



# The Fruit Leaf



June  
2010

<http://www.crfg.org>

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## Next Meeting

June 12<sup>th</sup>

Social and set-up 12:30

Meeting 1pm to 4pm

## LOTS of Summer Events

Want to learn how to propagate your plants by tissue culture? Do you like to party with your fellow fruit friends or tour classical, hundred-year-old gardens? Would you like to meet fruit experts gathered from around the world? Have we got a summer for you!

We have a *huge slate* of special events planned this summer, some of which require registration, so take a moment to peruse the following roundup of events.

**June 6<sup>th</sup>: Prusch Park work day, 9:30-noon.** Hang out with your fellow "fruities" and improve the park at the same time.

**June 12<sup>th</sup>: Our regular bi-monthly meeting, 12:30-4:00.** We won't have a "named" speaker, but we'll have a potluck and an interactive, do-it-ourselves swap of information, tool talks, a "show-and-tell," and tips & tricks. It would be great to not have too many fruit desserts (as much as we all love them), so consider bringing a main dish or salad.

Bring any items, tools, and ideas that you are excited about, to share with everyone. In addition, we'll have a guided tour of the Heritage Orchard. Those of you who have not seen it recently will be very impressed with the changes that Walt Compton has guided. There will also be tours of our new library, with Milovan Milutin, from which materials may soon be checked out. And Nancy Garrison will also give us a tour of the International Rare Fruit Orchard.

## Summer Events (continued from page 1)

**June 19<sup>th</sup>: Fruit Day at Yamagami's Nursery in Cupertino, 10:00-2:00.** Nancy Garrison, Lisa Stapleton and others will talk about growing a wide variety of fruit. Bring lots of questions. More information is available at [www.yamagamisnursery.com](http://www.yamagamisnursery.com). This is not a CRFG-sponsored event, but is included here because it is fruit-related.

**July 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>: Home tours of our members' gardens.** Susan will send out another email soon asking for more gardens to tour. Please consider opening your garden for this tour. Everyone will learn something, and sometimes just having a deadline works wonders to get your garden in shape for the rest of the year.

**NO REGULAR MEETING AT PRUSCH IN AUGUST! Check out [www.festivaloffruit.org](http://www.festivaloffruit.org) instead, for details on the annual international CRFG meeting.** Our regular meeting is cancelled because it is normally scheduled for the same weekend as the Festival of Fruit at Cal Poly in southern California. However, the Board will meet in September at a time to be determined later.

**August 7<sup>th</sup>: Kitchen Plant Tissue Culture at Prusch Park.** Learn how to clone your own plants the way the pros do. Tissue culture also often helps to thwart the transmission of plant diseases. Details can be found at <http://www.hometissueculture.org/htcgworkshops.htm>. If you have any questions regarding the workshop, please contact Carol, whose e-mail address is on this Web page. This is not a CRFG-sponsored event, but is included here because it is fruit-related.

**September 11<sup>th</sup>: Filoli tour.** Visit the classic orchards of Filoli, a beautiful historic estate, for a docent-led tour. Some of the scions for the annual exchange are collected here. The cost is \$15 per person, but if we can get 15 people to go, it drops down to \$12 each. We need to pre-pay, so there will be an advanced collection, according to Cory. Filoli can provide box lunches if we want, or we can just go to their very attractive cafe and buy lunch there. Here are some links for more information, and you may also contact Cory at [freestate@juno.com](mailto:freestate@juno.com):

\* <http://www.filoli.org/explore-filoli/>

\* <http://www.filoli.org/>

## Giving Back, and Paying it Forward

By Jack Kay

At our April chapter meeting, I encouraged everyone in attendance to think about how they can volunteer to help our chapter flourish even more than it already does. For several of you who already give much time and effort to the chapter, this is not an issue. For others, I realize you may want to volunteer, but are unsure how you might contribute or what you might have to offer. In the following paragraphs, I have put together some ideas for your consideration. If any of these interest you, please talk to me at a meeting, send me an email ([kay639@yahoo.com](mailto:kay639@yahoo.com)), or give me a call (408-735-7376).

