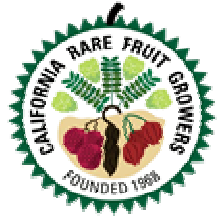


LOS ANGELES CHAPTER



January 2007 Volume X Issue 1

<http://www.crfg-la.org>

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January Meeting

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2007

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

SCION EXCHANGE

Bob Goldsmith

We will try to again have apple, pear, and plum/peach/nectarine rootstock available for you to purchase at the January meeting. It will be what was left over from last year's order, as we did not order new rootstock this year.

We will again break into small groups, which will be led by grafting coaches to help instruct you if you wish to make grafts to take home.

Please try to gather your scion wood from your trees as late as possible before the meeting to insure its freshness. **Note the gathering and preparation instructions on the next page.**

February Meeting

Date: Saturday, February 24, 2007

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

Program: Herb Drapkin will be our speaker. He will demonstrate the techniques involved in skirting your trees and also talk on pest management. This is what Herb spoke briefly about at our December meeting and because we all were so interested in learning more, he has agreed to demonstrate for us.

TASTING TABLE: If your last name begins with A-M, please bring something for our January Meeting.

SCION WOOD PREPARATION

***** Prepare a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. Immerse your scion wood cuttings in this for about 10 seconds before placing them in the plastic bag. This will insure the prevention of the spread of most diseases from one garden to another. One infected twig can kill the whole tree on which it is grafted, and possibly surrounding trees, too. A newly infected tree from your garden may not be showing visual signs yet but, without proper processing of cuttings, you could unintentionally be responsible for killing trees in the gardens of many of your fellow members.**

Continue with the following instructions:

- “ Wood should come from clean, disease-free and non-patented trees.
- “ Select straight wood from last year’s growth and cut as near to our scion wood exchange date as possible.
- “ Wood should be ¼” – 3/8” diameter (pencil size) and contain several buds.
- “ Cut to lengths that fit easily into a ziplock-type bag. Cut with a slanting cut on the top (distal) end and flat cut on the end that would have been nearest the trunk (medial).
- “ Bundle by variety in a moist paper towel(s) and place in a ziplock-type bag, leaving a slight opening in the ziplock bag for the wood to breathe. Make sure that the towel(s) stay damp as long as the wood is stored.
- “ Label outside of bag with fruit type and variety, as well as any additional information you feel is pertinent (i.e. minimum chilling hours; needs pollinator; vigor; zip code where successfully grown, etc).
- “ Keep scion wood bag in vegetable bin of your refrigerator until the morning of the exchange. Be careful not to let the scion wood freeze!
- “ At the exchange, please wait to make your selections until directed by the chairman.
- “ Please limit your selections to two of any variety, until all the groups have had their opportunity. Then feel free to go back.



STRAWBERRY TREE

– *Arbutus unedo* – Ericaceae

Donated by: CRFG/Clarence Barker and planted in 1980 (r.f.-09)

Common names: Strawberry tree, Madroño, Albocera, Albedro, Ichigoki, Ervedro, Medronheiro.

Submitted by **Alfredo Chiri**

The name *Arbutus unedo* derives from the Latin “arbor” that means “small tree” and “unus” – “edo,” that means “one” – “alone”. The name was given to remind you that you should “eat only one fruit,” because it contains alcohol and gives you headaches.

The strawberry tree is a small tree reaching 15 feet in height. The trunk bark is grayish-red, becoming redder as the tree becomes older. The bark is very thin with longitudinal fissures, which in time separates from the trunk. The top of the tree is round with thick branches having the same characteristics as the trunk bark. The leaves are simple, alternate, and remain in the tree during the year.

The strawberry tree produces masses of white-yellowish flowers at the ends of the branches. Since the fruit takes 12 months to ripen, the tree carries both mature fruit and flowers at the same time, making the tree incredibly beautiful.

The fruit varies in size, though it averages about 1 inch in diameter is red in color and from the distance looks like strawberries. Even though the fruit resembles a strawberry, the taste is sweet but insipid. The skin is somewhat rough, but when ripe, the fruit itself has the texture of a lush tropical fruit and has pleasant flavor.

The strawberry tree seems to be indifferent to the type of soil, but it seems to have a preference for acid soils. The tree tolerates most soils but prefers good drained soils. The tree will grow in sun or part shade and should be fertilized in spring. Pruning should be to thin with emphasis to show the beauty of the twisted branches and the reddish brown bark.

The strawberry tree is easily propagated from seeds. Seeds germinate well in the middle or late spring. The seedlings are rather small and slowgrowing. They are prone to damp off, and so they must be kept in well-ventilated lightly shaded areas. (Cont’d on next page)

(Strawberry Tree cont'd)

Transplant them as soon as they are large enough to handle and grow them for at least the first winter under a light shade. Plant the seedlings in their permanent positions when they are 12 inches tall.

