

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

September 2010 Volume XIV Issue 5

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

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September Meeting

Date: Saturday, September 25, 2010

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

Program: Doug Fieri, Bee Wrangler, was a speaker at our Festival of Fruit. After all the rave reviews he received, we decided to have **Doug** speak to all of those who didn't have the opportunity to hear him. His topic will be "The Importance of Honey Bees". **Doug** became interested in honey bees after watching a PBS special "Silence of the Bees". As a small scale commercial beekeeper since 2005 **Doug** works with about 40 colonies of honey bees in Southern California. Most of these hives are kept in various apiaries through out the San Gabriel Valley. Hives are relocated during the spring to assist growers with pollinating almonds and cherries. The honey collected from these hives is county certified and sold at local farmers markets in the San Gabriel Valley. He will be bringing some of his honey to sell.

October Meeting

Date: Saturday, October 23, 2010

Time: 10A.M.

Place: Bruce Blavin's garden
901 N. Whittier Dr., Beverly Hills, Ca 90210

Program: Be prepared to enter the Garden of Eden as you step into one of our new member's backyard- **Bruce Blavin**. Bruce has a little over an acre of land on the flats of Beverly Hills and has tried to plant 10 plants a week. The only thing holding him back is the cost of water. He is constantly inspired by other home growers and always visits arboretums wherever he travels. In a brief summary of what he currently grows: Allspice, Apples (4 varieties), Apricots (3), Asian pear, Atemoya, Avocado, Cherimoya (3), Kiwi (4), Aprium Flavor Delight, Bananas (25), Blackberries, Blueberries (16), Cherries: Barbados (Acerola), Rio Grande, Minnie Royal, Royal Lee, Sorinam (Lolita, Giant florida), Brazil (Grumichama Eugenia), Citron, Curry leaf, Dragon Fruit (20), Figs (13), Goumi, Grapes (6), grapefruit Oro Blanco, Guava (10), Ice Cream Bean (Inga edulis), Jackfruit, Jaboticabo (2), Jujube (3), Kei Apples, Kumquat (Nagami, Meiwa), Lemon (4), Lime (5), Longan, Loquat (4), Lycee (4), Mango (8), Medlar, Miracle fruit, Mulberry (9), Nectarine (4), Oranges (3), Tangerine (5), Papaya (2), Passion fruit (4), Paw paw (4), Peach (10), Persimmon (3), Plums (9), Pluots (2), Pomegranate (2), Raspberries,, Sapote (5), Sassafras, Wampee,

There are also a number of non-fruit bearing plants on the property for you to explore. As you walk through **Bruce's** garden he asks that you remember he has only been growing for 7 years and many plants are only a few years old. No doubt you will come away from his garden inspired to go home and expand your own gardens. Bruce looks forward to sharing his "Secret Garden" named after the children's story of the mysterious garden hidden behind the great wall.

Directions: 405 Freeway south and exit Sunset Blvd. Turn left on N. Church Lane & left onto W. Sunset. Follow W. Sunset and make a left on N. Whittier Dr. Arrive at 901 N. Whittier Dr.(corner of Sunset & Whittier Dr).



AWARDING MOMENTS!

One of the highlights of our Festival of Fruit was during the first hour of the day, when **Pat & Edgar** were recognized by the LA Chapter for all the work they had done to ensure a successful event. They were presented with a beautiful crystal fruit bowl as well as a plaque of recognition.

Emory Walton was singled out for his many years of dedicated service to CRFG. One of our most valued members, **Emory** was not only our webmaster for this event, but he is the one who introduced and organized our very successful annual Fruit Shoot. He truly deserved the CRFG Trophy!

Fruit for the Future

My ABC'S of weird fruit

(Ken Love's keynote speech presented at this year's FOF)

When I started to think about this talk it quickly turned into a fantasy. What would I plant if land, time and money were not an issue? If I could do anything I want horticulturally, what would it be? Perhaps most importantly, what I would do if I had the energy I had 40 years ago. All of the fruit you'll see I would plant more of, to eat, trade, sell, educate and for health. I do graft a lot of trees but not as much as I plant seedlings – I want that genetic diversity. I'll look at tree evens when I know they won't produce for 10 years. My first teacher here turned 98 in May and still plants mangosteen seeds.