While we have made much progress with woodchip mulching over the past few months, our two-to-three-acre Heritage Orchard, located on the eastern part of Prusch Park, continues to need lots of care and attention. The orchard is the source of many of the cuttings made available at our annual January scion exchange. If you attend these exchanges, please get involved helping to sustain the source of our scionwood by joining our new Heritage Orchard Activity Manager, Walt Crompton, at monthly orchard work parties. These are normally held on the first Sunday of each month from 9:00am - 12:00pm. You will find the work rewarding, and Walt always bring a great selection of refreshments. I also want to give a big thank-you to Scott Papenfus, who diligently served as our Orchard Activity Manager for the past several years.

For many years, Sue Conde served as the Newsletter Activity Manager, putting together and publishing our bi-monthly newsletter, *The Fruit Leaf*. We are grateful for her talent and efforts in this role. Recently, Lisa Stapleton agreed to take over the Newsletter Activity Manager position from Sue. As you observed in the April *Fruit Leaf*, Lisa is off to a running start.

That said, she can always use support, especially articles written by chapter members. Consider writing about your growing experiences and the lessons you've learned from the experiments that you've undertaken in your yard (both successes and failures). You don't have to be a professional writer to do this—Lisa always says that's what editors are *for*—and I know that Lisa would welcome your articles and make your writing shine. (Sini and Victoria have both contributed articles recently.) She could also use extra eyes to proofread draft versions of the newsletter if that might be your forte.

Kathleen Payne has done a great job as our Speaker Gifts Activity Manager, but unfortunately, she is moving to San Diego. Nancy Garrison has agreed to cover this role temporarily, but we need a permanent replacement. This position requires little time, and the chapter always reimburses for the gifts that you purchase. Please let me know if you are interested.

Becky Davis continues to do a fabulous job setting up the kitchen and preparing all the wonderful foods and fruits that members bring to our meetings. She can always use extra support both before (setup) and after (cleanup) our meetings, so consider serving on her committee. I am also certain that she would welcome a Co-Activity Manager and/or someone she could mentor to take over her position in the future.

For many years, Sarah Sherfy and Piyush Mehta have diligently handled the respective roles of Membership Activity Manager and Yahoo Group Activity Manager. Both positions require computer and database management skills. Given the size of our chapter and the complexities associated with trying to monitor and act on state and the chapter membership dues that do not always align timewise, Sarah and Piyush regularly face challenges. If you have some expertise in handling and/or automating the processing of database information, we could use your help in this important area. Additionally, if you have skills building web pages, let me know as our chapter does not currently have a website.

For the past four years, my wife Susan has organized tours of gardens of chapter members. Each year, those who have opened their yards have indicated afterwards how much they enjoyed the day and the chance they had to interact and share growing experiences with fellow members. As you know, Susan is at it again trying to recruit members to open their gardens for this year's tours. Recently, some of you have agreed to participate, but we still need several more. Please consider doing this; I am certain you will be glad you did.

## Rare Fruit: It's Not Just Mangos Anymore

By Sini Falkowski

Editor's introduction: *How far would you go to harvest a moist, delectable "ground fruit?" The ideal time for morel hunting is early Spring in the high country after snow melt, when the sun starts to warm up the soil. They appear briefly amongst the pine needles, and the season lasts only a few weeks. Generally speaking, the best time to begin looking for morels is when daytime highs in your area have been in the 60's (15° to 21°C) with nighttime lows no colder than the 40's (5°C).*

*So for Karl Gross and Sini Falkowski, the adventure started at "oh dark thirty," as they left West San Jose at 5 o'clock in the morning. Their destination: Jackson and the Gold Country. Their objective: fresh morel mushrooms. Here's how Sini describes it:*

"As we got higher in the mountains the terrain became filled with evergreens of all kinds, pine, cypress, cedar, etc. We arrived after a three-hour car ride at the Pi Pi campground in the El Dorado National Forest. The air was still a bit chilly as the sun hadn't yet warmed the air, and we could see our every breath. We arrived in plenty of time to hear directions during the initiation talk by Phil and Henry, our guides and leaders. We all