It is possible to propagate the tree from cuttings. Use mature, 12 inch scions from current season growth. They are a bit slow to root and you get a poor percentage take. If there are some branches low enough, it is possible to produce plants from layering but it can take up to 2 years to produce roots.

WHO's WHO



This issue we are featuring **Christine Warren**, our Los Angeles Chapter Food Coordinator.

Christine is a native Californian who grew up in the San Fernando Valley. She remembers her parents taking great interest in landscaping their Granada Hills

yard that included a variety of citrus and stone fruits and strawberries. She moved to Thousand Oaks at the age of nine and lived in a lovely woodsy home but with no fruit trees! After completing college and starting her career as a clinical laboratory scientist (medical technologist) for the VA Medical Center in Sepulveda, she married her London-born husband, **Ralph**, and moved in to an un-landscaped home in Sylmar. What potential! **Ralph** and **Christine** agreed that they would grow fruiting trees in their 17,000 sq. ft. yard.

Ralph and **Christine** met in a ballroom dance studio and competed in amateur ballroom championships around the world in the 1980's. They started a business videotaping ballroom competitions in their spare (??) time to augment their income. The business became highly successful, videotaping at all the major west coast events with innovative remote control cameras. (Ralph is mechanically inclined having worked as a tool and die maker for Hughes Radar). They prospered and so did increasing number of trees, varieties of citrus, apples and stone fruits.

Christine joined the Los Angeles chapter of CRFG in the early 1990's and recognizing a good thing bought a lifetime membership. After all, love affairs with fruit trees do not go away, they get stronger with time. Now with greater knowledge and exposure to the exotic,

Ralph and Christine grow just about everything. Christine has served as the LA chapter refreshment chairman for many years to reciprocate for the pleasure of the company of CRFG members and the opportunities membership has to offer.

Christine is still planting trees but regrets having insufficient time for maintenance. She presently commutes to VA Medical Center Laboratory in West Los Angeles and dances several times a week – ballet and ballroom. She recently won a Pro-Am international ballroom competition with her instructor, Victor Veyrasset, a national champion. She will not be “dancing with the stars” but watching the stars hanging over her beloved home fruit orchard.

Recipe is from **Phyllis Parker** of our Los Angeles CRFG Chapter

GREEN TOMATO BREAKFAST CAKE:

Nonstick cooking spray

1/3 cup butter, softened

1 cup sugar

2 large eggs

1 tsp baking powder

1/8 tsp salt

2 or three green tomatoes, cored and cut into eighths

1 tsp baking powder

2 tsp granulated sugar

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon.

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 9-inch round cake pan with oil. 2. Cream butter and sugar, when slightly fluffy, beat in eggs and vanilla. 3. Combine flour, baking powder and salt and sift into the creamed butter mixture; beat well. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Arrange green tomatoes pieces in concentric circles over batter. Sprinkle lightly with sugar and cinnamon. 4. Bake 50 minutes to 1 hour or until cake is firm and golden and tests when done. Serves 8.

(**Phyllis** wrote: “This recipe came from the New York Times, originally. My daughter, **Sherry**, e-mailed it to me because we always exchange unique recipes.”)

IS SOMETHING BUGGING YOU?



Paula White displays the ORCON products

On November 25th at the Sepulveda Garden Center, **Paula White**, and **Steve Hazzard** presented information on their company, ORCON, which sells live beneficial insects and natural products for homes and gardens. **Paula**, who's been with ORCON for 20 years is also a member of West LA Chapter CRFG. **Paula** and **Steve** discussed items in their product line and offered some for sale. Of particular interest was **Steve's** discussion of mason bees, especially in regard to their value in polination and also their nesting habits. Paula has offered to provide discounts on ORCON products to our Chapter members. Inspired by **Paula** and **Steve's** talk, **Herb Drapkin** showed up at the December meeting with his own delightful and ingenious version of a mason bee nest, intended to encourage mason bees to take up residence in your own garden. (Thanks **Herb**, now we've got some also.)

Also at the November meeting, **Jorge Pelaez** brought a number of small sweet tamarind trees that he propagated from seed. He donated these to the Chapter and we made them available for sale to members. It is rare to find sweet tamarind trees and they were very popular. Thank you, **Jorge**.

WELCOME

A very warm welcome to our new member **Pedro Colin**. Also, back by popular acclaim, **Les** and **Linda Warren**. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

One picture is worth a thousand words



All eyes are on the clock: Is it time to eat?



Ana Bruni Benson and Bob Goldsmith show off the delicious cake baked by Ana.



Art Carpenter in the holiday spirit!

February Meeting

If your last name begins with N-Z please bring something for our tasting table to the February Meeting.