



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2020 Volume XXV Issue 2

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

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SPECIAL EVENT: L.A. Nature Fest

Date: Saturday - Sunday, March 14 - 15
9:30 am - 5:00 pm

Place: L.A. Natural History Museum
900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90007

Program: CRFG is again hosting a table at the L.A. Nature Fest, to share the delights of growing great-tasting fruit at home. This two-day festival celebrates L.A.'s wild side! We hope to hand out "free samples" of edible fruit and live plants, as well as demonstrate grafting techniques. 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: March 21, 2020 at 9:00 am

***** PLEASE NOTE THE EARLY START TIME!!!**

Place: Sylmar High School

Program: "The Tony Stewart Memorial Tree Symposium"
Panel of Experts: Steve List of Sylmar High School, Dan Nelson of La Verne Nursery, Elliott Kuhn of Cottonwood Urban Farm.
Moderated by Jim Schopper.

Tours of Sylmar High School's agricultural gardens and hothouse, followed by the Fruit Tree Symposium, and concluding with a tree auction, with plants provided by the school and by local nurseries.

The Symposium will empanel three experts in unique fields of interest to answer your gardening questions: Steve List, head of the Sylmar High School Agriculture Department and leader of the Urban Gardening Workshop; Dan Nelson, Director of Operations at La Verne Nursery in Piru; and Elliott Kuhn, educator and the Owner/Cultivator of Cottonwood Urban Farm in Panorama City. Questions will be moderated by CRFG-LA's own Jim Schopper.

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

FIELD TRIP: Farm tour in Bakersfield

Date: April 25, Please arrive by 10:00 am

Place: Murray Farms

Meet at the Little Purple Barn

Program: Steven Murray was our CRFG-LA guest speaker in November 2019, when he told us about rare fruits he sought around the world. He helped change Murray Family Farms' business, selling to farmers markets and encouraging agritourism at locations in California's Southern San Joaquin Valley. He graduated from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and is the son of Steve and Vickie Murray. Murray Farms specializes in cherries, berries, peaches, plums, nectarines. But there is so much more to see. The drive will be well worth it! It will be best if you can car pool. Those of you who plan on going, talk to each other at our March meeting at Sylmar High School and see if you can ride together.

SAVE THE DATES -

CALENDAR FOR 2020 LA CHAPTER

- May 30 Sepulveda Gardens - John Chater - Pomegranates
- June 27 Field Trip- Dr Kiewiet and Kelly Gabysch
- July 25 Sepulveda Gardens - Dave King
- August 14-16 Festival of Fruit, Santa Rosa (no CRFG meeting)
- September 26 Sepulveda Gardens - TBA
- October 24 Field Trip - TBA
- November 21 Field Trip - TBA
- December 19 Sepulveda Gardens - Holiday Party

Words From Our Chairman

By Jerry Schwartz



It's a great time of the year for fruit lovers. Citrus are ripening with yellow red and orange fruit hanging from trees. After a good chill year, blossoms of deciduous trees abound. I'm looking to have a great crop this year. Especially on multiple Pluerry (plum-cherry) trees!

In my fruit heaven, squares don't exist.

I was looking for a new Pluerry™ release from Dave Wilson Nursery and found it at Sego Nursery in Valley Village. Sego is an old family nursery with an amazing selection of fruit trees, in five, seven, and fifteen gallon sizes. Trees are cramped together and the aisles are very narrow and long.

The operation of the nursery is amazing. One enters a cramped, old building and at an old wooden counter there stands the family. Tell them what you're looking for and the price you want to pay. They open a book which lists product sizes and cost. No computers!

When I went, I was escorted from the counter to the tree area and shown my preferred varieties. I chose my trees, and went back to the office to pay for them. The family member then wrote a paper receipt. When I got back to my truck the trees were already loaded. The only change the nursery has made in 80 years is accepting bank card payments.

