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LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2016 Volume XXI Issue 6

FIELD TRIP – Private tour of La Verne Nursery – *Chapter Members Only*

Date: Saturday November 19th

We are touring La Verne Nursery

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HOLIDAY PARTY

Date: December 10, 2016 (Note: date does not conflict with other Chapters' events)

Time: 10:00 a.m.

**Place: Sepulveda Gardens
16633 Magnolia Blvd. Encino, CA 91316**

Our Festive Holiday Potluck! Remember this is a full meal, not just snacks. It is a chance to prepare your favorite dish. Please bring a dish that serves 8-- and it would be great if you would include the recipe. Bring food to share and wear colors of the Season! Once again we can look forward to Marcia Melcombe entertaining us with some wonderful music!

Attention All Members: The holiday party will include a potluck. Please bring plants and white elephant gifts if you want to participate in the white-elephant exchange. Donations of plants or other items for our raffle/sale will be appreciated.

Chapter Members and Significant Others Only – If you so choose.

SAVE THE DATES

CALENDAR FOR 2017 LA CHAPTER

**** January 28th - Sepulveda Gardens – GRAFTING/SCION EXCHANGE**

February 25th – Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens - Charles Portney, Presenter

March 25th - Field Trip: Sylmar High School/Tom Spellman

April 22nd - Field Trip - Nancy Weihart - Home Garden

May 27th Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens

June 24th - Field Trip

July 24th – Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens

August 26th - No Meeting-

September 23rd – Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens

October 28th - Field Trip TBD

November 18th – Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens

December 16th - Sepulveda Gardens - Holiday Party

****Depending on Orange County Chapter's scion exchange meeting**

This month's photos courtesy of Edgar Valdivia and Deborah Oisboid

Words From Our Chairman



Dear Los Angeles chapter members,
It's finally here, my favorite season, fall, with rain, cooler weather, Thanksgiving Day, warm comfort foods and college football ' FIGHT-ON USC!' It's also pomegranate and persimmon time two of my favorite fruits. I have three persimmon trees (Diospyros Kaki) two fuyu's, one has a Hachiya grafted on it, and one Saijo variety. Saijo means sweetest in Japanese; it's an astringent type so this year I'm trying to learn "Hoshigaki" (Google it) Japanese persimmon drying process where you and hang them up to dry. They are absolutely delicious when done.



the
peel

Moving on to pomegranates, I have several varieties. Two old standards Wonderful and Eversweet and eight Russian varieties from UC Davis, courtesy of Dr. Gregory Levin: Cana, Afganski, Vkusnyi, Myatadzhy, Desertnyi, Agat, Purple Heart and my favorite Pamyati Rozanova which is a juice variety. All of the Russian trees are not up to production yet as some are still in containers. So I harvested my old reliable Wonderful and Eversweet trees plus a neighbor gave me some to press. **Yes, finally, I have a pomegranate press!!!**



It's nothing fancy but it works well. I fabricated it in my friend's machine shop using some stainless pipes and plates. Then, utilizing my hydraulic press, I was able to juice several gallons of pomegranate juice. I now have what Debbie calls pomegranate juicing tee shirts. YES, it does stain so wearing old clothes and gloves is a must. It's not that labor intensive to squeeze especially with

such delicious results. I package it up in quart freezer bags, with date and quantity usually two cups and freeze it; they freeze well and last for a year or more with no taste loss. But believe me it's so good, and it never lasts that long.

This year I harvested all my pomegranates and Valencia oranges, not one was left on the trees for the varmints. And I am looking forward to perfecting my Pomegranate press so I can do it automatically and faster we'll see... I also want to can both orange and pomegranate juice using a water bath method; If you have done either before please grab me at one of our meeting. I want to talk to you!

Looking forward to seeing you all at La Verne Nursery on Nov 19, 2016

Enjoy the Fall season and the Holidays,

Jim Schopper

Looking Back

By Debbie Schopper, Member-at-Large
SEPTEMBER Meeting

Our September meeting was held at the Sepulveda Garden Center, with guest speaker, Mark Steele, speaking on "Growing Bananas in Southern California".

