



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

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2017 Volume XXII Issue 5

MEETING

Date: Sept 23, 2017 at 10:00 am

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

Program: Paul Talley: Figs

Paul Talley, a new member to our Chapter, and a local fig collector, will speak with us about this member of the Mulberry family which is native to the Middle East and western Asia. The focus of the conversation will address what are known as "common" figs, those that do not need caprification (pollination) to set a main crop. We'll take a look at the major flavor profiles and match them to some of the more available varieties and discuss their care, both in-ground and in containers. A variety of figs will be available for sampling and at the end of the program there will be a silent auction on several of the varieties you've tasted.....

All Members: if your last name begins with N-Z please bring something for our refreshment table. And since it will be served close to noon, please consider bringing something lunch-y.

FIELD TRIP: First Ever Working Field Trip for CRFG-LA

Date: October 28, 2017

Time: ****9 am-PLEASE NOTE THE TIME. ****

Place: The Melcombe Garden, Northridge
(Private address)

Chapter Members Only

This is a 'hands on' field trip. Bring your garden gloves, bring your tools, bring your LA Chapter Spirit!! Thanks to the inspirational idea of our Chairman, Jim Schopper, our Chapter will devote one field trip a year to helping out a member with their garden. (You can read more about this project in our Message from the Chairman on the next page of this newsletter.) This month, Marcia's garden is our target. We will get our hands dirty and, under the direction of Marcia, we will help trim, prune, weed or do whatever she would like done.

After all the hard work, we will all be treated to pizza and drinks, courtesy of CRFG-LA. (Donations are not necessary.)

SAVE THE DATES - CALENDAR FOR 2017 LA CHAPTER

- Nov 18th - Sepulveda Gardens – How Does Your Garden Grow? (a round table discussion of gardening techniques)
- **Dec 16th - Sepulveda Gardens - Holiday Party**

2017 Chapter Officers & Committees

Chairman: chairman@CRFG-la.org
Jim Schopper 818-362-3007

Vice Chairman: co-chair@CRFG-la.org
Tony Stewart 213-760-5142

Treasurer: treasurer@CRFG-la.org
K. Payton 818-222-7556

Secretary: secretary@CRFG-la.org
Margaret Frane 310-828-0092

Newsletter Editor: editor@CRFG-la.org
Deborah Oisboid

Program Chairman: program@CRFG-la.org
Pat Valdivia

Photographer: photo@CRFG-la.org
Edgar Valdivia

Historian: historian@CRFG-la.org
Emory Walton 805-497-8835

Food Coordinator: food@CRFG-la.org
Chris Warren 818-362-8537

Plant Sales Chairman: plants@CRFG-la.org
David Payton 818-222-7556

Plant Sales Associates:
Tony Stewart
Don Indermill
Dusty Rhodes

Development Fund:
Bob Vieth 805-495-9789

Members at Large: atlarge@CRFG-la.org
Marcia Melcombe 818-349-8677
Debbie Schopper 818-362-3007

Words From Our Chairman



Dear Los Angeles Chapter CRFG Members,

What a pleasure it's been to serve with a great board of directors and the greatest chapter members in the entire CRFG organization over the past years with the Los Angeles chapter CRFG. My wife Debbie and I have developed friendships that will last a lifetime, and learned a lot about people, trees, grafting and exotic fruit. As L.A. chairman, we totally enjoyed these last seven years, but it's time to let another lead. Our Vice Chairman Tony Stewart has agreed to become our next Chairman. I'm thrilled that he will be assuming the chairmanship. My official "retirement" date is 12/31/2017, but by no means are we leaving the L.A. chapter. We are hoping more members will step up, to fill the empty vice chair and plant sales associate positions. We also need someone to administer our L.A. chapter Facebook page. Hear that, all you young members?

I'm so excited to announce we have planned a special event, to show up at a member's house and have a work day. We plan to meet at 9am and work, clean-up, prune, pull, plant, or do whatever is needed until 12 noon and then serve pizza and drinks. The date is the fourth Saturday in October which will be our regular meeting date, 10/28/2017. We are asking for volunteers, as no one is under obligation to attend, to join us in the effort.

How is your summer tree pruning going? Summer pruning will help keep your fruit trees shorter, smaller and more manageable. It will not give you the ultimate shape because it's really about size control that allows you to easily pick the fruit without a huge ladder. When you summer prune, the tree will not sprout out new growth as much as it would in the spring if you winter prune. Yes, it will bring some new growth and you will probably need a little tune up pruning in November to prepare for springtime. To me, overgrown fruit trees just look messy and unkempt. I mean, do you really need a thousand plums? Anyway get out those pruning tools, sharpen them up, spray with a disinfectant and summer prune on.

Best,
Jim Schopper

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. -W.Buffett

LOOKING BACK

By Debbie Schopper, Member at Large

July Meeting

The first thing we did at our July meeting, held at the Sepulveda Gardens, was award student Carlos Cruz of Santa Paula High School a \$500 scholarship from CRFG. His family was present for this honor.