I want to be that way too... That said, I would like to introduce you to my wish list –

A – Alupag,

This is one of those things that will be discussed and argued about for years, at least by taxonomists. Reminds me of some old commercial where the person is trying to make up their mind – it's a lychee, it's a longan, it's a lychee.

For me it's the best of both. The only problem is finding the meat around the seed!

First thing to do is plant 500 acres of the fruit and wait for a good ratio or we could try what my friend did for the B fruit that is Biwa.

B- Biwa – Kibou / seedless +Mizuho and Obusa

The seedless loquat or Biwa in Japanese was developed over a 12-year period by Dr. Yahata in South Chiba Japan. That prefectural government owns the patent for the fruit so I would not expect to see it here for sometime unless someone with deep pockets wants to buy it for me. How about Emory? Some of the other biwa I work with are mizuho, fusa hima, fusa hikari and the largest, Obusa which can average 120 grams. I use biwa rather than loquat as I was introduced to the fruit in Japan while I walked down a street near the University of Tokyo. My partner at the time reached into a tree on the street and grabbed a few and I was hooked studying the fruit for the next 6 years.

Have to mention a few other B fruits, Bilimbi and Buddhas hand. Both of them helped to teach me the fruit was much more than something you just pulled off the tree and ate.

C- Ceylon Gooseberry / Kitembilla

Is a good example of one of those fruits that most can't eat out of hand. It does (when mixed with 65% sugar) remind me of growing up in Chicago with Greek restaurants on every corner that had large stacks of pancakes and boysenberry syrup. This kitembilla syrup is much much better.

D- Durian,

I do like it, almost as much as watching the facial expressions of people who smell it for the first time. Collecting seeds in Thailand was fun. I kept telling the Ramada I did not have durian in the room and they said I did. A few hundred seeds smell just as bad....

E-Eggfruit / Canistel

This is one of those fruit you either love or hate – no middle of the road. Reportedly the highest natural occurrence of Vitamin A, the fruit always reminds me of grade school and that paste we had to use. You can't find that stuff anymore, too many new glues out there, besides all of us who ate paste in kindergarten now have eggfruit to eat. It really isn't that bad, not as bad as lucma. I like to mix it with whipped purple sweet potato.

F-Finger Limes

I hope I live to see these established in Hawaii. Really do love this fruit, as does every chef I've ever talked too. You want to fix some of the Calif. State budget? Don't let thousands of dollars of finger limes fall and rot at the Riverside station.

G-Green sapote

This is another of those strange things that people are not really sure about until they try it. It also has a number of flavors depending on when it's picked or when it's eaten. It's closer to mamey sapote when it first softens which the Floridians would love. Give it another few days and it turns into chocolate pudding, that thick type that mom actually spent time to cook. Ours usually wind up at the Four Seasons or Orchid Fairmont in some sort of irresistible confection. If you wait too long to eat it and it ferments in the heat – well maybe Timothy Leary would have liked it. Have to add a second choice for **G**, grumichama or Brazil cherry. I love this refreshing fruit and eat more out of hand than we sell or work with.

H-hachiya persimmon

I've always been spoiled by really good persimmons, having had an office in Japan for almost 30 years. I use hachiya not to describe the one variety but more as a descriptor for hundreds of varieties that you can stick a straw in and suck out the insides. It's also only one of two fruit I can remember my father eating in Chicago in the 50s. Dried persimmons or hoshigaki have been a staple at my house since we've been in Hawaii.

I-Ice Cream Banana

A number of years ago the chef and I were unloading my truck at the Four Seasons in order to set up a display for a special function they had. The display was going to be heavy on bananas. While I was in the back of my pickup a little boy and his father came walking along and the boy was very excited to see so many bananas on the stalk. I could hear him jump and turn to his father "Daddy I want a blue banana", "There is no such thing son" – Oh Excuse me sir, I shouted as I turned while holding a hand of blue javas. The boy and the father were rather excited, as was the chef who continues to order them to this day.

My second choice should not be **I** for ice cream bean but should have been **C** for cotton candy bean. I and other kids visiting our farmers markets love these things. They are usually used as conversation pieces or for back scratching but there are a few innovative chefs who place the little wisps of arials on top of some culinary creation.

J-Jaboticaba

This has to be in the top 10 of all the fruit I play with and enjoy eating, with some varieties having the capability to become truly world class popular fruit, Paulista is one of them. For those of you who haven't had it, it is hard to describe the taste. It's not simply concord grape like. I think it also depends on how you bite into the skin and how much tannin you get. I would put in many hundreds of these trees and a plant to make jelly, syrup, vinaigrette and a host of other products. You have got to try a jaboticaba milk shake!

