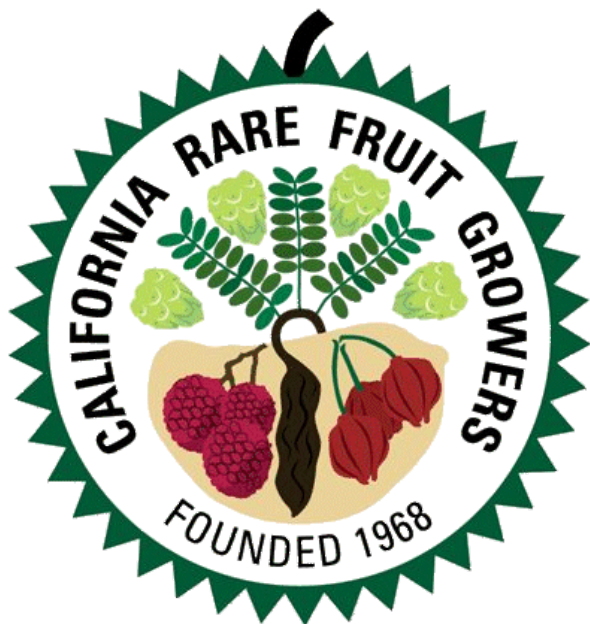


CALIFORNIA RARE FRUIT GROWERS

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER FEBRUARY 2005 NEWSLETTER



</Grapes/default.asp>. Thanks to all of you who made the event a success.

We also chatted about the upcoming San Diego Home and Garden show. It is March 4-6 out at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. We will have a signup sheet at the next meeting and we want to see some of our experienced folks sign up to do a shift along with some of our new members. It is a great opportunity to teach and to learn about fruit growing and to find new members. We can also donate plants to sell, or bring them out there to sell.

Also, don't forget the Durling Nursery Tour on February 26. It should be a great time and very informative. Look at the announcement later in this document for more information. Paul Fisher at 619 322 4141 is the organizer.

Then a month later, on March 26 we are scheduled to tour the Cherimoya collection at the South Coast Field Station in Irvine. Right now I propose though to cancel that field trip in favor of attending the Cherimoya Association annual meeting there on March 5. It is 20 dollars including a Hawaiian barbecue lunch and a cherimoya tasting and Raffle. (5 dollars without the lunch.)

See you all on the 24th of January.

David Silverstein

THERE'S TRADITION IN TREES

The Jewish Holiday of Tu b'Shevat

Tu b'Shevat, which fell this year on January 25th, marks the end of the rainy season in Israel. Buds are beginning to appear on the trees, and the blossoming almond trees, the harbinger of Spring, have begun to dot the landscape. So on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat, we celebrate the yearly cycle for the growth of trees in The Land of Israel. According to our Jewish mystic tradition, Tu b'Shevat is the day when G-d renews sustenance and the "life-cycle" of the trees, when the sap starts to rise.

NEXT MEETING is FEBRUARY 24.
It is on grafting and budding.

Scion Exchange was January 27, 2005:

The Scion exchange was great fun, as usual. We had a few slides of some grafts that with the new projector. They looked pretty good. Next time we'll have some more detail.

The tables of cuttings all looked great, with lots of terrific stuff. The standout this year was the extraordinary variety of grapes. We had a bunch of cuttings from the ARS-GRIN Germplasm Repository at Davis. We had cuttings of vines grown out from the Germplasm Repository cuttings of a few years ago. Then too Frank James was kind enough to come down from Orange County with an abundance of material from the University of Arkansas grape breeding program: Venus, Jupiter, Mars, Neptune, Marquis and Saturn. Some of our locals brought some of that Arkansas material too as well as other interesting grapes. If you wish to read a bit more about the Arkansas grapes, take a look at http://www.aragriculture.org/horticulture/fruits_nuts

There are many customs that have arisen to remind us of the meaning of this day. We eat fruits and nuts and the fruits for which the Torah praises the Land of Israel which is a land of grape vines, figs and pomegranates, olives and sweet dates.

