



California Rare Fruit Growers San Diego Chapter Newsletter

Thursday, May 24, 2007

General Meeting: 7:00 – 7:30 pm

Program: 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

chair@crfgsandiego.org
619/697-4417

Vice-Chair: Mike McCright
Membership Chair

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

Program: Plant Nutrition

Chapter vice-chair Mike McCright will make a presentation on Plant Nutrition. The program will be followed by fruit tasting and the opportunity to participate in a drawing for fruit trees and other plants donated by members.

FROM "EL PRESIDENTE"

I hope you enjoy and learn something from my presentation last month. It sure was fun to talk about selecting and growing rare fruits in San Diego. I really enjoyed sharing what others members have shared with me. I also enjoyed your participation during the presentation by having questions or sharing your experience... THANKS!

This Month's Presentation

In the spirit of covering some of the basic skills for new rare fruit growers and to encourage new members, our next presentation is going to be by our very own Vice-Chairman, **Mike McCright**, will be talking about plant nutrition. This is very interesting subject since San Diego is well known for its extreme soil: sandy, clay or decomposed granite with sometimes a little of the necessary nutrients. Mike will talk about how to revive these types of soils, so your new trees will survive the planting, receive the necessary and required nutrients, and therefore, produce the best fruit possible. So, make sure you attend this very interesting and important presentation... bring your family, bring your friends!

Chapter Standard Operating Procedures and Rules (SOP&R)

The group approved the new SOP&Rs by an overwhelming support (see Secretary's Notes). Unfortunately, we received a couple of very good recommendations from members who were not able to attend the meeting and present their suggestions. The Board members agreed that their comments are excellent in making the SOP&R a better document and agreed to place it back to the membership by invalidating the version we voted on and give you a chance to review the changes. We will be voting at the upcoming program meeting May 24th to place the SOP&R on hold until a revision is voted on by the membership. Thank you very much for your understanding and help in making our Chapter a better Chapter!

Just when you think...

Just when you think that you have everything ready for the meeting, things start to go wrong. First, we had another group in our scheduled room, but once we checked with the people from the Park, their names were not even on the list. I felt bad because we were given priority, and they were, basically, being kicked out because of us. Fortunately, the Park lady was able to accommodate them in Room 102. I thought we could extend an invitation to our meeting, but they meet on the same time we do. So someone suggested sending a copy of our newsletter or a plate of some of our fruit, I thought that would be nice, I will bring some of my mulberries to share with our Chapter and with them.

The next thing to go wrong was the Membership List; people with their first name starting with "R" to "Z" were not included. How did that happen? Let's blame it on the computer! Ok, Ok, it was I; I did not notice that the list was short. So next meeting I will have a copy and I will make sure it is complete.

From “El Presidente” (continued)

As I mentioned in the past newsletter: This list is NOT to be used for commercial purposes or unauthorized mailings.

Chapter Donation

At our February meeting we had **Ava Torre-Bueno** talk about the **Peace Garden** and impressed us with the objectives of this garden. The Board members talked about donating a few the trees we have in our possession. About the middle of April, I received and e-mail from our CRFG President (yeah, El Gran Presidente, the Big Chief himself) forwarding an e-mail from **Sandy Bar Ranch & Nursery** who was offering its remaining bare roots for the price of the shipping. I wrote the nursery and explained about the Peace Garden and selected a few trees, next thing I knew was that my wife is calling me at work about this huge box and asking... what did you order this time??!! GULP! I did not know, until I got home. It was a nice collection of bare roots trees and with an invoice for just \$37.40. The trees have been picked up by the Peace Garden, and placed, for now, in large pots. At this time, we are waiting for Ava to let us know when we can go to the Garden and help plant them. If you would like to participate, please let me know and I will give you the details as I received them. All this effort is for a good cause and we thank Sandy Bar Ranch & Nursery for making this donation possible.

San Diego County Fair (June 8 – July 5)

I just can't believe it; the San Diego Fair is just around the corner!! This year, our Chapter and the North County Chapter are planning to take advantage of the Fair by promoting our Festival of Fruit and our Chapters. We are planning on having plenty Festival of Fruit Registration Forms and Brochures, as well as plenty of Chapter Membership Applications, Contacts Information and Brochures at our booth. In addition, we are working on having a couple of Festival of Fruit banners: one at the booth and the second at the garden presentation stand, where Jim Bathgate and I will be doing a couple of presentations regarding rare fruits.