Scholarship Winner Carlos Cruz, photo courtesy of Paul Kao

"Passionate About Passion Fruit" was the following lecture topic and Jorge Ochoa was our speaker. Jorge has traveled to such countries as



Jim Schopper & Jorge Ochoa, photo courtesy of Paul Kao

Brazil, Cuba, New Zealand, French Guiana, and the Caribbean, and we were able to see many of these trips via slide presentation, where he was searching, sampling, and rating the many varieties of Passion fruits. Googling Jorge Ochoa Passion fruit will show you some

of these same gorgeous flowers and fruits.

First time visitors were introduced, a plant auction and a pot luck lunch ended our meeting.

August Meeting

Cottonwood Urban Farm was the place of our August field trip/tour and the home of member Elliott Kuhn.

Visiting Cottonwood is like taking a step back into the old San Fernando Valley ranch homes.

This farm is rich in history as the former home of actor and stuntman for John Wayne, Slim Hightower and then set designer Roy Peterson. There is so much memorabilia to enjoy and experience as you wind your way from the front gate to the farm area, including pictures, artwork, plantings, duck ponds,



Elliott Kuhn, photo courtesy of Paul Kao

beehive areas, refurbished and reinforced buildings, fruit orchards, and vegetable and herb gardens. Thank you, Elliott and crew for a delightful day and also for the snacks and duck eggs. (Photo album at the end of the newsletter.)

Time of the Season: Gardening Tips for September/October for Los Angeles (Southwest Region)

This list merges Almanac recommendations for September & October. For the full list check out <http://www.almanac.com/gardening/tips/CA/Los%20Angeles/03>.

CLEANING

- Save the seeds from your self-pollinating flowers by drying them and storing them in closed containers.
- Plant any perennials.
- Cut back annuals when they finish flowering.
- Harvest sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and winter squash.
- Divide and replant overcrowded perennial beds.
- Remember to apply a layer of organic matter to any new beds.
- Remove all debris and dead plants to prevent overwintering of certain garden pests.

PREPARING

- Begin cutting back on watering of the garden and lawn (except newly seeded areas) so that plants can prepare for dormancy (not growth).
- Plan to seed cool-season lawns, such as bluegrass or ryegrass, towards the end of the month; fall is the best time to establish such lawns.
- Buy your late winter and early spring bulbs.
- Prepare garden beds for more fall planting; remember to mix in plenty of organic matter.
- Bring in all houseplants; check for pests before bringing them in for the winter.
- Resume full fertilizing of roses as weather cools.

PLANTING

- Plant spring wildflowers now.
- If you purchased spring-blooming bulbs, plant them as soon as you get them.
- In some areas, you can plant cool-season vegetables, such as brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower), roots (carrots, radishes, leeks, onion, garlic, kohlrabi), and cold weather leafy greens (lettuce, kale, spinach, Swiss chard, beets, kale), peas, and celery.
- Plant cool-season annuals, such as pansies and snapdragons, when the temperature begins to decrease.

- Plant winter-hardy trees and shrubs. Plants set out now have more time to become established before spring growth.

OTHER

- Fertilize your lawn. Lawns fertilized in the fall are better equipped to survive the winter. Reseed in bare patches.
- Use only phosphate fertilizers on perennials and bulbs (no nitrogen).
- Do not fertilize annuals.
- Place tropical houseplants under shade trees to prepare them for winter indoors.
- Cut back watering for your plants as the days shorten and become cooler.

Propagation Method of the Month

By Deborah Oisboid, *Editor*

Information selected from The AHC [Plant Propagation](#), edited by Alan Toogood.

The most obvious method of propagation is by planting seeds. The seed is the basic biological unit for most plants. Each seed combines genes in an embryo that varies genetically from the parent plants. This way a species can keep its identity, yet still vary enough within the species to evolve and adapt to changes in the environment.

Seeds have different life spans. Some, especially fleshy seeds, die very quickly so will need to be sown as soon as they ripen. Others, such as dry seeds, can be stored for several years. Correct storage, in dark dry conditions below 39°F (4°C), can preserve viability. Exposure to higher temperatures or increased humidity may kill seeds or encourage premature germination.

There are so many different types of seeds that just listing the most common ones would take multiple newsletter articles! However, here are a few of the more common seed types, and typical ways to collect and save them.

Aquatic plants (such as lotus, water plantain, and cattails): Enclose a pod in a muslin bag. Never let the seeds dry out. Sow by smearing their aqueous jelly over the surface of a growing medium. Wash off jelly only if you wish to store seeds over winter.

Berries & Fleshy Fruit (such as raspberries, roses, and dragonfruit): Allow fruit to (just) ripen on the plant. Waiting too long risks theft by birds and other greedy yard critters. Squeeze berries in a cloth and rinse off the pulp. Or put fruit in water to rot, then mash and rinse – pulp and dead seeds rise to the top, heavy seeds settle to the bottom. Dry the good (heavy) seeds on paper towels for a couple of days before storing.

Capsules (such as poppies, alstroemeria, and fritillaria): gather pods or capsules in dry weather; moisture can bring on fungal rot. Shake (or place) into a paper bag and seal tightly. Or spread pods on newspaper in a tray and cover with more newspaper – pods can “explode” and shed seeds in all directions. Clean off any chaff attached to the seeds, which could cause rot.