K-Kokum

-quickly replaced kiwi, kumquat, kei apple key lime, Keppel and its relative kundong as my favorite K. Garcina indica could be called the Indian mangosteen although nowhere near as sweet. It can be eaten out of hand but seldom is. As a staple in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states the juice is added to morning curd, sometimes tea and lunch and again with curd / yoghurt at dinner or simply enjoyed as a juice. I brought back a number of bottles of the concentrate and found I was using it more on ice cream than anything else. Yeah, you have to try a kokum milk shake too. Innovative chefs in Goa, the Kokum capital if you will, might make reductions and coulis and a host of different sauces. I kept meaning to make jelly with some of the juice I brought home but as you can see, I like ice cream and never got around to it.

L- Lulu or Naranjilla

Lulu, the Colombian word for Naranjilla is usually used in Hawaii as one of our coffee farmers spent his time in the peace core developing lulo coops in Columbia. Since he started to popularize the fruit in Kona, there have been a number of adoptions by chefs who use the fruit in a wide variety of dishes. What surprised me was how popular the fruit is in Japan due to Colombia spending a small fortune to market "lulo" there. They must take all the money we give them to fight drug lords and use it to sell their fruit to Japan. Smart....

M- Midgen Berry

I owe this one to the CRFG seed bank. I think it was back when Lincoln was president someone sent in midgen berry seeds and having no idea what they were, I sent for some. That shrub is 15 feet tall and spawned numerous others that produce this blueberry cousin from down under. Steve Brady in Florida also works a lot with this having received them from Bill Whitman. It's a great little berry that does well in tropical environments where we can't grow many other berries. (another 10 acres to plant)

N-Nanka

Rather than diminishing my **J** choice by adding a 2nd to Jaboticaba, I decided to use **N** for Nanka, better known

as jackfruit. Hawaii's Pilipino community usually uses Nanka or Lanka instead of jackfruit. This has to be one of the most underutilized fruits outside of India. We did a little informal market research with about 100 people every Thursday for more than 4 years. White folks really do like jackfruit. None of my Pilipino or Indian friends believed it so I had to show them. Technically we still have the Guinness Book of records for Jackfruit but only because my friends in Kalpetta India didn't enter this 104 pounder. The 3 day jackfruit festival there was something I'll never forget and not only because of the thousands of different jackfruit products like gluten free flour from the seeds but because of the warmth of the people wanting to share absolutely everything about the fruit and India.

The west has just barely begun to scratch the surface of what can be done with this fruit.

O- Ohelo

Another blueberry relative and just about the only fruit that's indigenous to Hawaii, the ohelo, in the wild, is often confused with other inedible berries. The good news is that you will eventually be able to buy plants from an Oregon nursery or request them from the germplasm repository in Corvallis or Hilo where extensive variety trials have been underway.

P-Pulasan

I just like this thing better than Rambutan. It's much harder to grow especially in dry locations like Kona but the taste is more intense and sweet. This is one of my favorites to take into grade school classrooms. Actually I usually bring a big burlap coffee bag and fill it with 30 or forty different fruits depending on the number of kids in the class. They each get to pick one out of the bag to eat and talk about.

The expressions when they grab the soft rubbery spikes from Pulasan are classic.

Q-Quenepa

Or mamoncillo, lemoncillo, xenepa or Spanish lime is another underutilized fruit, especially outside of Puerto Rico and the American Tropics. There are very few trees in Hawaii and a great need for more of them both as an ornamental as well as an edible crop. The seeds hold great promise as gluten free flour that can keep us celiacs happy although there are a fair amount of old warnings on the fibers around the seed, affecting people adversely. I've never had a problem with them.

R-Rollinia

I need another 50 acres or so for rollinia or biriba as it's sometimes called. Not as a commercial crop but just to eat! Not only the firm just turned yellow fruit but I also like the older turned black fruit that some refer to as "snot apple" Maybe that's why it was changed from

Rollinia mucosa to Rollinia deliciosa. As a kid I loved any type of pudding and the texture of pudding. This fruit takes me back – As long as this is my wish list, maybe I should make it 100 acres.

