



The Fruit Leaf

Santa Clara Valley Chapter
California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.



September/October
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.
408 846-5373
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

October 10, 2009
Emma Prusch Park
Social and set-up 12:30
Meeting 1pm to 4pm

Speaker for Next Meeting

By Susan Casner-Kay

Our presentation in October will be by Tom Bressan, who is the founder and President of **The Urban Farmer Store**, a 28 -year-old company with stores in San Francisco, Mill Valley, and Richmond. **Urban Farmer** sells efficient landscape irrigation and lighting to landscape professionals, homeowners, and municipalities. Tom has written numerous articles and handbooks on all aspects of sustaining the landscape and the environment. His articles have been featured in the San Francisco Chronicle, Sunset Magazine, and in *Ortho* books, and he also served as a consultant for the *This Old House* book. He has presented lectures to over 500 clubs and organizations. Mr. Bressan is currently a board member of the San Francisco Parks Trust, the EBMUD Landscape Advisory Committee and the SFPUC Appeals Board.

For the CRFG meeting, he will present:

Making every drop count; tips and techniques for landscape watering.

The topics will include planting, water delivery methods, and system layouts and maintenance, with specifics for fruit trees. He will also discuss harvesting rainwater, and the use of gray water. He will be bringing examples of irrigation materials.

If you would like to check out the website ahead of time, it is:
www.urbanfarmerstore.com

Great Loquat Choices for a Long Season

By Lisa Stapleton

“Mom,” my seventh-grader asked hopefully, “Can you fix it so that we can have loquats all year around?”

Great question, I thought. I figured I probably couldn't get them year-round, but maybe I could plant different varieties. Or maybe I could find some that keep for a while, and at least stretch out the harvest.

Evan loves the loquats from our neighbor's variety, which she says just must have sprouted from a seed someone dropped, only seems to bear for about a month in April, May or June. The tree is actually on the border of two neighbors' property, and when we pass on our daily walks, we are careful snitch only from the side that nobody ever harvests, on the theory that they'll only rot if we leave them too long. That's a big problem with loquats; most of them don't keep well. They also bruise easily, and they're pretty hard to find in stores.

What's a mother to do?

When your kid (or grandkid) specifically ASKS for a particular fruit, you become a parent (or grandparent) on a mission. I started researching what varieties were easily available, and I found some that looked promising, if expensive.

I think I'm looking for one early, one midseason, and one late loquat. My plan is to plant them all in roughly the same hole, and trim them to look like one tree. (I'm all thumbs at grafting, and I want a solution that will work soon, not after my children are away in college.)

'Christmas' from *Edible Landscaping* in Afton, VA sounded promising for the early variety (or really late, I guess, depending on your perspective), and I've met owner Michael McKonkey, but even a small plant costs more than \$50 with shipping. Also suspicious was that the description said nothing about what it tastes like. 'Tanaka,' a late variety, was available via the 'Buy it now' button of eBay. 'Early Red' was about \$60 from several sources. 'Advanced' costs about the same. Ouch!

Of course, I would gladly (well, sort of gladly) pay that for fruit that tastes great and grows well here, but I'd need some confirmation from someone local, at least from someone who grows them in Northern California.

And I'd already tried 'Gold Nugget' and 'Champagne,' and while they were OK, they struck me as a little watery and not extremely flavorful.

That's why I was so jazzed to see that Patrick Schafer was going to speak on loquats and palms at the *Festival of Fruit*. He lives in Philo, California, so his climate is a little bit colder than ours in the winter, but it's northern California, so maybe it's close enough to our climate to get some good ideas and maybe even some plants. I figured I'd hold off until after the talk. One can often pick up cool varieties of the things being discussed, and if not, there's usually time later to hit the 'Buy it now' button.

Glad I waited.

The loquat talk wasn't scheduled until 4:00, so I cruised over to the vendor area in the parking lot at around 10:30 or so. The first thing I noticed was that I only recognized a few of the names on the loquats that Schafer was selling.

To those of us who are experienced enough to have drunk the tree-catalog Kool-Aid more than once, that could mean several things. They could be wonderful rare-and-neglected varieties, or, as sometimes happens, they could be rare because newer varieties came along that were better in some way, and nobody wants them anymore. I was hoping it was the first possibility.

I explained my objective, and asked Schafer what he thought of 'Early Red.'

“Well, it's OK, but in my experience, it's not early, and it's not red. It's about the same color orange as all of the other orange varieties.” Most varieties are either pale yellow or white, or more of a peach-colored orange, he said, and this one was a pretty standard orange.



What about 'Christmas'?

