

# LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

September 2006    Volume IX    Issue 5



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## September Meeting

**Date:** Saturday, September 30, 2006 \*\***NOTE: Meeting will be the last Saturday of the month this time only.**

**Time:** 10:00 A.M.

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



**Program:** Our speaker will be **Markku Hakkinen**, a researcher at Helsinki University Botanic Garden in Finland. You probably read the article on growing bananas in northern climates he wrote for the March/April issue of the **Fruit Gardener** Magazine. For those of you who will miss hearing **Mr. Hakkinen** speak at this year's **Festival of Fruit** and those who are fortunate enough to listen to him in San Luis Obispo, this promises to be a wonderful opportunity to gain more knowledge from this very experienced grower of multi variety of bananas and tropical and subtropical fruits. Don't miss this world recognized speaker!

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## October Meeting

**Date:** Saturday, October 28, 2006

**Time:** 10:00 A.M.

**Place:** Edgar and Pat Valdivia's home at 1091 Carmel Dr. Simi Valley, 93065. (Telephone: 805 584-6244).

**\*\*PotLuck.** We will also be hosting the Santa Barbara Chapter. Please bring something to share so that we will have a great lunch together.

**Directions:** Exit the 118 Freeway at First Street and go right (south) about 1 mile to Royal Ave. At Royal make a right and proceed to the second signal which is Sinaloa. Make a left on Sinaloa and at the second street which is Capri turn right. Go two blocks to Carmel Dr. and make a left. Arrive at 1091 Carmel Dr-the house is on the right-hand side.

Come and visit one of our very enthusiastic and successful members of rare fruits-tropical and subtropical! **Edgar** has a variety of pitaya, passion fruit, lucuma, cherimoya, Surinam cherries, and much more. This tour will also be offered to the Santa Barbara Chapter. So it will be a great chance for you to visit and meet the members from our neighboring Chapter. There will be plenty of pitaya for you to taste.

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## SOILED REPUTATION



Thank you to **Gisele Schoniger** for a very interesting and informative presentation at our July meeting. **Gisele** had us spellbound as she taught us on how to have the healthiest soil by learning to work with its natural bio-system.

## HOPING FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY

While on vacation to Denver a few weeks ago, **Bob Goldsmith** damaged his neck and was forced to cut his vacation short and return home. **Bob's** doctor believes that he has ruptured another disc in his neck in addition to the four previously damaged ones. Once he has a c-spine MRI the orthopedist will make a more detailed diagnosis. Most regrettably, this is going to curtail **Bob's** involvement with any CRFG activities for a while. The doctor said that if a cervical fusion is necessary he may be immobilized in hard collar for a 2-month period. Please keep **Bob** in your thoughts and prayers as he goes through this very painful ordeal. A card or note to **Bob** would be very much appreciated.

Meanwhile, during this interim period, **Jorge Pelaez** will be acting as Chairman of our Chapter. (Please see the decisions reached by LA Chapter Board on page 4 of the newsletter)



## THE FIG

By Alfredo Chiri

White Fig moraceae

Var. Blanche donated by: CRFG and planted in 1983  
(r.f.-07)

Common name: Higo blanco, Italian honey fig,  
Latttarula, White marseille

The fig tree is believed to be indigenous to Western Asia and distributed throughout the Mediterranean area. The fig tree grows best in dryer, warm, temperate climates. Rain during fruit development and ripening can cause fruits to split. In wetter, cooler areas the fig will also grow. Dormant trees are hardy to 12° F, but plants in active growth can be damaged at 30° F. Chilling requirements for the fig are less than 300 hours.

Although the fig tree is generally thought of as a subtropical plant suited to the mild winters and heat of California, there are varieties that will bear fruit in the milder climates of the Northwest. If a freeze knocks down the plant, it sprouts again quickly.

The fig tree is a picturesque deciduous tree that will

grow in height up to 50 feet in the wild, but typically is controlled to 10 to 15 feet tall. Figs grow as many-stemmed shrubs, reaching 10 feet in warm years. In warm climates the trees grow on one or several trunks and reach 20 to 25 feet, spreading wide.

