

# The Fruit Leaf

July–August 2004



Newsletter

Santa Clara Valley Chapter

California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.

## ***June Festival of Fruit a Huge Success***

***Sini Falkowski***

On June 18, 19 and 20<sup>th</sup> the annual Festival of Fruit was held on the Campus of Cal Poly Pomona. There was a large turnout from Chapters all over the States and it was kicked off by a wonderfully organized reception where the attendees were served a light dinner which, of course, included various fruits for tasting. Early in the afternoon were tours to Melissa's Gardens and La Verne wholesale nursery where the attendees could purchase trees.

The Saturday conference started with a talk from Chris Rollins of the Fruit and Spice Park in Florida. It was a tale of his trip to South East Asia and all the various fruits he encountered and was able to taste. Since there were 22 speakers I will only touch on the few that really hit home with me. Of course, Dr. Partida of Cal Poly gave a very interesting and informative talk of growing avocados that had everyone's attention. Also was a big hit was Chef Josez who shared his concoctions with the audience and we cannot dismiss Joe Sabol's funny, funny presentation on how he gets high school students to learn to graft.

During the lunch break Ed Laivo from Dave Wilson Nursery gave a fruit tasting with lines of people quite long. Our own Santa Clara Valley Chapter had a booth, too. It was a simple straightforward one with sign describing ourselves and our tasting of two heritage varieties of cherries which came from Andy's Orchard. The cherries were such a hit and we caught several people coming back more than once as the usual exclamation was "we just don't get cherries like this down here!" The two varieties were Black Republican and Black Tartarian. Most folks seem to like the crunch of the Republican which is the Bigarreau type and the flavor of Tartarian which is a gean type, but it was a hard choice regarding flavor. Bigarreau types such as

Black Republican, Bing and Rainier are crispy or crunchy fleshed varieties where as the gean are the soft fleshed varieties. More than once we heard the stale joke of "what happened to the Black Democrats?" The story behind the name of the Republican cherry was the founder of the cherry named it after a neighbor who was a staunch Republican. But I won't get into politics and you can accept the folk tale or not.

That Saturday evening was capped off with a delicious dinner from Melissa's with Mariachi singers and dancers. Sunday was devoted to tours of different kinds at the Fullerton Arboretum and Cal Poly. However, one of my favorite haunts was the Farm Store and nursery on the Cal Poly campus. Much of the foodstuffs are either grown or made on the campus by students. There was ice cream made on the campus that was so rich and tasty that I just rolled over and said, "oink". There I purchased avocados grown on the campus farm. One was a Daily avocado that was as big as a huge grapefruit and another almost as big was a variety called McArthur, both varieties unknown to me before.

Next year in September the Northern California Chapters, including the Santa Clara Valley Chapter, will be hosting the Festival of Fruit in Santa Cruz. Preliminary arrangements have been started and the list of tours being considered is extensive. Different tours that are being considered are Axel Kratel, Chadwick and Chuck Rust gardens, The Farm in Santa Cruz Biodynamics, Santa Cruz arboretum, Jim Ryder Orchards, Gene Lester Citrus, Cabrillo Salvia Gardens, Sierra Ault Nursery, Monterey Mushroom, Four Winds Citrus, Menlo Growers Citrus and Filoli. Since it will be so close we expect many of our Chapter members will want to attend AND volunteer to help. Our Chapter is responsible for registration so we will need many folks to make registration packets and man the registration booth. PLEASE volunteer to make the 2005 Festival of Fruit the best ever!