"First," he said, "It doesn't bear around Christmas anywhere near here. I'd say it's mostly a big disappointment on all counts."

And 'Advanced'?" I asked, checking out one of the ones he was selling. "It's OK, not too many seeds, but for me it has small fruit," he responded.

How refreshing, I thought. This guy seems like a straight shooter. The easiest and most profitable thing in the world for him to have said, "Oh, it's great, here, take this one. That will be \$20."

My initial impression was reinforced a few minutes later, a fellow SVCRFG member asked about a "seedless loquat."

"Well, there is no such thing in my experience," Schafer said. "If you grow more than one tree, you're probably going to have some pollination, and that means seeds. More pollination, more seeds. Less pollination, fewer seeds. But I've never seen a truly seedless loquat." As her face fell, so did Shafer's hope of an immediate sale. Afterwards, though, she and I commiserated about how tragic it is when reality rears its nasty little head and devours a perfectly satisfying fruit-tree fantasy.

So what's a good trio for our area?

For the early variety, he recommended 'Tribia de Precoe,' an early, white-fleshed variety that he says is sometimes too shy to bear for commercial use, but he thinks will still bear more than enough for the needs of my small family. For the mid-season variety, he sold me an 'Argelino,' sometimes mislabeled "Angelino," which he says is a large orange, mid-season variety with consistently high productivity. And for the late-season tree, he recommended 'Kanko,' which he says is the latest orange, and has an excellent taste.

Incidentally, Schafer mentioned later in his talk, he gets good-sized crops of loquats into mid-July at his Philo orchard, with the last stragglers even a little later.

And, he adds, loquats are really good for small spaces or even containers, because they can easily be kept small by pruning. They also tolerate partial sun; the downside is that fruit and leaves can become sunburned in hot summer conditions. (Netting can help to prevent this problem.)

So for \$60, I got three trees that come recommended by someone who lives about 100 miles north of me, and who clearly cares about fruit. I think that was worth the wait, don't you?

The following are some of Schafer's observations on a lot of different varieties that he's grown, reprinted here with his permission. He says he's still looking for 'Day,' 'Miller,' 'Fletcher Red,' 'Glen St. Mary,' 'Bradenton,' 'Hasting,' and 'Akko.'

- **'Advance'**--Small fruit, early-to-mid-season fruit, very few seeds
- **'Argelino/Angelino'**--Large orange, mid-to-late season variety with good production
- **'Brush St. Mother'**--Big, mid-to-late season, orange variety with lots of seeds
- **'Big Jim'**--Orange, mid-season, middle-of-the road fruit
- **'Champagne'**--Small, tart fruit on a shy bearing tree; no reason to grow it
- **'Christmas'**--A bust on all counts
- **'Gold Nugget'**--Poor production, low-quality, small fruit
- **'Healdsburg'**--White, medium-sized, mid-season variety with good size and productivity
- **'Kando'**--The latest orange, with excellent tasting fruit
- **'Massiddea'**--Small, shy bearer, mid-season variety with an excellent taste
- **'McBeth'**--Early-to-mid-season, orange variety with no acid; bland but productive
- **'Mrs. Cooksey'**--Medium-sized orange, OK quality, a little shy, and seems to scab more easily than others

- **'Not Advanced'**--Really big fruit, lots of seeds, very good taste, big tree, "the opposite of 'Advanced'" as Schafer puts it.
- **'Oliver/Wolf'**--Two very similar varieties with the same parents, orange, mid-season variety with good, medium-large fruit
- **'Tribia de Precoce'**--Early, white-fleshed, good-tasting, low-acid, sometimes shy bearing variety

Other varieties that did not work out well for Schafer are 'Early Red,' 'Thales/Gold Nugget,' 'Sherry,' 'Tanaka,' 'Sugra/Tsugura,' 'Strawberry,' 'Mogi/Moggi,' 'Benlher,' and 'Magdul.'

Patrick Schafer can be reached at pls@hughes.net.



Tricia



Condor

Pitaya Festival 2009

By Harvey Correia

The pitayas at Irvine are grown in full sun without any protection from sun or frost. Some are not doing so well but the majority are thriving and have been producing fruit for some time.

There was tasting at the Pitaya Festival, though not a wide variety of fruits. I did taste most of those that I photographed. There were also a few others, including 'Valdivia Roja' that were provided in greater quantities. 'Seoul Kitchen' does not have a lot of flavor, 'IMO', and the 'Nicaraguan' are not sweet enough for my liking, though it tasted good otherwise. It was similar to the two fruits I tried while in Nicaragua two weeks ago. The Guatemalan pitayas are some of the sweeter ones. 'Condor' was very good, even though I think it was picked before peak flavor. I liked 'Tricia' both in taste and appearance.

