



The Fruit Leaf

Santa Clara Valley Chapter
California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.



November/December 2009 <http://www.crfg.org>

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Membership

For information on chapter membership, notification of address and phone number changes, please contact:

Sarah Sherfy
9140 Paseo Tranquillo
Gilroy CA 95020
sherfy@gmail.com

Submit articles or questions to:

Lisa Stapleton
lkstapleton@yahoo.com

or
Sue Cancilla-Conde
4698 Englewood Drive
San Jose CA 95129
Phone 408 996-3112
weed eater@earthlink.net

Next Meeting

December 12, 2009

Emma Prusch Park

Social and set-up 12:30pm

Meeting 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Our Speaker is Rosalind Creasy

ATTENTION:

We meet in the building that resembles a barn, the **Multi-Cultural Center**. This is the first building as you enter the park. "Bella" the windmill stands by its side. Rosalind Creasy will be presenting: *Edible Landscaping and the New American Garden*. Rosalind is a garden and food writer, photographer, and landscape designer with a passion for beautiful vegetables and ecologically sensitive gardening. She began her career in horticulture in the 1970s as a landscape designer and restaurant consultant. By 1982 she had published her first book, *The Complete Book of Edible Landscaping*, which won the Garden Writers Association's Quill and Trowel award, was chosen as a Book of the Month selection, and hailed by *The Wall Street Journal* as the Best Garden Book of 1982. Considered a classic, it coined the term "Edible Landscaping," now a part of the American vocabulary.

Her new book *Rosalind Creasy's Recipes From The Garden: 200 Exciting Recipes*, has just been published. She is currently working on a completely revised version of her book *Edible Landscaping*, which will be released in April, 2011.

THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT

The 2010 SCV CRFG Scion Prep and Exchange Days.

Prep Day is Saturday, January 2, 2010, 8:30am, Meeting Hall, Prusch Farm Park.

Scion Exchange is Saturday, January 9, 2010 in the Multi-Cultural Center, Prusch Farm Park.

Doors open at 10:00am for members and 11:00am for the public. **A member must be able to prove their local and state dues is up-to-date.** Volunteers will be on hand to renew or sign-up new members. Read more on page 5.

Should You Revisit Banana Growing Here?

by Lisa Stapleton

Ever dreamed of growing bananas, maybe even tried it, but gave up because of problems getting fruit in our “iffy” climate? I did. I ended up with a bunch of plants that never fruited before they eventually froze dead. But now, thanks to some recent developments in banana genetics and culture, I am trying again. Should you?

A new cold-tolerant banana for outdoor growing?

One of the most heartening developments comes from Jeff Earl, an amateur grower in Modesto, who says that he’s found a banana that seems to do well even in the Modesto cold, where he lives. If he’s right, it should be good in Zone 8 and possibly the warmer parts of Zone 7. SCV-CRFG member Karen Plank says she’s fruited this variety here too, so this could be an option for many of our members.

At the gardenweb.com banana forum, however, there is some argument over whether it is different from ‘Dwarf Orinoco,’ and if so, what those differences are. Jeff says that the fruit is sweeter than ‘Dwarf Orinoco,’ and that California Gold is the *only* plant that he can fruit in the ground outdoors, without the protection of a greenhouse. Even when ‘Dwarf Orinoco’ dies back and fails to produce, he says, ‘California Gold’ still comes through and fruits in the same season, producing healthy, sweet bananas.

Sounded pretty good to me. However, it also sounded so good to everyone else like me that the few pups that Jeff has available—he’s a “regular guy” with a non-nursery job—have sold on eBay for over \$100 in some cases, though a few lucky, well-connected people have found other sources for a few pups, or have hit the eBay auction just right, paying only \$30-\$60.

So if you can’t grow bananas and fruit them outdoors in the ground all year, there are still several other ways to grow them.

Grow dwarfs

You could grow the very smallest dwarf bananas that have fruit, in pots, and pull them into a warmer area—such as inside your home, greenhouse, or courtyard—for the coldest part of the season. Examples of such dwarves include ‘Dwarf Cavendish,’ ‘Dwarf Orinoco,’ and ‘Dwarf Namwah.’

Dr. Richard Wallace, professor of chemistry at Atlantic State University in Georgia, says that he and his collaborators from the University of Georgia have also had good luck fruiting ‘Dwarf Orinoco’ and ‘Dwarf Namwah’ in southern Georgia, near Savannah, in Zone 8b.

