



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2020 Volume XXV Issue 1

MEETING: January 25, 2020 at 10:00 am
Place: Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino, CA 91316

Program: Annual Grafting Demonstration & Scion Exchange

There will be grafting demonstrations by some of our most successful grafters at our meeting, followed by our annual scion exchange. Please bring plant materials to share (seeds, cuttings, scions, etc.) There will be no silent auction, due to counterspace consideration. PLEASE DO NOT BRING SCIONS FROM PATENTED TREES. NO CITRUS PLEASE (prevent the spread of Citrus Greening Disease). PLEASE LABEL YOUR SCIONS CLEARLY.

- Scions should be 1/4" – 3/8" diameter (pencil size) and contain several buds (2 -3 minimum).
- Bundle by variety in a moist paper towel(s) and place in a ziplock-type bag, leaving a slight opening in the bag for the wood to breathe. The towel(s) should stay damp while the wood is stored.
- Label each bag with fruit type and variety, as well as any additional information you feel is pertinent (i.e. minimum chilling hours; pollinator needs; vigor; where successfully grown, etc).
- Put your name on the bag, in case people have questions.
- Keep scion 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 groups have had their opportunity. Then feel free to go back for more!

All Members: if your last name begins with A-M please bring something for our refreshment table.

MEETING: February 22, 2020 at 10:00 am
Place: Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino, CA 91316

Program: Annemiek Schilder - Fruit Pathology

Annemiek comes from many generations of dairy farmers in the Netherlands and has degrees in agronomy and plant pathology. She oversees extension programs that include 4-H and the Master Gardeners. In addition, she has expertise in strawberries, grapes, organic farming, small farms, and pest management and diseases. Her research efforts are focused on the diagnosis, epidemiology, and sustainable management of fungal diseases of small fruit crops, with an emphasis on blueberries and grapes.

All Members: if your last name begins with N-Z please bring something for our refreshment table.

SAVE THE DATES -
CALENDAR FOR 2020 LA CHAPTER

- March 21 Sylmar High School - Dave Wilson
- April 25 Field Trip - TBA
- May 30 Sepulveda Gardens - John Chater - Pomegranates
- June 27 Field Trip- Dr Kiewiet and Kelly Gabysch
- July 25 Sepulveda Gardens - Dave King
- August 15 FESTIVAL OF FRUIT
- September 26 Sepulveda Gardens - TBA
- October 24 Field Trip - TBA
- November 21 Field Trip - TBA
- December 19 Sepulveda Gardens - Holiday Party

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

2020 Chapter Officers & Committees

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Jerry Schwartz

Vice Chairman: co-chair@CRFG-la.org

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Andy Neiman

Words From Our Chairman

By Jerry Schwartz



We've had inches of rain. The yellow and orange leaves of my deciduous fruit trees have fallen to the ground. As I look over my yard I see orange, yellow and pink citrus ready to eat. In another area are deep red colored dragonfruit and some pitanga fruit. Mulberries are beginning to fruit and loquat flowers are budding. And the damn squirrels are running all over my yard planting peanuts, teasing my dogs and destroying my fruit.

Hi I'm Jerry Schwartz. I live with my wife, Rhonda, two small dogs, and hundreds of fruit trees. I'm a retired pharmacist. Rhonda is a retired RN. The dogs are still working. We have two grown children (they still work). I'm your new chairman; looking forward to meeting everyone and having a great year!

-Jerry

Tony Stewart Celebration of Life

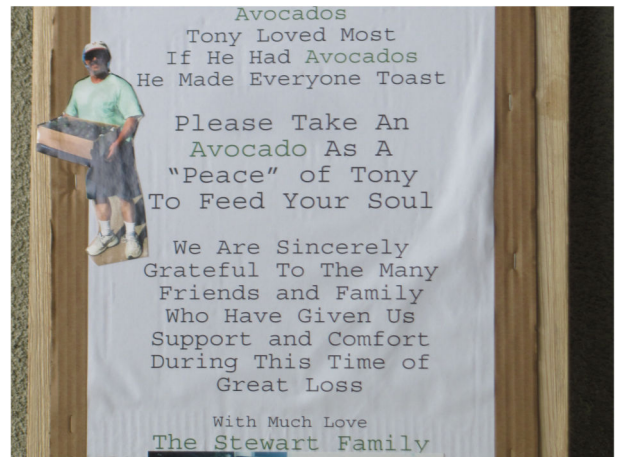
An uplifting ceremony was held to celebrate former CRFG-LA Chairman Tony Stewart, who passed away from a stroke on September 9, 2019. More than 500 people attended the event at the Real Life Church in Santa Clarita on November 2. Many wonderful stories were told by Tony's family and friends, and we all got to know our friend a little better, and miss him all the more.

