

# The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter  
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## 2006 – The Year of the Healthful Grape

### March Meeting



As Winnie the Pooh was so fond of saying, it was a “blustery day” when we met at the Cal Poly Student Experimental Farm. About 50 of us, bundled for the cold, ventured out to hear Dr. John Phillips discuss the history of the farm and also lead us on an interesting tour of the two acre site. (The photo of our group at the left, taken by Ron Blakey, is a bit misleading—it shows a sunny patch in an otherwise mostly cloudy and very windy afternoon!)

Art DeKleine led a brief business meeting. Chuck Fellows talked about the old apple tree he is

attempting to save in Arroyo Grande Village. We sang Happy Birthday to Joe Sabol and listened to a few words of wisdom from him: Do what you love and love what you do! Sandra Pirghaibi gave a report on her yearbook progress and made another plea for any memorabilia from the past. (See her fascinating story later in the newsletter about how these fabulous yearbooks have evolved.) Art said that there are 300 nametags in the box—and that was after weeding out a lot of them! Pet talked about the tours planned for the Festival of Fruit and asked if people had any more ideas of places that could be on the list. Then, without further ado, Joe Sabol introduced Dr. John Phillips, presented him with a CRFG hat, and turned the meeting over to him.

Dr. Phillips explained that in 1989 the land was set aside as a place where students could do demonstration projects of things that could work in Third World countries (straw bale construction, sustainable farming, etc.) and is only two acres surrounded by deer fence.

The resulting tour of the grounds gave us plenty of ideas of how to garden for the best results in a small area—even if it isn’t a level area! The wise use of earth berms keeps water runoff to a minimum and holds water in areas where it can seep slowly down to irrigate trees and other deep rooted plants. They don’t use pesticides, but haven’t had any problems with “bugs” that they couldn’t control. Part of their secret is that they don’t plant large plots of any one crop, so pests can’t really get a foot hold. Gophers are trapped.

Animals are interspersed through out the garden, mainly goats and chickens, have their uses in the garden, too, but mostly as “pets” to give children and adults unused to the rural life a better feel for what life on a “farm” really is like.

We also heard from Hunter Francis and Terry Hooker about the sustainable agriculture resource consortium which also helps support the site. (For more on this very interesting aspect of the facility, please contact Hunter at [sarc@calpoly.edu](mailto:sarc@calpoly.edu) ). The day, despite the chill in the air, was warm with friendship—and a satisfying feeling of time well spent.

## Festival of Fruit 2006

Planning is well under way and the event promises to be spectacular! You can see planners in deep discussion in the photo on the right courtesy of Ron Blakey. It isn't too late to join in—meetings are held at the **Pismo Prime Outlet** on Tuesday April 11, June 13, and July 11, from 5 pm to 8 pm.



Bob Tullock reports that he has 300 Princess and 300 Thompson seedlings from

Central Coast Farms in pots, along with another 800 plus cuttings rooting in his greenhouse. They'll be ready to give away to Festival attendees. He's thinking big!

The following is from Art DeKleine: To help the many people who are soliciting contributions (of money, plants, food, gifts, memorabilia, etc.) for the 2006 Festival, I am compiling a list of people who have or will assume responsibility for contacting a particular contributor (person, donor, sponsor, business, or group).

If you want to contact a name already on the list, please contact the person assigned that contributor's name before making the contact.

If you want to contact a name not on the list, please feel free to do so and send me the name of the contributor. I will add that name to your list of assigned contributors. I think that any contributor providing \$25 or more should have their name in the Festival Program.

Following is the initial list of potential contributors. Please review the list and add or subtract names of contributors for which you have or will assume responsibility.