Many pious Jews hold a Tu b'Shevat Seder, not unlike the meal we have on Passover. This ancient tradition was upheld in Safed, the seat of Kabbalistic¹ studies in the 16th century. On this date, fruit trees were measured for growth in order to calculate the annual tithe to the Temple². Even long after the Temple was destroyed, this Seder was a new way to reaffirm the spiritual bond with the Land in celebration of the approach of Spring and the fruit of the earth. Today, the Hebrew newspaper, *Yediot Achronot*, distributes a Tu BiShevat "Haggada" in time for the holiday. It was devised by Dr. Joel Rappel of Bar-Ilan University.

There is a snowy white tablecloth, candles, copious amounts of fruit and nuts; prayers, readings and songs. There are also four cups of wine accompanied by fruit divided into levels of "ascending spirituality". The first cup is chilled white wine, symbolizing Winter, accompanied by the lowest level of fruit which needs a protective covering, such as oranges or almonds.

The second cup is white wine mixed with a small amount of red, signifying Spring, the budding of new life, and this is served with olives, apples, peaches and dates (the outer layer is eaten, yet the heart is protected and has within it the seed of new life.)

The third cup is red wine with a small amount of white. This is the symbol of Summer and a perfect world in which nothing is wasted, With this, the highest level of fruit is eaten such as figs, grapes and berries. This is the highest level.

The fourth cup is just red wine representing fertility and the bounty of Autumnal crops waiting to be harvested.

What else happens on Tu b'Shevat? Very little religiously, but a lovely ritual has arisen in Israel, that's been adopted all over the Jewish world. It is a popular observance to plant trees, one of the greatest "mitzvot"³ you can do. Trees have great significance in Judaism. It is written in Deuteronomy: "When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to seize it, don't destroy its trees..." In the Midrash Shmuel on Pirkei Avot 3:24, it is written that man is like a tree in that his good deeds are his produce, his "fruits", and his arms and legs the branches which bear these fruits. He is, however, an "upside-down tree" for his head is rooted in the heavens, nestled in the spiritual soils of the Eternal, and nourished by his connection to his Creator.

At the end of the Hasmonean⁴ dynasty, there lived a holy man named Choni, known as the circle drawer, and we read his

story in the Talmud Ta'anit 23a. One day Choni saw a man planting a carob tree and asked him: "How many years does it take for the carob tree to bear fruit?" The reply was "Seventy years." Choni asked: "Do you think you will live another 70 years and reap its fruit?" The simple man responded: "I am planting the tree not for myself, but for my grandchildren."

Although the world has never regarded Jews as being tied closely to the land, the truth is that the religion has close ties to agriculture and ecology. The Midrash teaches us that man's life depends on the tree, and we are forbidden to live in a city that has no gardens and trees. They are so important to us that Rabbi Yohanan Ben-Zakai declared: "If you hold a sapling in your hand and are told: 'Come look, the Messiah has arrived', plant the sapling first and only then go and greet the Messiah." **HAPPY TU B'SHEVAT!**

Dvora Waysman

THE VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

It is my hope that the official investigation into last year's plant sale is now at or near an end and that we now can proceed with the business of our chapter as usual, including the business of having an annual plant sale. I have prepared a report on the sale in response to the allegations of misconduct and distributed it via the Department of Park and Recreation to all the principals in this controversy. If you would like a copy of the report, please contact me to arrange it. At this point I'm tired of the whole business and I would like to just put all the unpleasantness behind us and all just get along nicely.

Speaking of getting along, I'd like to thank Judith Abeles for contributing the foregoing essay about the Tu b'Shevat Holiday. I edited minimally to clarify some of the Jewish terms, I hope more or less correctly. The piece is very interesting. It also suggests to me that it would be interesting to get some other articles about various cultural traditions and practices relevant to fruit and its cultivation. I bet a lot of people in the chapter could contribute interesting stuff with a lot of insights into the growing of fruit and the people and peoples that grow it.

On another subject, I've been communicating with a couple of people up at the Germplasm Repository and Dr. Dan Parfitt at the UC Davis Pomology Department. Rather than bore you with details, here is what has come of these conversations.

