

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
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2005 – The Year of the Apple

Rose Apple

Syzygium jambos



Roses and apples--does it get any better than that? I don't think so! Of course, the Rose Apple is not actually related to either of them (it is from the family Myrtaceae, not Rosa), but it is an unusual fruit and one you might get a kick out of growing. It is certainly not a tree you will find thriving in gardens all over San Luis Obispo County!

While it is a native of the East Indies and Malaya, it has widely naturalized in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands (thought to have been taken there by Portuguese sailors). It has become popular in the West Indies, too, where it often grows into a shrub 35-40' tall. It was introduced to Jamaica in the 1700's and to

Florida in the 1870's. The tree is frost hardy once it is established down to about 25° F, although at lower temperatures it may not flower and fruit. In California it usually grows to a height of only 15-20', but it is still too large to grow as a container plant. They develop quite well from seed, but the fruit of seedlings (like their apple namesake) is not predictable. The best trees come from air layering or grafting spring flush scions. It takes about 4 years for them to mature enough to fruit.

Plant your tree along the south side of a building where it will get sunshine and some frost protection, but allow it plenty of room to spread. Pruning is generally not necessary. Protect the young tree from frost by covering it or providing overhead protection when cold below 32 ° F is expected. Our coastal climate does not seem to be detrimental to its growth. Once established, the tree can take some drought, although it may stress and could die if the drought is prolonged.

The tree makes a pleasing shrub, even if not fruiting, and the flowers are delicate, sweetly scented, and very attractive to bees. Here on the Central Coast, bloom time is early to mid summer with the fruit ripening three to four months later. Tropical trees bloom and fruit year round. The fruit, which is about 1" to 1 ½" long with four small seeds in the middle, is most popularly used for jams and jellies, although some people prefer them eaten fresh out of hand. They should be yellowish-green, but crisp, when ripe and they do not last very long once they reach that stage. When ripe, the fruit has a light rose smell and sometimes the fruit is even used to make rose water. They do not transport well, which limits any commercial ventures, so if you want to taste one of these interesting fruits, you'll probably have to grow them yourself unless-- you are planning a West Indies cruise soon. (Or ask Jack Swords of Nipomo if you can try one of his! He has one growing that he brought from Todos Santos, Mexico where his second home floats.) The seeds and roots are considered poisonous.

2005 Festival of Fruit

We didn't hold a local chapter meeting in September since many of our members went to the Festival of Fruit in Santa Cruz. The following is Joe Sabol's report of that event.

Fifteen members of our Central Coast Chapter recently attended the Festival of Fruit in Santa Cruz, hosted by five of the Northern California Chapters of CRFG. This is the annual meeting of our parent organization and moves around from year to year. This year the NAFEX (National Association of Fruit Explorers) joined us in Santa Cruz and conducted some of their annual business.

The week started with **five** days of tours! These tours took members to homes, nurseries, commercial orchards and special collections. This was probably the most extensive set of tours in our CRFG history! The formal Festival Meetings started on Friday afternoon with several workshops followed by a Dave Wilson Fruit Tasting, dinner and great speaker, Dr. Jules Janick. The next day was filled with speakers, workshops, plant sales, and a fantastic apple tasting event that included tasting 52 different apples! The program included 25 different speakers; three were from out of state!

If you want a personal account of any part of the Festival of Fruit 2005, please talk to any of the members who attended this memorable event: Art and Doris Henzgen, Robert and Carol Scott, Lyle and Barbara Overly, Art and Gloria DeKleine, John and Choung Crowe, Jaleah Brynn, Sandy Ahearn, Mary Walcher, Larry Hollis and Joe Sabol. (See photos below taken by Joe Sabol—everyone was having too much fun tasting apples and peaches and plums, oh my!)



Are You Ready to Help?

Our chapter is hosting the CRFG Festival of Fruit in 2006 and we'll need LOTS of help to put on a fine event. The following is a report of the planning meeting held on Tuesday, September 20.

