

# The Leaflett

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

### Mammey Apple

*Mammea americana*

Want to try something really exotic in your garden? The Mammey Apple may be just the fruit for you! Although it is called an “apple”, it looks more like a mango, with large, round fruits that taste somewhat like an apricot. The outside of the fruit is light brown when ripe and the inside is a deep orange. The seeds (from 1 to 4) are easy to extract and when crushed into a powder, make an effective flea repellent! The tree itself is lovely, its leaves similar to a magnolia’s, and its flowers are white and fragrant. Even without bearing fruit, it makes a nice shade tree, one that is very popular in dooryards all over the West Indies. It is a tree that likes water, but it doesn’t seem to be especially fussy about soil types. So, why doesn’t everyone have one of these trees? It can’t take frost! A temperature drop to 28° F will likely kill the trees and even a temperature of 32° F will cause leaf damage.



The Mammey Apple is a native of the West Indies and northern South America. Trees are usually grown from seed, but the seed is slow to germinate (anywhere from 40-260 days!) and the trees aren’t reliable. Grafting is the preferred method of propagation for uniform tree size and fruit production. While Mammey grows best in a fertile, well drained soil with high organic content, it will tolerate heavy, poor, acid soils. Fertilizing at least twice a year and mulching will greatly enhance the tree. Fruit production takes anywhere from 3-5 years on grafted trees to 6-8 years on a seedling tree.

Fruits are usually eaten fresh, although they can be made into pies, jams, and even wine! They aren’t always appreciated though, as their flavor may sometimes be bitter and they have been associated with intestinal upsets. But, if you want something different—give this exotic a try! I can guarantee you won’t find these fruits piled up at the Farmer’s Market!

### July Meeting

The July meeting was held at the Luffa Farm on Willow Road in Nipomo. According to a memo sent out by Joe Sabol after the meeting, here are six **critical** things we all need to know about that meeting:

1. Head count yesterday at the luffa meeting--54 total

2. Only one pick-up truck got stuck in the soft sand.
3. We voted on two motions (a new record) and both passed.
4. Only one vehicle crashed into a fence.
5. Seven people paid their CRFG Dues at \$30 each and received a Cherimoya Tree.
6. Close to 38 people took home infertile luffa seeds to plant.

Well, I think he was kidding about the “critical” part, but those who attended the meeting all seemed to find the subject of the visit interesting.



Luffas, or vegetable sponges, are members of the gourd family and their fibrous interiors make excellent cleaners for both skin and household. Owner of the farm, Deanne Coon-Saucerman, became intrigued by raising luffas when a friend of hers in college grew one as a class project. Deanne maintains that they might resemble a zucchini, but unlike that prolific squash, the luffa is not very easy to grow. Seed germination is sporadic and, according to her, they need a tremendous amount of water. She grows hers on heavy-duty trellises and plants the seeds in black buckets so the gophers, who relish this plant, will have a little more difficulty beating her to the harvest.

Once they are growing, Luffa vines love to spread, with many of them over ten feet long. When the skin turns brown, the ripe luffas are picked and then peeled. The inner fruit is then

hit against the picker’s hand to release the seeds (which are replanted). This results in a wonderful “sponge” that can be anywhere from 2” long to 36” long. Unlike the imported product, Deanne’s luffas are soft and natural and they are not sprayed or vacuum-packed, both processes that tend to harden them.

About 2500 to 3000 luffas are harvested on Dianne’s farm annually. As well as luffas, she grows herbs, such as lavender and makes a line of pure glycerin soap. Some of her soap has bits of luffa incorporated into it which gives it the good benefits of pumice, without the harshness.

If you missed this meeting, don’t despair! Dianne loves to give tours of her farm just about any time. Call her at 343-0883 to set up your own tour. (Thanks, Paul Moyer, for the great photos.)



## August Meeting

The August meeting started out with a—CRACK! While waiting for everyone to arrive at our meeting location at the center of Jack and Mary Kay Swords’ garden in Nipomo, many of us were trying out Jack’s macadamia nut cracker. It was a new experience for most of us to eat fresh macadamia nuts that we’d cracked ourselves and one that bore repeating! I felt sorry for those guys out front selling bird netting, since they didn’t get in on the action.

Bob Tullock, our co-chair, called the meeting to order and made the big announcement—our chapter will be hosting the 2006 Festival of Fruit at Cal Poly. In keeping with a major crop in our area, 2006 will be the **Year of the Grape**. Joe Sabol talked about the work that would need to be done. A planning meeting had been set for Tuesday, August 17 at his house and everyone was encouraged to attend. This is one time when MANY hands really will make light work.