Tony was an amazingly complex person who enjoyed sports, photography, photographing sports, and printing sports photos for the people he was filming. He had a

wicked sense of humor, made friends easily, managed to play years' and years' worth of competitive golf for a single \$2 bill, loved his fish and aquaculture, and even met Harry Belafonte as a young lad. He loved teaching, gardening, and grafting. He named new varieties of avocados after his daughters Ronnie and Jamie Rose.

Outside the church that day was a red wagon loaded full of avocados. Even now, Tony is sharing his harvest with everyone!

He and his wife Monica would tell each other they should always end the day better than it started. Excellent advice that we should all take to heart.



LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

November Meeting

Jim Schopper lead the very well-attended November meeting. He asked new members to please introduce themselves and we said hello to people who were interested in general fruit gardening, folks fascinated by pomelos, met an administrator of the Southern California Organic Fruit and Vegetable Gardening Facebook page, and even had a visitor all the way from China!

After introductions, CRFG members were encouraged to consider becoming Chapter officers. (Elections will be early 2020.)

Steve Murray was our guest speaker. His family owns and operates Murray Family Farms, which sells fresh, organic produce at farmers' markets throughout Southern California. Steve travels the world seeking out rare and delicious fruits, both wild and

domesticated, and brings many back to grow locally (in Kern County).

He began by introducing himself, and showed us his favorite way to prepare a pomegranate for eating. (Slice off the top, carve down along the white ribs and break it open into a flower shape.)

Steve also passed around a branch full of what looked like thumbnail-sized persimmons, which he introduced as the Chinese fruit *Diospyros lotus*, also known as lotus fruit, lotus jujube, or date-plum. It's also called something in Chinese which I unfortunately cannot spell but which Steve pronounces with great confidence.

He told us about his family farm, and described some of the challenges in farming and selling fruit (windstorms, fires, theft, and transport problems), of becoming Organically certified, and the (legal) obstacles to importing fruits and/or seeds to California.

Murray Farms currently favors the Kym Green Bush method of fruit tree pruning. (See article below.)

In order to "change" a fruit crop to a new variety, Murray Farms depends on top work, or cutting most branches off a tree and grafting the new variety to a strong parent. They also have greenhouses full of fruit like *Monstera Deliciosa*, Kei apples, pineapple, peanut butter fruit, and lillipilli.



We got to see some amazing photos! Murray Farms produces more than 2000 varieties of over 550 different species of edibles. Che, elderberry, Gojiberry, Lemonadeberry, Natal plums, pawpaw, barrel cactus fruit, native ribes, hearts of palm, Buddha's Hand citron (their largest was 9 lbs, about twice the size of the fruit he brought to show off), and their own privately-developed Murray berry.

A recipient of a CRFG scholarship, Steve not only has a BS in Plant science and an Agronomy Minor but also speaks Chinese fluently, as well as many other languages. This is extremely useful, and his language skills were evident in Part 2 of his presentation: rare fruits from around the world. We were introduced to African baobab fruit, as well as sabia, oncoba, and Ndea. We learned of the Chinese red-hearted kiwi, wild blackberry, trapa nuts, and soap nuts. (Be warned: soap nuts are NOT for eating!)

We heard about so many other countries and fruits: Thailand (Gak fruit), Laos (snake fruit), Sri Lanka (Wood apple), Dubai (plum mango), India (edible artizia), Turkey (carob), Columbia (castilla), Philippines (durian and marang), Oaxaca (Spondia), and so many others that it would take several pages just to list them all!

Eventually, someone inquired what Steve's favorite fruit is. Although he had mentioned several that are his favorites for other reasons, his unhesitating reply was Cherries!

What could possibly follow such an amazing presentation? A fabulous potluck, and an incredible plant auction with over 50 plants donated by Steve List and the Sylmar High School agriculture department: grapes, mulberries, tomatoes, figs, orchid trees, and so much more. And this was in addition to the plants donated by our own generous chapter members: agave, avocado, bird of paradise, cape gooseberry, Cherry of the Rio Grande, loquats, passionfruit, and plenty of others.

Additionally, we got to sample the delicious fruit which Steve Murray brought to share with everyone: pomegranates, guavas, avocados, and plums.