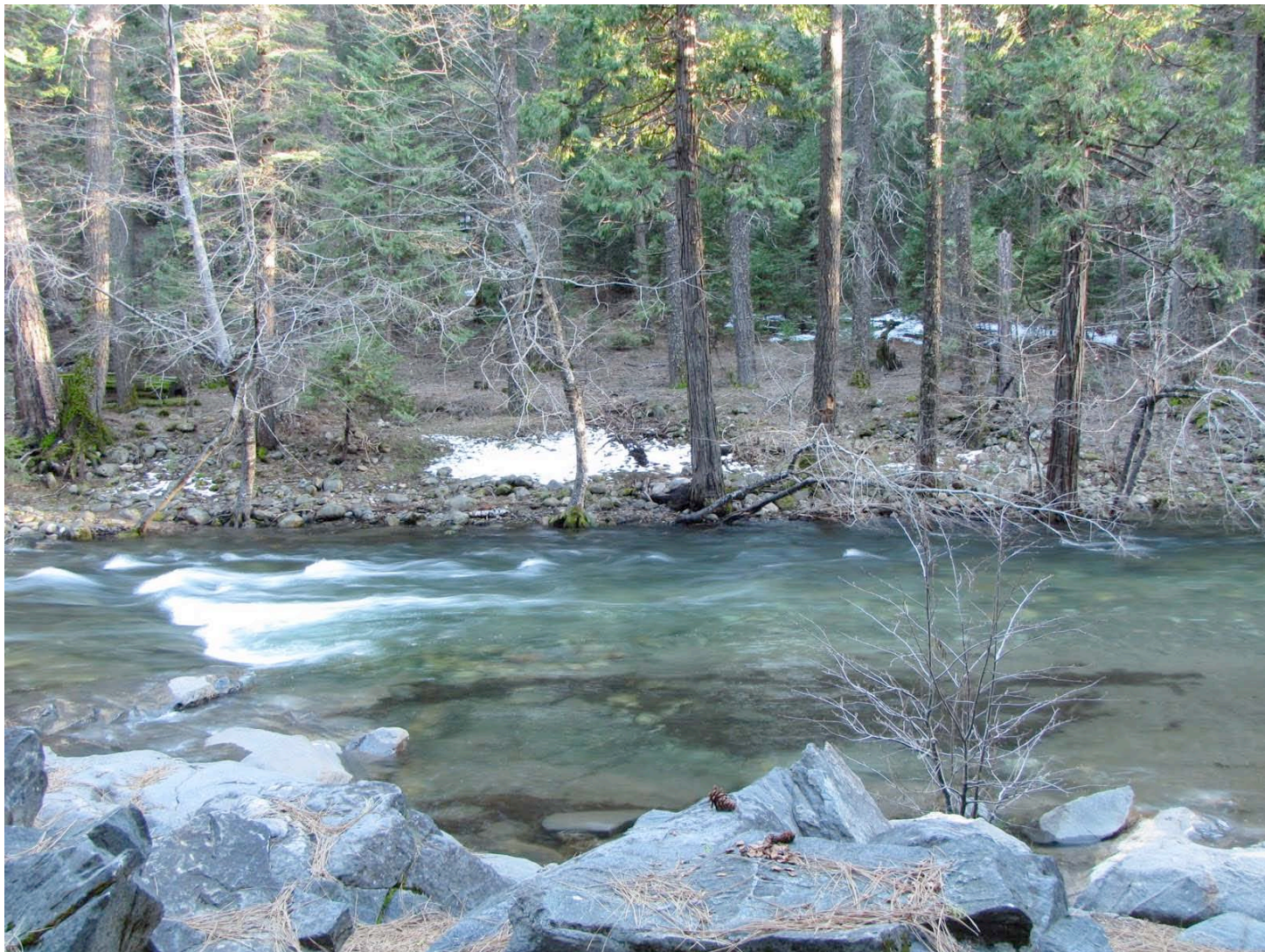
headed out in carpools to high country, where logging was permitted. We tried to caravan, but we neophytes soon got separated from the pack and had to “wing it” on our own.

