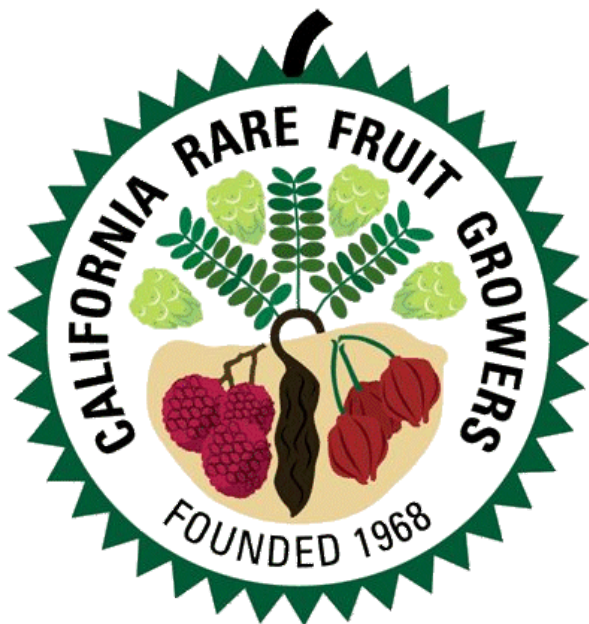


CALIFORNIA RARE FRUIT GROWERS

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

JUNE 2004 NEWSLETTER



Plant Sale Committee meeting right before our regular June 24, meeting. 6:00 p.m. Room 101

Minutes for the May 29th Meeting

The Labor Day plant sale was again the first item on the agenda. Mercifully, a motion was made and passed giving the Board full authority to decide this issue without taking up more meeting time. We also resolved again to get the meetings going on time so that we don't run so late. Many of our members get up pretty early in the morning, so it isn't fair to keep them out so late.

Carol Graham, "the banana lady," is organizing volunteers for the CRFG booth at the Del Mar Fair. Everyone is encouraged to

participate. Special thanks to Carol for her tireless efforts at coordinating the volunteers at the fair and the work parties out at Quail Garden.

Our presentation covered the benefits of worms for our gardens and orchards. There are two useful types of worms. One is the "aerating worm," which digs deep into the soil and makes it lighter, thus assisting in making the soil's nutrients more available and fostering good drainage. "Composting worms," on the other hand, live in the first few inches of soil. There, they help break down mulches to create compost and detoxify contaminants like mercury. A significant benefit of these worms for many horticulturalists and home gardeners is their—well, how shall I say this? Uh--castings! Yeah, "castings," that's the word for it! These *castings* are a slow release nitrogen source and long-lasting. They also contain a natural enzyme that dissolves chitin, the material that makes up insect skeletons. Insects naturally run like heck when they get a whiff of this super potent natural insect repellent. This great stuff can be used as a mulch by putting a one-inch layer from around the trunk out to the drip line. It also makes an excellent soil amendment, and can be steeped like a tea to use as a fertilizer and foliar spray. So the next time I see worm squiggling on the soil I've just disrupted, both worm and I surprised by the sudden displacement, I won't say "ick," or even "get lost," but rather, "Go forth and multiply!"

Linnea Lama

THE VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Early summer is in full swing. All over town from the San Diego Coast to the hills of El Cajon, mangos have set bumper crops of fruit. Grapes and Figs are ripening and tomatoes are flourishing. It looks like a good year. I've had very good results with the pomegranate grow-out this year and I'm potting lots of little trees up. I got my best results by cutting a couple of short narrow vertical strips of bark off the bottoms of the cuttings and then dipping them in pure undiluted Dip n' Grow. I also sprayed the cuttings with Cloud cover anti-transpirant above the soil line this year. I even wrapped a couple in parafilm. In addition I followed up a little on evidence

that seemed to say that cuttings can do better when placed in shallow pots of freely draining mix with most of their nodes above the soil line. I tried it again this year in an uncontrolled experiment and found it to be very successful in that it seems to give you more top growth faster and less underground rot related failures.

