



The Fruit Leaf

Santa Clara Valley Chapter
California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.



September/October 2008 <http://www.crfg.org>

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Next Meeting

October 11, 2008
Emma Prusch Park
Social and set-up 12:30
Meeting 1pm to 4pm

Our guest speaker for our October meeting will be Brian Debasitis,

owner of Mauby's All Natural, a company that provides soil-related services that help lead to healthy gardens, lawns, and playing fields without the use of chemicals.

Brian's work revolves around restoring soil micro biological ecosystems appropriate for the plants being grown. He started his business in Vermont in 2003 and has been operating in San Jose since 2006. He studied with Dr Elaine Ingham at Soil Food Web in Corvallis Oregon and is currently working on becoming a certified Soil Food Web Advisor.

Brian's presentation will cover the composition of soil and the whole soil ecosystem; how microbiology affects plants and how conventional growing practices affect soil microbiology. He will talk about some techniques for improving the micro-biological balance in fruit orchards and what affects that will have on tree health and fruit production.

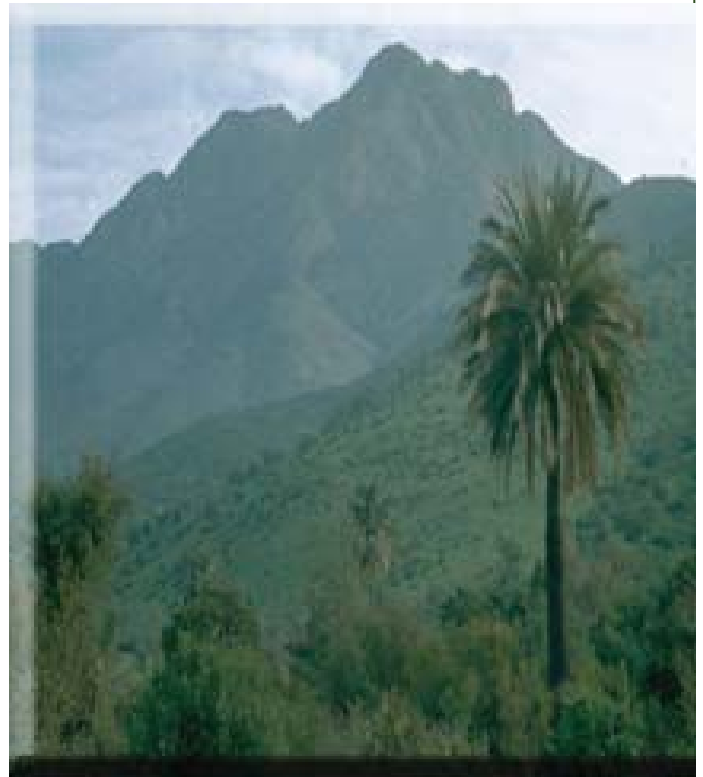
As part of his talk, Brian will bring a microscope and project an image of soil samples on the screen in our meeting room so that everyone can look at the same sample at the same time as he speaks. He will use some samples he has for projecting. Additionally, he plans on collecting a sample from our Heritage Orchard at Prusch to show.

Don't miss this informative and educational presentation.

The Chilean Wine Palm

PHILIP W. RUNDEL, *Professor of Organismic Biology, Ecology, and Evolution*

One of the most striking palms present in MEMBG—indeed in any botanical garden—is the Chilean wine palm, *Jubaea chilensis*. This species has at times been called the “Incredible Hulk” of the palm world because of its massive diameters that reach to 1.5 meters or more (five feet) and height that can reach to 30 m. Individual leaves are 2 to 4 meters in length, producing a crown up to 9 meters across. Although most travelers to Chile in past centuries marveled at the beauty of the Chilean wine palm, there were some who were less enchanted. Charles Darwin, after visiting Chile in the 1830s, commented in his famous *Voyage of the Beagle* that, “These palms are, for their family, very ugly trees.” The generic name *Jubaea* honors a relatively obscure Numidian king, Juba I



who was involved in civil wars against Julius Caesar in North Africa. His son, Juba II, later fell back into favor with the Emperor Octavius and married the daughter of Marc Antony and Cleopatra.

The Chilean wine palm has a natural environment very similar to that of southern California. Its home lies in valleys and on slopes of the coastal ranges of central Chile, a region that shares a mediterranean-type climate with California. The matorral and evergreen woodlands of central Chile where these palms grow are comparable in many respects to the chaparral and live oak woodlands of the Santa Monica Mountains. Thus, one can get a fair idea of this natural habitat by imaging large stands of massive Chilean wine palms growing in either Topanga or Malibu Canyon! Although natural fires are comparatively rare in central Chile as compared with California, the massive fibrous trunks of Chilean wine palm make them impervious to fires.