Grow very hardy varieties outdoors

In addition, Wallace says they’ve also consistently fruited ‘Kandrian,’ ‘Ice Cream,’ and ‘Sweetheart’—none of which are dwarfs—in typical Zone 8 outdoor conditions. This is consistent with several CRFG members’ experience; when I recently asked some of our local amateur growers which plants had actually produced edible bananas, ‘Goldfinger’ and ‘Ice Cream’ were on an extremely short list of varieties they’ve fruited.

The problem is that you’ll have to hope that there’s no frost during the growth of the fruit, or you’ll probably lose it. Most varieties need 9-16 months to develop fruit. You probably won’t get fruit every year from this method, but you’ll probably get it in some years. If you decide to do it, use the tips here to get the best odds.

Grow a fast-fruited variety as an annual

But Wallace and coworkers have also found that there is great variation in how long different varieties take to grow, flower and fruit. In particular, Wallace found that he can store a variety called ‘Veinte Cohol’ as small plants, or “pups” in a warm place such as a greenhouse in the winter, then plant the pups outside in April. The plants go into dormancy during the cold, and once planted, will begin to flower in August and by October, says Wallace, he’s got fruit that’s mature enough to harvest.

So far, only one variety (‘Veinte Cohol’) has proved itself to be capable of reliably producing mature fruit in this approach, and to get it, you need to go to “Going Bananas” and register for the waiting list for a pup, as several SCV-CRFG members have done. “Go to <http://www.goingbananas.com/contactgoingbananas.htm> and send an e-mail to get on the list,” says member Harvey Correia. “They’ll let you know when one is available.” The small nursery company typically

charges \$20-\$25 for small plants.

Advice that hurts actually maximizes your chances for fruit

This year's state meeting featured several talks about growing bananas. I asked Vince Sholten, who gave a presentation entitled "Growing Bananas and Subtropicals in Sonoma County," what tips he had for us.

"Grow high, and grow in mango mulch," he says. Growing bananas on a mound helps to keep their roots from sitting in water, and using mango mulch improves drainage and gives the bananas the nutrients they need.

Now for the painful part. Sholten says that part of growing bananas is making sure that they have enough food energy to produce fruit. Most bananas need to have between five and twenty leaves to "feed" the growing fruit, and once a shoot from the plant produces a flower, that part of the plant won't produce any more leaves. That's why it's important for at least one fruiting stem to grow leaves quickly, then send up a flower stalk in time for there to be enough warm weather for the fruit to ripen.

So pick one main stem, and cut the tops off of most of the other pups, leaving just one or two other than the main stem. This will force nutrients to be focused into growing the main stem, which you hope will produce that one precious flower spike.

Don't cheat by separating more than two or three entire pups from the main stem, because you want most of their roots intact. The roots of pups whose tops have been cut—but not separated from the main plant—will transfer much of their energy to the main stem, which is why you need to cut them down, not just cut them off the mother plant. (You're also allowed to save just a few pups or corms for next year by separating them whole from the main plant and repotting them.) And if your main stem doesn't produce a flower by June or July, you must cut it off. "You have to do it," says Sholten. "If you do, the plant's energy will go to one of the remaining small pups. If you don't, you probably won't get the plant through fruiting in time to actually harvest fruit. You want all of the plant's energy going into that one flower and the bunch that comes from it."

When one of the workshop attendees opined that it really hurts him to cut off healthy growth, even if it isn't going to produce fruit in the current season, Sholten empathized. "OK, you can *cry* while you cut it off, but you *still* have to cut it if it won't produce fruit quickly. You need all of the plant's energy going into that one stalk, or you won't be able to harvest fruit before the cold gets it."

*A Dwarf Brazilian in flower and fruit,
courtesy of CRFG member Harvey Correia*



A big thanks to all who helped at the Emma Prusch Park Orchard this year.

There is a small group of dedicated CRFGs taking care of our scion wood throughout the year. They weed, saw and cut suckers, trim and prune, keep after the park maintenance for orchard water, and finally collect scions. The group is mentioned periodically in the Fruit Leaf, but they do it for the love of the labor. Please join them and participate in maintaining our orchard for the future. The more participants, the quicker the job.