June Andersen is our San Diego Fair Volunteers' Coordinator and will be explaining the details of the booth activities at the Fair. If you can spend a couple of hours staffing the booth, you get in for free and spend the rest of the day enjoying the Fair.

Festival of Fruit

www.festivaloffruit.org



I want to thank **Oscar Butler, Aaron St. John, Dennis Sharmahel* (spelling?), Alan Snavelly, Alva Whetton, Irene Sias, Jesse Prothro, and Joy Bladykas** for adding they names at out last meeting to be part of the organizing and volunteering teams for our Festival of Fruit. Many, many thanks too to all of you who are already actively working as volunteers. Just a reminder, we still have positions available. For instance, we are still looking for someone to coordinate recording the presentations. If you have these skills or if you want to learn how to organize and

produce DVDs, please see **Joy Bladykas**, our Festival of Fruit Volunteers' Coordinator, at our next meeting for details. By the way, volunteers will receive FREE admission to the Festival and we are working on a modest, but special treat too, hopefully we will be able to make the announcement at our next meeting.

My Garden

My garden is finally recuperating from the frost that hit us a couple of months. And, with modesty apart, I just got to share this with you: my garden is looking beautiful this year!! I can see every tree profusely blooming and all have beautiful tones of green leaves. Two weeks ago the flowers on the citrus trees made them look like they were snowed and the fragrance in the air was incredible.

Right now, my mulberry trees are loaded with fruits, some of the citrus still have fruits, the bananas are pushing these beautiful huge leaves, the rose apple is flowering like never before. The grapes are covering the supporting wire with large leaves and many, many flowers which I am anticipating as being a sign that will bear the best grapes.

On the sad part, I have confirmed that I did lose several good trees. Two of them were my pride, my Malabar Chest Nut and my air layered Lucuma (it was too young to survive the frost). Others lost trees include five of bananas cultivars, a couple of my young avocados trees and sadly my collection of pitayas.

With all of this said, and in the spirit of bragging about my garden and to encourage you to participate in the June 30 Home Garden Tours, I would like to invite you to visit my garden and give you a tour of my collection of over 110 fruit trees. **Please feel free to stop by home on Saturday May 26th any time between 10 am and 2 pm.** My address is 8673 Warmwell Dr., San Diego, CA 92119 and you can call me for directions at (619) 261-3610.

If you would also like to open your Home Garden for the tours on June 30, please let **Mike McCright** (Vice-Chair@CRFGSanDiego.org or (760) 749-3538). We would like to have a list of Home Gardens available for touring at our June meeting.

El Presidente, José

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the following members who joined our Chapter this year:

John Aaron	Dominick Fiume
Mark Balazs	Barbara H. Nickerse
Cecilia Collinson	Ben Poirier
Raymond Edwards	Alan Snavelly
Joan Humphrey	Mark Umphres

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Barb Alvarez, Secretary

At the Last Meeting

Jose briefed us on what to expect at the Fruit Festival and who the upcoming speakers will be. Then we voted on the Standard Operating Rules and Procedures which were enclosed with last month's newsletter. It was moved to accept the SORP, seconded and approved with one voting against. ***See important message regarding this vote in the

Secretary's Report (continued)

President's report. With 61 people in attendance, our very our chapter chair, Jose, gave the presentation: "Selecting and Growing Rare Fruit in San Diego". What a fitting topic. My write-up is just a brief part of what Jose included in the program. Jose started with a reminder of the purpose of CRFG: "To encourage and foster public and scientific interest, research, education in and the preservation of rare fruit plants that have edible seeds, fruits, leaves, stems or roots and are not commonly grown commercially. The furtherance and encouragement of these activities shall be for the benefit of the public rather than commercial interests." He defined what rare fruit is: a fruit which is not normally grown in that area, a recently introduced species, or a species which is not grown commercially. For example: scarce fruits like red cherimoya which Paul Thompson discovered or fruit with unusual properties like the miracle fruit, which after you taste it, it makes water, lemons and even beer taste sweet (the latter actually tastes pretty bad), and new cultivars like the durian 'mountain red'.

For those of us in zone 23, which is subtropical, we can grow fruit that is not grown commercially. Figs need some warmth. So, they may not do too well close to the coast.

