

California Rare Fruit Growers San Diego Chapter Newsletter

Thursday, June 28, 2007

General Meeting: 7:00 – 7:30 pm

Ice Cream Social: 7:40 pm – 8:30 pm

Opportunity Drawing: 8:45 pm

The Year of the Mango

Website: crfgsandiego.org

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 152943

San Diego CA 92195-2943

Meeting Place

Rm. 101, Casa del Prado,
Balboa Park, San Diego CA

2007 Elected Officers

Chair: Jose M. Gallego
Membership Chair

chair@crfgsandiego.org
619/697-4417

Vice-Chair: Mike McCright
vice-chair@crfgsandiego.org
760/749-3538

Treasurer: Zhenxing Fu
treasurer@crfgsandiego.org

Secretary: Barbara Alvarez
secretary@crfgsandiego.org

Immediate Past Chair

David Silverstein

formerchair@crfgsandiego.org

2007 Appointed Positions

Greeter: June Andersen

Librarian: Oscar Butler
librarian@crfgsandiego.org

Facilities Coordinator
Barry Resetco 858/278-3732
javaman@crfgsandiego.org

Newsletter Editor: Cielo
editor@crfgsandiego.org

Webmaster: Jose M. Gallego
webmaster@crfgsandiego.org

Ice Cream Social

Jose brings the best ice cream from south of the border.
Remember to bring some of your home fruit for the ice cream toppings to share!



FROM "EL PRESIDENTE"

It is with sad heart that I inform you the passing of **Helen Adelaide Benlehr Thomson**, wife of our dear CRFG founder, Paul Thomson. **Bill Whitman**, founder of the Rare Fruit Council International, also passed away. Bill traveled with many CRFG friends, including Jim Neitzel, to many places in South Asia.

On the Good News

Thanks to **Mike McCright** and Kurt Peacock for their excellent presentation. I learned a lot that evening, but most importantly, is that people like to hear about what they can do to make their garden safer and also, what new fruits are now available for us to enjoy. Thanks guys!

This Month's Event: Ice Cream Social!!

This month's meeting is one of the most attended meetings of the year: it is the **Ice Cream Social**. Where all we care about is for the meeting to be over so we can enjoy our ice cream. Therefore, we will do our best to have a short business agenda for you; that way we can all enjoy our ice cream and with the good company of your friends at the Chapter. This is also a good time to get to know our new members as well as our guests. This is another meeting that I would encourage to bring your family, bring your friends!

Chapter Standard Operating Procedures and Rules (SOP&R)

Board members and members, met at my house to look into the suggested changes and agreed on the changes, please see the attached revised version of the SOP&Rs for you review. The suggested changes are italicized for your convenience.

Again, thank you very much for your understanding and helping us make our Chapter a better Chapter!

Membership System

We have taken a close look at how the membership is currently being processed and decided to make a few adjustments to efficiently have the communications among the Membership Chair, who receives the applications or renewals and checks to distribute information to the Treasurer, who receives the checks and to the Newsletter Editor who sends out the newsletters to the new members. All three should have the same information and on time. Well, we are working on a database that would make processing membership applications, renewals and updates more efficiently. To do this, a centralized version will be installed on our secure server where only authorized members will have access in order to perform their duties.

From “El Presidente” (continued)

After some cleaning up, the list is ready to be distributed at our next meeting. If you cannot attend the June meeting and would like a copy, please let me or Mike know. We would really appreciate it if you can pick it up at the next meeting. Hey, it is the Ice Cream Social! You should be there, right?

As I mentioned before, **This list is NOT to be used for commercial purposes or unauthorized mailings.**

San Diego Fair (June 8 to July 4)

We are still looking for volunteers to staff our shared CRFG booth. Please call June Andersen, our Chapter's San Diego Fair Volunteer Coordinator.

If you are a volunteer, please keep June or me posted as to the inventory of: Festival of Fruit Registration Forms, cards and postcards as well as Membership Applications (San Diego and North County), Contact Information cards and Brochures. Also please keep me posted as to the condition of the Festival of Fruit banners (in case they need to be replaced).