Check your September 2 email from Harvey to the SCV egroup for more information.

2009 Festival of Fruit

By Joan Halperin

The first evening of the formal part of the 2009 Festival of Fruit consisted of registering for the conference. The previous two and a half days had been filled with tours of private and public gardens and businesses. The first person I saw at the registration table was Karl Gross, who seemed to be helping everywhere I looked during the Festival.

Many of the Santa Clara chapter people had arrived early at the registration to help with setting up and cutting of fruit from Andy's Orchard. Nancy Garrison arrived with boxes of fruit, which needed to be rinsed before serving. Nancy spoke with one of the kitchen staff who gave his approval for the rinsing in the hotel kitchen. Oh dear, apparently he did not have the 'authority' to authorize this task. Soon a frowning Chef arrived, not pleased that we had not gotten prior permission to enter His Kitchen. Nancy did her best to placate, apologize and draw attention away from the corner that Milovan, Walt, and I were trying to use as inconspicuously and hurriedly as we could.

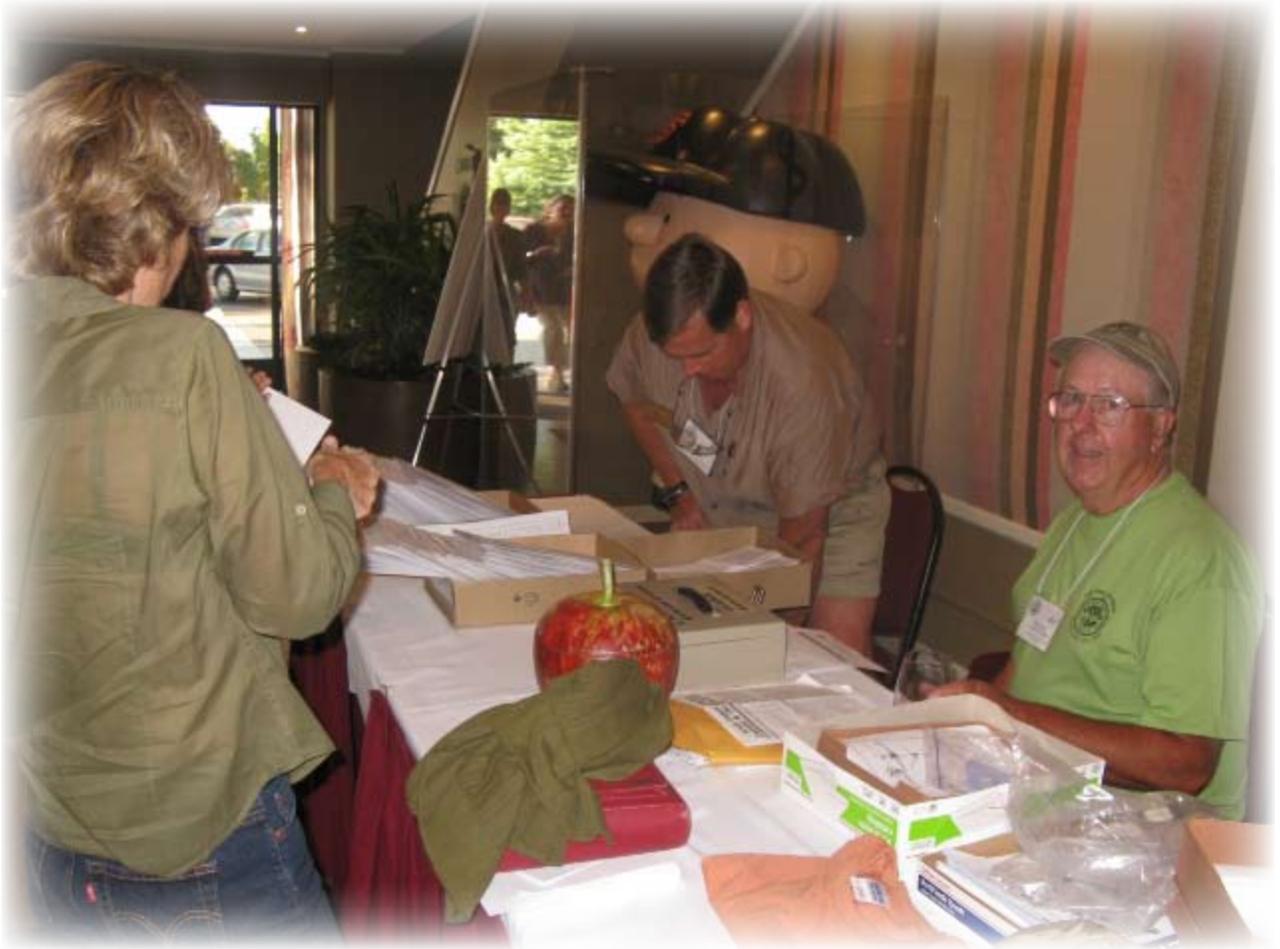
We then rushed our clean fruit to the serving tables to be cut and served. Sarah and one of the Redwood Empire people, Satvia, joined the cutting efforts. With the help of Karl's extremely sharp knives, the fruit was cut, placed pleasingly on the plates, and the tasting started. The six of us took turns continuing to cut, replenish the plates, taste the fruit wines, eat the cheeses, and breads from the other tables. We made a great team! The fruit from Andy's consisted of: 'Green Gage' (Reine Clau de) plum, a small greenish, fruit. It is rarely grown commercially in California, but Andy does have a small planting.