If you will forgive me a little theorizing, it may be that when you place a ten node branch in the soil so that eight nodes are down, you are creating a dilemma for it. It only has limited carbohydrate stores and a choice between making roots and making tops. All of those underground nodes bias it toward exhausting its stores on making roots and then not having the energy to crank out enough leaves to make up the deficit. This gives the common failure scenario where the cutting puts out a little bit of growth on top which later stalls and dies.

The other failure scenario with six or eight nodes down is where there is a lot of early top growth that later stalls and dies. Often post mortem analysis shows few or no roots and shows rot on the cutting. This would be where the abundant underground nodes are all in a position to produce root, but initial low water consumption may let them fall into a situation where none produce much root and they become semi dormant, exposing them to rot in the wet environment of the deeper pots. The large underground bark surface probably also allows a lot of passive water absorption without stimulating roots. Instead top growth speeds ahead until its transpiration puts pressure on underground nodes to wake up and grow lots of roots. Unfortunately by this time rot has gotten a good foot hold on the underground bark and roots and it may be too late.

By contrast, where there are only one or two nodes underground and very little bark, sunlight on the majority of nodes stimulates lots of top growth putting immediate pressure on just the few nodes that are in a position to produce roots. More pressure on fewer nodes means more vigorous root growth in the dryer environment of the shallow pot. This almost certainly helps the underground portion of the plant get established before rot can set in.

The overall result on average is lower mortality from rot, solid healthy roots, and a much lower root volume to top volume than you get planting the cuttings deeply in a deeper pot. The lower root volume is not necessarily a problem. In fact, a smaller healthier root system might be better adapted to transplanting into a larger pot or the ground, then a voluminous root ball that circles around and around in its pot. I'm going to do a controlled experiment next year.

Anyway, I hope that other people's cuttings are faring well. We'd be happy to publish anyone else's tricks and theories on propagation as well here. By the way, I have lots of little trees, 11 small trees of Pink Ice alone right now, counting one that is grafted to an ornamental pomegranate rootstock. It is time for people with a desire to grow these trees to start thinking about where to put them. The members definitely get the first dibs on them. Also, please consider growing up some of the others. None of this year's varieties are blind picks. All were recommended by somebody. Some, such as Sverkhroniy, were recommended by several people.

The one variety I failed with this year was one I have failed with twice previously. That was Green Globe, a very appealing variety said to have very large green fruit that hang like chandeliers from the tree and large juicy arils. I would like to hear from anyone who has successfully grown some out from cuttings. It failed in both the deeper pots and the shallow pots. It failed bare, with Cloud Cover, and with parafilm wrapping. I will say though that the one piece that I grafted to my "Wonderful" pomegranate tree, took off like a shot. I've got it braced up with Bamboo as I'm afraid that it is going to snap itself right off its rootstock.

As to the Plant Sale, I was pleased that a motion was made and passed at the last meeting that allows the remaining details to be worked out without the participation of the entire group. And believe me I fully recognize and understand that people do not want to spend long times on business at meetings. So far, these are the rules that the board has agreed slightly tweaked by me. But we have made great progress. Finalizing these draft rules will be by the board with input of the Sale committee.

Sale Format:

1. These rules apply to special plant sales by the San Diego Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers, for example, the Annual Fruit Tree Sale. Fees: 25 dollars for 60 square feet selling space. 10 dollars for subsequent increments or parts of increments of 30 square feet. The Chapter can make reasonable exceptions

in allocating space it can limit space available to any vendor. Members in good standing (including paid up parent organization membership) of any local CRFG chapter pay no fee. Parent-Organization-Only members will be asked to pay the modest fee to join the local chapter.