We ran into other folks who were also wandering around with no clue where to look. Having come up empty handed, Ming Wei, his wife, Karl and I headed back to the campground for lunch around noon where Henry and Phil were already there eating lunch with their wives. *They* had had a successful morning with their cache.

If at first you don't succeed

After a discussion regarding our disappointment at not finding anything, Henry brought out a map of the area and showed Karl where new logging had occurred, which might mean that there were morels that had not yet been "picked over."

The first place that Karl and I stopped, we struck out, but we later found large piles of logging debris, which often serves as a home for morels. The air was clear and crisp with the scent of pine and cedar trees all around. Underfoot, the ground was softly padded with pine needles. It snowed earlier that Thursday, so the ground still had patches of snow. The damp soil and conifer needles gave off a wonderful woody aroma. At first, I found nothing. It was frustrating to be on such a seemingly futile adventure.



I was thirsty because I'd left my water bottle in the car, so I headed toward the sound of water. BONANZA!



In a small lumber debris pile I noticed first one, then two and then more. I had come across an area that was filled with wild morels (*Morchella esculenta*) that were in clumps of three or four, and other outcroppings only a few feet away.

These rare wild mushrooms look like a sponge on a stick:



I felt as if I'd won the lottery. It seemed that there were so many that I couldn't pick them all before another outcropping would catch my eye. I had a whole Trader Joes's bag full of morels and Karl did almost as well. Around 3 p.m. we trudged up hill back to the car. There we ran into Ming-Wei and his wife. They wanted to continue hunting so we pointed them down to the jackpot area.

Karl and I immediately set off for home and we were able to get home at around 7 p.m. Dog-tired but hungry, I sauteed some of the morels. I'm new to all this, so since I wanted to experience the true flavor of this 'shroom, I just sautéed them in butter with salt, pepper and garlic powder. I expected a strong mushroom flavor but was surprised with the taste. They didn't have the usual 'shroom flavor, but it was very interesting, very woody. Definitely worth the adventure."





## **Seven Great Permaculture (Low-dig) Vegetables**

By Lisa Stapleton

Several people have asked me recently about permaculture, since we've had several speakers on the topic lately. While the word sounds pretty lofty, it's really just a high-falutin' word that has come to mean low-till or no-till agriculture. Permaculture experts also emphasize building soil health through the use of composting, mulching, organic fertilizers, and companion planting of nitrogen-fixing plants such as beans and peas.

Since most rare fruit is grown in permanent or semi-permanent plantings, we're all practicing low-till agriculture when we grow our fruit trees. But what about vegetables? Is there such a thing as a permaculture vegetable garden?

Well, yes, sort of. Some vegetables can be grown as perennials here in California, and others reseed themselves so readily that you can count on them coming back every year. Here's my list of some vegetables that are compatible with permaculture in the San Jose area. Where noted, some of these vegetables are not technically perennials, but they reseed so easily that they ought to be:

- Artichokes—A few years ago, instead of giving my husband a dozen roses for Valentine's Day, I gave him a dozen artichoke plants. I planted two six-packs, and now every year, from March through June, we have fresh, tender artichokes. We also enjoy the primordial-looking, fern-like foliage, which gets to

be four or five feet tall. (If they fall over, don't worry. They usually keep growing.) For the sauce, we use either butter with lemon, or olive oil with red-wine vinegar. If you want to move the plant, cut it back to a foot or less above the ground, dig it up, and replant it. (You can also buy them bare-root in January, but they're a lot more expensive than just buying six-packs. They also grow from seed.)

