

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2020 Volume XXV Issue 3

CRFG-LA meetings at Sepulveda Garden Center are currently suspended. We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy at home at this time.

Upcoming Chapter Zoom Meetings

For those without computer or smartphone, you will miss the visuals, but you can still listen to the audio stream. Instructions will be sent as soon as we set things up.

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

2020 Chapter Officers & Committees

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L.A. MEETING: John Chater
Pomegranate: A Breeder's Perspective

Date: Saturday, May 30, 10:00 am

Zoom: Meeting link to be provided as soon as we can

Dr. John Chater is a punicultologist at the University of California, Riverside. He teaches postharvest physiology of horticultural crops at Chapman University and health science courses at Riverside City College as adjunct faculty. (His late grandfather is "The" John Chater, pomegranate expert, whom many of us have known.) John established and manages the pomegranate research and breeding program at UCR, its cultivar trials, and is currently involved in genomic and metabolomic investigations involving fruit and juice quality, effects of climate on fruit biochemistry, genome annotations of USDA germplasm and comparative genomics of pomegranate with its closest relative (*Punica protopunica*), a threatened species.

L.A. TOUR: Virtual Garden tour - TBA

Date: Saturday, June 27, 10:00 am

Zoom: Meeting link to be provided as soon as we can

Virtual tours of members' gardens - to be announced.

You Are Invited: OC CRFG Zoom

O.C. MEETING: Peter McCoy

Fungal Ecology and Fruit Trees

Date: May Thursday, May 21, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Zoom: See www.ocfruit.com for details

The Orange County CRFG has generously invited our chapter and others to "attend" their meeting on May 21 via the Zoom app. Information and web links can be found at their website www.ocfruit.com. When the meeting starts in Zoom, please include your First and Last name, along with your chapter affiliation (ie. Jane and John Doe, Redwood Empire).

Photo Sharing with CRFG-LA

Did you know our CRFG-LA website has a photo share page? Join the fun and go on a virtual tour of our gardens, or remember past meetings - including our recent tour of Murray Farms on April 26. Check it out at: <http://www.crfg-la.org/piwigo/index.php?category/47>

If you have photos you'd like to share, you can request a personal member account and password, from either me (editor@CRFG-la.org) or Emory Walton (historian@CRFG-la.org).

-Deborah Oisboid

Words From Our Chairman

By Jerry Schwartz



Damn it: 9 weeks sheltered in place. Not seeing my kids and grandchildren. No vacations, trips, meetings, or stores including grocery stores and nurseries. No CRFG meetings. Staying healthy is the goal. Hope all of you are doing well.

Things are changing. Never thought we'd get to electronic CRFG meetings (thank you OC Chapter!), having my groceries delivered by Amazon - and my children - and watching sports from 20 years ago or seeing oil futures at minus \$36. All very unusual.

The world is crazy, but I have found my happy place: my yard. I get up, go outside, and munch on Kishu, California Honey, Clemenule³ or Pixie mandarins, or pink grapefruit. Soon five varieties of Surinam cherries will ripen, as will Tango and Florida Honey mandarins, Gold Nugget kumquat, and other citrus. Next I'll chomp on Cherry of the Rio Grande, Grumichama and passion fruit. Life is good!

2020 is a great year to grow fruit. Good early chill in November and December, with good rain totals. January and February were sunny (no rain) and cool. March and April supplied lots of rain. This resulted in a fantastic stone fruit bloom and fruit set. I'm expecting to eat five varieties of white nectarines, four apricot, six pluot, two cherry plums, three pluerry, five plums, and lots more.

Last year only five stone fruit trees produced fruit. This year I'm eating stone fruit from May to September. IN MY YARD, PESTS AND CRITTERS (all 2,4,6,8 and 10 legged kinds) WON'T TOUCH MY FRUIT. (Hopefully.)

Can't wait to share the fruit at the next Encino meeting with you.

Jerry

LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

~~March Meeting & LA Nature Fest (Cancelled)~~

Our annual Sylmar High field trip and Tree Symposium, and the LA Nature Fest events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

April 24 - Murray Family Farms Virtual Field Trip

Our chapter held our first virtual tour this past month: about 30 members got to "tour" Murray Family Farms in Bakersfield. Our guide, Steve Murray, graciously showed us his farm via the internet (Zoom).