- 1.** The Pomegranate that we call Pink Ice already has a name: Sin Pepe, or "seedless". It's a boring name, but that's it. Apparently all of the trees in that old row are named varieties.
- 2.** The new research leader at the Germplasm Repository, Ed Stover, is very appreciative of the fruit varieties that CRFG has contributed and will contribute to them, and of the various data compilations I send from time to time.
- 3.** Mr. Stover will take up our loquat project. He will request, on behalf of the Davis Repository, the varieties that I have indicated to him and other varieties to reflect the diversity of the species. The European repository is almost certain to cooperate. And Mr. Stover has written that he will share loquat material with me. Things are definitely looking up
Loquat wise.

David Silverstein

¹ A medieval mystical sect of Judaism with astrological and numerological characteristics among other things.

² Center of Jewish worship prior to its destruction under orders of Emperor Nero in 70 A.D. incident to crushing rebellion.

³ Meritorious deed in the eyes of G-d. Opposite of a sin.

⁴ Dynasty that ruled Israel from about 142 to 63 B.C.

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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:

DURLING NURSERY TOUR February 26, 2005

MEET AT 8 A.M. AT VETERANS Memorial Car Pool Site or 10 a.m. at Durling – 40401 De Luz Road Fallbrook, CA (That’s on De Luz Road a little north of De Luz) **760-728-9572**

Got any interesting Mulberry or Loquat scion wood? Call Dave Silverstein if you are willing to donate material to the Germplasm Repository. Our relationship with and support of that institution are important.

The California Cherimoya Association will be holding its **annual meeting** this year on March 5, 2005. South Coast Research & Extension Center 7601 Irvine Blvd., Irvine, CA. 10 AM to around 4PM. Liz Inglese, from Maui Fresh/Calavo and Dr. Gary Bender of the UC Cooperative Extension will speak. There will also be a team of specialists in cherimoyas to answer any of your questions. A delicious Hawaiian barbecue lunch and a raffle are also included in this event. The cost is \$20.00 per person-this price includes the \$5.00 for REGISTRATION and \$15.00 for lunch. *Note: If you wish to attend and have lunch-you need to register now . Please send your check to: Wendy Reisman, 1863 Wilstone Avenue, Leucadia, Ca 92024. If you have any questions you can call 760 942-8464 or email wendyreisman@cox.net .

GOT GOOD FRUIT PICTURES? Let Dave Silverstein know. We need to contribute some for our upcoming news story.

MERIT MOUNTAIN NURSERY CRFG DISCOUNT Yes friends, it is 25% off on all Fruit Trees. Call Paul Fisher for more information.

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

NEXT Meeting:

WHERE: Casa del Prado Building Room 101, Balboa Park
WHEN: February 24, 2005

MEETING TOPIC: Budding and Grafting

For membership, please mail your check for eight dollars to **CRFG, San Diego Chapter**
C/O Paul Fisher
1266 Vista Del Monte Dr.
El Cajon, CA 92020

You must be a current member of the parent CRFG organization as well, or send thirty eight dollars to cover both.

San Diego Chapter 2005 Calendar

Year of the Apple

Month	Meeting Topic	Event(s) For the Month
January 27, 2005 Casa del Prado 101	Annual Scion and Cutting Exchange.	Orange County Chapter Scion Wood Exchange 10 am to Noon, but OC/CRFG members will be allowed access to scion wood from 9:30. Millennium Barn, Orange County Fair Grounds.
February 24 Casa del Prado 101	Propagating fruit trees by Grafting and Budding. Hands-on practice. Bring plants and scion wood to graft on site. Rootstocks will be available for some species.	Durling Nursery Tour February 26, 2005 (see February newsletter for details.)
March 24 Casa del Prado 101	Cherimoyas. Presentation and discussion on Cherimoya growing	5 March 2005 at 10:00, Cherimoya Association meeting, tour and tastings at Southcoast Research Station. 26 March at 10:30, Southcoast Research Station Cherimoya tour.
April 28 Casa del Prado 101	Budding and propagation of subtropicals. Dominic Crescenti will then discuss some organic supplements and pesticides available from J&H Biotech.	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.
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?	ANNUAL FRUIT TREE SALE. 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. Perry Coles will present and lead the discussion. Pomegranate tasting.	
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	