2. All participants are encouraged to donate their plants or the full proceeds of sale of their plants. The minimum donation is 15 per cent of gross sales proceeds donated to the Chapter. With regard to Amateur growers, the Board has authority under these Rules to reduce the minimum donation for a particular sale under exceptional circumstances when the Amateur grower so requests it. A separate request is necessary for each sale. Receiving approval for a reduced minimum donation at one sale, has no effect on subsequent sales. The Board considers each request for each sale separately. The Board will find exceptional circumstances in cases where the Amateur grower has been of unusually great service to the organization over a period of two or more years. (Service as an officer of the chapter is not in itself exceptional or unusually great.) The minimum donation cannot be reduced below ten per cent of gross sales under any circumstance.
3. Amateur growers include back yard growers and propagators. In contrast, Commercial Nurseries are people or entities in the regular business of selling plants. They can be distinguished from Amateurs by one or more of the following indicia. Sales Volume of greater of 12 thousand dollars in the past year. Reselling of plants purchased from other growers, except where those plants were purchased as rootstocks and grafted over by the vendor. Having a commercial plant selling premises other than one's residence. Other indicia that one is or is not in the regular commercial business of selling plants will be considered.
4. Food bearing plants are the primary subject of our plant Sales. Other materials and other plants are permitted, but the individual vendor is entirely responsible for insuring that applicable taxes are paid.
5. The Board speaks for the Chapter on interpreting these rules, making allowances and exceptions, etc. Their decision is final and creates no right of appeal, no matter how arbitrary, capricious or downright idiotic it is. If a question arises onsite or in a situation when the Board cannot practically gather a quorum, it can be finally resolved by a majority of Board members present. The Board has discretion to reconsider matters if it wants to. It will strive to treat everyone with full fairness and equity.
6. The Board, in consultation with the Plant Sale Committee, may decide from time to time on any additional rules. Participants in any plant sale are deemed to be doing so for the benefit of the Chapter and to agree to these rules. No decision of the Chapter can create any injury to them or any rights for them whatever.

David Silverstein

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Announcements:

1) PLANT SALE COMMITTEE MEETING. We are going to meet at 6:00 p.m. on June 24, Thursday in Room 101 of the Casa del Prado. That is in 101 just prior to our next meeting. I'll bring some Pizza. We'll start right at 6:00. Really. Folks that signed the Plant Sale sheet last time and anyone else interested should show up.

2) THE TINA GRAFTING KNIVES ARE HERE! If you ordered one, you can pick it up at our next meeting. They look quite nice. If others are interested, we might order again.

3) Interested in cheap plant containers? Let Dave Silverstein know. I acquired a whole pile of one, three and five gallon containers. But with shipping they were not as cheap as I thought. I underestimated. Trade gallons are 40 cents, 3 gallons are about 90 cents, 5 gallons – 1.45. I think that this is better than you can do at local nurseries, home depots etc. But there are cheaper sources in the County.

4) Firewood. Want Some? Call David Silverstein at 619 523 8565. Its good stuff, aged citrus, pine and sapote wood.

5) STRAWBERRY LOQUAT. This cultivar has a loyal following as does Vista White. I would like Scion wood of either or both varieties, particularly the Strawberry. If you can spare some scion wood, call me, e-mail me, or

talk to me at the meeting. I would like to get some. Maybe I have some variety that you want. Again, David Silverstein 619 523 8565.

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

May Meeting:

WHERE: Casa del Prado Building Room 101, Balboa Park
WHEN: June 24 at 7 pm
MEETING TOPIC: Organic soil amendments -- Humic and Phosphoric Acid and manures and their remarkable effects on growth of Avocados and other subtropicals. Presentation by Dr. Greg Partida, of California Polytechnic, Pomona.

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 92020

San Diego Chapter 2004 Calendar

Year of the Berry

Month	Meeting Topic	Event(s) For the Month
June 24 Casa del Prado 101	Tips on Growing the Subtropical Fruit Trees. Lecture and Discussion with Professor Greg Partida, Cal Poly Pomona	Del Mar Fair -- June 11 to July 5 Festival of Fruit -- June 18 to 20, Pomona.
July 22 Casa del Prado 101	New Deciduous Tree Varieties -- Summer Fruit Taste Off. & Ice Cream Social -- Home Made Toppings and Fresh Fruits	Picnic with North County Chapter at Quail Botanical Garden July 10, starting about 11:30 a.m.
August 26 Casa del Prado 101	Banana Growing and Pup Exchange & Ice Cream social -- Exotic Fruits John Verdick, the Banana King, and Paul Fisher, the Banana Czar, will give an informative presentation on banana growing and on the many varieties of banana.	
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	