Chilean wine palms thrive in the mediterranean climates of southern California which are so much like their natural range in Chile. Once established, they are reasonably drought resistant, although successful establishment requires a relatively deep and well-drained soil for the root system. Additionally, they are surprising cold tolerant for a palm, perhaps because they occur naturally at elevations up to about 1,500 meters. Aided by the buffering capacity of their large trunks, they will readily survive temperatures well below freezing. Chilean wine palms have been grown successfully in gardens in England, northern Italy, and Switzerland.

The inflorescence of Chilean wine palm arises out of the axils of the lower leaves, forming a structure more than a meter in length with separate male and female flowers. The fruits, born in large numbers, are yellow-orange ovoid drupes about 4 centimeters long. The seeds, one within each drupe, are spherical in shape and 2 to 2.5 cm in diameter.

When the Spanish first entered central Chile in the early 16th century, they found literally millions of Chilean wine palms spread over valleys and slopes throughout much of the coast ranges. Isolated as this area was from the other Spanish colonies, the conquistadors quickly learned from the indigenous populations that these palms had a variety of valuable uses. The most important of these was to produce large quantities of a sugary liquid from the collection of palm sap. This syrup could be used directly as a sweetener, a use that continues today, or allowed to ferment to produce an alcoholic beverage. It is this latter use that gave rise to the common name for the palm, although

this use is rare today. The palm seeds, called coquitos, are also edible, and the pinnately compound palm fronds were widely used by the indigenous peoples of central Chile as a thatch for constructing shelters.

The process of collecting the palm sap requires cutting down the tree. The trunk is felled with the top angled down a slope. Then the leaves are removed and a razor thin slice of tissue is cut from the apex. The sap is then collected as it drips from this cut tip. To maintain sap flow a new slice is made daily over six to eight weeks or more, over which time as much as 300 to 400 liters of liquid are collected. This liquid is then boiled to concentrate the sugar and packaged to become miel de palma, palm honey.

Four centuries of heavy utilization of Chilean wine palms have drastically reduced their numbers and range. Today, this palm is primarily restricted to three large stands with a total population of about 100,000 trees. These stands are largely protected, although limited harvesting is still allowed in one of these sites, Cocalán, for the production of palm honey. Whereas Chilean wine palm cannot be considered to be an endangered species, local conservation groups have taken a strong interest in recent years in promoting reforestation of these palms. There are now many Chilean nurseries cultivating palm seedlings, with an established goal to quintuple the existing populations of these trees over the next 30 years. Anyone with an interest in the conservation of the Chilean wine palm should look at the web site for the Fundación para la Recuperación y Fomento de la Palma Chilena .

Although difficult but not entirely impossible to find here in California, palm honey is readily available in grocery stores in Chile. The production is far too small to supply and international market. It is sold in cans as pure palm honey or with a few coquitos of the palm added. Palm honey has many uses, all delicious ones. It can be poured over fresh fruit, added to ice cream or yogurt, or, my favorite, applied as a syrup for pancakes. The flavor is not strong and more like corn syrup than maple syrup.

While mature trees of Chilean wine palm are striking when used in landscaping, this is not a palm for the impatient gardener. Seeds commonly take 6 to 18 months to germinate and growth is slow. No one really knows the age that large trees in Chile can attain but there are reports that they are able to survive for hundreds of years.

For the full article go to:

<http://www.botgard.ucla.edu/html/membgnewsletter/volume5number4/Thechileanwinepalm.html>



Orchard Pests by Season: Dormant

You will need to go to the UC web site for further information:

<http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/general-pests.html#dormant>

San Jose Scale

Hosts

Most deciduous fruit and nut trees.

Damage

Gets on fruit, kills shoots.

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Nancy's Commentary's on the 2008 Fruit Festival - Year of the Avocado

Nancy Garrison

Oh, I do love these CRFG Annual Festival of Fruits. They are the best deal in town or out ... with registration costs at \$45 for a day and a half of lectures, 3 days of fruit tours, fruit tastings, and great fun with members from all over the state, the country and sometimes the world. It is such a treat to be able to hear different folks speak on their areas of expertise and then to be able to pick their brains afterwards. I found such a spirit of generosity and helpfulness among our hosts and attendees. The tasting this year was marvelous with an interesting assortment of rare avocados at festival and at members homes and at the Orange Chapter's meeting, three types of Pitayas (dragonfruit) including a white, a light pink and a deeply colored purple-pink, Longan, homegrown bananas, Grumichama, Cherry of the Rio Grande, Jaboticaba and white sapotes.

I love the tours the most as I can wander about, sometimes taste, photograph and ask questions. I especially enjoyed and learned a lot from Tom del Hotel on aggressive pruning and care of citrus as well as less well known members of the Myrtaceae family presented by Ben Poirier. There were many interesting and very rare fruit plants for sale by member nurseries at the conference. I brought back a large orange Surinam, a Reed avocado, a Goldfinger banana and a fruiting Goji berry.