A brief narration of the last Sunday workday of 2009 from Walt:

We had seven people show up for the work party at Prusch (and one more who came to the park but couldn't find us and left). The task for the day was to trim suckers - hands and knees, hand pruners and loppers work. I didn't think we would finish the whole orchard but we did - and finished by 11:00!

In addition to the regular faces that can be counted on showing up--Gross, Falkowski, Crompton, Halperin, Milutin, and Karl's pet rooster, Grossmon--we had a first time volunteer. Dexter Girton. Dexter has been a CRFG member for years but has never come to a work party before...if we could just convince a few more like Dexter to show up in the future!

For information on how you can help in the orchard contact Scott Papenfus at: smpcrfg@yahoo.com or Walt Compton at: germino@astounder.net

Roasted butternut squash salad with warm cider vinaigrette

by Nancy Garrison

1 1/2 pound butternut squash, peeled and 1/4 inch diced good olive oil

1 T. pure maple syrup, 1 T. dried cranberries

3/4 C. apple cider or juice

2 T. apple cider vinegar

2 T. minced shallots or garlic

1/4 pomegranate - just the arils

2 t. dijon mustard

4 oz. baby arugula

1/2 C. walnut halves, toasted

3/4 C. freshly grated Parmesan cheese or feta

Kosher salt, and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400.

Place squash on a sheet pan and add 2 T. olive oil, 1 T. maple syrup, 1/4 t. salt, and 1/4 t. pepper. Toss and roast for 15 to 20 minutes, or until tender. Add the cranberries the last 5 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the apple cider, vinegar, and shallots in a small saucepan. Boil for 6 to 8 minutes until cider is reduced to about 1/4 cup. Take off the heat, and whisk in the mustard, olive oil, 1/2 t. salt and 1/4 t. pepper.

Place the arugula in a large salad bowl and add the roasted squash mixture, walnuts, and parmesan. Spoon enough vinaigrette over to moisten and toss well. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Grapeseed is the new olive oil

by Corrie Grove

Grapeseed oil is a polyunsaturated oil and can be used to fry, bake, sauté, or use in salad dressings. It is actually made from the seeds of grapes (*Vitis vinifera*), and this by-product of winemaking has become a sought-after oil for cooking because of its high smoke point (320°F.) and its clean light taste some call neutral, others find nutty. It blends well with herbs, spices, garlic, and shallots. Most grapeseed oil is imported from France, Italy or Switzerland with a few brands now emerging from the U.S. winemaking areas.

High amounts of Omega 6 (linoleic acid) appear in grapeseed oil (69-78%) and help the body burn fat and increases energy. The oil contains modest amounts of Omega 9 (oleic acid) and traces of omega 3 (alpha-linolenic acid, GLA (gamma-linolenic) fatty acids, and there are trace amounts of vitamin E, vitamin C and beta-carotene. Health reports indicate that HDL levels can be raised and LDL levels reduced by including grapeseed oil as a regular part of one's diet.

Look for "cold pressed" oils: this process will not compromise nutrients, and many (myself included) believe the taste of the oils to be crisper and cleaner.

The 2010 SCV CRFG Scion Prep and Exchange Days

Prep Day is Saturday, January 2, 2010
Meeting Hall, Prusch Farm Park
8:30am

Scion Exchange is Saturday, January 9, 2010
Multi-Cultural Center, Prusch Farm Park
Doors open for members 10am: Public 11am
Closes at 3pm

The anticipation begins for the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers Annual Scion Exchange at Emma Prusch Park. This is open to the public Saturday, January 9, from 11am to 3pm, in the Multi-Cultural Center of Prusch Farm Park, and we will have hundreds of varieties of fruit scions available for free. As membership in CRFG, Inc., is a prerequisite to being a Chapter member we require people to become a member of the state chapter when they sign-up for our chapter. Members are entitled to enter one hour earlier than the public. Equipment to aid in grafting will be available for purchase, and two excellent demonstrations on the art of grafting are presented. The scion wood is collected from members collections, many local famous and historical orchards, and neighboring CRFG chapters. Come prepared to collect your scions by bringing: a felt tip pen to mark your new collections and large baggies to store the scions.

As with all Scion Exchanges, the word Exchange is important. If you have good varieties at your place it's time to get them into the Exchange. By the last week of December, cut your healthy scions, bag them up, and write a short description of the fruit's properties/dates/self-fertile (or not)/problems/good points/etc. If you're not certain of the variety, but love the fruit, describe it; do not guess at the name. When you bring your scions to the Scion Exchange, hand them off to one of the members who works the event so we can check that they're not still covered by a patent. This is important as we don't want to threaten our good working relationship with Dave Wilson Nursery, Raintree Nursery, Zaiger Genetics, etc.