Jerry

LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

January Meeting

An impressive crowd of over 150 people attended the first meeting of the new year. Our new president, Jerry Schwartz, started by asking new members to

introduce themselves. Many joined because they were interested in particular fruits, such as figs, pawpaw, or passionfruit. Some had questions which were answered by other members, such as how well Sweet Granadilla (passionfruit) grows here in Los Angeles. (Answer: Quite well, although the flavor won't be as spectacular as those grown in Costa Rica.)

A few club announcements were made. The Festival of Fruit will take place in Santa Rosa the weekend of August 14 - 16 this year.

Bill Brandt went over the key points of grafting: line up the living cambium layer between



rootstock and scion. Cover the scion, especially tropical fruit, with parafilm or other material to prevent it from drying out. He also demonstrated the

cleft graft method on a live tree. After that came additional advice from other CRFG members: Disinfect your tools using a 10% bleach solution, not soap. Use an acrylic marker instead of a Sharpie because Sharpies fade over time. Store scions in the fridge but don't add a moist paper towel with figs because they want to be dry. The Orange County CRFG chapter has a grafting DVD available on their website. (<https://ocfruit.com/Media.php>)



At last it was time to sample the huge scion selection, spread out among a dozen tables. Apples, pears (both Asian and European varieties), stone fruit, mulberries, persimmons, pomegranates, medlar, sapote, figs, grapes, elderberry, che, yakon, passionfruit, jujube and others were available. And a delightful snack

table kept everyone's energy up while they searched for the perfect varieties to add to their gardens. A fine time was had by all. Many, many thanks to all who donated plant materials to our successful Scion Exchange!

February Meeting

February's meeting had fewer attendees than January but was no less lively. Chairman Jerry Schwartz reminded us that CRFG, Inc. voting is still ongoing, and handed out ballots for those who didn't have one yet.

Emory Walton asked for volunteers to work the CRFG booth at the L.A. Naturefest at the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History on March 14 - 15. (See front page event list. Please contact Emory at historian@CRFG-LA.org if you're interested.)

New members were asked to introduce themselves.

Someone asked for sources of GOOD bulk soil for their garden. Whittier Fertilizer in Pico Rivera, American Soil in Simi Valley and Peach hill Soil in Moorpark were recommended.

Jerry asked for a show of hands to see if there is enough interest to visit Murray Family Farms in Bakersfield as a CRFG field trip. (This will be our April field trip, please try to carpool, if possible!)

Our guest of honor was Dr. Annemiek Schilder of the UC Coop Extension in Ventura County. She had a very informative presentation on "Plant Pathology 101" and covered a huge amount of information. She talked about the different types of pathogens which cause plant diseases: fungi, bacteria, viruses, nematodes (worms), and parasitic plants.

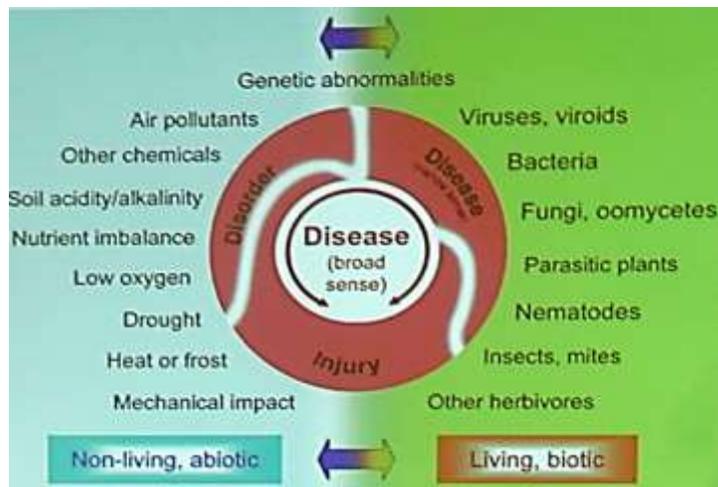
We learned the difference between fungi, bacteria, and viruses. Fungi are visible to the naked eye, grow as threads, create a single colony, reproduce by spores, and are usually spread by wind or rain.

Bacteria are smaller than fungi, are single cells which reproduce by cell division, produce many generations in a single day, generally look slimy, and are spread by vectors (other forces or animals).