Thank you to those who brought food for the tasting table. **Barry Resetco, June Andersen, Irene Krepac, Linda Espino, Jim Neitzel, and Zhenxing Fu.** The offerings included such morsels as: tamarind, freeze dried mangosteen, loquats and more!

Thank you to those who brought plants for the opportunity table: **Aaron St John, Judy Tadlock, Peruzan Dadbeh, Linda Espino, Lew Rishel, William Chow, and Joy Bladykas.** I know there were more people who donated, but didn't sign up. The offerings included a hog plum, rose apple, lady finger banana, red pitaya, Nana pomegranate seedling and more!

MAY GARDEN TIPS

May is very much like April, the days getting warmer and longer, fruit should be starting to be seen in most of the fruit trees. Have you completed the form to invite members to tour your garden? If not, next meeting we will have plenty of forms.

- [] Continue to fertilize your citrus and avocados.
- [] Continue to apply a balanced fertilizer.
- [] Continue to remove weeds.
- [] Verify that your irrigation system is properly working.
- [] 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 star becoming a problem, use proper control, such as soapy water.
- [] Continue to thin your deciduous fruit trees, 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 month and next month I want to talk about some of the materials that can be applied to keep your fruit trees healthy and productive. This will also tie in somewhat with my presentation this month. In this issue, I'll discuss fertilizers and next month will cover different types of manures and their applications.

Fertilizers and soil amendments, do your trees need them? What are they for? What about burning the roots, I have heard about that, what is that all about? Do I need to mulch if I already fertilize? Do I need to fertilize if I mulch?

Let's begin with what you need fertilizer for. This, by the way is my take on the subject, you can undoubtedly pick up a book that will dispute what I have to say, but I am going to stick to my guns because I know what has worked for me and also what has not. The following will work not just for your fruit trees but also just about everything else you grow.

Just about all living plants and animals for that matter appear to me to be electrical/chemical factories designed by God to live and propagate their species. What they need are various elements in their growing structure for different purposes. In fertilizers, these elements are called chemicals, some are needed in abundance and others are needed in trace amounts. All subsoil and quite a bit of top soil is composed of the rock from which it came. The rock is worn down by wind, weather and water to become smaller rocks, gravel, sand, grit and clay. Clay is only a particle size, if you wet talcum powder, it will be clay.

Top soil is composed of subsoil and plant material that has broken down into first mulch, then compost then finally what is commonly referred to as dirt. But the top soil has carbon compounds and the "chemicals" like nitrogen are more available.

Your plants need a variety of elements for proper growth; the most important of these are Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium. Many plants also need calcium in abundance as well. If your soil does not have these elements in abundance, you probably want to fertilize so your plants do not become deficient in these elements. Two easy ways to know if you need to fertilize are plant some plants and watch them grow. Do they grow well? Are they vigorous? Are they a deep green or a puny yellow green? Do they flower well and bear fruit well? If the answer is yes, you do not need to fertilize. If the answer is no to some or all of these questions is no, you probably do need to fertilize. You can also buy a soil test kit, and sample your soil. The test kit will tell you what you are deficient in, however cheap test kits only test NPK and PH, growing some vegetables like a summer squash or tomatoes will tell you what the real conditions are.

Most Southern California soils have a high pH, are low in nitrogen, adequate in phosphorous, and potassium. They are fairly deficient in calcium and some are a little low in copper and iron. Almost all our soils are also low in organic material. Most folks won't go wrong by adding gypsum which contains calcium and a fertilizer or mulch with a higher amount of nitrogen. That is all most soils need for good growth and fruit production.

The Frugal Gardener (continued)

Regarding fertilizers, there are two trends of thought chemical and organic. There is also room for a middle ground where organic amendments are mixed with high quality chemical fertilizers.

The Chemical advocates like the idea of better living through modern chemistry. Chemical fertilizer is cheap and easy to apply. On the short term, it gets the job done. On the long term, the soils nutrients are not replenished and the soil degrades. Nitrogen is quickly leached into the groundwater, making the ground water unfit to drink or even irrigate with. Slow release fertilizers are coated making the nitrogen release slowly over the course of the growing season and do not leach in to the ground water. If chemical fertilizer is applied too strongly it will burn the roots. This means that the plant got too much of a good thing, sort of like a diabetic eating a whole chocolate cake and getting very sick or dying. Often the plant dies when too much chemical fertilizer is applied. One of our members had almost a hundred avocado seedlings die from over fertilization of chemical fertilizer.

