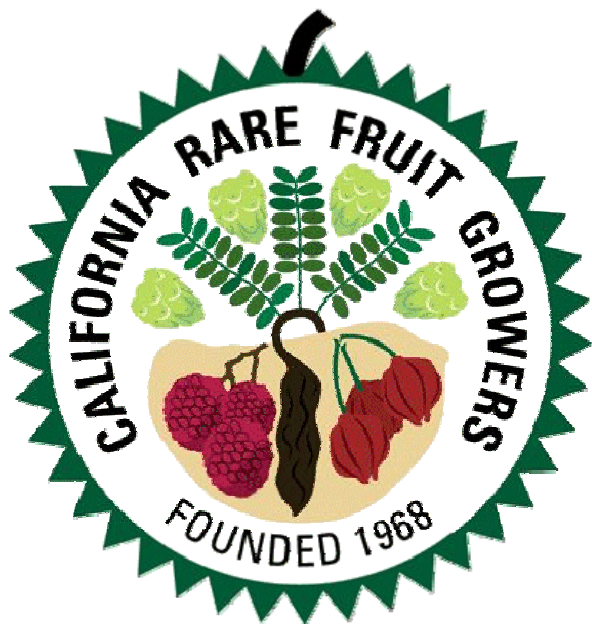


# CALIFORNIA RARE FRUIT GROWERS

## SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

August 2005 NEWSLETTER



*NEXT MEETING is August 25*

### *Minutes for July 28, 2005*

The Labor Day Weekend Plant Sale, Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>, was the main item of business. Because of the restrictions on sales outlined by the Botanical Garden Foundation, we will need more help this year. Volunteers are needed for all positions. We need persons to work the cash registrars, to check buyers' receipts at the doors, and to set up and take down displays. All and all, we will need a lot of help that day, so even if you can't stay for the whole day, please consider helping for a while.

The evening's presentation was on banana horticulture with our own CRFG panel of experts Tom Delhotal, Jim Neitzel, and Paul Fisher. The banana tree can be best understood as one of many "pseudo stems" produced by a rhizome which grows beneath the soil. The best commercial banana trees are constantly on the brink of extinction, Tom explained, due to viruses. Banana production becomes an "arms race" between the breeders developing new varieties, and the viruses. The

world's production zones are shrinking, so we are indeed lucky to have so many banana varieties that do well here in San Diego. There are about a hundred banana varieties in San Diego. Many people are not aware of the excellent taste of locally grown bananas. Their only experience has been with the more common "Burro" banana, which is not as tasty as the lesser known varieties. Jim's favorite varieties include the Monthan and Misi Luki. The Apple Banana is the small variety found in most Asian Markets. The Dwarf Brazilian is another good one that grows well here.

Here are a few tips on banana growing: Bananas need 1-3" of water to obtain three foot water penetration in sandy soil and r two foot penetration in clay soil. You may determine how many inches of water you are applying by leaving an open wide-mouthed container where your water is dispersed. A balanced fertilizer which includes nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium is beneficial. After fruiting, the "tree" will fruit no more and will die after a while. It should be cut back to 3-4 feet after harvest and then removed when the stump yellows and withers. Bananas grow very well in San Diego climate; they even tolerate some frost (their leaves just die back when affected by frost). You may help the pseudo stems survive frost by cutting back on water when the temperature reaches 60 degrees F. Also, if you can resist the urge to "beautify" your trees by cutting off dead leaves, the dead leaves help protect the vital pseudo stem from frost. Tall trees may be subject to damage by high winds, so Jim recommends growing shorter varieties. Root rot during the cool winter months can also be a problem, so even if you don't get frost, it is good to cut back on water in winter when soil temperatures drop below 63 degrees.

The evening's sampling table was especially graced with an abundance of ripe mangos and bananas as toppings for a bowl of vanilla ice cream. There's just something about ripe Kent mangoes and vanilla

ice cream that makes one feel incredibly blessed.  
Thank you everyone for another great evening and  
see you all in August.

*Linnea Lamar*

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

As Linnea's column makes clear, the sale will be on September 3. Announcements will be in the San Diego Reader, The San Diego Union Tribune, and the North County Times. Posters will be at several nurseries and there will be online notices at several high traffic horticultural websites. We will also have an article in the Union Tribune Homescape section appearing in which we will be mentioned prominently and the sale will also be mentioned. Also the astronomical portents are good. The sale will be on the new moon. The September meeting will be on the fall equinox. I expect big traffic. WE NEED THOSE VOLUNTEERS. ALSO, WE NEED YOUR PLANTS.

The good news at the moment, and perhaps I should not mention it or I'll jinx it, the good news is that we have had a good response from members volunteering, and some good nurseries are going to consign some good plants. We have the momentum going but more is needed. Ask not what your club can do for you ....