Viruses are even smaller than bacteria, are basically a simple core of DNA with an outer protective protein layer, force the plant to reproduce them, are systemic (present in all cells of the plant), are spread by

infected plant parts (cuttings, seeds, pollen) or by vectors (aphids, whitefly, mites, nematodes, etc).

We learned about nematodes, which reproduce by eggs. Many are good, but the bad ones have a needle in their nose called a "stylet" to puncture plant cells.



Dr Schilder talked about specific plant diseases, such as Peach Leaf Curl, Cytospora Canker, Phytophthora and Armillaria Root Rots, and Huanglongbing (HLB).

Her information about HLB (Citrus Greening Disease) provoked many questions. If you see psyllids on your citrus, they might not be Asian, and does not mean your plant is infected. HLB symptoms do not show up for several years. Specially trained dogs can "sniff out" trees with the bacteria. Sadly, trees in Ventura County have been identified as having the bacteria but there is not yet a confirmation of the disease.

Dr. Schilder suggested that if you have a question about a plant disease, the Master Gardener Helpline is a great resource. She suggested sending photos first and to have patience. It can take days or even weeks to identify a disease. And correct identification is critical in order to provide the best treatment.

Ventura County helpline: (805) 645-1455

Los Angeles County helpline: (626) 586-1988

Or email at mglosangeleshelpline@ucdavis.edu

She also offered advice on how to manage fruit tree diseases including:

- Start by buying healthy plants
- Ensure good drainage and the proper pH
- Don't over-fertilize/overwater/wound plants
- Remove and destroy diseased plants/plant parts

- Control insects which are virus vectors
- Apply fungicides and/or biocontrol agents.

All this and more information was presented. Many questions were asked. Afterwards, there was a small plant auction, followed by a delicious potluck snack table.

We send our appreciation to Dr Schilder for her incredibly informative and educational presentation on plant pathology. We all learned a great deal from her!

Plum Bud Gall Mite (PBGM)

By Deborah Oisboid

A recent email, sent to our chapter at the beginning of this year by John Valenzuela of CRFG-Golden Gate, warned that Plum Bud Gall Mite (PBGM) has appeared in central California. For those who missed that message, this article summarizes the email and will hopefully provide some insight.

From the original message: <http://bit.ly/2FrM1OE-PBGMupdate>
 "The photos below are from plum and pluot trees infested with PBGM, now found in San Jose, Dublin (Alameda county), and in Santa Cruz. The last two locations are new findings discovered by CRFG members, after they had the opportunity to see the galls on infested trees. Let's do our best to stop them from spreading, as they are known to kill fruit/nut trees in other parts of the world." –*John Valenzuela*

Gall Mites belong to the *eriophyid* mite family. This particular species (*Acalitus phloeocoptesis*) is a gall-forming mite that is apparently restricted to the genera *Prunus* and *Cotoneaster* (stone fruit and Cotoneaster plants).

The mites are difficult to see without magnification. They are about 0.150 mm long and about 0.07 mm in diameter. (For comparison, a human hair averages .06 - .08 mm in diameter.) Their wormlike bodies are whitish in color.

Females can produce as many as 700-850 eggs per year. The nymphs colonize the base of the current year's shoots. They overwinter in the galls they form and attack new growth buds. In spring, the galls split and the mites are dispersed via wind and insects.

Injury done by these mites can vary, depending on the tree host. PBGM infestations have led to weakened trees, decreased yield, or, in some cases, the death of the tree. In other instances, trees have recovered from the mite attack, and some cultivars, such as the plum variety "Beauty," are resistant to the mites.

Because these mites are microscopic, they are usually not noticeable until their feeding has produced galls.

The mites are primarily from southern and central Europe and Asia Minor, and are a known invasive species in the eastern United States. They prefer temperate and Mediterranean climates.

PBGM was first detected in California in February 2019, with the discovery of galls on plum trees at a Morgan Hill, California orchard. At the time, there was no significant "danger" rating of the mite by the California Department of Food & Agriculture. However, the CDFA is reviewing the situation and recommending a high rating, due to the potential damage to prime California crops, such as almonds. This pest is well worth the warning!