Festival of Fruit

www.festivaloffruit.org



After many runs of revisions and friendly disagreements, the article for the fruit gardener was submitted to Ron Coach, Editor of the Fruit Gardener. I must say, there was a lot of work done to get it just right. The team deserves a **BIG THANK YOU!**

I am really excited about the status of the event, it is now fully prepared and I can see all of us enjoy and learning during this event. Please visit our website for more detail.

At our June meeting we will have plenty of registrations, please look for the Registration table staffed by our Treasurer **Zhenxing Fu**.

We also have a modest treat for our **Volunteers**. In the last newsletter, I mentioned that they will receive free admission. Well, the Board approved that each will receive a special 2007 Festival of Fruit T-Shirt. Yeah!

My Garden

I was pleasantly surprised by the number of people who stopped by and joined the docent tour of my garden. I printed 20 copies of my inventory list and ran out by noon. For those who did not get a copy, I will bring some to our next meeting or you can download them from our web site under the Fruit Links.

Everyone who visited got a treat, for the second time my Cardamom has flowered. Unfortunately, my camera was not working until about a week later. I missed the opportunity to show how beautiful it was. Oh, well!

If you would also like to open your Home Garden for the tour, please let **Mike McCright** (Vice-Chair@CRFGSanDiego.org or (760) 749-3538). We would like to have a list of Home Gardens available for tour at our June meeting. **Member Ruth Sewell has invited us to a self-guided walk to her garden in Ocean Beach on Saturday,**

June 30 from 10 am to 1 pm. Please sign up at the June meeting to receive direction to her garden. **El Presidente, José**

EXOTIC FRUIT ICE CREAM

Let me tell you why these ice creams are so special, first of all, they are not your typical ice creams. These are gourmet ice cream; they are manufactured in a very unique and secret process.

Regular ice creams are made from materials such as vegetable or animal oils and/or fats mixed with artificial fruit flavorings and colors, as well as chemical products such as stabilizers or preservatives, having a final “foamy” texture, very light, which are preserved at a low temperature, around -20°C. An ice cream is a delicate chemical product to store, once it starts melting, that special texture is lost. Also, it is very difficult to mix with fresh fruits, which accelerate the decomposition. The mixture with the fruits gives the product a very short shelf life and as a result, not commercially profitable. What we eat as commercial ice creams have their fruit processed (frozen or semi-cooked) to the degree that the natural texture and natural flavor is lost. This is similar to what happened to canned fruit.

Here is where **Tepoznieves** ice cream comes in to play; they developed a process which mixes the fresh fruits with natural products such as milk, goat milk, sweetened with honey or natural juices from the fruit, at a temperature that creates fine crystals in the fruit without destroying the texture of the fruit. When you taste **Tepoznieves** ice cream you can immediately tell the difference, the flavor is that of a fresh fruit and the fruit you find mixed in the ice cream has the fine texture which a fresh fruit should have.

Some of the ice cream flavors that we're planning to have are **guanabana**, sapote (mamey), **black sapote**, **maracuya (passion fruit)**, and Poblana (coffee, sweet potato, and Bailey's Irish cream).

Fig with Mezcal, and, of course, I would not be forgiven by Helen Skeels if I do not bring her favorite: **tequila ice cream**...Yummmmm.

Many people have asked me how I bring them across the border... **very carefully**... not because they're illegal, but because, there is a long wait at the border. The ice creams should not be allowed to melt or to be frozen below the -20°C (which would be the case if I put them in contact with dry ice).

Jose M. Gallego

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Barb Alvarez, Secretary

At the Last Meeting

Vice Chair **Mike McCright** presented our program "Soil Nutrition" with 52 people in attendance. It was very informative. I will include my cryptic notes. I hope they make some sense to you.

The first thing that soil needs is air. Test your soil to see if it has adequate drainage. Dig a hole about a foot deep and a foot across, fill it with water, after it drains, fill it again. It should drain within 6 hours.

To know if a product is organic, look for the red OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) label.

