



# LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2026 Volume XXXI Issue 2

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

## 2026 LA Chapter Board Members

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### FIELD TRIP

**NOTE THE SPECIAL TIME FOR THE EVENT!!!!**

**Date:** Saturday, March 28, 1:00 pm  
**Location:**  
**Event:** Fourth Annual Tony Stewart Memorial, Tribute, and Tree Symposium

*This event is FOR CRFG-LA MEMBERS ONLY—NO GUESTS, NO FRIENDS. NO RELATIVES. NO CHILDREN. NO PETS.*

Please bring a dish to share which will feed at least 6 people.

### FIELD TRIP

**NOTE THE SPECIAL TIME FOR THE EVENT!!!!**

**Date:** Saturday, April 25, 9:30 am  
**Location:** Hollywood Hills  
**Event:** Meet the Hollywood Orchard folks and their Virtual Orchard!

The Hollywood Orchard is an all-volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to harvesting, using, and donating local fruit to charities and food banks. They “glean” from within their own Virtual Orchard: a network of neighbors who open their own gardens to share with others. Located in the Hollywood Hills, they hold “Pick & Kitchen” events, go on road trips together, work with their local elementary school, and learn about everything at their Farmer’s Circle events. We have been invited to join a Farmer’s Circle to introduce our groups to each other, followed by a tour of their community gardens. Bring good walking shoes, and something to share at a coffee & tea potluck before the event. Please carpool if possible!

*Save the date!*

### CALENDAR FOR L.A. CHAPTER 2026

March 28	Fourth Annual CRFG Tony Stewart Memorial, Tribute, and Tree Symposium
April 25	Hollywood Orchard introduction and garden tour
May 23	Cooking with Cactus, by Emily Diebold of LACSS Education (Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society)
June 9-14	CRFG Annual Festival of Fruit, CSU Fullerton, Titan Student Union. “Festival Day” on June 13
June 27	CRFG Annual Plant Sale
July 25	Home Garden Tour
August 22	TBD
September 26	Garden Tour with Hands-On Demonstration of Proper Pruning Techniques
October 24	TBD
November 28	TBD
December 19	Holiday Party

## VOTING TIME!

When you check out this month's Fruit Gardener magazine, make sure you read through the entire email. It's time for our CRFG, Inc proxy voting. Please download the ballot and send it in as soon as you can. <https://tinyurl.com/CRFGballot2026>

## LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid

### January 25 - Annual Scion Exchange

Although not as crowded as previous years, this year's annual Scion Exchange nevertheless had a lot more to offer. In addition to the usual fruit trees, we had some new and exciting plants to sample, including yacon, che, chaya (tree spinach), chayote, Eleagnus (goumi), rose apple, Japanese raisin tree, pepinos, and camellia japonica (not the tea-type of camellia).

Because there's more than one way to propagate a plant, the whiteboard in the room listed which scions could be directly planted in the ground (in addition being grafted). These included fig, grape, pomegranate, mulberry (although not all mulberries do well directly planted), sugar cane, dragon fruit, Barbados gooseberry, moringa, Babaco papaya, tomato, chayote, yacon, tree collard, elderberry, passionfruit, goji berry, pepino, rose apple, and Eleagnus/goumi. Some do better directly planted in the ground (fig and grape), but others need to be rooted first, either in moist sand or in water. Using a rooting hormone can also help start scions growing as their own plants.

Another column on the whiteboard showed compatibilities between fruit trees: which ones can be grafted onto others. Citrus to citrus, and apple to apple, of course. (Although citrus were banned from our Exchange to prevent the potential spread of Huanglongbing, or Citrus Greening Disease.) All stone fruit can be grafted onto other stone fruit (peaches, plums, cherries, almonds, apricots, etc), although some do better than others. Quince can be grafted onto apple, pear, medlar, and tecote. Annonas also graft well together: cherimoya, atemoya, soursop, and sugar apples.