The Central Coast Chapter has accepted the challenge of hosting the next annual meeting of our Parent Organization and it is called a "Festival of Fruit". It will be a major event for us and, to be successful and rewarding it will require involvement by all of our members!! We will be having a planning meeting every month on Tuesday evening, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Room 100, a community meeting room, of the Prime Outlets in Pismo Beach. We will meet on the **third Tuesday** of every month and **YOU** are invited to come and help with the planning. See Pet or Marv Daniels for directions to the meeting room.

Our early planning has included some critical decision making! For instance, the dates of our Festival will be September 8 and 9, 2006. The "Fruit of the Year" will be the healthy grape. Not just any grape, but the "Healthy Grape." We hope to have an overall theme for the Festival that includes "good health" with rare fruit!! Many of our speakers and workshop presenters will come with a "Good Fruit-Good Health" approach.

We have requested facilities at Cal Poly to host the general meeting, workshops, fruit tasting and plant sales. We are currently waiting for formal approval for our use of these key facilities. Our tentative goal is to have 400 people attend the Festival and to have a lot of fun planning and delivering! Your ideas, contacts, and help will be needed. Please do not be shy about attending the Tuesday Planning Meetings or serving on one or two of the many committees we will establish. What fun we will have!!!

Joe Sabol, Chair and Pet Daniels, Co-Chair

Look Around!

What do you grow? Would your yard, garden, vineyard, or orchard be appropriate for hosting a group tour NEXT September in conjunction with the Festival of Fruit? According to the surveys taken by our members, many of the participants at the Festival in Santa Cruz wanted more home tours, back yard orchards, small specialized plantings of fruits and nuts and fewer tours of commercial nurseries and commercial plantings. To accommodate these desires, we need **YOU** to open your growing space to the public. Please contact Joe Sabol or Pet Daniels to let them know what you have available and would be willing to share.

Community Orchard Update

The growing season at our community orchard on the Cal Poly campus is winding down. The fruit is pretty much gone except for a stray apple here and there, but weeds, the never-ending challenge in any garden, are still available for the picking! Stop by and check to see what you can do to keep our special orchard in shape.

The Lemon Tree Gets a Haircut!

By Pismo Pet Daniels

Marv had a birthday in September and wanted a new long-handled, one-handed pruner. The length he wanted was about 4 feet of handle with the hand grip at one end and the other end would have the cutter.

The hunt began. We did the local hardware stores, the local big box stores and then Farm Supply on Tank Farm Road. At Farm Supply the suggestion was offered to go to Noble Saw on South Higuera, just north of Chumash Mobile Home Park on the east side of the road.

Noble Saw is the home of the Astron, a made-in-Taiwan pruner. This little cutie is 1.5 meters with a total cost of \$60.49, which is very comparable to on line prices at different companies on the Internet.

Now, let the fun begin! With pruner in hand I set out this morning to attack the overgrown lemon tree! What a snap! Imagine a pruner at the end of your arm plus 1.5 meters (54 inches) of extended length? That's any gardener's dream! It was a simple task to prune the lemon down to our 8 foot desirable height! *(Wait a minute, Pet—I thought this was Marv's pruner! LH)*

Announcements

Welcome to Our Chapter: Dieter & Barbara Klaubert, Mary Andrews, Madeline Walker, Dorothy Hull, Kristin Poochigian, Philip Yoshida, Gary Epstein, and Nguyen Long.

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

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!**

We're Winners!

Our chapter historian, Sandra Pirghaibi (with perhaps a little too much time on her hands since her "retirement"), was reading the July/August issue of the *Fruit Gardener* magazine and noticed, almost on the last page, an announcement that the State organization was accepting nominations for the 2005 Community Service Award. She sent the letter printed below and, at the Festival of Fruit, it was announced our little chapter tied for top honors with the Orange County Chapter! Thank you, Sandra, for taking the time to write the letter. This is an award to be proud of!

"As the recently elected historian for the CRFG Central Coast Chapter I have spent the last 6-7 months researching and organizing the 10-year historical material kept by the chapter. For this small chapter of just over 100 members the ongoing community activities during this time have been well.....quite astounding. I didn't find TV interviews, tons of write ups in newspapers or a lot of horn-tooting and chest-pounding. What I discovered was a group of long-time residents who get involved in their community because...well it just makes them feel good.

