



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2019 Volume XXIV Issue 2

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

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FIELD TRIP: Sylmar High
Date: March 16, 2019 at 9:00 am
***** PLEASE NOTE THE EARLY START TIME!!!**
Place: Sylmar High School
13050 Borden Ave., Sylmar, CA, 91342
Program: Fruit Tree Symposium
by Dan Nelson from La Verne Nursery.

Our annual visit to Sylmar High School: tours of Sylmar High School's agricultural gardens and hothouse, followed by the Fruit Tree Symposium by Dan Nelson, and concluding with a tree auction, with fabulous plants provided by the school and by local nurseries.

Potluck to follow. All members, please bring a dish that serves 8-10 people. Remember, students will be joining us.

EVENT: L.A. Nature Fest
Date: Saturday - Sunday, March 16 - 17
9:30 am - 5:00 pm
Place: L.A. Natural History Museum
900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90007
Program: CRFG is hosting a table at the L.A. Nature Fest, and spreading the word about growing great-tasting fruit at home. This two-day festival celebrates L.A.'s wild side! There's a surprising amount of nature in Los Angeles, and the more you know how to look for it, the more you'll see. Free with paid Museum admission or with Museum Membership. \$15 for adults, \$12 for Seniors/students, \$7 for children, free for ages 2 and under. Use Expo Park/USC or Expo/Vermont stops if riding the Metro. There is paid parking if street parking is not available.
<https://nhm.org/site/activities-programs/la-nature-fest>

FIELD TRIP: Home of Jerry Schwartz - MEMBERS ONLY, PLEASE
Date: April 27, 2019 at 10:00 am
Place: Private home in Northridge
Program: Welcome to the fruit jungle in Sherwood Forest. Here is a sampling of what you will see: Raised veggie beds and over 200 fruit trees fill the jungle. Among the trees are over 60 varieties of citrus, 11 varieties of persimmons, 20 pomegranates, 7 loquats, over 30 stone fruits, cherries, 8 pitangas, a grumichama, mulberry, a che, acerolas, sugar cane, 4 pawpaws, figs, a pineapple, tropical and strawberry guavas, a cherry of the Rio Grande, avocados, a Yerba Mate, pitahayas, grapes, passion fruit, a canistel, a Korean cherry, and many, many more. All are very densely planted. When arriving at the jungle, pass the cow and stop at the pig. Remember this is someone's home, please do not bring pets or children. Potluck to follow: All attendees, please bring a dish to serve 8-10 people.

SAVE THE DATES -

CALENDAR FOR 2019 LA CHAPTER

- May 25 Sepulveda Gardens - Oleg Daugovich Ph.D - Blackberries & Raspberries
- June 22 Field Trip - Jesus Alvarez
- July 27 Sepulveda Gardens - Steve Murray
- August 24 Field Trip
- September 28 Sepulveda Gardens - David Karp
- October 26 Field Trip - Lewis Perkins
- November 23 Field Trip
- December 14 Sepulveda Gardens

Words From Our Chairman



I always enjoy our meetings and watching how they unfold and how each member takes away different information from our speakers. At our February meeting keynote speaker Dario Grossburger gave a great presentation on cherimoyas. Several new members attended who had learned about our meeting from a notification presented in the Los Angeles Times about things to do in the garden in February. I think everyone who attended learned quite a bit about cherimoyas, and I think now we have confidence to grow cherimoyas and pollinate them ourselves in our gardens.

The members of our neighboring Foothill chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers will be presenting the state-wide Festival of Fruit in August. I encourage our Los Angeles chapter members to provide as much assistance as possible to the chapter and help it be successful.

Our March meeting takes us to Sylmar High School once again for our annual Fruit Tree symposium. This year Dan Nelson of La Verne Nursery will be doing a presentation on growing and tending fruit trees. Those who have attended our tours of La Verne nursery in Piru in the past know how much knowledge Dan has on growing fruit trees. La Verne is one of the premier growers and sellers of fruit trees in California, and this will be an opportunity to purchase fruit trees to take home. We will also have opportunities to tour the grounds of Sylmar High School's horticultural department run by instructor Steve List. Steve has been a long time supporter of our CRFG chapter and we are proud to be able to support his students with donations from our chapter members. Please come prepared with cash to

purchase raffle tickets to win fruit trees and other garden items you'll be able to take home.