People enjoyed browsing the tables for their desired varieties all morning long. Meanwhile, outside in the patio area behind the meeting room, Bill Brandt and Bruce Blavin demonstrated multiple grafting techniques, such as "Vee" grafting (where the scion is carved into a point and tucks inside a "V" shaped slice), whip grafting (where the scion and rootstock are both sliced at an angle), and whip-and-tongue grafting (similar to whip grafting but with a vertical cut in the angled slice to create a tooth and notch to mate with the other tooth and notch).



So what did we share? Here comes the list! Apple, almond, apricot, aprium, atemoya, quite a few avocado, cherimoya, cherries, lots and lots of dragonfruit, elderberries, feijoa (pineapple guava), plenty of figs, grapes, guavas, loquats, moringa, mulberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums, pluots, pomegranates, quince, white sapote and black sapote, and sugar cane.

So many wonderful and new and exotic plants! I can't wait for next year's Scion exchange!

### February 28 - Drip Irrigation

I think this was the first time I saw more new faces than long-term members at a meeting! Which is a shame because I think even those who know about irrigation would have learned something that day.

Before the presentation, Karen Payton invited all new members to introduce themselves, and all six did so. We met two pairs of twins, an expert on roses, and a lovely couple who grow tropical trees from their home country.

Kathleen Doran prefaced her talk by reminding people that Huanglongbing/Citrus Greening Disease is still causing quarantines throughout California, and showed us photos of the Asian Citrus Psyllid, the primary vector for spreading this devastating disease which decimated about 80% of Florida's citrus trees before it began rampaging across the country. Look underneath your citrus leaves for clusters of tiny insects, and the weepy, waxy threads they exude. Unfortunately, by the time you see evidence, the tree is badly infected and needs to be destroyed, not even composted but triple bagged and thrown in regular trash.

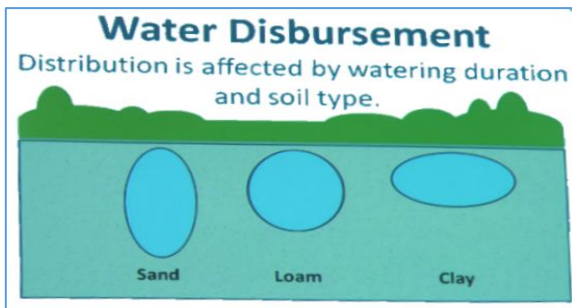
Once the preliminaries were over, Kathleen presented a very thorough and memorable description of what you need to build your own customized drip irrigation system.



Kathleen thinks the best thing about being a gardener is the ability to change our minds. We add new plants, we chop down trees. We graft onto older trees. Gardens are always changing. And drip irrigation is flexible (in many ways!) and can be quickly updated to fit the new garden design.

Drip lets you water thirsty roses, dry lavender, and a moisture-loving tree all on the same line if you know how to do it.

She first talked about dirt. Sandy soil absorbs water quickly and deeply, and the soil surface will dry out just as quickly. Clay soil absorbs water slowly so most of the moisture stays close to the surface. Loamy soil absorbs somewhere in between. Most people don't like clay soil, but she thinks it's great because it holds water better than the others. It's the perfect soil for drip irrigation.



The first thing you should do is learn what kind of soil you have. That will tell you how far apart to set your emitters. If it's hard to dig, it's probably clay. If it's easy to dig into,

it's more likely sand or loam. Kathleen said that people who water sandy soil frequently are probably replenishing the local aquifer, and she thanked them for their generosity!

Kathleen recalled growing up in a time when everyone watered their lawns on the same three days of the week, regardless of whether it needed it or not. She said that teaches roots that water will always be at the surface. When roots are at the surface, they are exposed to heat and air, and are likely to die when the weather turns hot and dry.

Dry soil can easily become hydrophobic (rejects water). To see if you have hydrophobic soil, water your soil and wait, and then kick the top damp surface away and see if the water has entered the lower dirt or not. If it hasn't reached below the first inch, you may have hydrophobic soil. The cure is a very slow addition of water, to give it a chance to soak in.

We have had some good rain in the last year or two, but this is California. There will eventually be droughts. We need to start training our plants now to grow the roots deep so they can survive the hot dry droughts.