Thank you to Steve Murray for a fabulous and educational presentation, and for coming so far to share your scrumptious fruits. Also many thanks to

Steve List and Sylmar High for their incredible variety of plants donated to raise funds for our CRFG scholarship fund.

December Holiday Party

Our December holiday party was a smaller, cozy affair. Jim Schopper began by introducing our new Chairman, Jerry Schwartz, and his wife Rhonda.

We were also asked to come up with garden plans for our out-of-country fellow CRFG member Serge Shammass, who now lives in Sounion, Greece (south of Athens). He is challenging us to come up with our best ideas for planting fruit varieties on the approximately 1/3-acre property. In appreciation, Serge will donate \$100 to the chapter in the name of the winning garden designer.

Jim showed us a rare green sapote fruit which member Bernie Storch successfully grew at his home in Santa Barbara. This tree is extremely difficult to grow in California, much less get it to produce fruit! The fruit is deep reddish orange outside, not green at all. Bernie joked that it was all dressed up for the holidays.



Our favorite singing duo, Marcia Melcombe and Mark Nudelman, regaled us with many songs of the season, as well as a few Irish tales to raise our spirits further. Marcia and Mark were gifted with lovely fedoras to say thank you.

Many people participated in a White Elephant gift exchange.

A delicious feast was spread for all to enjoy. So many wonderful types of food were brought to the potluck, from all around the world!



Hoping your holiday season in 2019 was warm and full of friendship and happiness!

Kym Green Bush Pruning

By Deborah Oisboid

At our November meeting, Steve Murray mentioned the Kym Green Bush method of fruit tree pruning. This method, also known as KGB, was developed by Kym Green of Australia. It was originally developed for cherry production. The earliest internet mention that I could find of KGB was 2005, when Green shared his philosophy at an agricultural event in Pasco, Washington.

Cherries grow in clusters on vertical (not horizontal) branches. The leaders have more sap flow, nutrients and water than lateral limbs and thus grow larger, firmer and better cherries. Harvesting with ladders or platforms is expensive as well as time- and labor-intensive. KGB offers easier harvesting without the use of climbing equipment.

According to Matthew Whiting, a Washington State University plant physiologist, the biggest challenge with this pruning method is achieving uniform vigor among the verticals and getting the right balance of uprights per tree so they are neither excessively vigorous nor weak in annual growth.

To prune à la Kim Green, the tree's top and primary leads are removed, allowing light to reach the inner branches. This also encourages the growth of flexible young branches of equal vigor growing evenly vertically around the trunk. Green recommends thumb-size diameter limbs.

The young branches are kept at 12 feet maximum height. This makes harvesting easier, as the branches can be bent down without damage. This is a huge advantage over crops which require ladders or platforms for harvest.

The only permanent structure in the KGB system is the base of the tree.

There is an excellent tutorial on KGB in https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/cherry_training_systems_e3247.pdf

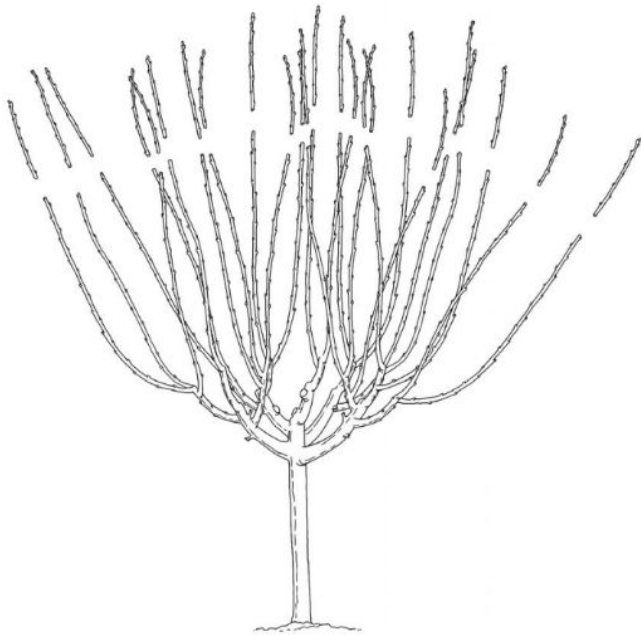


Figure 8

Image from Cherry Training Systems showing pruning on a 3rd year tree

Other Kym Green resources:

https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/a-believer-in-kgb-cherries/article_57023a78-c65b-56f6-9280-0c96139b61cf.html

<https://www.goodfruit.com/manage-light-for-high-quality-fruit/>

Secret Sauce, Part 1

What's your favorite way to eat your best home-grown produce? These two recipes were both taste-tested at the November 2019 CRFG meeting, with great enthusiasm!