The main points covered were: Banana Botany, Banana



Taxonomy, Growing Bananas, Maintenance and Harvesting.

Some interesting facts:

- A banana is an herbaceous flowering plant not a tree.
- There are approximately 1,000 varieties of edible bananas
- Choosing organic bananas may not be the best choice because once harvested that section of the rainforest is abandoned
- Don't water plants from Nov - Feb when they are growing
- Prune dead leaves, separate suckers, manage the size of your plant so you will be able to reach the fruit

- It takes 5-9 months for a bunch to mature, look for color change, and harvest the entire bunch at one time



- Banana juice stains!

A few of Mark's favorite varieties for growing in Southern California are: Dwarf Brazilian, Goldfinger, Sweetheart, Praying Hands, Orinoco, Ice Cream, Dwarf Namwah, and Misi Luki.

OCTOBER Field Trip

Thank you Van T. Do for opening your beautiful home/garden to our club for a tour. We began our tour after a welcome, complete with drinks and snacks kindly provided by Van. We walked through



the beginnings of fruit



orchards consisting of jackfruit, sapote, black pearl apple, avocado, pink and yellow guava, nectarine, dwarf Dorette apple, wax apple, and banana, to name a few. We viewed raised vegetable beds and learned of the good



effects of the bitter melon plant. We saw



"swinging" chickens (14 of them) in their run. We also were able to see fish pop up to get a bite, as Van fed them in their pond. Thank you, Van for a wonderful morning and tour.

Member Highlights

Many members have been very generous sharing information for others as well as opening their

homes for tours. If you would like to open your home and garden please contact Pat Valdivia.

Interesting Home Crop

Catherine Diaz, Editor

At a recent retirement party for a fellow educator I happened to sit next to a 70-something guest who did nothing but complain about her aches and pains. She was not a retired educator so had little in common with other guests. In an effort to squelch her droning I asked her if she had (note: I am not a user of any kind) ever tried marijuana for relief. The tables turned on me. She replied that as a matter of fact she does use it. She grows her own and lives near a man who is an expert on the topic of growing. He travels around the world as a consultant. I asked about her crops; are they any good. She said she has a fine, high quality, harvest. Finally, I asked how she processes it, e.g. does she "roll her own", have a hookah, or what? She said she infusions it in water then later makes a tea. Is marijuana considered a tropical plant? Just wondering.

Gynura Procumbens

By Deborah Oisbiod - Member-at-large

Looking to add some healthy greens to your diet? Try spinach. No, not THAT one. Nope, not even Malabar Spinach. Have you tried Longevity Spinach?

Family: Asteraceae

Genus: Gynura

Species: procumbens

AKA: Longevity Spinach, Moluccan Spinach, Cholesterol Spinach, Sabungai, Kamangi (Tagalog), Paetumpung (Thailand), Sambung nyawa (Indonesia), Deva raja, Akar sebiak, Kacham akar (Malaysia), Chi angkam (Cambodia), Kim That Tai, Cai Tieu Duong, Tiem Vinh (Vietnam), Man san qui cao, Lam fei yip, Bai bing ca, Ping wo ju sam qi (China).

That's a lot of different names for a little green-leaf plant!

Gynura Procumbens is a fleshy-leafed semi-vining perennial, native to West Africa, China, and Southeast Asia. The leaves are bright green and smooth. Leaf shape can vary, ranging from roundish pointed in shape, with shallow teeth along the edges. It is semi-dormant in winter, when it slows or stops growing. In spring the plants begin to flower before leaf growth begins, producing clusters of yellow or orange blossoms. In the tropics it grows wild on the edges of forests, near streams and meadows in semi-shady places. It can grow in poor soil. It can also grow with some dryness and sunshine but will not get as large. It is not cold-hardy and temperatures below 40F (5C) will damage it. In other words, unless you are in a frost-free zone try growing it indoors instead of outdoors.