Secretary's Report (continued)

The pH of your soil needs to be in the range of 6.3 to 6.8 for good growth for most plants. You can reduce the pH of your soil by using an organic mulch. Magnesium helps in the greening of plants.

Over using chemical fertilizing really can kill the plant. Most plants need mycorrhizae fungi to thrive. Chemical fertilizers, especially nitrogen can and does leach into the groundwater. After the groundwater is poisoned with these chemicals, it is useless for drinking and even for irrigation. San Diego soils are generally low in calcium and Nitrogen. Gypsum helps a lot. Jon Verdick uses "Citrus Growing Mix" which contains a lot of micronutrients. Kurt Peacock then shared with us some tips. There are a lot of "Snake Oil Products" that claim to solve all ills, but don't really do much.

For avocado root rot use Agrifos it is safe. Always water before applying fertilizer. 96% of fungi are beneficial. Tomato plants in the ground don't need as much water as people think. You don't need to water until the leaves are drooping in the morning. Liquid Gypsum works well as a "pick" and also, adds calcium to the soil.

To control spider mites and thrips use Spinosad. New mycorrhizae from other areas may not work for us.

Here is a bit of a description of some good stone fruits that Kurt has observed or is expecting soon at the nursery. 'Heavenly White' nectarine is low chill fruit that has produced at Walter Andersen Nursery, the Point Loma store. 'Autumn Glo' apricot is a late fruiting, low chill fruit. 'Early New Castle' is also low chill and 'Red Sweet' does well for Paul Fisher, who lives in a high part of El Cajon. There is a new white aprium which we can look forward to coming out soon. A nectarplum (a cross between a nectarine and a plum), and the 'Mini Royal' cherry which is a low chill cherry, which is expected to do very well here. Thank you Mike and Kurt this was an excellent meeting.

Thank you for those who brought food for the tasting table. **Barb Alvarez, June Andersen, David Archer, Paul Fisher, Zhenxing Fu, Sharon Hall, and Devora Susman.** The offerings included a lot of fresh fruits: 'Hayden' mangos, 'Maradol' papaya, 'Dessert Delight' nectarines, 'Gold Kist' apricots, 'Calamondin' limes, mulberries and more! Let's not forget to thank those who set everything up. It's a lot of work: **Belinda Mandeville, Barry Resetco, and David Archer.** Thank you.

Thank you, too, to those who brought plants for the opportunity table: **June Andersen, Joy Bladykas, Perusan Dadbeh, Michael Iufer, Frank Habefler, Sharon Hall, Devora Susman and Judy Tadlock.** The offerings included: Pomegranates, 'Persian' mulberry, dwarf Jamaican, red peppermint, epiphyllum hybrids, 'Chilean Wine' palm, 'Adriatic' fig, 'Autumn Royal' grape, loquats and more! **Judy Tadlock and John Pitcairn** brought some things for the free table.

David Archer also donated a 'Campas' cherimoya, which we auctioned off to the winning bidder **Mike McCright.** Thank you David for this special gift.

**Garden tour of El Presidente May 26th**

The turnout was very good with 25-30 people taking advantage of the opportunity for a personal tour of our president's home garden. As the rare fruit enthusiasts arrived we joined the tour in progress, and then caught what we had

missed later. I have been to the property before, but with only the 25 cent tour I didn't see all the variety that he has. Saturday was great, as Jose was able to point out the amazing exotics that a suburban lot CAN have.

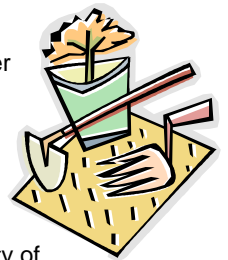
Indeed he does have lots of exotics. I'm impressed at how many he managed to fit in his yard (say "hello" to terracing). A few things included were yellow mangosteen, inga edulis (ice cream bean), opuntia, and many kinds of citrus, and bananas. Jose informed us that some opuntia pads are toxic. (note to self, on next survival trip don't eat just any nopales.

We were invited to pick our own white and purple mulberries. I have heard that mulberry trees get big oh my! He also showed us his experimental apple tree. Jose grafted over 40 varieties on it. This gave him the opportunity to taste and see which ones he liked best and also grew well in his microclimate. Unfortunately, a major part of the tree was attacked by varmints and is starting to succumb.

