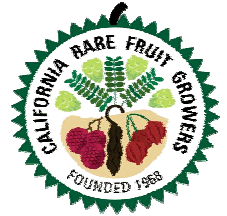


# YEAR OF THE OLIVE

## LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

March 2009

Volume XII Issue 2



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

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### March Meeting

Date: Saturday, March 28, 2009

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Sepulveda Garden Center  
16622 Magnolia Blvd., Encino, CA. 91316

**Program:** - Don Nishiguchi, Southern Pacific Region Local Produce Buyer for Whole Foods Market, will address our March meeting. Don buys the produce for 38 stores, from Thousand Oaks and Valencia to San Diego, including some in Nevada and Arizona. He will discuss how any of us might become a produce vendor for Whole Foods. He is already familiar with some growers among our membership. Don also can connect us with other potential buyers for fruits and vegetables we grow. He welcomes questions, so come with yours!

**\*Short Board Meeting to follow\* (All are welcome to attend)**

Those whose last name begin with A-M please bring something for our tasting table to the March Meeting

### April Meeting

Date: Saturday, April 25, 2009

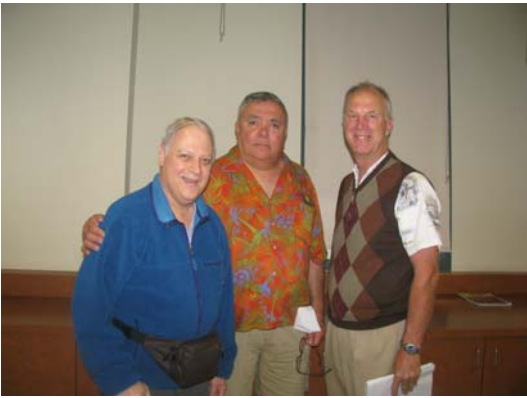
Time: 10 am

Place: Gerry Katz' garden at 501 E. La Loma; Somis, CA 93066 (805) 485-1822

**A pot luck will follow the meeting, so bring your salads, desserts etc. We will provide sandwiches and paper goods as well as drinks.**

Gerry Katz will open up his garden to us. You may remember visiting his home in Somis about 6 or 7 years ago. It was great then, it is fantastic now! What a collection of fruit he has and so beautifully landscaped. Some of the unusual stuff he has is a Chilean wine plum that is delicious, canistel, goji berries, wampi, and then there is jojoba, sapodilla longans, papayas, a crab apple from Russian that you can actually eat. The list could take up this page, but just join us for the tour and see all the marvels for yourself.

**Directions:** From the San Fernando Valley take the 101 North. Exit at Lewis Rd and make a right turn at the off ramp and a left on to Lewis Rd. (Lewis Rd will change names to Somis Rd.) Go about 4 miles to LA Ave/118 and make a left. In about 3 miles, at Price Rd make a right turn. Go almost 2 miles to E. La Loma and make a left. In about a mile you will see a mailbox with the address, 501. (There will also be a sign that says Sporthorse Int'l) It will be on the right hand side. Turn up into the driveway and go to the top. You will come to a stop sign, turn right and then left at 501 E. La Loma. I would recommend that as many as you that can, car pool. It will make it easier on the parking. Wear comfortable walking shoes-it is an easy walk, but there is a lot to see.



**Bob Goldsmith, Jorge Pelaez, Bill Brandt**

## **Thank you Jorge, Welcome Bill**

It is with great pleasure that we welcome **Bill Brandt** as our new Chairman and thank **Jorge Pelaez** for his leadership the past two years. Our members will continue their support under our new leadership and work hard to make our Chapter not only informative but a fun experience as well!

## **AND NOW A LITTLE ABOUT BILL**

**Bill Brandt** started growing fruit trees at 24 years of age at his first home and has never stopped. The usual citrus, stone fruits, apples, figs, cherry, and almonds and a mixture of

Vegetables were among his first endeavors. Inspired by **Bob** and **Cathy Vieth** in about 2000, he decided to spice up his gardening life by adding rare fruits **CRFG** style. He added mangoes (most have died of frost etc.), succeeded with avocado, but his big success is his lychees. After three years in the ground one gave him 19 lychees! This year two of his three trees are blossoming and he hopes to see fruit on both. **Bill** also added pears and cherries again with varied success. **Bill** is looking forward to the Chapter visiting his garden in June, but warns not to expect the sensational gardens of those with huge numbers of trees. He has about 22, some noteworthy, some less so. **Bill** looks forward to adding his voice to the leadership of this marvelous organization!

## **Kumquats: Sweet-tarts of the citrus rodeo**

**The perplexing fruit -- yes, you eat the rind too -- is finding respect with cooks and specialty growers alike.**

**By David Karp ( February 25, 2009 Los Angeles Times)**  
Reporting from Fallbrook — Growing up in Los Angeles in the 1960s, my brother and I knew just what to do with kumquats from the potted tree on the patio: We tossed them at each other. Like most Californians, we never ate them.