Although it is considered a vine, the stems are not very strong (hence the "procumbens," which means falling down or prostrate). When thriving it is supposed to grow very quickly and frequent pruning or pinching back young growth is recommended to maintain it with a moderate, bushier structure and to enjoy the fresh leaves. Gynura Procumbens can be eaten raw or cooked. The flavor has been described as having an anise-like taste. (Personally I think it has a very mild, almost bland flavor, tasting like a cross between cucumber, celery and spinach.) It works well in salads, or on sandwiches in place of lettuce. Fresh leaves can be added to smoothies. Stems can be chopped into soups, stews, or vegetable medleys like celery. Older leaves can be dried for tea.

There are many health benefits attributed to Gynura. It is considered anti-hyperglycemic, anti-hyperlipidemic and anti-inflammatory.

Traditionally, it is used in many different countries to treat a wide variety of health issues such as fever, rash, inflammation, kidney disease, rheumatism, diabetes, constipation, and hypertension. One internet source says it is safe and healthy for animals, particularly chickens,

possibly lowering bacteria counts in chicken droppings and improving egg cholesterol levels and shell thickness.

Gynura procumbens leaves are sometimes sold in markets as Ashitaba or Asitava. In fact the real Ashitaba is a completely different plant - Angelica keiskei, a highly valued herb from Japan which is more cold-hardy than Gynura.

Procumbens' cousin, Gynura Bicolor, is also known as Okinawa Spinach and is green on one side and purple on the other.

It's even got it's own Facebook page!

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=320973474643349&story_fbid=426563777417651

I am told Gynura Procumbens will root easily.

Having recently acquired a plant from a friend I am trying to propagate it and hope to have a few stems to offer at a future CRFG meeting.

Sources: Facciola, Stephen, *Cornucopia II, A Source Book of Edible Plants*, Kampong Publ, Vista, 1998

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<http://www.thesurvivalgardener.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TropicalGreens-779x1024.jpg>

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<http://www.stuartxchange.com/Sabungai.html>

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<http://www.edulisdesigns.com/blog/gynura-procumbens>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/439804719843821439/>

Email vs. U.S. Mail - Differences Editorial

C. Diaz, Editor

Having been the CRFG Chapter Newsletter editor for the last few years I have come to appreciate the pluses and minuses of sending out the newsletter **by email** as well as hardcopy. I respect that some members have elected to receive a hardcopy but there are differences and

advantages to email rather than U.S. Postal mail that I will suggest.

By receiving **the newsletter as an email attachment**:

- Members have a larger format for viewing
- I can include **more** pictures of interest to all members,
- PDF files, or detailed articles such as the one contributed by Deborah Oisboid this month on grafting, can be included and no paper is expended
- At times the URL references are "live" in an e-document, so one doesn't have to re-write a link on the web that sometimes can cause a problem if not copied correctly
- The newsletter can be printed out at the discretion of the CRFG member
- Paper is saved
- In an e-document the pictures are clearer and larger

On the other hand

For hardcopy versions...

- People can sit comfortably and read through the articles even if they don't have a computer or Internet access.
- It's more portable and portions can be highlighted or notes written on it.
- The newsletter can be recycled
- In the hardcopy version pictures are not as clear and sometimes colors are not as true.
- I would need glasses to read it

Other options...If you misplace your hardcopy, or if you delete your newsletter from your email, or documents file, you can still access it and elect to print it because the newsletter is also posted online?

If you don't have a printer most public libraries will let you print out documents, maybe for a small fee.

So members, **my suggestion** is, if you currently receive just a hard copy ***please consider switching to an email version.***

Grafting

Contributed by Deborah Oisboid

Deborah Oisboid again shares information about grafting. This article is available as a PDF attachment in the newsletter sent via email. Some copies will be available at the next meeting for those who receive only the hard copy of the newsletter.