In other news, I'm in contact with the Germplasm Repository folks up at Davis. Before I forget, please note that the pomegranate tasting will be at our September meeting if we are able to have it, rather than October as originally projected. The research leader, Dr. Stover, was down in San Diego County earlier in the month. He actually came to see some Kiwi plantings up in North County. But he and I also talked loquats via cellphone, but I could not get away from work to meet with him in person. Jim Neitzel and I performed a stunning loquat budwood transfer in which Jim handed off a package of fresh cut loquat budwood to me in a fast food restaurant parking lot. I in turn combined it with some other scions I'd cut, transferred it to the refrigerator at my office, which is on Pacific Hwy. Dr. Stover swung by and picked it up from "my" paralegal on his way to the airport and whisked it off to the propagation facility for grafting the next day. What a precision operation. Drug smugglers eat your hearts out.

The material is doing well at this point. This puts several of Jim's loquat selections up in the national loquat collection. One of the reasons that Dr. Stover was seeking loquat material is to swell the collection so that he has good things to trade to the Europeans. The propagation facility already got some of the European varieties earlier this summer but had poor take, so they are working on their loquat grafting technique and preparing to try again. Apparently, the European group has its best luck grafting in mid summer (July).

All in all this is good news for loquats. Those European varieties are now coming here one way or another. And let's modestly give credit where it is due. CRFG introduced me to the European Minor Fruit Tree Project website through the links on their website. I got Dr. Stover to take a look at it. (My credibility with him has a lot to do with my CRFG affiliation.) He became enthusiastic about it, and being a dynamic person with credentials, he got the Europeans interested in cooperating. Now our chapter is working with him to help insure that there are loquat scions to trade for the new material. This worldwide exchange of loquat material will introduce superior new varieties to this country. And I think it is safe to say that it would not be happening now if it weren't for the CRFG. That is my unbiased opinion. I'm proud to be associated with you all.

See you real soon.

*David Silverstein*

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Oscar Butler – Librarian, 858-458-3533 <a href="mailto:mbutlr@pacbell.net">mbutlr@pacbell.net</a>	

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

\* The Bonsai club is displacing our 9/22/05 meeting with preparation for their show. It seems like an ungodly amount of preparation. But think about whether to move our meeting to Wednesday night the 21<sup>st</sup>, or to a week later on the 29<sup>th</sup>

\* Festival of Fruit is coming up. It is September 6 through 10 in Santa Cruz. The main event, speakers etc are on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup>. It looks good. The field trip on the 6<sup>th</sup> is to the USDA experimental orchard up at Winters, CA. There will be fruit tasting.

Kniffings Nursery is offering CRFG members 10 per cent off on trees. 14940 Oak Creek Rd. El Cajon, CA 92021 (619) 561-0611

Meritt Mountain Discount Nursery (Paul Fisher) is offering 20 % off on all trees. 1266 Vista del Monte, El Cajon, CA 92122 (619) 322-4141

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

## NEXT Meeting:

WHERE: Casa del Prado Building Room 101, Balboa Park

WHEN: August 25, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.

MEETING TOPIC: Presentation and Discussion on growing Figs.

*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

## CALENDAR == YEAR OF THE APPLE

Month	Meeting Topic	Event(s) For the Month
April 28 Casa del Prado 101	Dominic Crescenti will then discuss some organic supplements and pesticides available from J&H Biotech. Dr. Gary Bender will tell us about the newest Avocado Pest in the County, the Avocado Lace Bug.	Green Scene, Fullerton Arboretum. Date Saturday, 23 April 2005.
May 26 Casa del Prado 101	Organic Fertilizers	Member Garden Tours
June 23 Casa del Prado 101	Lychee and Longan. Presentation and Discussion.	Del Mar Fair
July 28 Casa del Prado 101	Bananas. Two local experts, Jon Verdick and Paul Fisher will lead the discussion.	Quail Garden Picnic. July 23rd. It starts at 11:00.
August 25 Casa del Prado 101	Figs. Steve Spangler and John Verdick	
September 22 Casa del Prado 104	Paw Paws. How to find and grow them. What are the best varieties? Pomegranate tasting.	<b>ANNUAL FRUIT TREE SALE.</b> SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 2005. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. 9:00 a.m. until it's over.
October 27 Casa del Prado 101	Mangos. Presentation and discussion on growing them.	
November 17 Casa del Prado 103	Back by popular demand, Terry Salmon will present Vertebrate Pest Control II, focusing this time on rats and gophers. Also, workable bird management techniques.	
December 15 Casa del Prado 101	Holiday Dinner, Elections and Gift Exchange	