Our personal tour began in his private greenhouse, where he grows his most delicate and special plants. Some of the highlights included jaboticaba, black sapote, eleagnus latifolia, tropical apricot, and an endangered species of American Chestnut. We saw a very happy 8-year-old Yang Mei tree, Wax Jambu & Syzygium, Governor's plum, marula, a fruiting ginger called Afroganum, and many other exotics.

Outside was part of their cherry orchard, where he showed us the reflective tarps which help extend the fruiting season, and the overhead misting system used to cool the trees during summer. Next, we visited their family garden where they grow oranges, jujubes, persimmons, pecans, plums, pawpaw, mayhaw, and medlar trees. We met one of their dogs, and also their 180-pound tortoise. We learned that very few pears can grow in Bakersfield's climate (Zone 10A). As he described, "stuff only grows where we put drip irrigation."

They use an acid injection system on the blueberries, because of the alkaline soil. Sometimes they add sulfur. When it gets very cold, the tropical plants require warmth from propane tanks and heaters. They use recorded birdsong and reflective hangings to discourage bird pests, although they are only effective for about 2 weeks at a time.

After some onscreen chatting, he offered to drive about 5 minutes to another property to look at some of his experimental crops. We saw his special eleagnus and goumi plantings. His favorite is the Carmen eleagnus, which is larger and tastier than the other two varieties they grow. He described the taste as kind of like a jellybean but more tart. (Then he ate some...)

We saw workers doing commercial harvesting of blueberries - huge stacks of berries in pint cups. As he

¹ A non-released variety I picked from the UC Riverside collection.

headed back to the truck, we saw more familiar fruit trees such as cherries, nectarines, and plums.

At the end of the tour we walked through the Big Red Barn, where the family sells produce and jams to the general public. After a few final questions we said goodbye to Steve, who had to get back to work.

Murray Farms is currently selling produce at Hollywood and Santa Monica farmers' markets, and plans to sell at many others soon, as the cherry harvest progresses. You can also purchase some of Murray Farms' products online through Röckenwagner (rockenwagnermarket.com)

After we said farewell to Steve, most of us stayed online to socialize, and we got to view some of our own members' gardens.

Grateful thanks to Steve Murray for spending so much time with us and showing us his amazing family business. Also our gratitude to Margaret Frane for hosting the Zoom meeting, and to Kevin Liu and Anwar Hachache for inviting us into their own back yards that day.

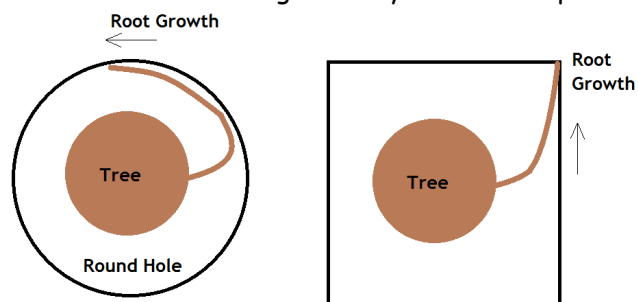
April 16 - Orange County Meeting

The Orange County chapter of CRFG sent an open invitation to all chapters to join them for a Zoom presentation on the topic of "Selecting a Nursery Tree, and How to Plant It," followed by "Cherimoyas." The event was held on April 16 at 7:30 pm. At the peak attendance, over 100 people were logged in, from chapters all over the country. Represented were CRFG Inc, Orange County, San Diego, Foothill, South Bay, Inland Empire, Los Angeles, Golden Gate, Sacramento, West LA, Santa Barbara, Redwood, and even Arizona chapters!

After some official chapter business was attended to, Ben Kotnik of San Diego CRFG shared his wisdom on selecting the right plant, for the right place, with good technique. Some of the takeaways included:

- Be aware that MOST nurseries have a bias towards selling products over caring for customers after purchase. Select your tree source appropriately.
- Look for a strong trunk and long tap root. (Pull it out of the pot if possible.)
- Create a Sun Chart for your geographic area to know how much light is available for your plants. <http://solardat.uoregon.edu/SunChartProgram.html>
- CRFG is your best resource because they are local to your area and understand the issues better.
- Graft low and central to the main trunk because they will be there a long time.

- Avoid co-dominant leaders on the main trunk. A "vee" between two main branches will capture debris and moisture, and encourage rot.
- Plant in a rectangular, not circular hole. Roots from the root ball will grow along the edge of the hole. A round hole will guide roots into a round shape, which can strangle the plant. A square hole will allow the root to hit a corner and grow away from the tap root.