S-Soursop

Perhaps the most challenging fruit on my list and one that I don't like that much I had to think twice about using it as my S fruit when there are so many sapote's, sapodillas, Syzygiums, spondias and star apples/fruit. I try to look at things both in terms of culinary aspects as well as horticulturally. There are things about the soursop that defy both. Sure we can make smoothies, jellies, soufflés which are actually pretty darn good but we still have not found that one recipe that will make chefs want to buy this fruit that grows so prolifically in Hawaii. Even the fibreless varieties are usually only sold to Hispanics and the Philipino community. We do have a lot of trees in part because, for many years, it was the root stock of choice for cherimoya and part because it flowers year around and brings in a lot of pollinators so that no one has to hand pollinate cherimoya in Hawaii. It is getting better; a pastry chef at one of our resorts won a national contest a few months ago for a spicy soursop soup. Say that three times fast!

2nd Surina

T-Tropical Apricot

When this ends up on a list or is chosen by anyone for anything, my friends from Florida usually look at me cross-eyed. This is another one where 100 acres of them should be planted and in 7 years the seeds from the sweetest ones planted again and again until a very sweet fruit evolves from this. Even then the sour ones have their place. 54 island chefs chose this as one of twelve fruits they most wanted to work with. That produced some spectacular results as sales increased.

U-Ume

I found five types of Prunus mume while researching in Japan, only one of which grows in tropical locations. The little chuo ume is extremely versatile and is something that we will see more and more of in the near future in Hawaii. Both as a fruit and as a rootstock. Any prunus that will thrive at sea level in the tropics has my vote. We found that some of the low chill peach varieties sent to Hawaii would never fruit, in part because of the standard rootstocks used. I'm in a middle of a test to graft all of the low chill peach varieties onto the ume rootstock. To find a peach, other than mysore, that would grow on the ume rootstock in Hawaii would be very beneficial. We simply do not get real peaches in Hawaii. The is to say that if the juice does not run down my chin, it's not a real peach. The plum itself is sour when hard, sweet when softens, has a long shelf life and

loved by chefs and consumers alike. Makes a great umeboshi too.

V- Voavonga (*Vangueria madagascariensis*) or Spanish tamarind, in addition to marula are two African fruit that deserve to be spread around. Only tried it once in Japan but it left a lasting impression. Marula too. In part thanks to Dr. Mizrahi in Israel, marula varieties have been spread around some and started to make their way into high-end markets in Japan. The Voavonga fruit is usually just eaten fresh but perhaps, only because there is not that much of it yet. .

W-Wampi

I love this citrus cousin too, both to eat and as a landscape tree. I can easily imagine in it in stores, laid out like grapes. There are a few varieties that I would like to try when I get back to China someday. Supposedly the varieties are names after Tai Chi movements and I'm really looking forward to trying "stroking the wild horses mane" Wampi fruit.

Also need to mention a second **W** here: water apple or jambu ayre AKA *Syzygium aqueum*. A great versatile fruit the chefs in Hawaii love to play with in salads and vinaigrettes. It's given to women in Malaysia after childbirth as it helps to rebuild electrolytes. A natural Gatorade but tastes a whole lot better!

X-Xigua (water melon) xuxu- chayote

Ok, so X is a stretch== Does anyone not like Xigua? Swika in Japanese or watermelon in English. There is also xuxu or chayote too but perhaps my favorite xuxu is a vodka form Greece – which is what I need about now -

Y-Yuzu

That vodka or better yet shochu from Japan mixed with fresh yuzu juice is my drink of choice. There is some fear in Hawaii that with all the people that put in Yuzu trees a few years ago that there will be an over abundance of fruit in a few years. I highly doubt it since much of what was sold was not yuzu but other citrus like jambiri lemon or ichang papeda. Having trained as a chef in Japan I can tell the difference. One of the Japanese chefs coined a word for the fake yuzu calling it naniwa or ' what is it?' fruit. I hope I live to have enough citrus to help people market in Hawaii.

Z-Ziziphus

You guys have a lot more of this than we do in Hawaii and most growers there really know nothing about it, nor do our chefs have any idea about its versatility. This is another one where I'd like to plant a hundred acres, maybe 50/50, half Chinese and half India. I'm looking for next years harvest in Kona where we only have a few producing trees and I can have my culinary students pit a few thousand and make what they want.

