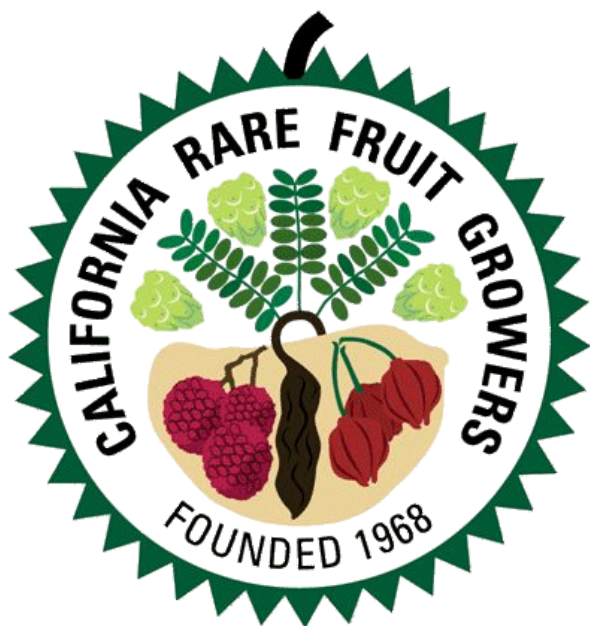


CALIFORNIA RARE FRUIT GROWERS

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

SEPTEMBER 2004 NEWSLETTER



Upcoming meeting is September 23
Meeting Minutes from August 26, 2004:

The business meeting consisted of all the preparation and excitement related to the Labor Day Plant Sale. Many people volunteered to help out, thus making the sale a positive and worthwhile event, perhaps even a new tradition. The topic of the meeting was growing banana trees. The presenters were Jon Verdick, Encanto Farms nursery ("We Be Bananas"), and Paul Fisher, Merritt Mountain Nursery. Carol Graham, "The Banana Lady," also contributed some valuable insights. Here are some highlights of the discussion: Helpful tools for banana horticulture include a sharp shovel having a straight blade on the end of the pole. This allows growers to cut off banana pups at a 90 degree angle to avoid hurting the roots of the mother plant. Also, one can create a banana tree "propper upper" using PVC pipe. See Jon Verdick for details. Mulching is particularly important for banana trees. And, although fertilization is helpful, compost benefits the soil more than chemical fertilizers. John uses large quantities of the free compost from Miramar landfill. 16-16-16 and

GroPower's 5-3-1 were among the recommended fertilizers. John uses 16-16-16 and alternates every other application with 21-0-0 and 0-0-52 so that he gets a 9-3-27 ratio. The 21-0-0 and 16-16-16 are Home depot cheap. He fertilizes monthly during the growing season, giving about 2lbs per plant. He cuts back on fertilizer and water in the winter, winter being roughly the part of the year that we are on standard as opposed to daylight savings time. Banana trees should stand eight to ten feet apart; they have an extensive root system, reaching out about ten feet from the tree. Pups need to be removed regularly (they can be removed when quite small), but not more than one per week per tree to maintain the integrity of the mother tree. These enchanting trees produce just one stalk per tree; then the tree dies back leaving the production to the other guys: "Day-O, day-ay-ay-O. Daylight comes and me want to go home." Deciding when to pick a stalk can be puzzling. Paul waits till the bananas are 10-15 percent yellow to pick, Jon says "I write the date the first hand flowers on the side of the pseudostem with a felt pen. 6 months later I cut the top most hand off and let it ripen on the counter. If it is OK I pick one or two hands a week until they are all gone, or the rest ripen on the tree. Some will ripen a little earlier, some a little later, but it is a good starting point till you get to know your variety in your location." (Some material attributed to Jon in this article is taken from his postings on the banana forum on Gardenweb.com. It is used with neither Jon's nor Gardenweb's permission.)

Our evening fruit feast was highlighted with some great bananas (including the Monthan and the Nam Wa), passion fruits, plums and longans. We also got to experience the rare fruit of the durian tree. This southeast Asian species produces an odiferous fruit with a hard, prickly rind and a soft, pleasant-tasting, pulp. The taste can be compared to onions and garlic; the smell can be compared to something rotting in the jungle, evoking ambivalent feelings among us about its place in the culinary realm. Thank you all for another great meeting! See you next time.

Linnea Lamar

THE VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

I want to start out by thanking every member of the chapter who helped out at the sale. It was downright inspiring to see how many people showed up to work and worked hard and long. It was amazing to see the number, quality and variety of plants donated by the members. A lot more people than I thought have apparently been quietly propagating fruiting plants all along. And the vendors, both the individual members and the nurseries, all created outstanding displays. Room 101 looked just like a big welcoming jungle of fruit trees. And people bought trees. The bottom line was very good for the club, with over 800 dollars from our own sales and a similar amount from the percentages of the vendors. I think we can all be proud of what we achieved here, and we can use the momentum to accomplish more great things.