Thanks Jose for the privilege to see and hear about your wonderful garden.

JUNE GARDEN TIPS

June is supposed to be the start of summer but as things go with the weather, who knows how this summer is going to be. Your garden should look green, full of flowers and fruits getting ready to be picked. By the way, have you completed the form to invite members to tour your garden? If not, we will have plenty of forms available at the next meeting.



- Start fertilizing your trees as they are coming out of dormancy.
- You can now plant papayas and bananas and remember they are heavy feeders. Don't over water them!
- This month may be your last chance to plant your subtropical trees.
- Continue to fertilize your citrus and avocados.
- Continue to apply a balanced fertilizer to all you fruiting trees.
- Continue to remove weeds.
- Verify that your irrigation system is properly working.
- You may need to start watering twice a week, check the moisture in your soil before irrigating.
- Look at the color of leaves of each tree and check for iron or zinc deficiency and add the necessary amendments.
- Another very effective fertilization method is foliar fertilization, give it a try.
- Add high nitrogen amendments to your bananas.
- Aphids and mites can start to be a problem, use proper control, such as soapy water.
- Continue to thin your deciduous fruit trees, especially after the 'June drop'. Remember for home garden fruit trees, you are looking for quality, not quantity.

You can also visit our web site for each of the Monthly Garden Calendars: <http://crfgsandiego.org/garden.html>

THE FRUGAL GARDENER

By Mike McCright

Cost saving tips to reduce the money you spend on raising your own food



Free and Cheap Fertilizers and Mulches

This is a continuation of my article on this subject. In last month's newsletter issue, I covered fertilizers. This time I'll cover the different types of manures and their applications.

Manures

Animal manures from herbivores like sheep, horses, cattle, goats and rabbits are very good for your soil. They release their nitrogen fairly slowly over the growing season, they turn into compost and become alive with worms, beneficial insects, mushroom fungus etc. They make an ideal living mulch for your trees. For practical planning purposes, most are about .5-.5-.5. However if you buy low quality at the stores, they have added too much sawdust in composting and have little fertilizing value left in them. If you buy from the store, keep this in mind. Usually high quality chicken manure is your best organic amendment value.

Animal manures do have a couple of drawbacks. They smell for a few days after applying and mulching with fresh manure has flies. The flies, from my horse manure are small flies that seem to stay where the manure is and do not appear to add to my annoying fly population, meaning the little flies do not annoy me. If I used more manure that would probably change, but I use heavy applications with no real increase in house or horse flies.

Application.

Every book I have ever read on the subject says to compost manures before application. To me, this is a waste. Much of the nitrogen is burned up and washed away during composting. I apply herbivore manure fresh as a mulch around the trees once a year in the winter and sometimes give a mid-season boost to heavy feeders like bamboo and bananas. I apply it thickly, up to 10" at a time and spread it out to the root zone. I do not use any fabric and just bury the weeds with it. The weeds usually die, but Bermuda grass in particular has been troublesome. By May, it is one to three inches thick with a small layer of black soil below it. By mid-summer it is almost gone. I recommend you water the soil well before application, spread it on and not water your trees until after it has dried. I have never burned any plants with any manure using this application procedure.

Cow manure usually comes from dairies. I do not recommend you use cow manure from dairies. The dairies feed a fair amount of salt to the cows so they drink more water and make more milk. Unfortunately, the salt comes out the other end and makes our soils saltier, not a good thing.

Horse manure, my preference, has minimal salt and is easily available for free at any stable or from almost any horse owner. I apply it thickly in the winter and let the rains wash it in. The only real problem is the nitrogen washes out too soon and it takes longer to break down. Although this may seem like a downside, it works for me. It fertilizes the tree/plants in the spring during their main growth spurt and makes a good mulch for the summer. I get mine from a local stable, they load it up for free and just want to get rid of it.

Goat and sheep manure has been in my experience, the best of all, but generally is harder to get for

free. All goat and sheep owners have it but they are far and few between in Southern California. Their manure is usually pelleted and breaks down rapidly into great soil. Your plants will love it!