Branches of the fig tree are thick and twisting and spreading wider than they are tall. Fig wood is weak and decays rapidly. The sap contains copious milky latex that can be irritating to human skin.

The fig tree leaves are bright green, single, alternate and large (to 12 inches in length) with 1 to 5 lobes, rough hairy on the upper surface and soft hairy on the underside.

Figs are not quite fruits. They are a collection of inside-out flowers with all the important parts accessible to the outside world through a hole at the base. The first crop, called the "breba crop," blooms on the new wood of the previous season. The second crop, known as "main crop," appears on the new wood of the current season. When the tree is cut back, most of the first crop is lost.

The mature "fruit" has a tough peel, often cracking when ripe, exposing the pulp. The interior has a white inner rind containing a seed mass surrounded by jelly-like flesh. The seeds are numerous and generally hollow if they are sterile, but pollinated seeds give to dried figs the characteristic nutty taste.

Fig trees require full sun all day to produce palatable fruits. Young trees should be watered regularly until fully established. In dry western climates mature trees should be watered deeply at least once a week. Desert areas will require being watered more often.

The Blanche fig tree is known as a medium-to-large fig. The skin is yellowish green, and the flesh is white to amber, very sweet, with a lemon flavor. It has a light "breba crop." It likes cool-summer areas. It is a slow-growing, dense, and hardy tree.

If your last name begins with N-Z please bring something to share for our tasting table in **September**. Also, it would be great if you could share either the name of the particular fruit you bring or the recipe of the special treat you prepare

## Asthma Friendly Gardens

by Thomas Leo Ogren

When you have asthma the typical garden is not a very friendly place at all. There are mold spores to contend with and worst of all is all that pollen. Typical gardens have pollen producing male trees and male shrubs. Almost anyone with asthma will tell you that their asthma can be triggered by a good number of things, but pollen is often number one for causing an attack. Garden allergies are common, but they need not be. Allergies from gardening could be largely a thing of the past if we're willing to make some simple changes.

### Twelve keys to building your own asthma friendly garden

1. Plant lots of female trees and female shrubs.
2. Use only low pollen or no pollen lawns.
3. With OPALS™ 1 is best, 10 is worst. Use only plants with rankings of 1-5 (see **Note** below)
4. Remove any trees or shrubs with rankings over OPALS™ #7.
5. Replace any removed high pollen, asthma triggering plants with their opposite, female trees or female shrubs.
6. Use only plants that are well adapted to your own area.
7. Use a wide variety of plant materials; diversity is good.
8. Avoid plants with strong fragrances or odors, as they can cause asthma.
9. For mulch, use rock or gravel instead of bark to cut down on toxic mold spores in the garden.
10. To further eliminate mold spores, encourage wild birds in the garden. Birds eat insects and insect damage triggers outbreaks of mold.
11. Keep your plants healthy. This too will cut down on both pollen and mold. When it is hot and windy, do some irrigating. Fertilize everything in the garden spring and fall.

If a tree, shrub, vine or any other plant always looks sickly, always attracts bugs, then dig it up and get rid of it. Replace it with something easier to grow. Don't get caught up in having to spray insecticides all the time, as they too can cause asthma and allergies.

**Note:** There is now a scale that measures the allergy potential of all garden and landscape plants. This trademarked scale is called **OPALS™**, or Ogren Plant Allergy Scale. The scale uses a simple, easy-to-use 1 to 10 ranking system. The safest, least allergenic plants rank at 1, and the worst, most allergenic at 10

**Tom Ogren** is author of five published books, including: **Allergy-free Gardening**, **Safe Sex in the Garden**, and **What the Experts May NOT Tell You About: Growing the Perfect Lawn**. He has a Master of Science in Agriculture. His website is [www.allergyfree-gardening.com](http://www.allergyfree-gardening.com)