Here is some of what I found.

Every month for ten years, nearly every chapter member either opened their homes for monthly meetings and spoke to the members on their expertise (or learning experience!) or assisted in setting up chapter meetings and tours. Every meeting the CRFG sign is displayed and strangers welcomed. That's 120 meetings not counting all the other project activities and we all know what public speaking entails!

In 1996 this tiny chapter hosted (by themselves) a state meeting complete with hand painted tour signs and a seedling for every attendee. Stories of members opening their homes to house attendees and the member who took care of 70 plants for exchanges in the front yard of his tract home still circulate among the members.

At the July 2005 meeting chapter members unanimously voted to take on this challenge again and host the 2006 meeting. This is a tremendous undertaking for this small chapter but one that these members will tackle with hard work and commitment.

The chapter web site (one of the few chapters that maintain one) is kept updated by the present chapter president, a math teacher, in his spare time. Take a look. In itself the site is a chronicle of the chapter's many community activities. I can attest that it reaches an international audience. One of my husband's long-lost distant relatives (an agricultural scientist with the Canadian government) found our name on the chapter's web site while doing research and contacted us.

The chapter community orchard at Cal Poly SLO with its many varieties of fruits and trees, tree plantings for members who have passed on, the chapter newsletter that involves hours of research, the hats that are presented to hosts with the CRFG name on it (I saw one in COSTCO a while back!), Cal Poly students who help with fruit tasting events, and many more community activities to numerous to list are all a part of chapter ongoing activities.

But...if I were to name the single most important ongoing community service this chapter provides, it would have to be the annual High School Grafting workshops. Every year, yes, that's every year, for several weeks, chapter members on their own time and expense visit local high schools and conduct hands-on apple grafting classes. Several of the high schools they visit are attended by high-risk students and the letters of appreciation sent by students and teachers will tear your heart out. As one of the "grafters" said to me at one meeting...."our children are our future".

I wasn't designated to write this. If I had suggested it to the group they would all have probably waved their hands around, and pooh-poohed the whole idea. So many members who volunteer for the activities have said "We do it because we want to".

I'm going to send this anyway. In my opinion this chapter deserves a "Lifetime Achievement Award". If you decide to recognize the chapter this year, they will graciously accept it with an "Aw Shucks" attitude. If you don't they will continue to do what they are doing and at least this letter may get published.

Either way, I'll be in a lot of trouble.

*Submitted by Sandra Pirghaibi
Central Coast Chapter"*

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!

October 8—Chris Chaney's Wholesale Protea Nursery—2425 Mesa Ranch Road, Arroyo Grande: Mr. Chaney has well maintained Marion berries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and a greenhouse for pepino dulce and tomatoes. He also has grapes, kiwis, feijoas, lemon guava, and a

mixed tree orchard with a unique system of netting. Oh, yes, and he has propagation houses and lots of **proteas**! He will sell us proteas on October 8 only. Thanks to Jenny Weaver and Carol Scott for setting up this meeting! **Refreshments: S - Z please.**

Directions to Chris Chaney's: From the north, take 101 south and turn right on El Campo Road, go 1.5 miles, then turn left on Los Berros Road and go only .1 mile before making a right on West El Campo Road. Go .4 miles on El Campo and then turn right on Mesa Ranch Road. It is only another .1 mile to **2425 Mesa Ranch Road.**

From the south, take 101 north and exit at Los Berros Road and go .3 miles, turn left on Los Berros Road and go another 3.3 miles on Los Berros to West El Campo Road. Go .4 miles and turn right on Mesa Ranch Road. It is only another .1 mile to **2425 Mesa Ranch Road.**

November 12—Gene Carl's Trout Farm and New Zealand Flax Farm—Nipomo: Details will follow.

December 10—Potluck and Sharing—PG&E Community Center—San Luis Obispo: Details will follow.

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.