Kumquats do present a challenge for the uninitiated. In

most citrus, the juicy pulp is consumed and the peel discarded. Kumquats, however, are eaten whole, and their appeal stems from the contrast between their tart flesh and thick, sweet rind.

But maybe folks are finally catching on. Without much fanfare, more and more kumquats are being grown in California, which now leads the nation in production. Granted, it's still a minor crop compared to other citrus, but chefs and home cooks alike are giving kumquats more respect, and specialty growers are planting intriguing, previously rare varieties.

Kumquats are intense, complex flavor bombs. Trained sensory analysts detect a fresh, citrusy odor and pungent taste to begin, followed by green and woody notes, with a persistent oily undertone and a sweet, apricot-like aftertaste. A few years ago, a Korean flavor chemist determined that the component that imparts the fruit's distinctive spicy aroma is an ester, present in minute quantities, called citronellyl acetate.

Northern San Diego County, where many farms focus on specialty crops, is the nation's top production area, with 71 acres of kumquats, mostly in small plantings. The local season starts in January and runs through June, but kumquats are at their best, fully ripe yet still firm, from now through April.

The fruit's biggest booster may be Helene Beck of Fallbrook, a.k.a. "Miss Kumquat," who grows several hundred of the trees with her husband, Robert. She sells kumquats wholesale and online, along with kumquat syrup, purée, preserves and fruit leather, and is working on a book of recipes.

"Even here in Fallbrook, many people still don't know what to do with them," she says, offering a plate of freshly baked kumquat cookies.

The view from her Tuscan-style hilltop villa, flanked by cypress trees, evokes an old-world vineyard and chateau. Below in the kumquat orchard, the lush green trees sparkle with bright orange fruit, which two workers painstakingly clip into canvas sacks.

Chefs prize kumquats' pungency, chewy texture and sheer beauty. Breanne Varela, pastry chef at Lucques and AOC, is planning a dessert of yogurt panna cotta served with candied kumquats, Cocktail grapefruit and blood oranges. Zoe Nathan at Rustic Canyon combines kumquats with crème fraîche for an ice cream that she serves by itself or with cornmeal pound cake.

### **Origin in Asia**

Kumquats are native to China, where they are eaten fresh, made into preserves, used for religious offerings and grown as ornamental plants. They are popularly

considered citrus -- and were even first classified as members of the *Citrus* genus after the Scottish botanist Robert Fortune brought the first kumquat plant to Europe in 1846. But in 1915, the great scientist Walter T. Swingle established a new genus, *Fortunella*, for kumquats, based on structural differences in their flowers, leaves and fruits, compared with those of other *Citrus*.

Molecular sequence analyses, which in theory could determine how close kumquats are to *Citrus* genetically, have differed in their conclusions, depending on the methods used. A British botanist, David J. Mabberley, proposed reuniting kumquats taxonomically with *Citrus* in 1998, but Swingle's system is still more generally accepted among scientists, at least partly because they don't want the inconvenience and confusion of changing names.

Kumquats arrived in California about 1880, long after other citrus, and for many years, Florida dominated production, primarily in the gift-package trade; in California, kumquats were grown almost exclusively as ornamental plants. The 1950 census listed 180 acres of kumquats in Florida, just one in California. But starting in the late 1960s, increased Asian immigration to

California spurred demand and prices for kumquats.

"The market was so hot for [kumquats] in the '80s, we used to send crews to harvest home garden trees," recalls Lloyd Bittner, manager of the Cal Flavor packing house in Escondido, which was at the center of the boom.

Eventually, supply exceeded demand, Bittner says. "People would call up to ask, 'Hey, are you coming to pick my kumquats this year?' But we had all that we could sell."

Today, California has 133 acres of kumquats, and Florida has 46, mostly near Dade City, northeast of Tampa. Shippers estimate that 80% of the crop goes to Asian Americans, and that 90% is the standard oval Nagami variety, with bright orange, spicy-sweet skin and tart pulp.

In the last decade, however, the roundish Meiwa variety, the best for eating fresh, has become more available. Introduced from Japan about 1910, after the Nagami variety, it is larger, with a thicker, sweeter skin, and the juice is less sour; when fully ripe it can have a wonderful tropical banana flavor.

Long popular in home gardens, it had not been planted much commercially because of its slower, less vigorous growth, incompatibility with some common rootstocks and the shorter shelf life of its fruit.

These drawbacks sound daunting, but in De Luz, a gorgeous, pristine area of citrus and avocado groves and chaparral north of Fallbrook, two growers, Juan Garcia and George Cunningham, have thrived planting Meiwas. "I sell 10-pound boxes of Nagami for \$22, but Meiwa for \$31," Cunningham says. "Meiwas just fly out of here."

Normally, other farmers would jump at such a lucrative opportunity, but citrus growers in San Diego County have suffered such catastrophic ordeals recently -- fires, irrigation water cutbacks and the threat of deadly greening disease -- that few are planting new citrus these days.

In the southeastern San Joaquin Valley, the state's largest commercial citrus district, kumquats are rare, but several niche growers offer exotic kumquats and hybrids.