#### PREPARE GOOD PLANS

Although it's possible, it's not a good idea to run drip irrigation and sprinklers on the same line. Drip irrigation emitters push out water in gallons per hour (GPH), while standard sprinklers operate in gallons per minute (GPM). It's possible to calculate and design a system using appropriate ratios but it can get pretty complicated.

The best way to plan your irrigation system is to create a map of your yard so you know where everything is, and where you will place everything. This will be a big help when you are trying to remember where a particular line is located a year later, after mulch has been dumped on top of it and the tiny nearby plant has become a large bush.

#### APPLY BEST PRACTICES

We don't start off expecting to fail. One way to prevent failure is to regularly check your whole system. Turn it on and make sure there are no leaks. If your system starts watering at four in the morning, will you know? Don't wait for your plants to die to tell you there's a problem. Find out how many emitters your gardener has accidentally trimmed off. Kathleen recommends a full system check at least once a month. It just takes a second, then you can make repairs quickly instead of waiting for a catastrophe.

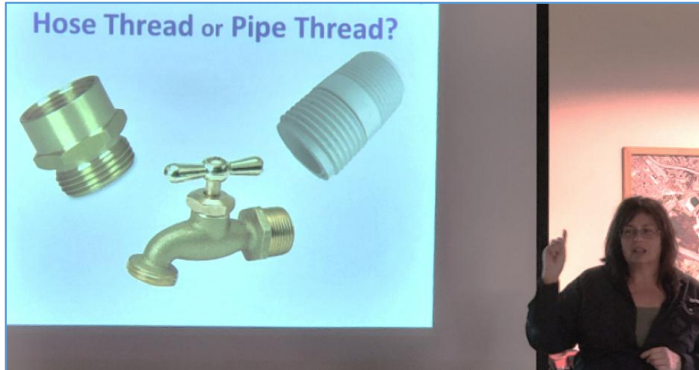
#### SIZE ULTIMATELY MATTERS

There are a lot of different components, and each one comes in multiple sizes. Kathleen illustrated the difference between hose thread and pipe thread. They look almost the same, but hoses have straight threads and use a rubber gasket to seal,

while pipe threads are slightly tapered and the threads themselves close off leaks if properly assembled.

If you purchase a hose fitting and there's no rubber washer inside, put it back and get another one. That's much better than scrambling to find a gasket later.

Hose threads and pipe threads will never seal together. Bad idea. Don't try it, you'll just break the pipe.



Kathleen passed around a hose fitting and a pipe thread fitting so we could try putting them together and discover for ourselves how they do NOT work well together. She advised us not to crank hard to make a pipe seal. Hand tight should be sufficient.

Although some people swear by Teflon tape for sealing pipe threads, DO NOT EVER put Teflon tape on a drip irrigation system. You will end up with tiny bits of Teflon breaking off and blocking your emitters and/or filters.

Then there is the poly hose, which comes in far too many sizes, and an inch isn't always an inch! In fact, a half inch hose can be .58", .62", .70" or .71" in diameter! To make things worse, most "sized" fittings only fit their particular hose size.

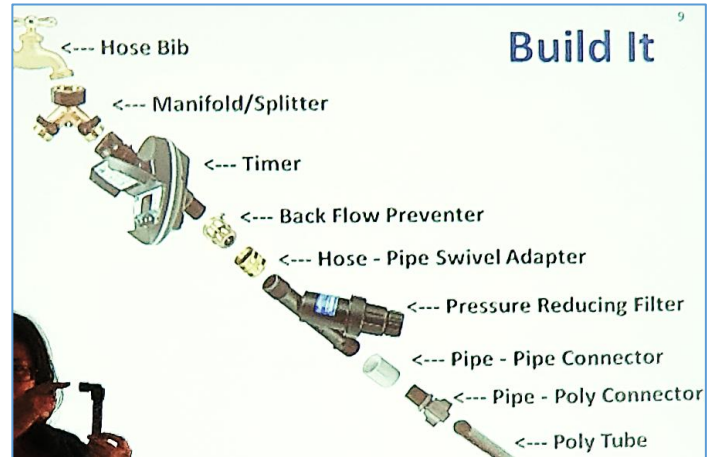
Kathleen showed us something wonderful called a Universal Connector, which is tapered and will fit multiple "half inch" tubes even if they measure different diameters. They aren't always easy to find, so it's a good idea to purchase them when you find them, and keep them handy for future repairs or design changes.