Rabbit manure. I have not used rabbit manure but some say it is better than any of the others. Give it a try if you know anybody with rabbits.

Chicken manure is different, it is about a 5-1-1. High in nitrogen and needs to be aged or composted before use. I can get it for free if I am willing to take fresh manure, paying only for trucking, or pay \$225 for a 20 yard truck load of a good composted manure from laying chickens.

To understand this "yard" thing, a yard has 27 cubic feet of volume, bagged manure at the store is usually in 1-2 cubic foot bags. So 20 yards is equal to 540 one cubic foot bags of store bought manure. Almost everything is much cheaper by the yard.

I bought a truck load about a year and a half ago and have been using it since. This manure has higher calcium and is great for incorporating into the soil for heavy feeding plants like tomatoes and corn. My greens (collards, kale, chard etc.) also grow very large when I till in this amendment in before planting. I generally do not use chicken manure as mulch for fruit trees because it is "hot", meaning that the higher nitrogen leaches out during watering and could burn the tree roots. My exception to this is heavy feeding plants like banana and bamboo. I do use chicken manure as mulch for these in their growing season of April-November. I buy my composted manure from Armstrong Eggs in Valley Center. I have also used chicken manure to "fix" a nitrogen/iron deficiency in citrus and mulberry. They are fast growers and will show chlorosis in their leaves because they need more nitrogen during fast growth.

My well water has a pH of about 7.5. The high pH binds the iron in the soil and does not allow the plant to absorb it. A generous mulch of chicken manure watered in is a great organic fix to this problem. The chlorosis I have seen disappeared virtually overnight. Chlorosis, by the way is a deficiency manifesting in a yellowing of the leaves. It is usually caused by an iron deficiency in my soil. It is however more commonly caused by a nitrogen deficiency. Either way, a little chicken manure does the trick.

Other free amendments

Grass clippings are a very good soil amendment. They are free, readily available and make good mulch. Their only drawbacks are that you seldom get enough at one time to make a dent in your mulching needs, they break down quickly (good and bad) and they may contain herbicides and pesticides that may have been used in the lawn.

Leaves are a good free soil amendment but not a good mulch unless they have been shredded. They can mat up and prevent water from penetrating the soil. They are generally low in nitrogen but high in other minerals, especially trace minerals.

Weeds are in my opinion a good mulch, especially if you pull them and apply them before flowering and seed set. They break down slower than grass clippings but take care to avoid noxious grasses that have ripe seed or living root stolen like Bermuda grass

Wood chip and sawdust. I do not recommend them. Wherever I have dumped a wheelbarrow load, nothing grows through it. They are good however for "paving" a garden path. When I lived in Washington State I even inoculated the sawdust with mushroom mycelium so that edible mushrooms grew along the edges of my garden paths in the fall, an added bonus of tasty food.

The Frugal Gardener (continued)

Pet waste. I generally do not recommend them as soil amendments; I have however used them on ornamentals away from the house.

Compost. Compost is one of the best amendments you can use. It breaks down slowly, contains almost all of what your plants need to thrive, it is usually low in nitrogen. It helps create good humus and later good top soil. You can make it yourself or pick it up at a composting facility. It is generally free to San Diego or Oceanside residents at the Mira Mar and El Corazon composting facility. The drawbacks are that it is low in nitrogen and may slow your plant growth the first year. It is made up of about half eucalyptus which can release a growth inhibitor for other plants, and it probably contains herbicide/fungicide/pesticide residue. When I get this compost, I use it liberally around my bamboo and I would also recommend it especially for bananas, both like lots of plant food and organic soil.

I also use some amendments I buy at the feed store, bone meal, blood meal, cottonseed meal, gypsum. These are excellent amendments but are not cheap to buy. They are however cheaper at the feed store than at a garden nursery. Using organic amendments generally requires more knowledge about what you are doing and costs more than cheap chemical fertilizer. However armed with a little knowledge and ingenuity, you will enjoy the benefits with little cost.