## **Our Next Speaker**

Dave Giordano comes from an old family of cherry growers in the Berryessa district of San Jose. He conducts a commercial orchard and fruit stand at the Walter Lester estate on Chynoweth Ave. in San Jose, where he also has a greenhouse of exotic tropical fruits. He will tell us about his experiences obtaining, growing, and fruiting them.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Santa Clara Valley Chapter of CRFG

August 7 (Saturday) 1 P.M.-4:30 P.M.	Prusch Park	<b>Growing Tropical Fruits in the Bay Area (Mangoes and Papaya)</b> by Dave Giordano.
August 8 (Sunday) 10 A.M.–NOON	Andy's Orchard 12615 Half Road Morgan Hill	<b>Fruit Tasting.</b> Last of the stone fruits. \$5 per person. Harvest walk through the orchard: \$5 per person. For more information, go to the Website: <a href="http://www.andysorchard.com">http://www.andysorchard.com</a> . Or call 408-782-7600.
October 2 (Saturday) 1 P.M.-4:30 P.M.	Prusch Park	<b>Fruits and Wildlife of Borneo</b> by Linda Kincaid. Linda writes the Organic Gardening column for the <i>Fruit Gardener</i> . Feature length articles on her adventures can be found in the January and March issues. She also recently wrote an article on proboscis monkeys for the National Wildlife Federation.

JABA WHAT?

It is slow-growing and unimpressive  
 Standing about 5ft tall  
 Its branches and leaves pretty, but unexpressive  
 It's a bush and that is all!  
 I searched in spring for the flowers  
 Without a trace  
 Their presence beyond my powers  
 This tree is a waste of space!  
 But WAIT- Summer's ARRIVED  
 And what do I now spy  
 Beyond the leaves--the branches alongside  
 But little black fruits for me to try  
 Umm good! What a treat!  
 Such unusual good fruit to eat!  
 Poor little friend I misjudged thee  
 Now for me, I gotta have a **JABOTICABA** tree!

Katie Wong

See for yourself!! MYRICARIA CAULIFLORA  
 Donated by Steve Starnes  
 Growing in Prusch Park

FIG AND GRAPE TASTING

September 11 @ 9:00 AM

The largest collection in the nation of figs and in the western world of grapes, is that located at Winters, Calif., part of the National Clonal Germplasm Repository of the USDA. The Sacramento chapter has arranged of Northern California CRFG members to tour and taste figs and grapes in the repository collection, conducted by Repository staff.

Directions—Interstate 505 north to Putah Creek Road exit, just south of Winters. At end of off-ramp, turn left and left again to Railroad Avenue. Turn left and right at first opportunity, which will keep you on Putah Creek Road. Continue over a mile, until you encounter the olive trees on the left. They will part at a great gate in the chain link fence. Enter the gate and follow the road to the meeting place at the house before you. Dress for warm weather, bees and wasps.

To be certain that the tour is not cancelled for any reason, call Ray Sheehy the night before at 530-66-7239.

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

<b>Director Chair:</b>	Corrie Grové	650-372-0516	<a href="mailto:freestate@juno.com">freestate@juno.com</a>
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	Nancy Garrison	408-299-8321	<a href="mailto:nancyg2@aol.com">nancyg2@aol.com</a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Todd Kennedy	415-664-8851	
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Sini Falkowski	408-446-1992	<a href="mailto:sinif@worldnet.att.net">sinif@worldnet.att.net</a>
<b>Director:</b>	Ken Sherfy	408-846-5373	<a href="mailto:sherfy@myrealbox.com">sherfy@myrealbox.com</a>
<b>Director:</b>	Katie Wong	408-251-2742	<a href="mailto:alivensilk@aol.com">alivensilk@aol.com</a>
<b>Director:</b>	Nick Lolonis	650-574-0998	

<b>Heritage Orchard:</b>	Ken Sherfy	408-846-5373	<a href="mailto:sherfy@myrealbox.com">sherfy@myrealbox.com</a>
<b>Program Chair:</b>	Sarah Sherfy	408-846-5373	<a href="mailto:sherfy@us.ibm.com">sherfy@us.ibm.com</a>
<b>Librarian:</b>	Doron Kletter	650-571-1258	<a href="mailto:Kletter@impact.xerox.com">Kletter@impact.xerox.com</a>
<b>Fruit Leaf Editors:</b>	Todd Kennedy	415-664-8851	
	Bob Allen	650-949-0280	<a href="mailto:boballen@stanfordalumni.org">boballen@stanfordalumni.org</a>
<b>Membership:</b>	Sini Falkowski	408-446-1992	<a href="mailto:sinif@worldnet.att.net">sinif@worldnet.att.net</a>
<b>Propagation Chair:</b>	Doron Kletter	650-571-1258	<a href="mailto:Kletter@impact.xerox.com">Kletter@impact.xerox.com</a>
<b>Scion Exchange Chair:</b>	Karl Gross	408-733-5317	<a href="mailto:kgross@usgs.gov">kgross@usgs.gov</a>