- **Inca Plum** is an old Burbank, heirloom plum. When ripe it is a golden color with magenta specks.
- **Flavor King Pluot** is a beautiful fruit, with a deep maroon color, and very juicy.
- **Golden Nectar Plum** is an oblong golden yellow colored fruit, unsurpassed as a dessert plum.
- **Maria's Gold Nectarine**, is named after a Russian horticulturist. It is a beautifully pure yellow color, juicy and highly flavored.
- **Silk Road Nectarine** is a Tashkent type nectarine, also an all gold and juicy fruit. Both 'Maria's Gold' and 'Silk Road' are selections of the Hybridizers' Group, CRFG-SCV.

All of the fruit was well received because of the ripe taste and the fact that the fruit was so striking; all of the rich colors tempting return visits to the table. There were numerous questions from the tasters on the possibility of obtaining trees of either 'Maria's Gold' and/or 'Silk Road'. The 'Green Gage' plum seemed to solicit the strongest responses, people either really liked it, or said it was way too sweet, no thanks.

Not wanting to venture back into The Kitchen to wash the knives, I wandered through the hotel lobby looking for a different option. The knives and I drew some curious stares, but all in all the tasting was fun and successful.





Thank you Corrie for Festival of Fruit photographs.



The Dave Wilson Tasting Table

If a grower knows
why, he or she
will teach
themselves how.

L. H. Bailey
*The Principles of Fruit
Growing, 1897, 1926*

Wolfskill Pomegranate Tasting

Possible Date: November 7th at 10:00am

Keep checking your Santa Clara Valley egroup for an update.

Any SCV CRFG member may sign-up to receive egroup messages at:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scv_crfg/

Common Ground Classes

To register for classes, call Common Ground at 650 493-6072, then send a check for the full amount to Common Ground, 559 College Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

SOIL FOODWEB

Alane Weber Saturday, December 5, 2009

10:30 - 12:30 \$30, To register call 650-493-6072 or

<http://soilfoodweb.eventbrite.com/>

Super soil! The soil Foodweb consists of all the beneficial micro- and macroscopic soil critters that function harmoniously in our garden soil. They are responsible for nutrient cycling, soil production and immune system boosting. Understanding the riches in our soil will give you greater ability to surf with nature's wisdom and make better compost.

FILOLI

86 CAÑADA ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062
650-364-8300 X508 TEL

Orchard tours are available Thursdays and Saturdays June through October. For more information pick-up a flyer in the Visitor and Education Center lobby or visit our web site, www.filoli.org.

Original Apples in the Filoli Orchard include: 'Baldwin,' 'Black Twig,' 'Esopus Spitzenberg,' 'Gravenstein,' 'Jonathan,' 'Newtown Pippin,' 'Winter Banana,' 'Wolf River,' 'Yellow Bellflower.'

Original Pears in the Filoli Orchard include: 'Bartlett,' 'Belle Lucrative,' 'Doctoer Jules Guyot,' 'Doyenne du Comice,' 'Duchess d Angouleme,' 'Lincoln,' 'Louise Bonne i Avranches,' 'President Mas,' 'Souvenir du ongres,' and 'Winter Nelis.' Original Asian Pears include: 'Chojuro,' 'Keiffer,' and 'Okusankichi.'

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
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Board Member	Walt Crompton geronimo@astound.net	650-773-0569

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	408-846-5373
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 smprfg@yahoo.com	
Librarians	Milovan Milutin milovan.milutin@nsc.com Walt Crompton geronimo@astound.net	650-773-0569

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