- Fennel—Fennel grows quite tall here, often reaching a height of eight feet or more. Individual plants come back each year, and it reseeds so easily that it can become invasive. Harvest the fennel “stalks” that grow in little celery-like clumps near the bottom of the plant. They can be cut off and steamed, and served as either a whole clump or cut up and used in recipes. They're tasty and expensive to buy in stores, and the seeds have an anise-like flavor and can be used for seasoning. Dill and anise can also be grown as perennials here. CAUTION on fennel—It's not a good idea to plant fennel around the base of a tree. There seems to be a chemical in the fennel—or perhaps a pest—that produces a condition that looks like a chemical burn around the trunk. It might just be a protective chemical in the plant, but I almost lost an avocado tree to this trunk burn. Clearing the fennel from around the trunk fixed the condition and allowed the tree to recover.
- Asparagus—Asparagus re-sprout every year from the same roots, so as you harvest, leave enough shoots to be sure that the remaining leaves will be able to store enough nutrients to regrow. The leaves are very fern-like and pretty, so they make great additions to the landscape. Some people cover the young sprouts with peat moss or leaves to blanch them. Asparagus grown this way isn't green, but sort of a creamy white tipped in yellow.

Image: FreeDigitalPhotos.net





- Fava Beans—While not technically a perennial here, fava beans reseed themselves with little or no help from you. The beans, when cooked, look and taste like large lima beans. In my garden, I put trellis next to them to keep them from falling over, and then plant peas in front of them. The peas use the bean stalks to climb up to the trellis, and toward the end of the fava-bean season, I start getting peas. When the beans are ripe, the pods turn slightly yellow or even start to blacken. On each individual bean, there is a tiny piece of plant tissue that almost looks as if the bean is sprouting. This part is *extremely* bitter, but if the bean is at maximum ripeness, it usually comes off when you pull the beans out of the pod. But if it sticks to the bean, just scrape it off with your fingernail, or you *will* be sorry.
- Lamb's Quarters or pigweed—The former name sounds so much better, doesn't it? Because the leaves start out wide at the base and taper down, and their edges look as if someone has taken pinking shears to them, the leaves look a bit like the hind quarters of sheep. This is a tall-growing green that can be used as a summer substitute for spinach or lettuce, which have a tough time growing in our summer heat. By weight, it's also more iron-rich than spinach. They grow almost in the shape of a Christmas tree, except that instead of needles, they have these great-looking leaves. While not technically a perennial, a single plant produces thousands of seeds, so saying that it reseeds easily is a laughable understatement. I ordered my first two packs of a stunningly lovely variety called "Magenta Spreen" from Seeds of Change, and let's just say that the second packet was a total waste of money. Years later, when Bob Allen toured my garden, he commented on the lambs quarters, which I had planted once, a decade ago. With a tone of voice that only comes with experience, he said, "Ah, you've got Magenta Spreen lambs quarters from Seeds of Change," and we both laughed. Seriously, there's a tiny bit of magenta fuzz on the bases of the new leaves that make it almost look like a developing flower, so they're lovely in the landscape.
- New Zealand spinach—Also a good summer substitute for spinach, this plant usually overwinters beneath the leaf fall under one of my parking-strip trees, but even when it dies back from frost, it either comes back or reseeds itself, probably both. Again, it can be used as a substitute for spinach. The texture, though, is rougher than spinach, so for people who don't like this quality, it's best in cooked dishes.
- Swiss Chard—Those of you who are Bible-versed might remember the phrase, "The poor will always be with you." It's the same thing with chard. Plant it once, and you will be pulling tiny "chard-lets" forever. It is usually used as a green, but the roots are also edible. (Beets are really just chard plants that have been bred to have big, sweet roots.) If you let them, the plants can grow to be taller than you are. I planted this once as a summer substitute for spinach, not knowing that some people—including my husband—are supertasters for a bitter chemical in chard. Let's just say that if chard were toxic waste, Loren would be an EPA-approved detection device for detecting parts per billion. That man could detect a single chard leaf in an industrial-sized vat of garlic-doused minestrone. I'm told that only maybe a quarter of the population has this capability, but my husband is definitely one of them, a fact that I only discovered *after* I grew a whole seed-packet of the stuff. So now I pull bazillions of little chard-weeds every spring and summer. But if you're not a supertaster, it is, in fact, a great, prolific summer substitute for spinach.