The new information I found most shattering to my old understanding, was that citrus thrive with more aggressive pruning, leaving the trees opened up to dappled sunlight and better air circulation which encourages more flower and fruit formation in the interior rather than just on the tips. Tom described how one starts at the lower branches of the citrus and follow each branch from it's point of attachment out to the tip, moving around the tree. After the lower tier is finished, move up to the next tier and follow suit as before. For those long aggressive and floppy branches that you find sticking up above the rest of the tree canopy, follow them back down into the tree to their point of attachment and remove the entire sprout.

Next year's festival will be held in Sebastepol and our help will be greatly needed.

Orchard Pests by Season: Dormant

Cont. from page 3

Description

Gray scale with yellow body.

Life Cycle

Three generations, overwinters as immature black cap stage.

Controls

Natural: limit tree size; lady beetles and parasitic wasps (avoid summer sprays).

Spray: See Calendar of Backyard Gardening Operations

Leaf Curling Aphids

Hosts

Apple, plum, cherry, and others.

Damage

Rolled, stunted leaves; stunted and distorted fruit; honeydew drip.

Description

Apple aphid (rosy purple); green apple aphid (small and green); mealy plum aphid (pale, green, waxy); black cherry aphid (shiny, black); leaf curl plum aphid (yellow green, shiny).

Life Cycle

Overwinters as eggs on tree. Eggs hatch as tree leaves.

Controls

Natural: Control may not be sufficient. Aphids develop before natural enemies build up.

Spray: See Calendar of Backyard Gardening Operations

Pear Psylla

Hosts

Pears

Damage

Honeydew with sooty mold, leaf burn, pear decline, leaf curl.

Description

Adult looks like miniature cicada, one-tenth inch; nymph yellow to brown at 5th nymph stage.

Life Cycle

About five generations a year; overwinter as adults.

Controls

Natural: Predators and parasites (avoid summer sprays).

Spray: See Calendar of Backyard Gardening Operations

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Events

Members,

We, CRFG will be having a booth at the

Harvest Festival held at Prusch Park on Oct 4th from 10 am - 4 pm

May I ask for your help? I need volunteers for an hour or two to help out at the booth, greeting visitors, answering questions, fruit tasting, sharing some talking points on the benefits of joining CRFG. Karl and I will be there all day. if you are unable to help out, can you kindly help by dropping off some fruits from your orchard/garden? we do fruit tasting at the booth.

Also, if you have old CRFG magazines that you don't need, bring them over; these are bright colored, beautiful magazines and good advertisement -- I give them out if someone is really interested in joining the chapter.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Sarah Sherfy



2008 Plant Disease Seminar, November 11, 2008 from 8-12

at the Agriculture Center Conference Room (1432 Abbott St. Salinas) This seminar will focus on broad range of topics dealing with plant pathology and food safety research and information. For more information and to rsvp to please contact Steve Koike at 831-759-7350.

Fresh Approaches to Fertilizing Techniques Conference November 12-13, 2008 at the Double-tree Hotel in Modesto, CA. Learn how groundbreaking fertilizer research can be applied to agriculture practices. Topics include: Managing micro-and macronutrients, understand organic fertilizer, keeping nutrients in their place and managing nutrients of regional crop.

For more information call 916-445-0444

**Satsuma Mandarin Fruit Tasting Dates:
Fridays from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.,
October 10th, October 24th, and November 7th at LREC**

Satsuma mandarins in various stages of maturity will be displayed whole and sliced for tasting. The same varieties will be displayed each week to allow visitors to compare maturity characteristics such as color, flavor and quality as the season progresses. At each tasting for the displayed varieties, we will provide a report of the current sugar acid ratio, rind thickness, and other fruit characteristics measured in the fruit quality laboratory. Culminating the tasting event is a walking tour of the LREC Demonstration Block on November 12 at 10 A.M., led by Tracy Kahn, Curator of UC Riverside Citrus Variety Collection. At this event, growers will be able to evaluate on-tree fruit characteristics and the growth of the trees and discuss the varieties. Contact Beth Grafton-Cardwell, Director, Lindcove Research and Extension Center, 22963 Carson Ave., Exeter, CA 93221, office: 559-592-2408 ext. 152.

**Orchard Pests by Season: Dormant
Blister or Rust Mites**

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Hosts

Pears for pear blister, pear rust; peach and nectarine for peach silver.

Damage

Pear blister/rust russet fruit surface, blister, and damage leaves. Peach silver damages leaves.

Description

Mite: need hand lens to see, white to tan.

Life Cycle

Overwinters under bud scales and adjacent to leaf buds; many generations.

Controls

Natural: Predaceous mites (avoid summer chemical sprays).

Spray: See Calendar of Backyard Gardening Operations

Peach Twig Borer (PTB) Hosts

Peach, nectarine, almond, apricot, plum, prune.

Damage

Invades fruit and kills new shoots. Fruit feeding usually superficial, not deep.

Description

Mature larva with chocolate brown bands, dark head.

Life Cycle

Several generations overwinter as larva in hibernaculum on tree.

Controls

Natural: not reliable.

Spray: See Calendar of Backyard Gardening Operations

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