What kind of great things? Well for one thing I propose that we do the Labor Day sale as an annual event. We have now seen that the Chapter can do it and that the day and the location have a lot of potential. Making the sale into a regular and predictable event will further enhance attendance. Each year's publicity will build on the last. In addition, we learned quite a few things that will make the sale better.

Some may ask why we need to raise money. We need it so that we can continue our policy of two ice cream socials per year, a newsletter every month, and everything else we do now, while simultaneously pursuing avenues for improvement and growth. My first such proposal is to get a projector and laptop computer for digital slide presentations. This would be appealing to visiting speakers. It would also make routine meetings better. All in-house presentations could be spiced up with a few photos or diagrams. People could email me interesting images for "show and tell," and I could put them on a CD for the next meeting. Instruction would also benefit. For example, when we do our grafting and budding meetings, the presentation could be enhanced by either simple line drawings or sharp digital pictures of each step projected on the wall behind the presenter. He or she could pause between steps and point out critical things on the projected image. During the fruit tasting and raffle, the projector could be left projecting the images in smaller (for example 2' by 2') format as a continuous slide show. This would enhance our teaching mission, and offer a little polish that might be appealing to visitors considering membership. In addition, the setup could be used to project DVDs of past presentations from the festival of fruit. (CRFG is in the process of transferring these from video to DVD format.) We could also use the set up to take our show on the road to garden clubs and schools where interested people can be found. This would be an excellent way to reach whole populations of interested people who aren't reached by our usual promotions.

I'm quite serious about this, and I've looked into the costs of the equipment. I think that we could get away for about \$1500, give or take a couple hundred dollars for the hardware. Our most expensive option would be a new Dell laptop (the cheapest model) along with a new projector. A less expensive option would be the purchase of an older laptop with at least a P3 750 Mghrz CPU and at least 128 Mg of RAM along with a good refurbished projector. I will ask for authority from the club at the next meeting to implement this proposal. By the way, if you have any of this equipment that you wish to sell, the club might buy it. Or, if you were to donate it, you could receive a tax deduction. Talk to me about it.

Another use of money would be to implement a deal I've worked out with the germplasm repository up in Davis to ship us promising pomegranate varieties for tasting and evaluation. Perhaps we could also get unusual grapes and stone fruits this way as well. My goodness it would be nice to get a case of ripe Muscat of Alexandria grapes and Pink Ice pomegranates "fed exed" to us, purely for tasting and evaluation of course – in the name of science of course. The folks up there would like the tasting data. But I think that they'd expect us to pay shipping costs. Thirty pounds by standard overnight shipping is 85 dollars, 2 day is half that and probably adequate.

Anyway, those are my ideas to use the money for the club. I'd love to hear any other ideas that people have.

David Silverstein

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Jose Gallego – Webmaster and Director of National Affairs (619) 697-4417 webmaster@crfgsandiego.org	Irene Sias – Greeter (619) 482-0938

Announcements:

BOARD MEETING -- OCTOBER 3, 2004 -- PAUL'S HOUSE 9:00 A.M. TOPICS are NEXT YEAR'S MEETING CALENDAR -- NEXT YEAR'S SALE Everyone should contribute ideas between now and then. Also anyone interested in serving on next year's board, please attend Board meeting. IF there is time we will also discuss field trips and other special events. Call Chair or Vice Chair during week before to make sure it's going to happen

LAST CALL FOR HUMIC and PHOSPORIC ACID products. How many people want humic and phosphoric acid products. Let me know ASAP what you want to order and how much of it. If I don't hear from you, I'm just going to order for people who have already let me know and I'll order some extra for other people to buy at a slight markup to benefit the club and me.

Humax Liquid -- \$ 14.00/gal

Humax Powder -- 55 lb bag @ \$3.75 lb + 20 dollars shipping

Cheaper Humate powder, slightly lower grade -- 40 lb bag at 82.00 including shipping

Fulmax (Fulvate Liquid for foliar feeding) -- \$16.00/gal

Phosguard 0-28-25 -- \$28.00/gal

These are all estimates depending on how much we need and who we get it from.

Don't forget to check our website at www.crfgsandiego.org.

SEPTEMBER Meeting:

WHERE: Casa del Prado Building Room 104, Balboa Park
 WHEN: September 23 at 7 pm
 MEETING TOPIC: Control of vertebrate pests in the fruit garden.

For membership, please mail your application form and check to

CRFG, San Diego Chapter
 C/O Paul Fisher
 1266 Vista Del Monte Dr.
 El Cajon, CA 92122



San Diego Chapter 2004 Calendar

Year of the Berry

Month	Meeting Topic	Event(s) For the Month
September 23 Casa del Prado 104	Pest Control in the Fruit Garden - Ron Hobgood of County pest control will be our speaker for the control of vertebrate pest control. -	ANNUAL FRUIT TREE SALE. SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 2004. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. 9:00 a.m. until it's over.
October 28 Casa del Prado 101	Nut Trees -- Pecans, Macadamias, Almonds etc. Ice Cream social -- Exotic Fruits	
November 18 Casa del Prado 103	Winter Pruning	
December 16 Casa del Prado 101	Holiday Dinner, Elections and Gift Exchange	