If you have some ideas you want published in this column, email them to: natureboy43@sbcglobal.net

WISH LIST

Members of our Chapter have the opportunity to let other members know what plant(s) you are looking for. The idea here is to do plant exchange, or cover some minor expenses like the soil and container. This is strictly a service between members and not for commercial growers.

Some of the basic information you may want to include in your request: common name, scientific name if highly unusual, variety/cultivar, seedling/grafted/cutting, variety/cultivar & size.

Send your Wish List on or before the 10th of the month to be published in the upcoming newsletter.

Wanted: (1) Multiple grafted avocado, not too big to be replanted. (2) One dozen pint canning jars, new, with lids, empty. Trade for a couple filled with homemade jam or whatever. (3) Need some 1/2 gal or larger plastic pots for transplanting. Trade Pine needles for mulch, flower bulbs or whatever. **Low Rishel** at 858-565-1962 or lewri@tns.net

In Memoriam

Helen Adelaide Benlehr Thomson

(Excerpt From the North County Times)

Helen was born at Elcot Lodge in Landaur-Mussurie, United Provinces, India. She was 96 years old and died of natural causes at Tri-City Hospital in Oceanside. In 1941 she met and married her husband **Paul Thomson**, one of the founders of CRFG, also of Missionary parents. They were married in Yuma, AZ, on October 11, 1941, a marriage that

lasted 65 years. There were no children. Funeral services were held Saturday, June 9, 2007.

Bill Whitman

(Excerpt From the New York Times, By David Karp)

William F. Whitman Jr., a self-taught horticulturist who became renowned for collecting rare tropical fruits from around the world and popularizing them in the United States, died Wednesday at his home in Bal Harbour, Fla. He was 92. Mr. Whitman, who had suffered strokes and a heart attack, died in his sleep, his wife, Angela, said.

Among rare-fruit devotees, Bill Whitman, as he was known, was hailed as the only person to have coaxed a mangosteen tree into bearing fruit outdoors in the continental United States. Native to Southeast Asia, mangosteen is notoriously finicky and cold-sensitive.

Mr. Whitman's devotion to collecting and propagating rare species and varieties stemmed from a sailing trip to Tahiti, where he became enchanted by the fruit. Mr. Whitman was a founder of the Rare Fruit Council International, based in Miami, and was its first president, from 1955 to 1960. Foremost among the fruit he introduced to Florida was Kohala lontan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The San Diego & North County Chapters invite all members to a joint **potluck picnic on Saturday, July 21st - 11 am at the Ecke Building, Quail Botanical Gardens.**

Admission to Quail is free for SD Chapter members. Please bring a prepared dish, drinks and your own utensils. The North County chapter will be holding a plant & CRFG publications sale for their fundraising.

2. Thanks to **Jon Verdick** for the bananas I was looking for: Misi luki, Namwah and African rhino horn. From **Jose Gallego**

3. A limited number of the following banana pups ready to be removed: Lakathan, Thousand Fingers, Rose, Popoulu, Goldfinger, Ice Cream, Point Loma, Raja Puri, Cocos and Finger Lady. First come, first to take them! **Jose Gallego** at 619-261-3610

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Master Gardeners

Sat. Jun. 16 – 10 am to 3 pm: Annual Plant Sale – Casa del Prado, Rm. 101, Balboa Park ☎ Info: (858) 694-2860 or www.mastergardenerssandiego.org

Quail Botanical Gardens

Sat/Sun July 14 & 15 10 am to 4 pm: Insect Festival.
Members: Free; Guests: Free w/ admission ☎ Info: 760/436-3036 ext. 206 or www.qbgardens.org

San Diego Horticultural Society

Mon. July 9 at 6 pm: Debra Lee Baldwin "Designing w/ Succulents" at Del Mar Fairgrounds ☎ Info 760/730-3268 or www.sdhortsoc.org

Water Conservation Garden

Sat. 10:30 am, Sun 1:30 pm: Docent tours of the Xeriscape garden. Free. ☎ Info: <http://thegarden.org> or 619/660-0614
12122 Cuyamaca College Dr. West, El Cajon