The Organic people (I am one of these) figure that increasing the health of the soil will increase the health of the plant and healthy plants eaten by us makes us healthier too. Organically grown plants have less disease and insect infestations. The yield is about the same. However after several years of applying less concentrated amendments like composts and mulches, no more fertilization are often necessary. Buying organic fertilizer is generally more expensive and they are more difficult to apply. However, you will read below how to get them cheaply. As the organic amendments break down slowly they generally do not wash far into the soil before being brought up by the plants they are fertilizing. Organic amendments slowly build the tilth of a soil incorporating more airspace and better drainage into the soil.

General notes

Nitrogen is an expensive component of fertilizer. If you buy a bag of 20-20-20 (nitrogen-phosphorus and potassium) the first number refers to nitrogen, that is the main cost of the bag of fertilizer. Nitrogen is water soluble and washes away quickly. Nitrogen generally needs to be replenished regularly. Because the organic sources release nitrogen slowly, they are usually applied once or twice year. Chemical fertilizers are usually applied when the plants are about to or having a growth spurt, otherwise the nitrogen is washed away and is not used well by the plant. In the garden, chemical fertilizer is applied every 2-4 weeks to keep good growth.

Mulching is applying a layer of material, usually organic on top of the soil. The mulch slowly breaks down into compost then into soil. Organic mulch is a valuable soil amendment that keeps the soil around the plant cooler and moist. You will not need to water nearly as often if your trees are mulched. Just mulching is usually adequate fertilization for most trees.

Chemical fertilizers are generally man made and organic fertilizers were once living plants or animals. There are exceptions but that is the considered difference.

Do not use any fertilizer or manures on first year trees. The added nutrients put on top growth at the expense of root growth. If you go away for a few days and they do not get watered, they will show deterioration. Let them develop their roots before adding any higher nitrogen amendment.

The chemical companies have pushed for no labeling of organic amendments (NPK) and have been virtually banned to advertise them as fertilizer. However for

the purposes of this article, I use the terms fertilizers and amendments interchangeably.

Of note to mention, the decomposition of organic material creates a weak carbonic acid that locally reduces the pH of the soil. Addition of almost any organic amendment will reduce the pH of your soil. In all western soils, this is a good thing. The addition of these organic amendments also creates a reserve of readily available nitrogen as well as other soil nutrients as one can readily see in all top soils.

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.

For Sale or Trade: Got Mulch?? Lots of pine needles, you want, come and get them - 55 Gal plastic barrel, whole or half. Trade interests: flower bulbs, glads or daffodils or whatever you might have, including evergreen low ground cover stuff, not pickle week or that sort. **Lew Rishel** at 858/565-1962 or lewrish@tns.net

Wanted: Carambola or Kiwi fruit tree; I have some things to trade for them. **Judith Abeles** email: ja_llm@yahoo.com

Wanted: seeds or seedlings of *Austromyrtus dulcis* (midyim berry) and *Elaeagnus multiflora* (goumi). **Peruzan Dadbeh** email: egardener@sbcglobal.net or at the meeting.

Wanted to Buy or Trade: I am looking for a few banana varieties which I lost during the recent frost: Misi luki, Namwah and African rhino horn. I will be happy to trade or purchase them. Thanks, José **Gallego** at 619/261-3610 or email: jmgallego@losgallego.com or

Free: 5 (100') 1" diameter black soaker hoses, 5 (10') 3" diameter corrugated plastic drain pipe with slits. **Cielo** at 619/818-0093 or cielo_g@yahoo.com

Trade: Fruit bearing 5' Babaco Papaya tree in 15 gallon container. Trade for interesting perennial plant or rose apple fruit tree. **Cielo** at 619/818-0093 or cielo_g@yahoo.com

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. Jun. 16 10am to 12 pm: Succulent Topiaries with Margee Rader Spend the morning making a topiary turtle that you can take home and put in your own garden. Margee Rader of The Original Living Wreath, who created the giant sea horse in QBG's popular Undersea Succulent Garden, will teach you how to make topiaries using succulent plants. She will spend the first 30 minutes doing a demonstration, teaching you about the process, and going over which succulents to use. Cost: Members, \$50, non-members \$55 (includes materials) Advanced registration is required. Class size is limited. ☎ Info: 760/436-3036 ext. 206 or www.qbgardens.org