After Joe introduced Jack Swords and presented him with his CRFG hat, Jack began his interesting and informative talk by saying, “Thirty-one years ago, when Mary Kay and I moved to this property in Nipomo, all anyone thought Nipomo was good for was dumping old cars and dead bodies. There was nothing here when we arrived except the house, eucalyptus trees and sand.”

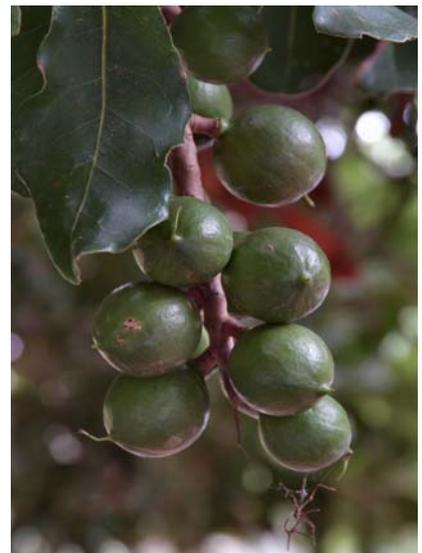
As we looked at the paradise surrounding us now, most of us probably found his statement difficult to believe. We sat beneath mature macadamia nut trees and the ground below us was covered with their nuts. Trees, vines, and bushes of every shape and hue, many of them covered in fruit, surrounded us. There were no planting rows in his orchard, just an abounding profusion of plants.

Jack said he actually did start out planting in rows, but over the years, as one tree died and was replaced with another, the rows disappeared. Although he insists he only has about an acre and a half, one really can wander in and out of Jack’s garden/orchard for at least an hour, as I did after his presentation. He prides himself in not buying any of his amazing assortments of plants, but rather in getting them by “collection.” He has defied the odds, especially with his macadamia crop, because Nipomo is rather cool for many of the things he grows. Lows in the winter at his place can get down to 24-26 ° F and one year got down to 19 ° F! That year he lost several plants, but he says once the macadamias are established for a couple of years, some frost won’t hurt them.

A retired science teacher who is color blind to GREEN, Jack has been fascinated with exotic plants for years. He and his wife, Mary Ann, and Art and Doris Henzgen were the founders of our chapter of the CRFG over 10 years ago.

The entire orchard is on drip irrigation which keeps things alive while Jack and Mary Kay spend 6 months of the year at their “other” home—a boat docked in Todos Santos, Mexico! Mary Kay says the orchard is Jack’s, but her handiwork in the yard nearest the house included some pretty exotic species, too, such as Hawaiian white ginger. Jack has too many plants to mention all of them here, but a few must be mentioned, such as the 52 bearing macadamia trees (several varieties), a white Sapote whose grafted branch is almost bigger than the parent tree, many kinds of unusual citrus trees, banana, carambola, coffee, longan, passion fruit, kiwi fruit, and sweet-smelling allspice. Along with all these “rare” fruits, he even has some regular fruit trees, such as apples and apricots. Oh, yes, **he** has a Mammey Apple!

(Jack called Joe Sabol the day after the meeting and he was very pleased to find that after 100 people had marched all over his backyard, that there was no garbage, trash, broken drip lines, or any serious evidence of our meeting!)



Thanks to Paul Moyer for the photos of Jack and his “bearing” macadamias.

### **Congratulations Dick Pottratz!**

Our treasurer, Dick Pottratz, announced in his quiet way that his 2004 Syrah won a **silver medal** at the recent Mid State Fair in Paso Robles. This is really an accomplishment to crow about, Dick!

### **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. As announced at the August general meeting, there was a planning meeting held on Tuesday, August 17 at the home of Joe and Jill Sabol. The results from that meeting are:

First choice for dates: September 8-10, 2006

First choice for location: Cal Poly

First choice for Fruit of The Year: Grapes

First choice for a Theme: Happy Healthy Grapes....

Key points for us: Good Health and pure fun! This will be a memorable Festival!

The next planning meeting will be held **Tuesday, September 20, from 5-8 PM** and will be located at the Pismo Beach Prime Outlets, 333 Five Cities Drive, Suite 100. The meeting room is in the SE corner of the Outlet. You can park in the back of the Outlet by turning right at the second driveway east of the McDonald's exit. Turn left after entering the driveway and go around the building to the back where there is plenty of parking.

## **THE APPLE STORY**

By Pet Daniels

These fully dehydrated apple slices are more than just plain apples. First, these apples are Dorsett Golden, grown by Paul and Marie Moyer on a large tree on their 4 acre plus property in Squire Canyon.



