

The Fruit Leaf

May-June 2004



Newsletter

Santa Clara Valley Chapter

California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.

ORCHARDS IN THE AREA

A new and occasional feature to look for in *The Fruit Leaf* will cover remarkable orchards in the area. There is a surprising number of nonprofit orchards in the Bay Area, both open and closed to public visits. These include some found in public spaces, and in private places. Some are abandoned, relict orchards from the golden age of fruit growing in Santa Clara Valley; others are re-creations, and some found in the most improbable of locations.

This first feature provides a look at one very large, very important orchard that is known to our members, but not very well understood. The recently rehabilitated orchard at Filoli Center in Woodside is not on any public tour, does not produce fruits for sale, and is not made much of in fruit growing circles. Several of our members had propagated the trees that were planted in the restoration of the Filoli orchard, and provided advice at the inception of the project. But there has been no Chapter contact with the orchard at Filoli. That is not to say that the Chapter has had no benefit from the presence of so many varieties of fruits there. Most of the apple and pear scions at recent Chapter scion exchanges have been provided from the Filoli orchard, by courtesy of Filoli Director of Horticulture, Lucy Tolmach.

BY-LAWS UPDATE COMMITTEE

We need a committee of 3 to review the existing by-laws and to make recommendations for specific improvements, which must then be approved by the membership prior to amending the by-laws. Please be ready to volunteer at our next meeting for this important task.

TREES FOR SALE

Member Bea Sobil will be moving and would like to sell a Jaboticaba (in a 5-gal pot, approx. 4' tall, 10 years old), Ice Cream banana (in very large containers), a tall, healthy Bombax, and other ornamentals. Give Bea a call at 408-745-7039 and make an offer.

SHOW AND TELL

Past Chapter Chair Aline Bier has brought to our attention the practice of Los Angeles Chapter of CRFG, for Chapter members to share their fruits and discoveries with the rest of the Chapter at the meetings. Perhaps we do want for a more regularized opportunity for members to describe, and even take credit for, the fruits they bring in for tasting, or the plant material brought from home. Let our current Chapter Chair Corrie Grové know if you have brought something to the meeting to show and tell about.

It often happens, that our latest accomplishments must be left at home in the brag patch, to mature more fully. Also, we may come upon a discovery (Eureka!) that is worth sharing with others. In such a case, presentation before the meeting is not the most efficient way of communication. To save meeting time, repeating and spelling out addresses of vendors, or pulling up the durian that is at last in full bloom, consider a submission to *The Fruit Leaf*. Our Editor(s) are on call 24 hours, just use the e-mail address provided. We even do rewrites!

FEEDBACK SOUGHT

Did you go to this year's SF Flower and Garden Show at the Cow Palace in March? If so, did you see our CRFG demonstration site? Our theme was "Chinese Exotica." We appreciate our friends and volunteers who made this event successful. If you have any comments and suggestions, please let us know, either email or phone to Katie Wong alivensilk@aol.com or Saeko Izuta (510-299-2813), sizuta@sbcglobal.net.

DAVE WILSON FRUIT TASTING AND ZAIGER TOUR

Dave Wilson Nursery invites all Chapter members to a tasting of their new fruit varieties on Thursday, July 17, at 9 AM, including a tour of Zaigers Genetics Lab and trial orchard. This event will last about 3 hours. Dress appropriately for hot weather. The location is 1219 Grimes Ave., Modesto, CA 95358. 209-522-1075. Carpools are encouraged.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Santa Clara Valley Chapter of CRFG

June 5 (Saturday) Noon-4 P.M.	Prusch Park	Know all about Passiflora by Mark Cooper and Patrick Pons-Worley. Talk will be on how to cultivate Passiflora, soil requirements, what to do with the fruits, recipes to enjoy, preserving fruits for year-round use. Patrick will be bringing copies of his Passiflora cookbook for sale. Chapter Board meeting immediately following program.
June 13 (Sunday) 10 A.M.–NOON	Andy's Orchard. Morgan Hill	Fruit Tasting. First of four summer tastings will feature cherries.
June 18 (Friday)–20 (Sunday)	Cal Poly Pomona	Festival of Fruit 2004. Three days of programs, tours, tastings, plant sales.
July 17 (Saturday) 9 A.M.–Noon	Zaiger Genetics, Modesto	Fruit Tasting and Tour of Lab and Trial Block.
August 7 (Saturday) 1 P.M.-3 P.M.	Prusch Park	Growing Tropical Fruits in the Bay Area (Mangoes and Papaya) by Dave Giordano.