### Donations, Contributions, Support, Sponsors List

#### CRFG Festival 2006

3/15/2006

Joe Sabol has or will contact:

- Bay Laurel Nursery in Atascadero
- Lawyer Nursery in Montana
- A.M. Leonard (mail order catalog)
- Blue Diamond Almond and Walnut

SLO County Farm Bureau

Joe Sabol and Doris Henzgen have or will contact:

C and M Nursery in Nipomo, Kim (for a tour)  
Wild Horse Winery & Vineyard, Templeton

Bob Tullock has or will contact:

Hometown Nursery in Paso Robles

Doris Henzgen has or will contact:

McClintock's in Shell Beach  
Pacific Home Do It and Garden Center  
Golden Hills Road Nursery in Paso  
Sycamore Farms (closed)  
Old Town Nursery in Nipomo  
Cherry Lane Nursery  
Leticia Vineyard in Arroyo Grande  
Cottonwood Canyon Winery in SLO  
Ben-boy Nursery in Arroyo Grande  
OSH in Pismo Beach  
Wild Horse Winery in Templeton  
Ian McPhee Restaurant in Templeton  
New Frontiers Market in SLO  
Madonna Inn in SLO  
Native Sons Nursery in Nipomo  
Fess Parker Winery on Foxen Canyon Road  
Plantel Nursery Inc. in Santa Maria  
KCOY Channel 12  
Corbett Canyon Winery and vineyards  
OSH in Santa Maria,  
Muranka Bonsai Nursery in Nipomo  
Cambria Nursery and Florist in Cambria  
Golden Hills Garden Center, Paso Robles  
The Tree Man, Paso Robles  
Castro Cellars Winery in Templeton  
Robert Hill Winery in Paso Robles  
Peachy Canyon Winery in Paso Robles  
Finley Family Farms Nursery & Garden Center, Templeton

Art DeKleine and Doris Henzgen have or will contact:

Farm Supply on Tank Farm Road

Dorothy Seelos has or will contact:

Jocko's in Nipomo (Mr. Mike Knotts)  
Spencer's Fresh Markets, Arroyo Grande  
Vons, Arroyo Grande  
Wet Dog Designs, Grover Beach  
Santa Maria "Achievement House"  
Old Town Nursery, Nipomo

Cherry Lane Nursery, Arroyo Grande

Dorothy Seelos and Joe Sabol have or will contact:

California Table Grape Commission

## Local Rare Fruit of the Month—April—Cherimoya

By Robert Scott



This member of the annonaceae family was indeed a rare fruit to me until I joined the Central Coast Rare Fruit growers. Then, Chapter chair, Jay Rusky, brought some cherimoyas that he was growing to sell after the meeting. He also sold them at the farmer's market. With the first taste of this delicious fruit, I was hooked! Wow! What an exotic taste--white, melting, juicy, sweet, fragrant flesh. So being the seed propagator that I am, I immediately sowed the seeds. My collection of seedlings grew from cultivars such as Bays, Booth, Chaffey, Pierce and White. Those seedlings turned into 2 foot trees in one year.

Cherimoyas are grown commercially in Ventura and Santa Barbara County. They are believed to be native to inter-Andean valleys of Ecuador, Columbia and Bolivia. Here on the Central Coast they do well along the coast to the foothills that have a coastal influence. If you get fog and have moderate temperatures they should do well. Cherimoyas hate excessive dry heat. Young trees will freeze at 25 to 26 degrees; young growing tips freeze at 28 - 29 degrees. The older the trees gets, they longer they are able to survive freezing temperatures. I have lost many seedlings, but I persisted and now have 6 mature trees giving me fruit. I have grafted a seedling to a pink cultivar, obtained from Jay that has fruit with a pink tinge under the skin and faintly mottled in the flesh. Commercially, cherimoyas are hand pollinated, but with our coastal influence I get a good crop without doing so. It took 7 to 8 years before I had fruit on my seedlings. Grafted trees will bear in 2 to 4 years. You must protect young trees from frost! I have well drained soil which has been mulched for years.

So the next time you get a chance to try a cherimoya, I say go for it! I have never tasted a cherimoya I didn't like. Save those seeds and plant them, and thank you, Jay Rusky.

### High School Apple Grafting

The 2006 Apple Grafting season is over and what a busy time it was! Joe Sabol, Pet and Marv Daniels, and Patti Schober outdid themselves in planning, organizing, and working hard to help students of many ages graft over a thousand apple trees. They had many faithful workers assisting them—which I won't name in case someone gets left out. **YOU** know who you are and your hard work was much appreciated! Ralph and Paula Sarmiento, recruited by Marv Daniels, were so impressed with the program that they sent a check for \$250 to be used specifically for the apple grafting program. What a wonderful surprise!