Later that day, and on Sunday, you have an opportunity to go to the LA Nature Fest and enjoy the day at the Los Angeles Natural History Museum.

Reading about our April garden tour at the home of Jerry Schwartz, it's hard not to get excited. His incredible variety of fruit trees is going to be inspiring for all of us.

I'm sure all of our gardens will be flourishing with the abundance of rain and the upcoming warmer spring weather.

Tony

LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

January Meeting

This year's annual Scion Exchange had tremendous attendance! Well over 150 people were there sharing, discussing and examining the multitude of cuttings available. People who brought scions were given a sticker and got first pick when the tables were opened. But first, some business.

Chapter announcements were made by our Chairman, Tony Stewart, followed by a request for membership dues and proxy voting for officers. Bill Brandt showed us how to do vee grafting, and Paco Frausto offered a different view of grafting - on dragonfruit! Instead of cutting an entire branch off, only the spiky eyes are wedged into a notch before being gently bound in place.



And then...the tables were open! Overflowing with cuttings from stone fruits, figs, grapes, jujubes, persimmons, mulberries, pomegranates, apples, pears,

guava, and elderberry, plus some more unusual offerings such as Raisin tree, Wax apple, Tree collard, Jelly vine, and moringa and cotton seeds.

The Silent Auction took place after the food tables were emptied, with figs, dragonfruit, and grafting tape among the offerings.

Many thanks to everyone who participated and made this year's exchange such a success!

February Meeting

What a busy February! There were close to 100 attendees at the meeting, so we started off with a brief introduction of members and where they garden. Several important announcements were made, including a request to please send in your CRFG officer ballot, and a solicitation on behalf of this year's Festival of Fruit (sponsored by the Foothill CRFG chapter and to be held at the Arboretum in August).

Finally the main course: Dario Grossberger who spoke about cherimoyas. He presented a huge amount of information, beginning at the very beginning with the origin of cherimoya. It was once thought to come from Peru but it is now believed to originate closer to Central America.



Cherimoyas prefer a coastal climate, and are related to atemoya (anona, sugar apple, and pond apple) as well as to pawpaw. Dario talked about cross breeding cherimoya and attempts to develop a seedless, or mostly seedless, variety. He described over a dozen varieties of the fruit. We learned about flower shape and gender, plant genetics and biology, pollination, grafting, pruning, propagation, watering, and methods for improving fruit production. And even after all of

that there were dozens of questions, which Dario patiently answered for quite a long time.

The meeting ended with our wonderful potluck table and then The Cherimoya Raffle Par Excellence! Dario donated a huge box full of cherimoyas and the fruit was raffled off, one at a time, to those who had purchased tickets earlier.

It was an incredibly informative, and quite tasty, presentation. Many thanks to Dario for teaching us so much about this fascinating fabulous fruit!

An Unexpected Greenery

By Deborah Oisboid

Hobbiton, as you know, is the home of Bilbo Baggins, Esquire. If you get a chance to visit the place in person, do it! It's a tourist attraction on the north island of New Zealand, near the town of Matamata, and I can honestly report it's a beautiful, idyllic location to visit.

What's more, it has real gardens and real fruit trees!

My son and I visited New Zealand the previous winter (at the peak of their summer season) and Hobbiton was one of our favorite tours. It was originally built for filming *The Lord of the Rings*: Peter Jackson saw the farm with its gently rolling hills and thought it matched the story's concept perfectly.

The original Shire was a temporary thing, and was torn down after the trilogy filming ended. However, they rebuilt it for the movie *The Hobbit* in 2010 as a permanent exhibit.

Hobbiton covers nearly 12 acres and contains some 40-plus hobbit "holes". Most of these are elegant facades, and a few are simple round wooden doors inset into the hill and partially hidden by overgrown "weeds". Only a few doors open and none enter the hillside more than a few feet. (Actual interior filming was done at a studio.)