ANDY'S ORCHARD FRUIT TASTINGS AND TOURS

Member Andy Mariani has opened his new orchard store and plans a season of fruit tastings and orchard tours. There are three cherry tastings coming up in June and an apricot and other stone fruit tasting in July, and peach, nectarine and plum tastings in July and August. For more information regarding when particular varieties of fruit ripen, please go to Andy's website: www.andysorchard.com. To get to Andy's Orchard take Fwy 101 to Morgan Hill. exiting east at Cochrane Rd. Turn right at Mission View Rd. and left onto Half Rd. There is a sign at 1615 Half Rd.

Note: It is advisable to call ahead (408) 782-7600 for reservations in case the tours fill up.

Sunday June 13, 2004, at 10 a.m. Cherry Tasting and Tour. \$10.

Saturday June 19, 2004, at 10 a.m. Cherry Tasting & Tour. \$10. (A Harvest Walk is offered for \$5 more: You can walk through the orchard and pick some cherries yourself, which are then weighed and priced in the Country Store.)

Sunday June 20 (Father's Day), 2004 at 10 a.m. Cherry Tasting only. \$5.

Saturday July 3, 2004 at 10 a.m. Apricots & Other Stone Fruits. Tasting only. \$5.

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

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

The Orchard at Filoli

C.T. Kennedy

Filoli is a country estate located north of Woodside, on the San Francisco Peninsula. The house and gardens were started in 1917 by William Bowers Bourn, San Francisco capitalist. Bourn's personal robber barony was the Spring Valley Water Company, the water monopoly in the City, and it is not by chance that Bourn located his estate at the southern end of and overlooking the reservoirs constructed by his company.

The earliest improvements to the Filoli property were the fruit orchard and its facilities. The orchard was laid out in the basin created by the San Andreas fault zone, one of the few flat spaces on the property, and the entrance road to the estate was laid out to pass the orchard. A landscape design that emphasized the orchard was fully within the 18th - 19th century tradition of the Gentleman's Orchard, an orchard where placement, fruit variety and grand extent were at least as important as actual production of the fruit itself. That the orchard was the most important part of Filoli to Bourn personally is confirmed by the varieties to be found in the orchard. It was not a solid planting of one or two fruits for commercial sale. There were fives and sixes of each of the best sorts: Comice pear and Esopus Spitzenberg, for example, just what you would expect in an orchard to produce for a large household. But there were other, unconventional varieties - three purpleleaf plums, functionally sterile and would never produce fruit. These indicate that the choice of fruits was not delegated to a head gardener, who would have lost a job over such a gaffe. Instead, it appears the variety selection was done by Bourn, not answerable to anybody but himself, which accounts for the odd mix of varieties.

Stories of orchard management by Filoli staff during 1920–1940 reveal that indeed, the Filoli orchard was never operated for the purpose of producing fruit, but for the projection of a fruit aesthetic. Bourn dictated the placement of a passive-cooled fruit cellar adjacent to the orchard, in the style of Eastern and European fruit storage. Each fall, Filoli garden staff gathered in the fruits to the cooler. Of course, at Filoli the apples and pears were brought in during September - ambient temperatures and the fruit itself well above eighty degrees during the workday. The fruit store never worked, and by the description of one former employee, all the fruit was thrown out within a few weeks. Clearly, fruit production was not the purpose of the annual exercise.

Bourn died in the mid-1930s, and the estate was purchased by the Roth family, successors to control of the Matson Navigation Company. It was Lurline Matson Roth (she was named for the ship, not the other way around) who made a gift of the Filoli property in 1977 to

the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the current owner. Roth family archives show the Filoli orchard during that period as well maintained, cultivated, occasionally replanted, and irrigated. But the fence around the orchard was always inadequate to protect it against deer. A conjunction of several causes in the late 1970s led to the decay of the orchard. The orchard "came with" the rest of the property to the National Trust, which had no orchard policy, and priority was to turn Filoli into a self-supporting enterprise. Irrigation ended. The fences, always inadequate, exceeded their half century of useful life, began collapsing, and deer had access to all the trees. Drought during 1976-7 made even dry-farming ineffective, and the toll upon trees began that is continuing today.

The orchard became a wild area of Filoli. The public activities on the property became more popular, and parking was insufficient. In 1991, plans were made to pave the north quarter of the "abandoned" orchard for additional parking. Chapter member Todd Kennedy, also a member of the Friends of Filoli support organization, was invited to propagate on-site from the trees that stood in path of progress. His services did not come free, however, and his presence led to Filoli staff investigation into the significance of the orchard in the Filoli culture.