That's the a to z of it

We as growers know there are more than one type of avocado, fig, mango, orange etc. but most people don't. The knowledge of different varieties for all of these and making them available to growers and then consumers has helped in the revitalization of production agriculture in Hawaii. We are starting to grow our own for the first time in 50 years. All in all it is a great time to be in agriculture – commercial or back yard and really it doesn't matter as long as you enjoy it.

LA CHAPTER DOES IT AGAIN!

Without a doubt this year's Festival of Fruit was truly spectacular!! Not only were we blessed with four days of wonderful weather, but the enthusiasm, interest and enjoyment of those attending was contagious! Thursday's tours (to the Valdivia home, the Wintersteins, and the South Coast Field Station) each drew large numbers of people eager to learn more about the pitahaya as well as other fruit. Having to choose between the morning tours on Friday to either Melissa's or the Huntington Botanical Gardens was a difficult choice indeed. But it was a win-win situation, as both offered wonderful information. Friday afternoon was busy as many toured the Center for Regenerative Studies and the pitahaya planting at Cal Poly Pomona.



Culminating the day was a fantastic reception of delicious food, a fruit wine tasting and beautiful Andean music. Greeting everyone, Edgar rallied the group with his passionate and animated words of welcome.

Then came the big day:



Vendors arrived at the campus of Cal Poly Pomona bright and early Saturday morning and began unloading the beautiful plants they brought to sell; the LA Chapter volunteers, wearing their blue CRFG caps waited at their posts as registered attendees lined up to receive their packets and badges; walk-ins eagerly waited to pay the registration fees; speakers looked over their notes and adjusted their technical equipment; others hoping to win an “ipad” (among other prizes) eagerly lined up to buy their raffle tickets.. At 8:30am sharp, our chairman, Bill Brandt, welcomed the crowd and introduced Edgar Valdivia as the coordinator for the event. Next, Joe Sabol, our new CRFG President, spoke a few short words. Bill Grimes was presented an award for his 6 years of dedicated service as our CRFG president and then three scholarships were awarded to students in agriculture. He then introduced all the CRFG Board members. The Los Angeles Chapter presented awards to Bill Grimes, Dr. Greg Partida, Ramiro Lobo and Emory Walton (see page 2 for pictures). Bob Vieth then came forward and surprised Edgar & Pat Valdivia by presenting them with an award and a beautiful crystal fruit bowl (see article on page 2). At 9am sharp, our keynote speaker, Ken Love took to the podium for his lecture (a transcript of his talk appears on page 3).



From there on the excited participants went from classroom to classroom choosing among the 24 speakers, which presentation they wanted to hear.

There was a break at noon for lunch and the always spectacular tasting of stone fruit provided by the Dave Wilson Nursery. Also, there were plenty of pitahaya for most everyone to take home. We cannot forget the generosity of Walter Toma from the Sequoia Chapter, who provided a truck load of fruit for all to take. At 2pm it was back to the classrooms to continue listening to the various lectures. Throughout the day, people had a chance to share with one another what lectures they had heard, what they were growing and what they were planning to grow. At 5 o'clock everyone gathered around as the big raffle began. The raffle tickets were shaken about, a CRFG member put her hand in the box and drew the winning ticket-everyone held their breath. And who was the winner of the iPad? Our very own Margaret Frane! Many other beautiful items were also raffled off that day-a leaf cutter, beautiful fruit posters, books, plants, etc. The beautiful red dragon centerpieces on the dinner tables reminded us that this was indeed the “Year of the Pitahaya/Dragon Fruit. After enjoying a tasty California buffet, Ken Love led us on a delectable view of the use of fruits in our cuisine. In many ways, it was sad to see the event come to an end. However there is always the next festival. So start planning now for “**The Year of the Pomegranate**” to be held in Arizona in October of 2011.

FEIJOA FREEZER JAM

(courtesy of Herb & Anita Drpakin)

3 cups of pureed feijoa (pineapple guava)
 4 ½ cups of sugar
 1 ½ tbs. lemon juice
 1 box of pectin (Sure-Gel or Bell)

Mix fruit, sugar and lemon juice until all of sugar crystals are dissolved
 Dissolve pectin in ¾ cup of water in saucepan and bring to a boil. Let it boil for one minute

Add heated pectin to fruit mixture and stir for 10 minutes.

Place in clean freezer containers, leaving a ¼” from the top.

Cover, seal, freeze and date.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!! If your last name begins with **A-L** please bring something for our September tasting table. Please bring whatever you have ripening in your gardens, to share and show off.