## Tips and Tricks: Apple Maggots and Root Feeders

By Lisa Stapleton

If you're trying to grow apples here, you might have noticed that it's getting harder to get perfect fruit these days. With codling moth, light brown apple moth and San Jose apple maggot in the area—yes, we've even got our own apple pest named after Our Faire City—you could even find that almost all of your apples are perfect—except for one large, nauseating worm hole.



Almost anything is worth a shot. Last year, almost every single apple had a wormhole in it, though mercifully, most of the time, the worm was gone by the time I cut into it. So we could never have apples fresh off the tree, because I'd have to cut them into pieces to avoid the hole.



Image: Dan/FreeDigitalPhotos.net

A Spinosad spray is an option, but if you're looking for a totally organic, no-spray solution, you can get one from Raintree nursery, which advertises a 75 percent effectiveness rate for its "apple maggot control bags." They cost \$20 plus shipping for 300, so each bag sells for about 6.7 cents. They look like the cheap little nylon socks that shoe salesmen give people who come in without socks, but want to try on shoes anyway. I'm not sure, but they might be reusable, though I think I'll do a sock-load in the wash before attempting to reuse them, just to get any bacteria or pests that might be hiding inside.

You're supposed to put them over the small apples when they're anywhere from the size of a dime to the size of a quarter. I actually pull the bottom into two sections, wrap it around the bottom of the twig that holds the apple, and tie it for extra protection. If I'm in a hurry or I'm covering more than two apples at a time—so I might have to take the bag off of one of them and bag it separately later if they get too big for the "sock"—I clip it with the cheapest, smallest size binder clip I can find. (I hit a sale where I got them for about 2.5 cents each.) I'm careful not to actually clip the twig or the apple stem. Instead, I wrap the open end of the sock around the base and clip the sock to itself.

It's kind of tedious—about as exciting as watching grass grow—but I managed to do 20-30 at a time, several days per week, as the apples were setting. (Luckily, my apples set fruit over about a six-week period, and are small to medium-sized, so I was able to keep up.) So now I've done about 280, and need to finish maybe

another fifty to have fully covered all of the fruit in my yard. Since I was often able to bag more than one apple at a time, I estimate that I've probably protected about 350-450 apples.

The socks are starting to stretch, as the apples get bigger. I had thought they'd look really weird, but they were less conspicuous than I thought, and as they stretch, they become less obvious. I'll report back later about whether or not this approach worked for me.

Of course, I'm going to try to practice good apple hygiene by picking up fallen apples and either using or disposing of them immediately. And I have some Spinosad on hand, but I really, really hate to put stuff on our food, especially since one often only finds out about side effects much later—sometimes a whole generation later—when exposed people's health starts to deteriorate. (I still worry a little bit about all the vermiculite I used in our yard, only to find out much later that a lot of vermiculite contained asbestos fibers until the early 1990s, when the W.R. Grace mine was shut down. There's nothing I can do now anyway, but it makes me lest trusting going forward.)

To use this method of control, you're going to want to prune your apples to a reasonable height. One of our members used to say that anything higher than what you can reach is a waste, but I'm willing to use a stepstool or a small ladder, so about eight to ten feet is my personal maximum.

A side benefit might be protection from sunscald, since nylons have a small amount of SPF, as most women will tell you. Again, I'll let you know in the fall.

## **PVC Piping and Root Feeders**

A while back, I mentioned that I'd taken out a tree where I'd been using the perforated-PVC-pipe trick to get water to the roots. It had apparently worked, I said, because it was harder than heck to take the tree out, since the (plumcot tree's) roots were so thick and healthy. Lot's of people wrote back, "WHAT perforated-PVC-pipe trick, Lisa?" So here's the scoop.