WINTER SQUASH WITH DUKKAH

From Brad Golstein

SQUASH:

- 2 large acorn squash, halved across the equator, seeds removed
- 1 cube butter
- 2-4 Tablespoons honey
- chopped parsley, lemon wedges

DUKKAH:

- ½ cup pistachio nutmeats
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
- ¼ teaspoon fennel seeds
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Score the inside of the squash with lines about every 1.5 inches apart. Butter each half with a tablespoon of butter and place face down on tin foil or parchment paper atop a baking sheet. Bake at 350 until soft and caramelized, about 45 minutes.

In the meantime, brown the remaining half cube of butter, add the honey.

To serve, place a hot squash half right side up, sprinkle with dukkah, then drizzle with brown butter/honey mixture. Top with chopped parsley, serve with lemon wedge.

To make the dukkah, toast the pistachios for about three minutes, add to a processor or blender. Put the cumin, coriander, fennel, salt and pepper in the same skillet and toast until fragrant, also about three minutes. Add them to the nutmeats, and pulse until coarse.

Serves 4 as a main dish, or cut squash into wedges and serve 12 as a side dish. You can use any winter squash, it's just that acorn makes a nice size for individual servings.

This is vegetarian; to make it vegan, replace the butter with margarine or olive oil.

PERSIMMON-SPICE CAKE

From Deborah Oisboid

Note: Freeze and defrost Persimmons for this, it makes them perfectly soft for peeling and mashing.

- 4 – 6 formerly frozen, defrosted ripe persimmons
- 1 tsp Baking soda
- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1-3/4 cup flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp each: cloves, nutmeg, ginger
- Lemon zest
- ½ cup walnuts or raisins (optional)

Peel Persimmons and mash together. Add baking soda. (It will turn into a gel.)

Beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg. Alternately add sifted dry ingredients with persimmon mix, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Add zest. Add nuts or raisins if desired.

Spoon into greased 9" cake pan or loaf pan.

Bake 350F for 40 minutes or until a knife comes out clean. Can be made vegan by substituting 1-1/2 TBS soy flour for the egg, and adding ½ tsp baking powder to the dry ingredients.

Editor's Column (With Classifieds!)

WANTED: SUCCESSES

Kathleen Doran, CRFG member and member of the Master Gardener Speaker's Bureau is asking for your most successful methods in dealing with garden pests (mammals and birds)? Please contact her at katsacco@att.net with your success stories. She will be

giving a "Critters In Your Garden" presentation around the middle of 2020. The newsletter will publish the date and location(s) as they become available.

OFFER: GARDEN COMPETITION

CRFG-LA Member Serge Shammas, who has moved to Greece but still joins us when he can, is looking for garden designs. His "competition" to plot out fruit tree locations in new garden is still open, and will continue until about February. His climate is that of Athens, Greece. He would love to get CRFG members' ideas! Members who submit the winning design / suggestion will get \$100 donated to the chapter in their name(s). If you are interested, please contact the newsletter Editor or Karen Payton, or write to editor@crfg-la.org or treasurer@crfg-la.org. We can provide you Serge's contact information and a copy of his property sketch (approximately 140 ft x 180 ft trapezoid) to lay out an ideal garden.

WANTED: Volunteers for the 2020 Nature Fest

CRFG-LA is once again hosting a table at the Natural History Museum Nature Fest the weekend of March 14 – 15, 2020. This time we have permission to distribute plants in addition to telling people how much fun it is to grow your own rare fruits and demonstrate grafting techniques. People interested in helping out at the table should talk with Emory Walton (see green banner on sheet 1 for contact information).

RECOMMENDED: Tropical fruit (seed) source

You might want to check out Tradewinds (www.tradewindsfruit.com/tropical-fruit) for an astonishing (and fairly expensive) listing of more tropical fruit (seeds) than even the most dedicated CRFG member has attempted to grow. I think it is a site that CRFG members would find of interest.

-Joan Citron

WANTED: SECRETS

In 2020 I'd like to include delicious garden recipes that you, the membership of CRFG, really love to use. If you're willing to share, please send your favorite recipe to editor@crfg-la.org. Thanks in advance and I hope to hear from you!

-Deborah Oisboid, Editor

Have a suggestion? A question? A story to share? Send it to editor@crfg-la.org and see it published here!