During the second half of the meeting, Ben discussed cultural practices of growing cherimoya. He noted that taste tests of cherimoyas are flawed because the best flavor is at peak ripeness, and different varieties ripen at different times during the year. He also recommends grafting onto natural seed stock. His favorite method of growing rootstocks is to treat it as Mother Nature does: smash the fruit on the ground, let the seeds sprout naturally, and separate them a year later. Hand pollination extends the fruiting season.

Our chapter sends our appreciation to Orange County and to Ben for sharing these fascinating presentations with us, and we look forward to their May meeting on fruit trees and Mycology (fungus).

Peach Leaf Curl

Deborah Oisboid – editor@CRFG-la.org

I regret to report some of my stone fruit appears to be infected. If anyone collected scions of my Kaweah Peach or Red Sun Nectarine at the LA or West LA Scion exchanges, you may want to destroy them as soon as possible.

Peach leaf curl is one of the most common diseases found in backyard orchards. Caused by the fungus *Taphrina deformans*, peach leaf curl affects the blossoms, fruit, leaves, and shoots of peaches, ornamental flowering peaches, and nectarines. Plums are affected by a different fungus, *Taphrina communis*, which causes Plum Pocket disease. Apricots and almonds are not usually affected.



Leaf symptoms appear about 2 weeks after leaves emerge. The fungus grows between leaf cells and stimulates them to divide and grow larger than normal, causing swelling and distortion of the leaf. Red pigments accumulate in the distorted cells. Cells of the fungus break through the distorted leaf surface and produce elongated, sac-like structures called “asci” which produce sexual spores called “ascospores.” These spores give the leaf a grayish white, powdery or velvetlike appearance.

The *Taphrina deformans* spores overwinter underneath bark, around buds, and in other protected areas.

Disease development is related to air temperature at the time buds are opening. If surface moisture is present and the air temperature is near 68F, infection can take place.

Temperatures above 86F and below 40F inhibit the fungus. After symptoms are visible, control is impossible. Our recent wet season was, unfortunately, a perfect storm of coincidences (pun intended).

The peach leaf curl pathogen also infects young green twigs and shoots. Affected shoots become thickened, stunted, distorted, and often die. Only rarely do reddish, wrinkled to distorted (“hypertrophied”) areas develop on fruit surfaces. Later in the season these infected areas of fruit become corky and tend to crack. If leaf curl infection builds up and is left uncontrolled for several years, the tree may decline and need to be removed.

Treatment

1. Select resistant varieties whenever possible.
2. Apply a fungicide such as chlorothalonil, copper hydroxide, or ziram at the beginning of dormancy and/or just before bud break.
3. Keep the ground beneath the trees raked up and clean, especially during winter months.
4. Prune and destroy infected plant parts as they appear. Sanitize pruning tools with a 10% bleach solution.
5. Thinning the fruit crop in years of severe infection can also help maintain plant vigor.

SOURCES:

- <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7426.html>
- <https://www.planetnatural.com/pest-problem-solver/plant-disease/leaf-curl/>
- <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/common-pest-problems/common-pest-problem-new/peach-leaf-curl.pdf>
- <https://plantdiseasehandbook.tamu.edu/food-crops/fruit-crops/peach-apricot-and-nectarine/>

Secret Sauce, Part 3

Gluten Free Banana Bread

From Candace Rumenapp

WET INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup coconut oil solids or other solid shortening
- Scant 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten

DRY INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/2 cup gluten-free Pancake or Baking Mix
- 1/3 cup ground coconut, unsweetened (use a coffee grinder for best texture)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg (fresh grated is best)

FRUITS:

- 1-1/2 cup bananas, mashed
- 1/4 cup cooked sweet potato or cooked carrots
- 1 tsp lemon rind, grated
- 1-1/2 tsp orange rind, grated

NUTS:

- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or other favorite nut
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries

Cream the sugar and coconut oil or shortening together, whipping until fluffy.

Add eggs, one at a time, and blend each egg in well.

Combine dry ingredients together, including coconut chips and spices.

Alternate adding dry ingredients and mashed fruit mix into wet ingredients, about 1/3 of each at a time.

Stir in nuts and cranberries.

Pour into 11" x 8" non-stick pan.

Bake 50 minutes at 350F.