In 1997, the Garden Staff proposed to the governing board of Filoli, that the remaining orchard be rehabilitated and brought into the scope of irrigated gardens and the Filoli interpretive program. The board approved allocation of many thousands of dollars, for the clearing and fencing of the seven acres that were left. This area was very different from what is seen there now. It was obvious that there were fruit trees here and there, but so thick was the growth of poison oak and Coyote Bush, that it was not certain that the trees had been planted in rows. After clearing, there was discovered a grove of 25 mature walnut trees (to 50 feet in height!), some 150 surviving trees in all, a complicated well and drain system, and a habitat for red-legged frogs. Incorporation of the orchard nearly doubled the area under cultivation at Filoli.

Several of our Chapter members were invited to a meeting of advisors, during that first season. What evolved was a program to maintain the orchard as a collection of fruit trees, not as a producing orchard, with minimum of cultural practices (no sprays, but not exactly organic, either), and no additional staff hirings for the additional work involved. Irrigation (at each tree) was permanently installed at great expense, and the ground is mowed, not disked.

During 1996, Chapter chair Linda Kincaid had arranged for several of our Chapter members to propagate fruit trees for a permaculture orchard at Shenoa, a location in

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Mendocino County. Shenoa closed before the trees went into permanent locations, so there was a collection of pears and apples looking for a home. Filoli welcomed them as the basis for replanting of its own orchard, and in late 1997, members Ted Cunningham, Doron Kletter and others transported the trees from Shenoa to Filoli. Doron and Todd propagated more trees for Filoli at Sonoma Antique Apple Nursery's growing grounds. Eventually, Filoli created its own nursery area for producing trees for the orchard, and Todd Kennedy's collection of apples and pears at San Martin were eventually replicated at Filoli.

The climate and soil of the orchard site are not conducive to any but pome fruits. The apples and pears have been supplemented by addition of a very few medieval pome fruits such as medlars, azarole, haies, whitebeam, sorbs and also some ethnic fruits such as the Chinese quince, tejocote and pashia - even mayhaws, in one area subject to winter flooding. The is one hillside suitable for stone fruits, which remained unplanted, when in 2002 a demand was made by Prusch Park management to remove many of the peaches near to oak trees in our Heritage Orchard. Those peaches were dug up, and made a gift to Filoli. They now make fruit on the Filoli knoll.

Right now, there is no regular tour of Filoli that includes discussion of the orchard. During the Fall Festival at Filoli, there are special tours of the orchard alone. The Filoli staff has trained a cadre of interpretive guides for that annual event, and for other rare occasions when called for. Most of the replanted trees are not yet of bearing age. What to do with the fruit, is often asked. Fruit from the original trees is gathered each fall and stored in the now-refrigerated cold storage. These are sliced for fruit tasting at the Fall Festival, and the remainder offered to food banks, employees and volunteers until all is gone. There are no plans for setting up on-site sales, or any more sophisticated distribution. Just as in Bourn's day, the emphasis is not on the fruit production, but maintenance of the orchard as a part of the Filoli property. Operation as a fruit farm is not cost-effective, and would result in a dislocation of garden and maintenance effort at Filoli. Scions continue to be made available to the Chapter at its exchanges.

All this work is done by Filoli's employees and regular corps of volunteers. If Chapter members are interested in being involved in orchard operations, they may apply to become regular garden volunteers at Filoli. Right now, only a few Chapter members belong to the support group Friends of Filoli, which is a requisite (for management, insurance and supervision purposes) of any person who wishes to take part in the work at Filoli.

2004 DUES NOTICE

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION ADDRESS CHANGE NOTIFICATION

Apparently quite a few of you do read this notice because a lot of you paid your dues. THANKS! However, there are still quite a few of you who haven't, so check your label. If it says anything other than 2004, then your dues are due. We don't "carry" members as long as we used to, so please send your check for \$10.00 dues to SCVC/CRFG, using the return address on the outside mailer.

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

FESTIVAL OF FRUIT 2004

Members are reminded that it is not too late to register for this year's annual meeting in Pomona. For more information including registration fee, hotel accommodations, campgrounds and RV facilities in the area go to the CRFG Website: www.crfg.org and click on the link 'Make Your Reservation Now!' or go directly to the special Festival of Fruit Website: <http://www.lindaspellman.net>. There is also information in recent issues of *The Fruit Gardener*.



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