Work for the Scion Exchange has already begun, however we will need people to cut and gather scions at a number of locations in December 2009 and January 2010. If you're interested, able to be called upon at the last minute (as often happens), can work in wet weather as well as the California sun, and are enthusiastic about scion material, please send your information via e-mail to: Karl: gross_karl@sbcglobal.net Phone 408-733-5317.

Join the State CRFG Now

Add New Excitement to Your Gardening

Memberships are for individuals/couples and begin from the date dues are received. Each membership, annually, receives six bimonthly issues of the Fruit Gardener magazine. A one-year membership costs \$36. Make checks payable to **CRFG, Inc.**, and mail to:

California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.

66 Farragut Avenue

San Francisco, CA 94112-4050

Santa Clara Valley County CRFG Memberships

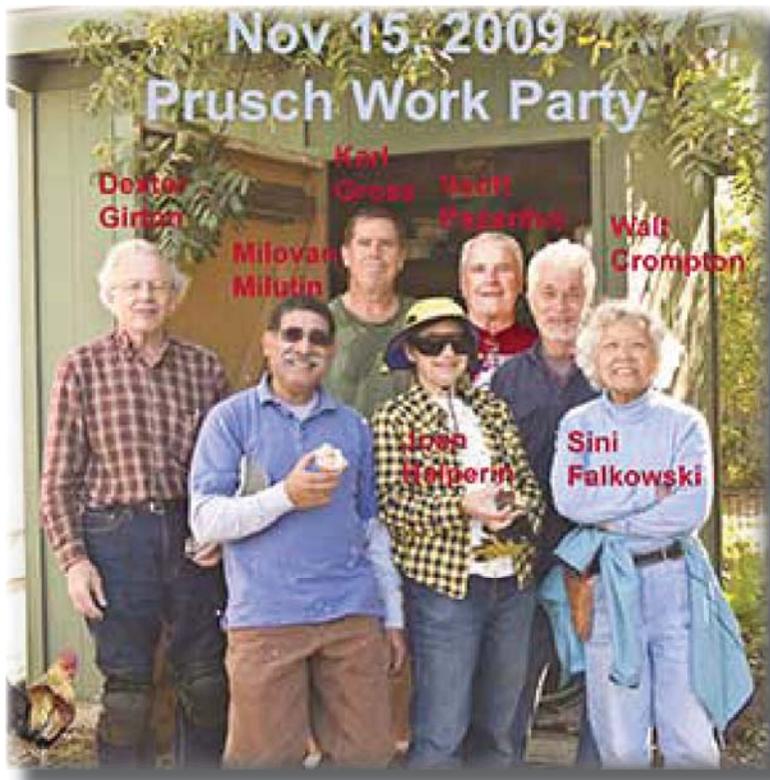
This is a reminder that Santa Clara Valley Chapter membership runs from Jan.-Dec. Membership is \$10/yr. Please renew your membership by the December meeting for 2010. You may prefer to send a check to Sarah at the address provided below. If you are unsure about your membership status or chapter dues please don't hesitate to send an email to: sherfy@gmail.com. You also have a chance to renew at the Scion Exchange. If you want to bypass the crowd/rush, consider renewing early, as lines are extremely longer during the Scion Exchange. If you have a new email or home address, don't forget to inform Sarah, else you will not be receiving any communications from the chapter. Make checks payable to SCV-CRFG.

Sarah Sherfy

9140 Paseo Tranquillo, Gilroy CA 95020

408 825-9700

The table at Wolfskill tasting 2009 pomeagrantes. A lot more people than last year.



One of the many Prusch work parties from 2009. Members of this party are: Dexter Girton, Karl Gross, Scott Papenfus, Walt Crompton, Milovan Milutin, Joan Halperin and Sini Falkowski.

Here is Steve Boboricker during the chapter tour showing us his paw paw tree.