WHAT TO DO

- **Inspect Now:** check stone fruit (plum, apricot, pluot, aprium, etc) trees and Cotoneaster species for bud galls.
- **Look for:** small (1/16 in. or 1.5mm) very round swellings of the galls, (like teeny, tiny potatoes), imitating fruit tree buds (which are more pointed, and a darker color).
- If you suspect that a tree is affected, contact your local county agriculture department. Inform them that you wish to report a Plum Bud Gall Mite pest sighting.
- Complete the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) "Report a Pest Sighting Form" online and submit via email to the CDFA Pest Hotline. <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/reportapest/form/reportapestform.pdf>
- Report a pest by calling the CDFA Pest Hotline at 1-800-491-1899
- Do not exchange any scions from infected trees!

CONTROLS

Wettable sulfur treatments in spring, when plum bud gall mites first start to emerge from their protective galls, has been effective in controlling these pests in other regions. For example, the pesticide Endosulfan, applied early in the season, was seen to reduce *Acalitus phloeocoptes* infestations by 95% in Spain.

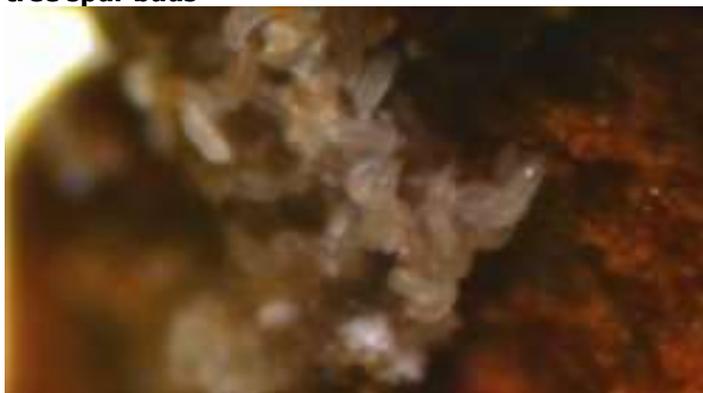
Treatments may need to be repeated, depending on the level of infestation. Note that apricot leaves are very sensitive to sulfur, so you can only treat apricot trees with sulfur before leaves emerge. Because these particular *eriophyid* mites are new to the region, we do not yet know what sort of an impact native predatory insects will have on controlling plum bud gall mite populations.



Early infestation, showing galls at the base of shoots



Later stage, with many galls in between older fruit tree spur buds



Closeup of worm-like mites. Photo by Susan Casner-Kay

(Photos were cropped to fit the newsletter format.)
Find more photos on the Santa Clara County Ag Dept PBGM info sheet 2 pages

<http://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/files/300211.pdf>

Other sources used for this article:

<http://www.crfg-central.org/Newsletters/2019/Mar/crfgccNewsletter2019Mar.html>
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/pestratings/prp/mites/acalitus_ADA.pdf
<https://www7.inra.fr/hyppz/RAVAGEUR/6acaphl.htm>
<https://bugguide.net/node/view/1643676>
http://www.agri.huji.ac.il/mepests/pest/Acalitus_phloeocoptes/

Frieda Caplan, 1923 - 2020

By Roy Imazu

Walk down the aisle of your local supermarket and you can expect to see the likes of kiwi, mango, starfruit, shiitake mushrooms, baby carrots, sugar snap peas, and other "newcomer" fruits and vegetables. This was not always the normal varieties you would see. The person given a large credit for expanding the market choices was Frieda Caplan.

She was a local girl raised in the Highland Park area by Russian immigrants. A UCLA graduate, she found a job as a bookkeeper at a produce house. She was looking for a job that had flexible hours so she could care for her two young children. When her boss went on a vacation, she was asked to help out as a cashier. Her first sale involved a large order for brown mushrooms. She had to improvise to fill the order. From there, she eventually opened her own business.