#### KNOW YOUR DIRECTIONS



Irrigation connections have shapes just like road signs. A tee is a tee no matter what size, and they all do the same thing: incoming water splits into two streams going in different directions. Angles all work like angles, crosses split the flow multiple times, and so on.

#### BUILD IT



Begin your new drip irrigation system at the hose bib. You can design two or four or ten different lines using splitters.

You can automate each line with a timer. That means you don't have to ask the neighbor's kid to turn them on and off for you while you're out of town. There are many types of timers: electric, battery operated, solar, etc. Some can work more than one drip line in sequence or at the same time.

Next you will need a back flow preventer, which is required by California code. Standard sprinkler valves already have back flow preventors built into them to protect yard water from backing up into the drinking water line. Some newer houses have a backflow preventer built into their incoming water lines, but older houses do not. It's best to assume your house does NOT have one and include it in your drip system instead of finding out the hard way. You don't want fertilizer or the dog's latest donation to the yard getting sucked backwards through the line and into your drinking water!

Unfortunately, backflow preventers can be expensive, especially those made of brass. But they are a necessary expense. Backflow preventers create a one way street for water flow. Look for the directional arrow on the side of the fitting when installing - do NOT install it backwards!! Also, never place a backflow preventer before a timer.

Backflow preventers are made with straight hose thread, so you can't connect pipe thread to it. You will need to get a pipe-to-hose converter before adding the actual drip lines.

Ready for the dripline yet? Nope! You need to add a few more things first. You should include a pressure regulator, because adjusting the water flow from the hose

bib doesn't always get the water where it needs to go. Pressure and flow are two different things. Higher pressure can move more water without increasing the flow rate. And, like backflow regulators, pressure reducers also need to be installed downstream of (after) the timer.

Always, always, ALWAYS include a filter. Because there will always, always, ALWAYS be stuff in the line. Kathleen told us about a friend whose filter became clogged full of little blue things. Apparently, somebody had repaired a PVC pipe in his system, and the loose stuff and glue droplets ran down the tube and completely filled up and blocked the filter.

A note about filters: check them at least monthly. Removable filters are better than simple mesh filters because you can pull it out and hose it off and put it back and everything is clean and ready to go. Mesh filters simply catch crap and hold it until there is no more flow. Filters will be your biggest maintenance job, other than finding cut lines.

Kathleen prefers filters which are not in line with the drip system. They are easier to maintain and remove to be washed off. Inline filters just trap dirt and keep it in line, eventually blocking the water flow.

You're almost ready to add the drip lines.

To adapt the filter to your system, use a pipe connector and then one of the universal adapters to fit into your poly tube.

When buying your parts for your system, always try to fit them together at the store. That way you will know they can do the job!

## DRIPLINE HOSES

You are finally ready to create your beautiful, customized water web! Attach the large ("half inch") poly tube to your adapter and run it like a backbone where it needs to go. Then connect smaller tubes branching out like ribs. The smaller tubes will have emitters and other fittings to drip water exactly where it needs to go, and at the correct flow rate.

Think of poly tubing as a freeway, the connectors as offramps, and the micro tubes as streets, with the emitters being the houses where the garden plants live. Use the "freeway" to get the water most of the way, and keep the "streets" short. You don't want to go very far on a street.

You will need to cut the hoses to the correct length. Kathleen does not recommend using scissors, because you will end up with a little angle or a hanging Chad on one side.



(Remember those?) A water-tight connection needs a straight-across cut so the ends are flush on

the fitting. There are lots of different tube cutters, and some of them claim to have replaceable blades. However, their actual replacement blades are nowhere to be found! When the blade gets dull the whole thing has to be thrown out because of this. You can sharpen a blade and keep it going for a little while longer but that's about it.