Quince Preparations

John Baumgrenze

Quince are dead simple to prepare. Pick them off the tree and scrub them with a stiff brush under running water until the fuzz is gone. You cut them in half and pry out the core (or quarters if they have bug damage, just to be safe.) Put them cut side up in a covered casserole and run a bit of honey into the core cavity. Bake them, covered, for at least an hour at 400°F. At that point you can pour a few teaspoons of inexpensive white wine (cook's wine) over them and give them another 10-15 minutes in the oven. This step creates a bit of quince jelly around the fruit if you get the quantity and time just right. I also like a brief spray of cook's brandy on them just as they come out of the oven. Let them cool for 15-20 minutes so you don't burn your mouth. Last year we compared a seedling that grows where I used to work (I took a crown cutting from it 10 years ago) with Meech's Prolific and Smith's Best, both grafted of the seedling. Each had its unique merits, but Smith's Best lived up to its name.

Quince simplified and glorious

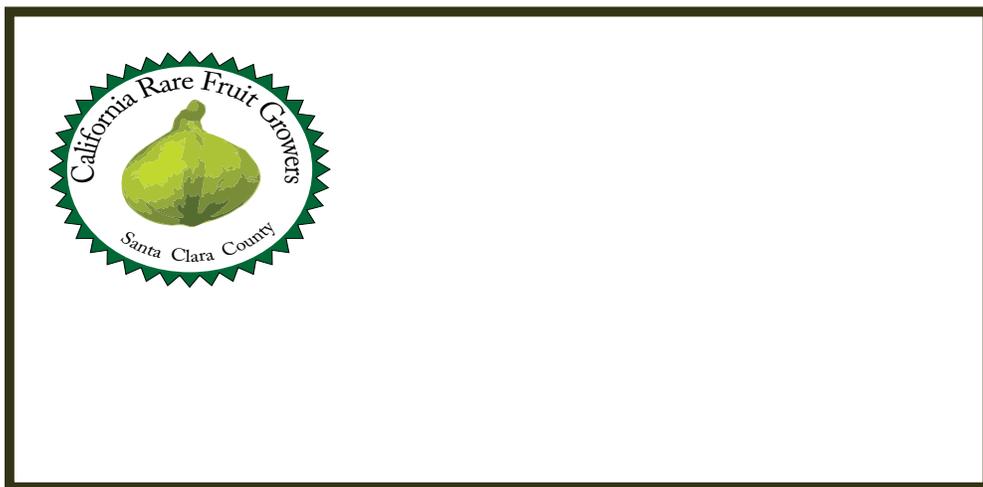
Carolyn Craft

1 quince per person
brown sugar
butter
cream

Completely hollow out the core of each quince, from top to bottom. Put in a microwave-safe bowl.

Fill open center of each quince with brown sugar, dot with butter. Microwave until baked and soft. Pour cream over and serve.

Use the badge below if need be.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009

| | | |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Chair | Nancy Garrison nancyg2@aol.com | 408-298-5828 |
| Vice-chair | Jack Kay Kay639@yahoo.com | 408-735-7376 |
| Secretary | Joan Halperin gargoyleden@verizon.net | 408-846-9188 |
| Treasurer | Jeffrey Wong jeffrey.wong@itv.com | 650-424-9664 |
| Board Member | Scott Papenfus smpcrfg@yahoo.com | |
| Board Member | Milovan Milutin milovan.milutin@nsc.com | |
| Board Member | Walt Crompton geronimo@astound.net | 650-570-5567 |

**For early entrance to the Scion Exchange:
A member must be able to prove their local
and state dues is up-to-date.**

ACTIVITY MANAGERS 2009

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------|
| Programs | Nancy Garrison nancyg2@aol.com | 408-298-5828 |
| | Jack and Susan Kay Kay639@yahoo.com (Jack) scasnerkay@gmail.com (Susan) | 408-735-7376 |
| Membership | Sarah Sherfy sherfy@gmail.com | 408-825-9700 |
| Egroup | Piyush Mehta piyush_mehta@yahoo.com | 510-713-8202 |
| Editor | Sue Cancilla-Conde weedeater@earthlink.net | 408-996-3112 |
| Scion Exchange | Karl Gross gross_karl@sbcglobal.net | 408-733-5317 |
| Hospitality | Becky Davies jefdavies@sbcglobal.net | 925-556-9846 |
| Orchard | Scott Papenfus smpcrfg@yahoo.com Walt Compton | |
| Librarians | Walt Crompton geronimo@astound.net Milovan Milutin milovan.milutin@nsc.com | 650-570-5567 |

**CRFG Santa Clara Valley Chapter
9140 Paseo Tranquillo
Gilroy CA 95020**