When you're planting a tree in our typical adobe-like soil, if you plant a section of three-inch diameter, perforated PVC tubing—which you can get at any hardware store, usually in the plumbing department—you can water through the piping, and the water penetrates more deeply than it would if you just tried to water the surface. (You can also use unperforated tubing, but the dime-sized holes mean that you'll get water to all points along the pipe much more quickly.

When I planted my street trees, the City of San Jose actually required it, because the City Arborist thought that doing this helped to conserve water and keep tree roots from hugging the surface, where they are more likely to tear up sidewalks, streets, lawns, etc. It certainly cuts down on how long you need to water to penetrate that upper layer, since the water is going down a foot or two, depending on the length of your section of pipe.

To keep snails out, you can buy covers for the pipes as well. They look like little round sewer grates. This also keeps out hapless frogs that might stumble into the pipe and not be able to get out. (You can also angle the pipe to give wildlife a break.)

## **SVCRFG at SJSU Earth Day**

**By Scott Papenfus**

It's hard to believe that Thursday, April 22, was the fortieth anniversary of Earth Day, and SVCRFG was well represented at San Jose State's observation of this event.

Our booth included three Tables, perhaps the largest of approximately 50 booths (pure guess) set up along 7th St on the San Jose State Campus. Chapter members staffing our booth included Sini Falkowski, Karl Gross, Joan Halperin, Chris Melville, Scott Papenfus, Ann Stuart, and Katie Wong. Kris had taken the lead in getting things organized within the group that had volunteered to be there.

Two of our tables were filled with lovely roses and good things to eat, brought by various members of our



group. These goodies attracted a steady stream of people through out the day and stimulated good conversation about CRFG, the growing of the fruit, and its preparation.

The third table was filled with a display of various potted plants of special interest to passersby. Included were three pots illustrating three phases of the progression of developing an avocado tree. The first pot was a sprouted avocado seed, the second was an avocado seedling grown from seed that had been grafted, and the third pot contained a very robust looking small grafted avocado tree. (This was all Sini's handiwork.)

Other examples of grafted plants and plants grown from cuttings were also on display, and we all pitched in to answer general and specific questions about our organization and the plants and food. We realized too late that we didn't have much in the way of flyers to hand out, which might be something to think about for future events.

## Berries at Wolfskill

By Johnny Valenzuela

On May 15, CRFG members got an early taste of spring berries, thanks to collection curators Jenny Smith (mulberries, kiwi, persimmons and olives) and Clay Weeks (stone fruit) of The Wolfskill Experimental Orchards, who hosted this tasting along with the Sacramento Chapter of CRFG.

This very early fruit was not at its sweetest, due to such a cool spring. Here is the list, with just a few comments:

### Cherries

'Guigne Dianronay' (slightly bitter overtones)  
'Guigne Noire Luisante' 'Mona' (my favorite)  
'Big Burlat' (large, good)  
'Merton Premier'  
'Merton Heart'  
'Korsova Rana' '  
Spanische Glaskirsche' (tart pie type, similar in color to 'Coe')  
'Coe' (gold, blushed with red, translucent and melting)  
'Coops special'  
'Burbank' (good)

### Mullberries

'Rupps Roumanian' (reddish and black color, good sweet sour balance)  
'Florida'(seemed a little bigger than 'Florida Giant)  
'Florida Giant' 'Middleton' (probably a Middle Eastern selection, by way of Australia, very productive and early)

To search for information on these other varieties in the Germplasm Repository Collection, see the Accession Area Queries at [http://www.ars-grin.gov/npgs/acc/acc\\_queries.html](http://www.ars-grin.gov/npgs/acc/acc_queries.html)

In addition, while there we heard that the first 'Spotted Winged Drosophila' has been found in Davis. Jenny Smith warned of a new devastating disease of Asian persimmons in the Eastern US, the Kaki Sudden Death Syndrome. It can kill trees within weeks or months of the first symptoms. It is thought that a virus is triggered by cold damage to the trees. In one case, this occurred at only 25 degrees F.

See: <http://www.clemson.edu/hort/Kaki.php> and <http://www.clemson.edu/hort/Kaki.php> for more information.

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