Before Marv Daniels came along last year and picked up a few windfall apples from this Dorsett Golden tree, the fruit was being distributed to this horse and that llama in the neighborhood, not being good enough for human consumption, but the animals were pleased to have them for snacks!

"Why do the animals get them?" asked Marv. Paul and Marie said, "We have other apples that taste much better". Marv's experiment dehydrating this Dorsett Golden was a huge success! When dried this apple has just the right amount of tartness and flavor to give it an interesting taste.

Marv is also particular as to the process of dehydration. Each apple is wiped clean and sliced with the peeling intact while being cored and sliced on his 'Pampered Chef' Apple peeler/corer/slicer. He places each half slice onto the dehydrator tray for about 12 hours and when the slices are dry to his satisfaction they are cooled and stored in glass or heavy plastic containers. The result is crunchy and delicious! Marv hopes that you will enjoy a few bites, our family really does!

## Tree Planting

The ASI Children's Center  
 Cal Poly State University  
 California Rare Fruit Growers – Central Coast Chapter  
 June 14, 2005

Quote for the day: "The best time to plant a fruit tree is...20 years ago!  
 The second best time to plant a fruit tree is...today!"

Fruit trees planted:

Lemon – Donated by the Crops Department and Dan Ray  
 Orange – Donated by the Crops Department and Dan Ray  
 Plum – A yellow plum, grafted and donated by Art DeKleine  
 Apricot (Moorpark) - Grafted and donated by Art DeKleine  
 Red Pear (Starkcrimson) grafted and donated by Joe Sabol

CRFG Members and Friends helping with the planting and reading: Lark Carter, Bob Tullock, Art Henzgen, Jim Ritterbush, Steve Knudsen, Pet Daniels, Marv Daniels, Sandy Ahearn, Larry Hollis, Steve Johnson, Paul Moyer, Marie Moyer, Dan Ray, Kristin Poochigian, Phil Yoshida, Dick Pottratz, Bryan French, Evelyn Ruher, Tonya Iverson, Al Jacobs, Joe Sabol--And the entire Children's Center Staff. A grand total of more than 30 individuals helping! (Photo by Paul Moyer)



### Another Children's Story

After returning home from his tree planting duties at the Children's Center, Bob Tulloch greeted his daughter, son-in-law, and family who had just arrived for a visit from their home near Harrisonburg, VA. Later that evening, they were strolling through the orchard when Bob stopped, picked a small, but ripe nectarine from a tree, and handed it to his three-year-old grand daughter. He watched as she took a bite, and then looked up at him in amazement. She said, "I didn't know these lived in trees!" "Yes," replied Bob, "and lots of other really good things to eat spend their lives in trees, too!"

### Community Orchard Update

Our Community Orchard, located on the Cal Poly Campus, had some very nice Pluots, peaches, nectarines, plums and even a few apricots this year, among other fruits!

There is still mulch to be spread and summer pruning to be done. The suckers have been pruned off but weeds do pop up and possibly some suckers have grown in the past couple of weeks. Pet and Marv Daniels, our orchard overseers, thank all of you who took advantage of this wonderful opportunity to taste a fruit from each tree in exchange for some needed work in the orchard. There is still time to go out there while the late fruits are ripe! And remember, there are no parking fees on the weekend.

### Starbuck I Turns 30!



Joe Sabol went to Paul Rhys' giant pumpkin farm and came away with a lot of enthusiasm and a few seeds; seeds which he planted following Paul's instructions. On July 10, he reported: "Our favorite pumpkin (Starbuck I) is 30 **days** old today, we are 30 days from its pollination date. Circumference today (stem to flower) 72 inches (six feet) Book formula estimated current weight 116 lbs today. Prediction: We will learn a lot this year."

The photo is of Joe, grandson Daniel, and Starbuck I which was taken about a week earlier than Joe's report. Does anyone else have a "giant" pumpkin in progress? Share your story, too!

### 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](http://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.

### 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 all bring our own bottled water to drink, too. What fun it is to be a member of CRFG!

**September 8, 9, 10—CRFG Festival of Fruit—Santa Cruz area:** This is the annual meeting of all chapters, a State Convention of CRFG! There will be no local meeting for the Central Coast in September. Let's all plan to attend the Festival in Santa Cruz! Saturday is the big day! Watch the CRFG website for news and details: <http://www.crfg.org/> **Need a place to park your motor home**

or camper in the area? **Russee Parvin, one of our members who lives in Watsonville, says he has plenty of room there for people who can dry camp—best of all, it's FREE.**

**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.

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