

CALIFORNIA RARE FRUIT GROWERS

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

FEBRUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

Meeting January 22, 2004

David brought up several items of business. The annual holiday party was voted to stay on a Thursday night instead of on a Friday night. Then June passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers to staff a booth for the 19th Annual Home and Garden Show at the Del Mar Fairgrounds March 5th, 6th, and 7th. Please contact her to cover a shift. Her number is 760-729-3501. Everyone is encouraged to participate. The chapter will reimburse your parking if you turn in your receipt. And remember, you can bring plants to sell at the CRFG area to raise money for the club. The group is also considering the purchase of root stock to graft trees for the annual plant sale. (Note, Paul Fisher has ordered a quantity of apple and stone fruit root stocks, some of which should be available at the February meeting and the following grafting workshop.)

The main event of January's meeting, however, was exchange of scions or cut twigs for propagation through grafting and rooting. The meeting began with all the generous and knowledgeable growers setting up tables of cuttings from their wonderful assortment of fruit trees and grape vines. The growers had meticulously organized and labeled their bounty of scions for the group's convenience. They even provided materials for members to label their selections from the precious bounty before them. Everyone left much richer, and I'm sure we all offer our gratitude for our fruity loot. My treasures included scions from the Jelly fig, Beauty Plum, Banana Apple, Flavorella Pluot, Himrod Grape, and the Che Tree, all of which I am most eager to graft or root.

The February meeting will feature grafting instruction and a demonstration. Then there will be a grafting workshop at Paul Fisher's house at 10 a.m. on Saturday the 28th. If all goes as planned, there will be rootstocks available at a very reasonable price at both events. Members may attend the workshop for free and may have the chance to arrive early to help set up, pot trees etc. Guests will pay ten dollars. We hope to give people a lot of grafting experience, as we will be grafting a quantity of trees for our various plant sales. There may also be an opportunity to learn about state of the art potting mixes by actually unloading

several yards of the components in Paul's driveway and mixing them. In addition, we may have several hundred root stock trees to pot up. All depends on when the trees arrive. If they arrive early, this work will have to be done earlier. Stay tuned.

Linnea Lamar

THE VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

It was a great scion exchange. As far as the pomegranate material went, we distributed a lot of material to a lot of people, and people were very good about signing up for what they took. I'd say that the distribution went off without a hitch, except

that I seem to have misplaced the bundle of Parfianka cuttings. I also was pleased to hear from many people that they had plants growing from last year's material, so we will still have data coming in on that stuff. It will be exciting to see how all these new varieties perform.

I have also been corresponding with some pomegranate aficionados out of state. I mailed a couple of bare root trees to a fellow CRFG member in Texas. He is trialing numerous varieties to pick one or two to plant on a commercial scale. Discussions with him highlighted a few facts about pomegranate propagation that are worth passing along. One thing is that the best rooting hormone for them is IBA (indole butyric acid) at a fairly high concentration, at least .8 per cent. Some authorities also recommend with pomegranates and other things that you trim, in addition to freshly cutting the bottom of the scion, two to four narrow strips of bark 1/8 to 1/4 inch wide and 1/4 to 1/2 inch long trimmed up from the bottom edge and perpendicular to the bottom edge. This exposes more cambium to rooting hormone and provides (theoretically) more rooting surface.

Most of the experienced folks know this, but I just want to mention that people should be careful what rooting hormone they buy. Dip 'n Grow is one that is available at retail nurseries. It has plenty of active ingredient at one per cent IBA and half a per cent NAA (naphthaleneacetic acid). But many of the other products that are commonly available at nurseries, home depot etc. have very little active ingredient. Home Depot only carries Schultz rooting hormone. At .01 per cent IBA it may be of some use in propagating herbaceous plants. But it is useless for hardwood cuttings. Bottom line is that it pays to read labels.

But I digress. Our Texas colleague is preparing a quarantine area to receive, among other things, two pomegranate cultivar's from India. They are Jalore and Ganesh, both of which are said to be seedless, not merely soft seeded, but seedless. This would be amazing if true. It would make the flesh something like a coarse grained citrus. And even if "seedless" is just a figure of speech for "very soft seeded", these sound intriguing. We are in line to receive some of this material after it clears quarantine, two years from when it arrives.

I've also been communicating with a pomegranate grower in southern Italy who very much wants to try some American varieties like Wonderful and Ambrosia because he thinks they would be commercially successful in Italy. He offered to send me a bare root tree of one of the local sweet varieties. But alas I have no import permit, yet. And its killing me and I can't stand it anymore, so I've applied for a permit to import pomegranate, fig, loquat, and prickly pear (opuntia ficus indica -- I love this name, it's like music) from southern Europe. And I have applied to establish the necessary postentry quarantine area in my yard. The application forms were very simple and straightforward. The process is free. The permits if granted are good for five years. And the requirements don't look too tough. Imported plants do not have to be isolated from all plant while undergoing quarantine. They have to be kept at least 10 feet from all other plants of the same genus and from other imported plants. If I fail to meet the requirements, it will be because my yard is not big enough to establish the necessary isolation between plant types for the quarantine area. But some of you folks with big yards might have a fairly easy time of it, since you could theoretically stick figs into your apple orchard, pomegranates among your anonas etc. If you are interested, I can get you copies of the forms you would need to get you started. There is lots of good stuff available all over the world, starting with the European Germplasm collections. We really need to try it.

For me, priority one is the loquat project, because I think that loquats in this country are the most in need of an infusion of exciting new genetic material. If my permit applications are turned down, you can bet that I'll be begging everyone in the club to apply to establish a quarantine area in their yards.

By the way, I should mention that the process for importing prickly pears is simplest of the ones I've mentioned. They only need an import permit. When they are delivered, they need to be inspected for health by local agriculture officials. If they pass, they are yours to do with as you please. They don't need any postentry quarantine period at all. I know that prickly pear is an American fruit, but I think that other countries have done more with it to develop it in recent times.

I look forward to seeing you at the February meeting.

David Silverstein

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Don't forget to check our website at www.cfrgsandiego.org.
February Meeting:

WHERE: Casa del Prado Building Room 104, Balboa Park
WHEN: February 26 at 7 pm
MEETING TOPIC: Grafting
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
February 26		
Casa del Prado104	Propagating desirable fruit tree varieties by Grafting and Budding	Workshop. Individual instruction in Grafting and Budding methods. FEB 28. 10 dollar fee for non-members. Call or e-mail for more information.
March 25		
Casa del Prado 101	Propagating by air layering etc.	Workshop. Individual instruction in Air Layering etc. 10 dollar fee for non-members. March 27, 2003 Call or e-mail for more information.
April 22		
Casa del Prado 104	TBA	Green Scene, Fullerton Arboretum. Date TBA
May 27		
Casa del Prado 101	TBA	Tentative Pikake Garden Tour. Date TBA.

June 24		
Casa del Prado 101	TBA	
July 22		
Casa del Prado 101	TBA	
August 26		
Casa del Prado 101	TBA	
September 23		
Casa del Prado 104	TBA	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	TBA	
November 18		
Casa del Prado 103	TBA	
December 16		
Casa del Prado 101	Holiday Dinner, Elections and Gift Exchange	