The most potentially significant, although planted in only small quantities so far, is the Nordmann Seedless. It was discovered by George Otto Nordmann on a Nagami seedling in DeLand, Fla., in 1965. With a teardrop shape and a slightly thinner, paler skin (probably caused by the absence of plant hormones from the seeds), it looks a little different from the Nagami but has much the same flavor. Its primary appeal is its lack of seeds.

That's right, a seedless kumquat. For anyone who has ever grappled with a large batch of the fruit, that is major news. Tiny as they are, kumquats typically have two to five seeds, and removing them is tedious. D.J. Olsen, chef of wine bar Lou in Hollywood, which serves sliced candied Meiwas from Garcia with *burrata*, speck and *vincotto*, says his kitchen help groans when he brings in a box of kumquats for de-seeding. "They say, 'I did it last time, so it's your turn,'" he says. After tasting a Nordmann recently at the Santa Monica Farmers Market, Olsen said: "I'd buy that in a heartbeat."

Other seedless varieties exist in Texas and Asia, and it seems likely that in time, they will become common.

Kumquats ripen peculiarly late in the San Joaquin Valley -- as late as March in some locations. To supply the market for Chinese New Year, which can fall from late January to mid-February, several growers have planted Fukushu, which is large, round and juicy, and matures around Christmas. It is sold as a kumquat but is actually a hybrid with mandarin.

"Asians love them, and marmalade companies get into bidding wars for them," says Mike Foskett of California Citrus Specialties, who has 300 Fukushu trees.

## SPEAKING OF KUMQUATS

(Thanks to Herb & Anita Drapkin we have this delicious recipe)

### Kumquat (Meiwa) Freezer Jam

#### Ingredients:

3 cups finely chopped fruits

4 ½ cups sugar

1 pkg pectin (Mix pectin in ¾ c water and let boil for 1 minute)

#### Directions:

Cut fruit in half and remove large seeds. Chop very fine. Add sugar and mix for 10 minutes. Add pectin as prepared above, Pour into containers and let sit over night (24 hrs)

Makes 5-6 containers

## Welcome new member

We want to welcome back **Frank Califa**, who has already joined us for many meetings. Welcome to our new members who include **Daisy** and **Tim Odell, Stuart Longin**, and **Llyswen** (pronounced “Leewin”) **Franks**. We are delighted to have such delightful and enthusiastic people join our group.

## PIERCE COLLEGE ANNUAL FARMWALK

**Mark this date on your calendar.** As in the past our **LA Chapter** will have a booth there to demonstrate grafting, and to promote an interest in our organization. We welcome volunteers to come spend the day or a few hours with us.

**Date/Time:** Sunday, April 19th / 9:30 am to 4:00

**Place:** Pierce College, 6201 Winnetka Av, Woodland Hills 91371 Victory /Mason

### Ten things that will save the most water

**1. Water your lawn only when it needs it.** Step on your grass. If it springs back, when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water. So set your sprinklers for more days in between watering. Saves **750-1,500 gallons** per month. Better yet, especially in times of drought, water with a hose. And best of all, convert your lawn to native plants.

**2. Fix leaky faucets and plumbing joints.** Saves up to **600 gallons** per month for every leak stopped.

**3. Don't run the hose while washing your car.** Use a bucket of water and a quick hose rinse at the end. Saves **150 gallons** each time. For a two-car family that's up to **1,200 gallons** a month.

**4. Install water-saving shower heads or flow**

**restrictors.** Saves **500 to 800 gallons** per month.

**5. Run only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher.** Saves **300 to 800 gallons** per month.

**6. Shorten your showers.** Even a one or two minute reduction can save up to **700 gallons** per month.

**7. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.** Saves 150 gallons or more each time. At once a week, that's more than **600 gallons** a month.

**8. Don't use your toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket.** Saves **400 to 600 gallons** per month.

**9. Capture tap water.** While you wait for hot water to come down the pipes, catch the flow in a watering can to use later on house plants or your garden. Saves **200 to 300 gallons** per month.

**10. Don't water the sidewalks, driveway, or gutter.** Adjust your sprinklers so that water lands on your lawn or garden where it belongs--and only there. Saves **500 gallons** per month

Some more great tips from **Candace Rumenapp:**

**11. Use organic soil, compost or garden waste** which naturally conserves moisture.

**12. Mulch, Mulch and more Mulch.** Even flat sections of non colored newspaper or wet shredded newspaper; leaves, pine shreds, hay etc.

**13. Place smaller containers under trees.** When watered the water and nutrients will also water the tree below.

**14. Use the Polyethylene beads mixed in soil**

**15. Paint your black pots white.** Small black pots actually cook roots in hot valley temp.



**Bob Vieth, Emory Walton, Daryl McMurrin, with students from Santa Paula High School.**

The high school grafting program is underway. Thanks to all of those LA Chapter members who participate in bringing this program to the high schools. Under the guidance of **Bob Vieth, Lynn Maxon, Dick Watts, Emory Walton, Michael Zarky, Daryl McMurrin** and **Edgar Valdivia** are part of this year's team.