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### Summer Fruit Salad

- juice of 1 large lemon  
1/4 cup sugar or mild honey  
2 red, green, or yellow apples, cored and cut into pieces  
2 large oranges, peeled, seeded, pith removed, and sectioned  
1 large or 2 small ripe pears, cored and chunked  
1 banana, halved lengthwise and thickly sliced  
2 kiwifruits, peeled and cut into chunks  
2 cups melon balls (watermelon, cantaloupe, or other ripe melon)  
2 peaches, nectarines, or plums, pitted and cubed  
1 cup whole berries (small strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, or a combination)  
1 cup seedless red or green grapes, halved
- In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the lemon juice and sweetener. This acidic mixture will keep the fruit from browning for a few hours or overnight. Add the fruit, one kind at a time, tossing gently after each addition, striving for a colorful mixture. If it seems too dry, add a splash of fresh orange juice.

**Tip:** Cut the fruit neatly into pieces small enough to eat in one bite but not so small as to lose the character of the whole fruit. In other words, your salad shouldn't look like fruit hash with tiny pieces that are hard to identify.

## GREAT PLANT SALE PLACE YOUR ORDERS NOW!

Our grafted plants are now available for only **\$8 and under** depending on size. We have many varieties of pears, asian pears, apples, plums, pluots, peaches, apricots, and nectarines. Get details and place your order today by calling **Dave Payton** at (818) 222-7556. Varieties are available on a first-come basis. Order for pickup at next meeting.

### For Your Information

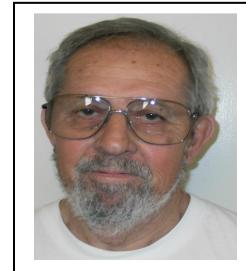
The following decisions were reached at our **LA Chapter Board** meeting held last month:

1. Whenever money is to be spent that is over \$200 the Chairman and 4 other Board members must approve the expenditure.
2. Whenever the amount is \$200. or less, the treasurer may agree to the expenditure with the approval of the Chairman.
3. At the end of each year a Financial Report will be submitted to the Board by the treasurer.
4. Standard Operating Procedures will be presented by **Lynn Maxson** to the Board for their perusal and/or endorsement.
5. The amount of \$55, or a CRFG membership plus \$25, will be paid to any guest speaker at the LA Chapter Meetings
6. The following positions have been added to the LA Chapter Board and authorized by **Bob Goldsmith**: **Jorge Pelaez** will be Co-Chairman, **Edith Watts** will be Secretary and **Edgar Valdivia** will be in charge of Ways and Means.
7. The Board should have a meeting at least twice a year.

## It's Almost Here!

One of the great benefits of belonging to **CRFG** is the Festival of Fruit which is held every year. If you have never attended, I urge you to think about going this year. The Central Coast Chapter under the direction of **Joe Sabol** is putting together a fantastic program. There are lectures, tours, fruit tasting and lots of fun. In fact there is so much to do sometimes it is hard to choose. So don't forget-September 6-9<sup>th</sup> at San Luis Obispo Cal Poly. Check out their website for all the details.

[http://www.crfcentral.org/2006\\_Festival/festival\\_2006\\_home.htm](http://www.crfcentral.org/2006_Festival/festival_2006_home.htm)



### Meet Alfredo Chiri

During the past couple of years articles on various fruits have appeared in our newsletters that have been written by **Alfredo Chiri**. If you have ever visited the Fullerton Arboretum then you have seen him there. **Alfredo** has been in charge of the **CRFG** garden for many years. **Alfredo** is a very active member of the Orange County Chapter and is in the process of publishing a book about tropical and sub-tropical fruit that can be grown in California.

### WELCOME-New Member

We'd like to welcome **Richard Hopps**, who has just joined our Chapter. We look forward to seeing you at our meetings.

### GREAT FIELD TRIP!



What wonderful hosts, **Don** and **Judy Webber** were! **Don** showed the 50 attendants all of his avocados and his successful grafts. His hard work has paid off.

**This we know... the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to earth.  
All things are connected, like the blood which connects one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life - he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.**

- Chief Seattle, 1854