KSBY television sent a news team out with reporter Tony Cipolla to report on the apple grafting classes. They did a terrific job covering the Pacific Beach High School event. If you didn't get to

watch the program, you can still see the report by going to:  
<http://www.ksby.com/home/headlines/2485461.html>

Schools and other places where grafting classes were held this year were: Templeton High, Bradley Lillian Larsen Middle School, San Miguel High, Master Gardeners and Achievement House, Gonzales High, Soledad High, Lompoc High, King City, Morro Bay High, Shandon High, Grizzly Academy, Coast Union HS in Cambria, Arroyo Grande High, Pacific High, Paso Robles High (2x's), Nipomo High, SLO High, Harloe Elementary, Santa Ynez High, Santa Maria High, and a CRFG special held at Norm Beard's place in Goleta. WOW! That was accomplished in just a month of hard work. Not only that—everyone was still smiling just as big at the last class (Arroyo Grande High in photo below) as they were at one of the first classes (Nipomo High photo last month)! These are truly people who “love what they do!”



### **The Murray Smith Tomato**

*Several issues ago, we talked about Love Apples aka tomatoes! Art DeKleine kindly searched out the source of the Murray Smith Tomato, finding the “expert” in the field to be Dave Hannings of the Ornamental Horticulture Dept. at Cal Poly. The following was written by Dave.*

Here’s the scoop--I am the “official” keeper of the Murray Smith Tomato seed, and will have a student each year grow several hundred plants to select from them parents to improve the strain. The plants still vary in flavor and disease resistance. We are working to make them more consistent.

This tomato was named after Murray Smith, long-time professor of speech and director of the Cal Poly Theatre. It originated as an unnamed seedling purchased in a supermarket in San Francisco by Mr. Smith's mother. It was planted next to her mobile home on the San Francisco Peninsula. Because of its vigorous growth, it was supported by a trellis approximately six feet tall and eight feet wide. It completely covered the trellis and produced a huge crop of large tomatoes.

About thirty-five years ago some of the fruit was shared with Dr. Howard Brown, head of Gal Poly's Ornamental Horticulture Department. Every year since then, Dr. Brown has selected some of the largest and most perfect tomatoes. They are allowed to ripen fully and the seeds are extracted, dried, and held for planting the next season.

Seeds for the new crop are sown in flats of peat and perlite in a 60-degree greenhouse. First sowing is made February 1 and a second sowing on March 1. Seedlings are transplanted into cell packs about 10 days after sowing and returned to the greenhouse. Thirty days after sowing, the cell packs are moved to an unheated shade house for *hardening-off*. The plants are shifted into 4-inch pots or gallon cans, depending upon how long they are to be held.

This tomato is well adapted to the warm regions of San Luis Obispo. It is planted in a sunny location in well-prepared soil and organic matter. A slow release fertilizer is added to the bottom of the planting hole. A basin is made around the plant to provide for weekly watering.

Support is provided by bending area-reinforcing wire (commonly used in driveway construction) into cylinders 22 to 24 inches in diameter and 3 1/2 feet tall. The 4" x 6" mesh allows for easy picking.

March 16 is the safe planting date for San Luis Obispo and April 16 for the North County. Subsequent plantings may continue until July 1.

The Murray Smith is a large red tomato with a small core. During the peak production season a dozen of the fruit will fill an 11 x 16-inch flat. In San Luis Obispo, the fruit begins to ripen about August 1, with peak production in September and October. The season continues through November and December. In years without frost, we are still picking some in January and February. Paul Rhys reports eating the last Murray Smith of the 1999 season on St. Patrick's Day, 2000.

### **The Scrapbook Story** **History in the Making** By Sandra Pirghaibi

At the writing of this article it's been 14 months since I volunteered to take on the project of gathering material and arranging the ten year history of the Central Coast Chapter activities.

It's been quite a ride.

I'm a sprinter not a marathoner and it's taken a considerable amount of persistence to keep things on track but it's getting there.

The project is now about half done. It should be completed by the July or August meeting. When finished there will be ten books representing the ten years (1996-2006) of the Central Coast Chapter. I have asked Joe Sabol to reserve space at the August meeting at Cal Poly so members can view all the completed books and do a little reminiscing.