To find the best tool for the job, go to a pro plumbing shop first. Ask all the questions you want at the pro shop. And then go to a warehouse store and get what they recommend for a lower price. But never, ever go to a pro shop at 8:00 in the morning because that's when they are selling to contractors and they will not have time to talk to you.

If you're lucky you can also get information at a nursery.

Once you have the general shape laid out and the tubes cut, add the emitter fittings where they are needed. These are installed by poking a hole into the drip tube and pressing the fitting into your new hole. Kathleen's favorite tool is a simple handheld device with a poke on one side and a small hole on the back. The poke allows you to make a hole at any angle on the hose, whether on the right, on the left, or on top. The hollow at the end of the handle allows you to press the emitter in place which saves your thumb a lot of pain! And it makes a satisfying "POP!" sound when the poke goes through.



Above all else, do NOT use a screwdriver to poke a hole! That is guaranteed to leak.

Kathleen described the best way of stuffing an emitter into a hose as doing a chicken dance! While pushing the hose and emitter together, flap your elbows up and down, slowly working the fitting into the hole. She recommends standing up because you will have better leverage that way.

You can also soak the hose in hot water to soften it before poking the fitting into the hole.

Kathleen advises that, whenever possible, create a "closed loop" emitter line. This prevents puddles at the end of a straight line

## SAFETY GEAR

When the dripline is laid out exactly where you want it, you staple it to the ground. Literally. Use long, U-shaped metal loops to stake the hose and hole it still Kathleen warned us NOT to cheap out on this part. There are so-called "landscape staples" which corrode after a few years



This is important safety gear

and leave two VERY SHARP and VERY RUSTY wires sticking up, waiting to stick some tetanus through your sneaker and into your foot!

Estimate how many you think you'll need and double it. Then double it again. You will need a LOT of them! You do not want to take a trip to the E.R. after snagging your toe on a bit of upward-moving hose and falling into a rose bush. Yes, this has happened! Not a pleasant experience.) She reemphasized: use MORE loops than you think you'll need!!

#### BEFORE AND AFTER

As you're planning your drip system, use moisture testing probes to find out how deep the moisture in your soil goes. This will tell you where to place more (or fewer) drip lines.



Get a bunch of cheap moisture testing probes, they don't have to be expensive. Also, use them after the system is set up, to make sure it's doing what it needs to do.

Stick the probes all the way into the ground, then pull them out by the (metal) stem, not by the plastic gauge at the top, because you will break it

Why do you need a moisture sensor? For one thing, your finger only goes a couple of inches into the ground to feel for water. Citrus trees who don't get enough water have leaves that hang down and look very sad. Citrus trees who get way too much water have leaves that hang down look really sad. Most people think a plant that looks sad needs more water.

Before you turn on your strip irrigation system, check and see if you need to turn it on. Because maybe you don't need to water.

That's why you need a probe.

#### EMITTER TYPES

Kathleen described the many types of emitters including bubblers, drips, sheets, misters, sprays, and adjustable types. She warned against putting too many emitters on the small lines, because each one slows down the water a bit until there's no flow left. She also said never put emitters in the main ("freeway") line because you don't want to slow that down at all.

If you've inserted the wrong emitter or realize it needs to be somewhere else, you can remove it, but then you have to plug the hole. Do not try to poke something new into that hole because that's a guaranteed leak.

Do not place emitters to spray water on a tree trunk. Instead, circle the trunk. There are special parts to do this. Kathleen showed us a C-shaped pad which pushes water straight down. Jim Raycroft (who brought some fantastic

starfruit to our potluck after the meeting), brought his own circular pipe which opens to let you circle a tree. The water sprays out but not in, so the trunk stays dry. They come in many sizes, including several feet in diameter, and cost about \$35 on Amazon.



There are inline fertilization systems you can add, but make sure to run fresh water through the dripline before shutting it off, or else you will end up with fertilizer blocking the system.

