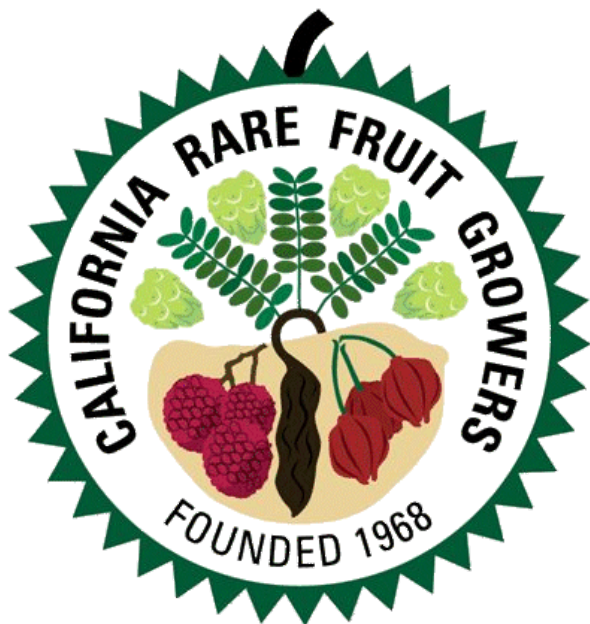


# CALIFORNIA RARE FRUIT GROWERS

## SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

NOVEMBER 2004 NEWSLETTER



*Upcoming meeting is November 18!*

### *Meeting Minutes from October 28:*

We kicked off the meeting with a computer-driven slide presentation, featuring Jim Neitzel and Leo Manual with their mango trees. We now can view all such inspiring and educational visuals using our new laptop computer and projector. The evening's lecture was given by our own Jim Neitzel. The topic was "nuts"—I mean *real* nuts such as macadamias and walnuts.

"Everyone should have a macadamia nut tree," Jim tells us. There are two types. One is *m. tetraphylla*, or rough-shell macadamia, which has a high sugar content. Among these, Kate is the best cultivator because of its 8% sugar content. The other type is *m. integrifolia*, or smooth-shell macadamia, which has less sugar but is good after blanching. This is

the Hawaiian variety. Macadamias do well here in San Diego, and Jim is currently developing a thin-shelled variety since many people complain that macadamias' tough shells make them difficult to crack. Rocks work, Jim says.

Walnuts can also be grown in San Diego County. Noteworthy varieties include El Carmelo (largest nut), Placentia (lowest chill), Payne and Pedro (semi-dwarfs and low-chill). Both walnut and pecan trees make great shade trees, as well as producing tasty nuts. They should be planted in deep soil on the north side of the property. The Mahan (the largest pecan), the Wichita (the richest tasting), and the Mohawk (good flavor) are excellent pecan varieties. The Madagascar Chestnut has beautiful tropical foliage, and the nuts are good. It grows well in San Diego. In general, cashews require a warmer climate than we have in San Diego, and pistachio trees do better farther north.

"If you like almonds, go to Henry's Market," Jim tells us because scrub jays and those pesky ground squirrels will eat most of yours. If you don't mind sharing, get a self-pollinating variety. Garden Prince is a natural dwarf. All varieties are prone to ground rot, so good drainage is a must.

The remainder of the evening was delicious, even though the ice cream didn't arrive from Mexico. There were bananas, nuts, and plums—and an unforgettable sapote (variety unknown), among many other fantastic fruits. We may indeed be grateful for our wonderful club and our beautiful trees. See you all November 18<sup>th</sup>.

*Linnea Lamar, Secretary*

## ***THE VIEW FROM THE CHAIR***

"Our" garden writer toured a few gardens on October 29<sup>th</sup>. She got a lot of pictures, and she got to talk with Leo Manuel, Paul Fisher and Jim Neitzel. She will be able to do an article for the *Union Tribune*, and she has gotten confirmation that the article will run shortly before the next Labor Day Plant Sale. This will contribute to the momentum that we are building for the event. In addition to that, we will have our other bases covered better this time. Thanks, Betty Newton for pointing us in the right direction on this.

And of course, for those of you who were worried that we are making too much progress too fast and losing our humility, worry no more. Someone has made inflammatory allegations to the Parks Department about our wrongdoing in connection with the plant sale. I do not believe that this will affect our progress negatively, but it could. Stay tuned. And take a lesson from it. That is, one does not "get away with" rule violations in a public context such as a plant sale.

Anyway, there will be a plant sale next Labor Day Weekend. And I hope that the success of the last sale inspires everyone to propagate a few plants or a few more plants to donate. I would say that any plants that fruit around the Labor Day season are good bets. Having good fruit to taste really helps to sell plants.

At the last sale, we had delicious rose apples for people to taste. A lot of people loved them, and every rose apple plant in the place was gone by lunch time. If we had 20 more we probably could have sold them. So rose apples are a good thing.

Cheap interesting things are good too. We sold a lot of the little solo papaya plants. Inexpensive one-to-three gallon seedling mangoes of good varieties also sold well. We explained that these seedlings would be variable, but people were just really taken with the idea of little mango trees for seven or ten dollars.