After that they will go to the librarian. Perhaps it would be nice to display them at the annual meeting.

I've been asked to write an article about my journey through these ten years so here it is.

In my exuberance the beginning of 2005 I broke two of my cardinal rules: scope out the whole project and keep it simple. While I was waiting for the previous material to be located I started on the 2005

book. It was pretty easy to just keep up as we went along. It wasn't until the year was half over and I had received the past historical material that I realized I was going to have to redo my approach or the project would never be completed.

I stepped back and took some time to design the layout for the books so they would all be similar; one book for each year. I then set up 10 books. They each contained blank colored cardstock for each meeting event (i.e., grey for January, blue for February, red for high school apple grafting, etc.). The arrangement included:

Page 1 – List of Yearly Activities and Calendar

Page 2 – List of Elected Officers

Meeting Pages-Limited to four pages per meeting for photos, newsletter and Fruit Gardner magazine

Community Orchard Pages

Tree Plantings and Special Events

I used these books to file paper information where it belonged.

Then I created a skeletal electronic data base to store digital photos and other scanned material; a sort of file cabinet. When I received new photos or other electronic information I just dropped the files into their proper place for use later.

A plan makes things much easier.

I started by creating the most current book first then worked backward completing one book at a time. There was no information for 2001 through 2004 and everything had to be recreated. Fortunately members gave me photos, memorabilia and other information they thought needed a home. The chapter web site is a wealth of information. Still, it took a tremendous amount of research, work and prodding to place everything in its proper place.

It has been fun though. I know every place this chapter has ever been for a meeting and seen ten year old photos of people I've only known a few years. To get a list of yearly activities it was necessary to read every newsletter and every e-mail sent and kept.

At this time I probably know more about chapter members I think than almost anyone.

For those of you who might want to create your own personal historical documents for your family here are some tips for you based on my experience:

1. Set up the project structure first even if it is just on paper, decide how you want to approach it then tackle it one piece at a time. You get the satisfaction of completing something, avoid being overwhelmed and won't feel you have 10 things half done. Also, things just fit better.
2. Use good acid free products. Stay away from those sticky photo albums with the plastic sheet over each page. The glue deteriorates rapidly. I spent hours steaming off irreplaceable photos and newspaper clippings from the chapter's old books.
3. Store your completed projects away from paper's arch enemy, water to prevent its death sentence, mold. And, avoid placing your books in plastic bags where moisture can accumulate.
4. Scan anything flat that is irreplaceable (including old photos and newspaper articles).
5. Use your digital camera to take pictures of your finished project so it can be recreated if a disaster happens.

6. If you want data files lined up chronologically by date, name the numerical file with the date first then the alphabetical name (i.e., 1-1-06 January Meeting). For files you want lined up in a certain order place a number at the beginning of the file name (i.e., 1-Smith Family). Windows will automatically line them up the way you want instead of alphabetically.

There's probably more but this article is getting too long so I'll just stop here.

And, if anyone wants a peek at what's already been accomplished we visit our Santa Maria home about once a month where I keep the completed books. Give us a call or stop by and we will show you books from past years. Besides, we would love the company!

## Announcements

**Welcome to Our New Chapter Colleagues:** Karl Princic, Joan Tomooka, Chester Gibbs, Virginia Griffen, Aura Carmi, and Don Shealy.

**Join the Parent Organization:** Many of our chapter colleagues are 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!**

## Calendar of Meetings – 2006



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!

**April 8—Green Acres Lavender Farm in Atascadero:** Janice Silva and Bob Bostwick will host our meeting and share their fascinating lavender with us. Thanks to Roger Eberhardt for helping to line up this adventure. Owner Janice says: "Please ask everyone to wear good walking shoes and carpool as much as possible. There is parking on the street and some on the farm, so the more people that drive together the better." Check them out at: [www.greenacreslavenderfarm.com](http://www.greenacreslavenderfarm.com) **Refreshments group H through R, please.**

**May 13—Wildwood in Arroyo Grande:** Jane and George will host. **This meeting starts early!** We will begin at NOON, with a BBQ lunch. We will enjoy a practical and memorable "Orchard

Development" planning session for a community orchard on a north facing hillside! Details and directions will follow. Do not miss this meeting!

**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.