San Diego Horticultural Society

Mon. Jun. 11 at 6 pm: "A Special Evening with Annie Hayes, Annie's Annuals: Exciting & Fabulous Mediterranean Climate Rarities!" Note different meeting location due to SD County Fair. Shrine Center, 5440 Kearny Mesa Road, conveniently located in Kearny Mesa between Highways 805 and 15, adjacent to Highway 163 and just 15 minutes north of downtown San Diego. Cost: Free to members, \$5/non-members. Seating is limited – come early! Parking: Free, but limited. Car pools highly recommended. ☎ Info **760/730-3268** or www.sdhortsoc.org

San Diego Orchid Society

Tue. Jun. 5 at 6:30 pm Novice Class in Room 104; 7:30 pm General Mtg in Room 101, Casa del Prado in Balboa Park ☎ Info: www.sdorchids.com or Steve Mallory at 619/405-0412 for show schedule.

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

UPDATED CHAPTER CALENDAR YEAR

Month	Meeting Topic	Event(s)
May 24 Rm. 101	<i>Plant Nutrition</i> By Mike McCright	Jose's Home Garden Tour – May 26
June 28 Rm. 101	Ice Cream Social	SD County Fair- June 8 - July 4; Home Gardens tours – Jun 30; Nursery hopping – June 2
July 26 Rm.101	<i>Stone Fruits For SD County</i> by Jim Bathgate	Quail Garden Potluck – July 7
Aug. 23	<i>Celebrate Festival Of Fruit 2007</i>	Festival Of Fruit 2007 – Aug 10-11
Sep. 27 Rm. 104	<i>Figs Cultivars in SD Diego</i>	Tijuana Market spice tour – Sep 29

	By Jon Verdick	
Oct. 25 Rm. 101	Nominations; <i>Pomegranates</i> by David Silverstein	Home and Garden Show
Nov. 15 Rm. 101	Elections: <i>Guavas in San Diego</i> By Randy Pompoon	TBA
Dec. 15 Rm. 101	Installation of Officers; Annual Dinner	TBA

FESTIVAL OF FRUIT PLANNING MEETING SCHEDULE*

Everyone is welcome to come and help plan this event.

Day & Date	Location
Sun – May 20	Ben Pierce's Home (Note #3)
Sun - Jun 03	Keith Harold's Home (Note #2) or QBG Garage Loft
Sat - Jun 16	Mira Mesa Branch Library
Sat - Jun 30	Mira Mesa Branch Library
Sat - Jul 7	Ecke Bldg – QBG (Annual Picnic)
Sat - Jul 14	Jose Gallegos's Home (Note #1)
Sun - Jul 29	Larabee House – QBG
Sat - Aug 04	Mira Mesa Branch Library
Fri & Sat – Aug 10 & 11	Festival of Fruit Southwestern College

Note #1	Jose Gallego Ph# 619/697-4417 or cell: 619/261-3610 8673 Warmwell Drive, San Diego, CA
Note #2	Keith Harold Ph# 760/942-2572 or cell: 760/518-5989 1001 Saxony Road, Encinitas (Leucadia), CA
Note #3	Ben Pierce Ph# 760/744-4716 or cell: 760/597-4547 713 Ruskin Place, San Marcos, CA

*Revised: 29-Apr-07

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Party & Orientation at Quail Botanical Gardens Sat. May 26 11 am to 1 pm:

The CRFG San Diego chapters will be having a work party and orientation at Quail Botanical Gardens. Please meet in the "**Subtropical Fruit Garden**". Kapi Kizer, a volunteer docent at Quail will be doing an orientation meeting prior to our work in the garden. The orientation and volunteer registration is mandatory for our group to work at Quail.

Signup sheets will be available at the orientation. Our participation in maintaining the garden goes back to the late 1970's. Many of the fruiting trees and plants were donated by past CRFG members. We are trying to revitalize this project so your attendance and participation is essential. For more information, please call **June Anderson at (760) 729-350**. **We'll need a headcount to submit to Quail by Mon. May 21st**. June has volunteered to be our Quail Botanical Gardens liaison for both chapters.