I also talked to a lot of people who wanted pomegranates "other than Wonderful." People particularly wanted the soft-seeded varieties, and they particularly wanted exotic varieties. I would say that if some of your Central Asian selections have achieved any size, you would do well to prune a bit and get some plants for the sale going. People had no problem paying 15 to 20 dollars for an exotic soft-seeded pomegranate that they could not get anywhere else. (However they were not interested in paying ten dollars for a five gallon Utah Sweet--too familiar I guess.)

I also would like having some good grafted avocados to sell. A few home-grafted small Haas, Reed, etc. would be good so we can sell them very cheaply. Also, we can ask more for some good less common ones that don't turn up in the nurseries much -- Holiday, Linda, Sharwill etc. A lot of people wanted avocados, and no one had them.

And before I sign off, I want to say some positive things about the Wonderful pomegranate. I don't talk it up much, and as we saw at the sale, it is not what aficionados are looking for these days. But it is a vigorous, precocious, fruitful tree that produces huge gorgeous fruits. The problem with the ones in the store is that they are not usually properly ripe. They have to be really ripe. I'm still picking fruit here on the coast. But once they are really ripe, the arils have a deep deep almost black color. And the flavor can be very complex with winy, berry, and cherry like notes and a mix of tart, sweet and slight astringency. Also, the main flaw, the relatively hard seeds, seem less bothersome in late fall in a rainy year. I'm not sure if it is just because the juice-to-seed ratio is so high, or if the seeds actually soften a little at this stage. In any case, they can be appreciated for a popcorn-like crunchiness in a rainy fall. In dry years they are overly tart and concentrated and seem to have small arils that have a high proportion of seed.

As a final point, I'd like to thank the Skeels and Snows for showing me their beautiful gardens and letting me taste some of their produce. We are fortunate to have them in our chapter.

Take care. See you at the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

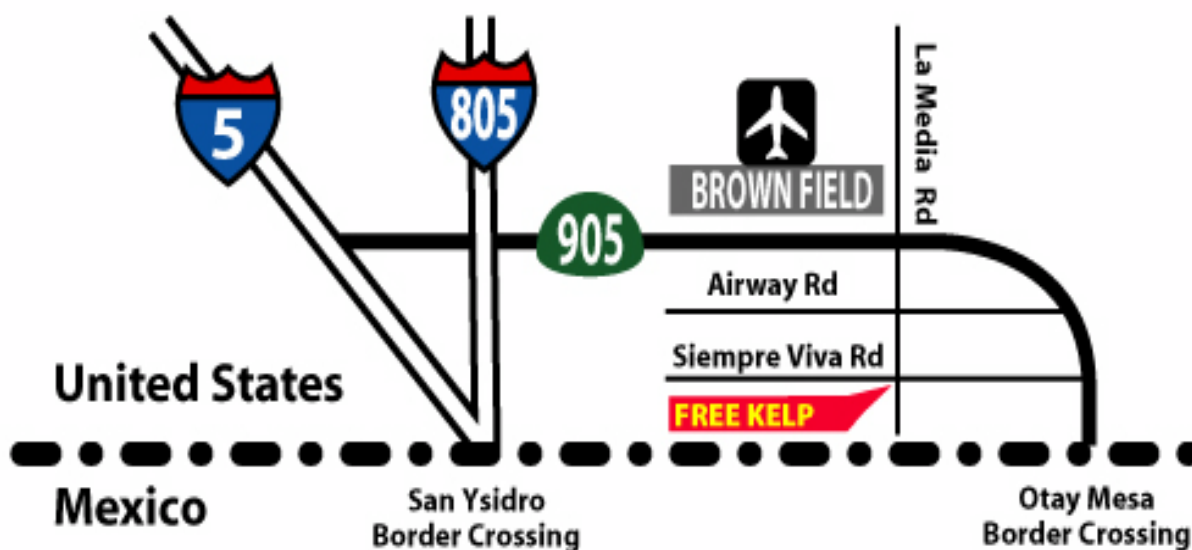
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## Announcements:

### Free Kelp Fiber

Great stuff as thin top dressing ( 1/16th inch) or tilled in (1 inch layer) or potting mix (up to 10%). Due to extreme water holding capacity don't exceed recommended amounts. Corner of La Media Road and Siempre Viva Road in Otay Mesa, just west and north of the Otay Mesa border crossing (see map below). Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am to 4pm. Available through December 31 only. Haul as much as you want, or delivery available for nominal delivery charge (minimum order required). California Soil Solutions' <http://www.casoils.com/index.html> lease is up. All material must go. Go to southwest corner of La Media Road and Siempre Viva Roads. Turn right on Siempre Viva, go five feet and turn into our driveway. Drive to the center of the property for help. Call (866) 535-7672 for more info.



Note to those who go across the border frequently: Because of the Mexican Fruit Fly, customs agents are not letting anyone bring fruit *in any form* into the United States.

Don't forget to check our website at [www.crfgsandiego.org](http://www.crfgsandiego.org).

### NEXT Meeting:

WHERE: Casa del Prado Building Room 103, Balboa Park  
WHEN: November 18, at 7 pm

MEETING TOPIC: Winter Pruning

*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*

<b>Month</b>	<b>Meeting Topic</b>	<b>Event(s) For the Month</b>
November 18 Casa del Prado 103	Winter Pruning	
December 16 Casa del Prado 101	Annual Dinner, Elections and Gift Exchange	