Hard water deposits can also clog up emitters and you can't do anything about it if it's in the main line. But you can clean a "street" line by sticking it in a coffee cup with vinegar for an hour or so. Shake it off and the lime is gone.

There are dripline kits available which make it easy to set up but they might not work in your particular garden. Kits are created for a single static situation. Buying your own and doing it yourself makes your system perfectly customized,

*It really doesn't matter what you use as long as the right amount of water gets to the plant!*



and there are so many options that it allows you to be amazingly creative. There may be some limits, but if the water is coming out where you need it, then it's perfect!

And take your time! This is not a race. You don't have to design and build your drip system all at once. You can do it over a series of weeks or weekends or months.

Someone asked about local restrictions on water. Kathleen reassured us that the "water police" will not force you to stop drip irrigation watering after ten minutes. Remember that drip irrigation is gallons per hour, not per minute. You can run it longer than an hour, if you need to, and you won't break any water laws.

After such an intense and thorough presentation, we all relaxed and enjoyed some fabulous potluck dishes, including: Filipino rice with savory mushrooms and tofu, fried potatoes with onions, Lentil salad, potstickers, fresh Kajang starfruit, sliced passionfruit, fresh mandarins, baked carrots, fresh lemons, fresh strawberries, fresh Surname cherries, sweet

lumpia, sliced Chandler pomelo, and an intense, dense chocolate bundt cake.

We thank Kathleen very much for sharing her tremendous knowledge and making drip irrigation simply make sense.

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## WANTED: Grafting Volunteers

Help wanted: Looking for CRFG members to help teach students how to graft. The volunteers need to be interested in grafting, not necessarily experienced in grafting. They'll mainly be supervising the students to make sure no one gets cut.

The schedule of classes is listed below. If you are interested and available to help out on any or all of the following dates, please contact [editor@crfg-la.org](mailto:editor@crfg-la.org).

- Verdugo Hills High Tuesday 3/10 from 12:30pm – 3:50pm
- Poly High Thursday 3/12 starting at noon
- John Wooden High Monday or Wednesday 3/16 or 17 from 11am – 1:30pm
- Sylmar High Thursday 3/19 from 10am – 1:45pm
- North Hollywood High Tuesday 4/7 starting at noon
- Eagle Rock High TBD (If interested, contact Barry and he will let you know when it is finally scheduled.)

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## Sweet Orange Scab (SOS) Quarantine Boundary Update

Los Angeles and Orange Counties - Los Angeles and Villa Park Areas

Effective February 6, 2026, the Department is expanding the SOS quarantine in the Los Angeles area of Los Angeles County. A map of the new boundary can be found at [www.cdffa.ca.gov/citrus/pests\\_diseases/sos/regulation.html](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/citrus/pests_diseases/sos/regulation.html).

Sweet orange scab (SOS) is a plant disease caused by the fungal pathogen *Elsinöe australis*, which results in the formation of pustules (small raised spots or rounded swelling) and lesions on the skin or rind of citrus fruit.

The initial scab or lesion forms on very young fruit, is slightly raised, and pink to light brown in color. As the lesion expands, it appears cracked or warty and may change color to yellowish brown, and eventually to dark gray.

The quarantine prohibits movement of citrus plant material across the established boundaries. SOS is not fatal to the tree if treated properly.



- Both citrus and sweet orange scabs can be controlled with a series of well-timed fungicide applications. Fruit are only susceptible for the first six to eight weeks of its development.
- The first fungicide application should be made prior to bloom to protect the foliage of the spring growth flush.
- Applications to protect the developing fruit should be made at petal fall and three to four weeks later.
- Fungicides are available to commercial growers for scab control (See the LSU AgCenter's Louisiana Plant Disease Management Guide).
- Only copper-based fungicides are readily available for use on residential citrus.
- These copper-based fungicides should not be applied during bloom.

For more information on SOS, see the official website [www.cdffa.ca.gov/citrus/pests\\_diseases/sos/PestProfile.html](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/citrus/pests_diseases/sos/PestProfile.html)