In the previous *Fruit Leaf*, the history of the Filoli Orchard was shared with Chapter members. This edition, we explain what was found there when rehabilitation began in 1997 and what has been added since.

Once cleared, the orchard was found to comprise an apparently random distribution of some 90 pear and apple trees, grouped in threes and fours of certain varieties. A solid planting to one side was of walnuts, half of them reverted to Northern California Black Walnut rootstock, probably due to blackline virus. One particular low trough conducts drainage from parking lots, and a line of quince there indicated that this stream was known for many years—quinces will survive some amount of inundation. A few plums survived only as myrobalan rootstocks, except on the knoll. There, where a sandy, well-drained soil prevailed, two Asian plums and two prune trees survived.

The rehabilitation protocol called for repropagation of all extant trees to preserve the existing varieties. This was carried out in winter 1998. At the time, most trees had not been observed in fruit and were not in condition to bear fruit. As it happened, there were multiple specimens of most varieties, and repropagation resulted in many duplicates.

The response to fencing the orchard against deer was remarkable. Apple trees that had seemed stunted or moribund exploded into expansive growth and even bore fruit. Branches that had never been strained were suddenly subjected to a full load of fruit and leaves. Many trees lost limbs that first season, before the need for props was realized. Apples particularly have a soft heart wood. There exists a fungus that colonizes apple orchards, and in time consumes the centers of apple trees. Most of the original apple trees at Filoli have a hollow trunk as a result, and this exacerbated the limb breakage problem. Pears, however, are a noble cabinet wood, and their hearts will outlast the tree—already the longest-lived of all orchard fruits.

The grafted trees propagated from the originals were planted out in 1999. This left most of the space in the orchard vacant. Garden management invited Todd Kennedy to propagate additional apple and pear cultivars from his San Martín orchard, and in this way the orchard was ultimately filled up. The orchard now comprises 'historically correct' varieties of fruit, current during the period of Filoli's private ownership, 1918–1975. Most of the varieties added to the orchard collection are of American origin, but not all, since many varieties from Europe were known in or introduced into California during that time: 'Cox Orange Pippin' and 'Summer Rambo' apples of course, and nearly all the great pears of the time came from France or Belgium. No great license was necessary, since Bourn, who started the orchard, was a fruit collector, and odd varieties still unknown were

planted by him in the Filoli orchard and garden. Since there survives no record of the varieties first planted in the orchard, and there are no other indications to suggest a correct or even probable replanting of the orchard in original varieties, Filoli staff adopted a standard of replanting with period varieties, both American and European. The protocol is to plant those varieties that might have been planted or replanted, had Bourn remained alive during the period 1918–1975.

That gives a pretty broad latitude that has not been abused. Most replanting has been of American apples and European pears, all from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A further criterion has been to select varieties that would complement an eventual interpretative program of fruit appreciation and fruit history. As a result, the history of the apple from Roman 'Decio' and 'Court Pendu Plat' to Renaissance 'Margil' and 'Old Nonpariel' and the many more recent varieties can be illustrated from the Filoli collection. Representative selections from the best European varieties, 'Edelrother,' 'Borsdorfer' and 'Weisser Wintertaffetapfel' of Germany, 'Calvilles' and 'Fenouilletts' of France, and of other countries are planted. The interesting microclimate of the Filoli site, with moderate summers, afternoon shade and long season, permits the growth and production of all these in one place, which cannot be done elsewhere in America.