Her first claim to fame was "Chinese gooseberries," as they were known in New Zealand. It would take some 18 years for the public to fully accept what she re-named the "Kiwi fruit." Ironically, she would later become allergic to that fruit.

She founded her own company in 1962. Purple became her favorite color because the sign maker only had that color when she started her operation.

"The other people on the market were only interested in high-volume items," Ms. Caplan told The Orange County Register in 2015. "Small farmers had no place to go. Nobody was interested. So I started listening to all these small farmers."

By 2018 her business was a \$50 million-plus endeavor, with 75 full-time and 110 part-time employees in an 81,000 square foot warehouse in Los Alamitos.

"Our problem in introducing new vegetables has never been the consumer," she told The New York Times in 1979. "It's only been with the retailer who is afraid to try anything new."

The enterprise is still run by her two daughters and granddaughter. It is reported that she never learned how to cook. She was 96 when she passed away in 2020 after a brief illness.

Secret Sauce, Part 2

What's your favorite way to eat your best home-grown produce? Here are a couple of ways to preserve your favorite fruits.

MANDARIN MARMALADE

From Brad Golstein

- 2 lbs mandarins, seedless (not required to be seedless but HIGHLY recommended to save the pain of picking out the seeds)
- 2 lemons
- 4 cups water
- 5 cups sugar
- 1 box low-sugar pectin

Wash the fruit well, and scrub it with hot water and soap (if you bought it) to get rid of the wax and any other residue. Place the whole fruit and water in a Dutch oven or large saucepan and bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for 45 minutes, until tender. Let cool and finely chop the fruit, removing any seeds, but save the poaching liquid. Measure the mixture; with liquid you should have about 8 cups.

Mix pectin with 1 cup sugar. Add this to the fruit and bring to a full boil (one that does not stop when stirred with a spoon). Add the remainder of the sugar while stirring, return to a full boil and continue to boil, stirring, for one minute.

Immediately ladle into prepared fruit jars, filling until 1/8" from the top. Wipe the jar rims and seal with the tops and bands, screw on tightly. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. Remove, and cool on a cooling rack. After several hours or overnight, test by pressing down on the lid—if it springs up, you must refrigerate it.

Well-sealed jars will keep a year or more in a cool, dry place. Makes 10-11 cups.

PRESERVED FIGS

From Brad Golstein

- 2-1/4lbs fresh figs
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups water
- peel of a dried mandarin or orange and/or 1 cinnamon stick
- optional/substitute flavorings: star anise, minced ginger

Bring water and sugar to a boil, stir to dissolve the sugar. Add remaining ingredients and simmer, covered, for 1-1/2 hours. Spoon figs into bottles, pour syrup over them. Bottle and water bath like jam; should make 2 pints.

Can also add a tablespoon or two of rum to jars before sealing.

Let sit in a cool dark place at least a couple of months.

Editor's Column

(With Classifieds!)

WANTED: Writing Tool. Roy Imazu is seeking a good marker for writing plant labels. At the Scion Exchange in January, someone brought a marker described as being very permanent (eg, for writing plant labels). Roy found an acrylic based marker labeled "painter" (sic), at Joann Fabric & Craft store. He accidentally got some on his fingernail and it was still there after several days. Has anyone else used this sort of pen, if so how permanent is it? Please send feedback to editor@crfg-la.org, I will forward it to Roy.

OFFER: Memory trick. Candace Rumenapp recommends this trick which has often worked for her. If you can't remember a name or a word or a concept: hold your breath, close your eyes, squeeze both hands into very tight fists and count to ten. Candace says when you open your hands fast, the missing word often occurs to you again.

WANTED: Successes. Kathleen Doran of the Master Gardener Speaker's Bureau (and CRFG member) 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.

WANTED: Garden Designs. Serge Shammass, who has moved to Greece but still keeps in touch with CRFG-LA, is looking for designs/suggestions for his new garden in the next month or two. The climate is that of Athens, Greece. He would love for the CRFG to get involved. Members who submit the winning design / suggestion would 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.

WANTED: Favorites. In 2020 I'd like to offer special garden recipes that you, 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!