There are signs pointing to "Underhill" and "The Shire". There are woven hedgerow fences. There is a giant oak Tree atop the hill above Bag End. (Spoiler alert: it's fake!)

Each "house" has its own character and most have gardens as well. More than the incredible detail and the lush green hills all around, I was fascinated by the gardens.

One was all wildflowers – and it was the first time I'd ever seen a valerian flower. Several houses had vegetable gardens, with leeks and carrots and many other root vegetables. But there were also sunflowers, beans, and herbs a-plenty: nasturtiums, borage, lemon balm and comfrey.

I spoke with one of the employees working in the gardens. He said most of the plants are typical English varieties, to

match the Tolkien vision. I was a bit sad not to see any New Zealand plants in the cultivated areas, but I had to admit the English ones were certainly thriving! And in between the burrows, among the valleys and woods, are plenty of natives to admire.

I later learned some of the plants are grown at an off-site nursery. Also, many edible plants are deliberately let go to seed to bring in bees and butterflies. I learned the goal is not to maintain pristine gardens, but to have a more romantic and relaxed style, since hobbits are mellow and easy-going folk.

Of particular interest to me were the trees. Outside Bag End itself was a small apple tree, possibly crabapple. Its thin, bending branches were heavily covered with fruit. It was very tempting to ask for a graftable cutting, but I resisted the urge. (Darn it.)

Then there was Pippin's grove. Although Tolkien described children playing among plum trees, this one had apples and pears. I remember a particular heirloom type of pear with brown skin and a long, thin neck – and it was only slightly larger around than a fat plum anyway. For the movies they stripped all the pears off the trees and attached (fake!!) plums instead. And then never used that scene at all. Poor little pears!

Fortunately, all the wonderful food doesn't go to waste. The garden produce is used in the kitchens of the Green Dragon, which is the last stop – and the most delicious part! - of the tour.



Pear Tree in Pippin's Orchard

To learn more about the gardens of Hobbiton, go to <https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/homed/garden/98175593/gardening-on-middle-earth>

Secret Source

By Deborah Oisboid

Where is your favorite place to get new plants? The CRFG scion exchange in January is my absolute favorite, of course!

Second on my list is the Sylmar High School agriculture department. They have a truly impressive program, started from scratch about 12 years ago, which has grown into an amazing cornucopia: greenhouses with trays of seedlings, stands of fruit trees, a very active chicken coop, water gardens, and more. They share with the community, too. They give free vegetable and fruit and herb plants out to neighbors and show people how to grow them for themselves. They compost the food from their own cafeteria. But you'll see for yourself at the March tour.

Third on my favorites list is City Plants. City Plants is a continuation of LA's former tree planting program, Million Trees LA. Their mission is "to grow a greener future for Los Angeles by engaging Angelenos to plant and care for trees throughout the City." They partner with the City of Los Angeles, and six other non-profits, to distribute 20,000 trees each year. I love getting free trees at their "adoption" events. This is where I obtained several of my stock trees for grafting. Sadly, City Plants only has shade tree adoption events this year. Still, it's nice to get free trees! Check out the adoption calendar at <https://www.cityplants.org/calendar/> to find your nearest event. Remember to bring proof of being a DWP customer, such as a water & power bill with your address on it.

Believe it or not, Craigslist is a decent place to find plants. Some very fine plants are sold in the "Farm and Garden" section (<https://losangeles.craigslist.org/search/gra>). The prices can sometimes be expensive. Since my favorite pricing is free, I prefer the "Free" section (<https://losangeles.craigslist.org/search/sfv/zip>). You can also search for "plant," "tree," "cactus," or whatever you're interested in. Just accept that it might take a while, be patient, and you may end up with something that isn't exactly what you were after but is just what you want. Also, the "Free" section may be safer – you're less likely to get taken by a con artist when you aren't paying them anything.

In the next issue, I'd like to introduce you to a few of my favorite (local) nurseries.

Letter From the Editor

If you're willing to share your secret, what is your favorite place (nursery, hardware store, grocery, discount shop, etc.) to buy new plants, and why? I would love to include it in a series of articles with great tips on the best plant sources. Please send your ideas 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!