Catkins (alder, birch): collect while still green before they ripen; keep in paper bags for a week or two until they disintegrate.

Cones (pine nuts): Dry ripe cones in a warm place to release seeds. Dry seeds in a warm, airy place before putting them into clean, labeled plastic bags or small containers. Conifer seeds can be stored between 5 – 20 years in a refrigerator (35°F) or longer in a freezer (8°F).

Exploding seedheads (euphorbia, impatiens): Remove seedheads still attached to their stems as they turn brown, and place in a paper bag.

Fluffy seedheads (leafy greens, asclepias, senecio): Harvest once the plant forms clusters topped by white fluff similar to a dandelion flower. Pick individual seed heads every few days as they ripen, or shake/brush free seeds into a bag or bin every few days. Alternately, the whole flower stalk can be cut when half the seeds are ripe, and placed in a labelled paper bag to finish drying.

Grasses: (a) GATHERING: Collect well-developed, healthy inflorescences just before their seedheads are fully ripened. Cut stems once fluffed up fully. If cut too soon, the inflorescence will contain no seeds. (b) EXTRACTING: keep grass stems in a cool, dry place for a few days to allow the seeds to finish ripening. Strip off the seeds from each spike; they should come away easily. Sow at once or store until spring.

Herbs (mint, lavender, dill): Gather seeds as soon as they ripen (summer or autumn). Test for ripeness by tapping a pod gently. If a few seeds scatter, it's time. Cut off stalks with the seedheads still attached and dry in small bundles, keeping them loose so air can circulate. Place in labeled paper or muslin bags or hang bunches to dry for up to two weeks in a warm, airy, dark place, with a paper underneath to collect anything which drops. Note that herbs may cross-pollinate. Closely related species may also interbreed if they flower at the same time (dill and fennel, for example). Crossbreeding means you don't know what will come up when you plant the seeds.

Nuts/nut-like fruits – generally ripen in autumn. Gather when they naturally fall or immediately before. Remove nuts from outer castings, clean and sow immediately in deep pots. Alternately store in moist peat or in a refrigerator, and sow in late winter to spring (best method where there is too much water during winter rainfall).

Pods: Harvest when pod starts to turn from green to brown and when the weather is dry. Moisture increases the risk of fungal attack. Store in a refrigerator but keep dry (put a silica gel capsule inside the container during storage). Can remain viable for many years if dried properly within the pod/capsules.

Letters to the Editor

Propagation Experience: Cuttings

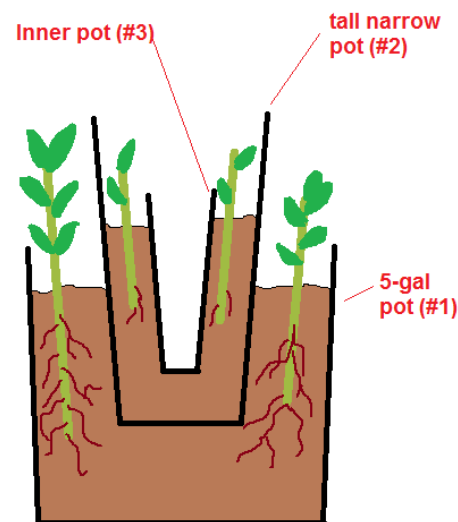
By Fang Liu, CRFG member

I would like to share one thing I started doing that may have contributed to my success at rooting cuttings this year. I used to root long cuttings like grapes in 5 gallon nursery pots. They are tall enough to bury 2 nodes beneath the soil line. The problem was it used a lot of soil and so I tried to root many cuttings in one pot. Most of them would not grow and I lost a lot of cuttings that way.

This year, I tried putting a narrower container inside the 5 gallon one, filling the volume between them with soil and cuttings. This did several things:

1. Allowed good drainage in case I overwater
2. Reduced the distance between the side of the pot and the cuttings
 - a. Improving gas exchange
 - b. Allowing heat from the side of the pot to reach the cuttings
3. Allowed me to inspect the cuttings for root growth
4. Reduced the amount of soil used to root many cuttings

I placed the pots under a tree so that the pot would get sun exposure but the cuttings would not. So the bottom heat might have helped. It takes more than a month for rooting to happen. Leaves would already have grown out by then. I find that disturbing the soil after the cuttings produce leaves but before the roots have grown out will kill them. Removing the inner pot to check on the roots allows the soil stays intact.



The Fang Method of rooting cuttings



Fang Propagation: inner pots removed

The roots start out very brittle, so I wait until they've grown a few inches and there are at least about 10 of them or they are branching out. I separate and repot the rooted cuttings into individual pots with more room for root growth. Then I wait until I see roots growing out from those pots before transplanting them to the ground

The experiment was a success this year. I lost

significantly fewer cuttings and had extras to give away to friends and family.

Have a suggestion? A question? A story to share? Send it to editor@crfg-la.org and see it published here!

Photo Album of Cottonwood Urban Farm