The same climatic features permit apples from various places in America, all to be grown well in one location. At first, there seemed to a prejudice favoring the old varieties of the Northeast, perhaps because these have received good press in the best-publicized fruit books in America—Beach, Thomas, Barry and Downing. The classic apples of the West Coast were propagated, and because of memories of Emil Linquist, Midwest varieties were added in fairness. More recently has come an awareness that the American South had an apple tradition that deserved investigation—indeed, was among the many aspects of Southern material culture that was neglected, if not suppressed, in conventional American life after 1860. These have been recently added to the limits of orchard space, material obtained from Nick Botner, probably from Lee Calhoun.

Analogous additions of European and American pears, from Roman to more recent times, have been made to the Filoli collection. Cider apples (but not perry pears) have been planted, if needed to support a future interpretive program on fermenting—likely to be popular with some.

In one corner of the old orchard, some liberties have been taken. Near the creek bank, where the soil is a heavy clay and few old trees had survived, a vineyard of four rows of grapes has been planted. These also came from San Martín. All are of *Vitis labrusca*, *V. aestivalis*, or hybrids of these species with *V. vinifera*. American and

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French hybrids have been difficult to grow well as a collection anywhere else in the USA; many varieties require either a dry climate, or long growing season, but not the hot summers of interior California.

So far, this vineyard has proved to be the public's favorite feature of the Filoli orchard. Occasional tours and tasting in connection with the Fall Festival have been a revelation of the variety of taste possible in this one fruit. All the permutations of color, size, flavor, ripening date and productivity can easily explain the 150 distinct cultivars of "labrusca"-type grapes in the Filoli collection.

### Tomato and Chile Pepper Tasting

The Master Gardener's Tomato and Chile Pepper Tasting is scheduled for Saturday, September 4, 2004, from 10AM to 12:00 noon at Prusch Park.

### Apple Tasting in Santa Cruz

The Monterey Bay Chapter of CRFG has its Annual Apple Tasting at the Fall Harvest Festival on September 25, 2004 from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m. at the Live Oak Grange Hall, located at 1900 17th Ave, Santa Cruz.

The more recently planted collection of stone fruits on the knoll takes advantage of a gritty well-drained soil. These included some peach varieties salvaged from the backyard of the late collector Fay Paquette of Camarillo, publicized in the original edition of Ortho's book *All About Growing Fruits and Berries*. These were collected after his death and are still unnamed, a challenging exercise that is left for the future. Others known to us are 'Raritan Rose,' 'Miller's Late,' 'Late Crawford,' 'Kalamazoo' and many other classics. Some survive only here at the Filoli orchard. In summer 2004, these produced their first crop, and are quickly looking to surpass the vineyard as a favorite stop for Filoli employees.

At this writing, the Filoli orchard is nearly full again, and any additions will necessitate removals from among the existing trees. This is a desirable equilibrium, and makes the work or propagation easy now, mostly grafting replacements of trees in decline. Any new addition (and garden management is always discovering more fruits) will require other space elsewhere than in the orchard—about which, more later.

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

#### ADDRESS CHANGE NOTIFICATION

Founded in 1968, the California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG) is the largest amateur fruit-growing organization in the world. Its membership includes primarily hobbyists as well as nationally recognized botanical gardens, noted international horticultural researchers, commercial growers and representatives from institutions of higher learning. The members of twenty-one chapters and individual members reside in 48 states and territories of the United States, and in more than 35 countries worldwide. For more information, contact:

Santa Clara Valley Chapter/CRFG  
5124 Forest View Drive  
San Jose, CA 95129  
408-446-1992

#### CHAPTER LIBRARY—BOOKS TO CHECK OUT

If you would like a list of books in the Chapter library or wish to check out books, contact our librarian, Doron Kletter at 650-571-1258. Or email Doron at [doron.ketter@pah.xerox.com](mailto:doron.ketter@pah.xerox.com).



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5124 Forest View Drive  
San Jose, CA 95129

