474-8013

From SLO to Santa Maria

This company also does tree trimming, removal, stump removal, ornamental pruning, chipping, wood-splitting, construction clean-up and labor, hauling, insured, and free estimates.

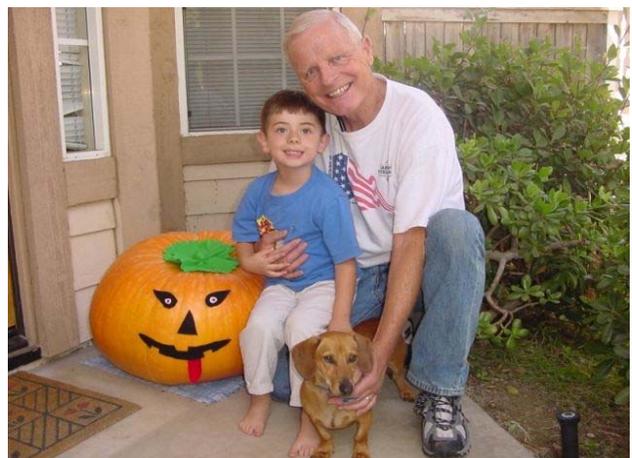
Giant Pumpkin Report

By Joe Sabol

Paul Rhys donated a lot of giant pumpkin seeds to members of our Central Coast Chapter at the April meeting. Many of us planted his giant seed and tried to grow a whopper. We found out it is pure fun and more difficult than we thought. We came to appreciate Paul and his 500 pound beauties!

We grew six plants in our neighborhood; two were planted at the home of Ernie Block and Susie Allen. One of these was fed a lot of Starbucks coffee grounds. The other one we called Decaf, and it got none. Starbucks weighed in at 210 and Decaf came in at 170. Two more seeds were planted at another neighbor's place and both of his plants produced nice pumpkins that quickly rotted. Jill and I had one plant in our yard growing one pumpkin for our grandson. We could easily lift this one so we took it to Riverside for the grandson's front porch. (See photo on right.)

The final pumpkin seed went to a neighbor, Leo. It was the last seed planted and got off to a very slow start. However, Leo took good care of it; fed it a lot of fish emulsion, and grew the winner of the neighborhood contest. He took it to the Nipomo Harvest Festival and came in third with a pumpkin weighing in at a whopping 310 pounds! Just wait until next year!



Editor's Brag

One of the advantages of being the newsletter editor is that *I* get to choose what I put into the newsletter each month. So, I am taking this opportunity to **brag**. (No, I won't brag about my grandkids, although I can certainly do that, too!)

My husband, Bernie, and I own a small vineyard in Nipomo planted in Syrah grapes. Greg Phelan, a Cal Poly graduate, manages the vineyard. The crop is sold each year to a vintner in Paso Robles named Stephan Asseo. Stephan, a native of Paris, has been making wine for 22 years, first in Burgundy, France and, since 1998 in Paso Robles. He moved from France to California as he wanted to try blending Bordeaux varietals with others, such as Syrah. In France, because of strict government controls, he couldn't do that. His idea has paid off and his wines, under the **L' *Aventure*** label have met with huge critical acclaim.

He didn't **blend** the 2003 crop from our vineyard, though. This is what Stephan said about the 2003 crop: **L' *Aventure* Rim Rock Vineyards Syrah – 2003**--This wine is the first to receive vineyard designation by L' *Aventure*. While Stephan's philosophy and winemaking lean towards blending, this 2003 Syrah from Rim Rock is an exception. Grown just 3 miles from the Pacific in Nipomo by Greg Phelan, it is a brilliant purple wine, with characteristic cool -climate aromas of white pepper, wildflowers, and soft, red fruit. Pomegranate, raspberries, and a faint hint of vanilla and spice last long in the mouth. Classic and elegant, this is a wine for many different foods. Rim Rock Syrah will be available to wine club members only. (\$45/bottle)

Lost Chair

Jenny Weaver says: A very nice, blue folding chair was left at Chris Chaney's. It has 2 cup holders and a stuff sack. No name or phone number on it. I've always wanted one of those!!

I have it, so the owner can email me or call me at 473-3616.

(Just a reminder, put your name and phone number on items you bring to meetings.)

Announcements

Welcome to Our Chapter: Peter Jankay, Esther Rigoni, Elfrieda Blond, Dan Mouran, Don Jeung, Nancy Lehman, Evelyn Ruehr, and Jeremy Heib.

Web Site: Check our site at: www.crfq-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.

University of California Lindcove Research & Extension Center Citrus Tasting: You are invited to attend a Citrus Fruit Tasting and Display Day for Growers and Homeowners. December 14th will be the Grower's Fruit Display Day and December 17th will be the Homeowner's Fruit Display Day. Both events will begin at 9:00 am and go until noon and there will be no formal presentations, so you may

arrive anytime between those hours to taste over 100 varieties of citrus fruit. The facility is located at 22963 Carson Avenue (which is the corner of Road 228 and Ave 315), Exeter, CA Phone (559) 592-2408 for further information or directions to the event.

Return of the Dave Wilson Fruit Tasting Event: Mark your calendars now for **Saturday, August 12, 2006** when Dave Wilson Fruit Tasting will return to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. This has been a **wildly** popular event that we weren't able to host this year. (Yes, I **do** mean "wildly". Have you ever seen fruit enthusiasts high on fructose?) Note that this is less than one month before we host the Festival of Fruit. **Your** assistance is not only requested, it is **NEEDED!**

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. Pet Daniels suggests we bring our own bottled water to drink, too. What fun it is to be a member of CRFG!

November 12—Gene Carl's Trout Farm and New Zealand Flax Farm—Nipomo: Gene loves his 20,000 trout, but he donates them to Lopez Lake! He has a fascinating system of raising trout in Nipomo! Gene worked with avocado growers in Southern California, and with two major avocado cooperatives—Calvo and Cal Fame. After moving to Nipomo, he started the Lone Pine Wholesale Nursery. Thanks to Jaleah Brynn for suggesting this location! **Please bring refreshments A to G.**

Directions to the trout farm at **652 N. Thompson Rd.**, Nipomo CA

From the North on 101: Exit on Thompson Road and go South on Thompson. Turn left off Thompson onto a dirt road called Hans Place. This is about 1.25 miles north of Jockos Restaurant in Nipomo. Go 400 yards and Gene is on the left. The nursery on the corner, Lone Pine Nursery, is his but he has leased it out.

From the South on 101: Exit on Teft Road in Nipomo. Go East on Teft to Thompson, and then left on Thompson heading North. Go about 1.25 miles north on Thompson and turn left off Thompson onto a dirt road called Hans Place. Go 400 yards and Gene is on the left. The nursery on the corner, Lone Pine Nursery, is his but he has leased it out. If you get lost, you can call Gene Carl at **929-4376**.

December 10—Potluck and Sharing—PG&E Community Center—San Luis Obispo: Full meal sharing. Exact beginning time will be announced here next month, but it usually starts at 12 Noon. Thanks to Marv Daniels for arranging for us to use the space.

January 14—Annual Business and Pruning Meeting—Mr. Dan Lassanske will return by popular demand. He was great last year, but we are hoping this year that it will not rain again so we can get more "hands-on" experience in our orchard.

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

