



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

January 2014 Volume **XIX**

JANUARY MEETING

Date: Saturday January 25th

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

Program: GRAFTING AND SCION EXCHANGE

HELP OUR CHAPTER - BRING SCIONS (seeds, cuttings, etc.)

We need your help and participation in our annual Scion Exchange. Everything helps! As long as your trees are healthy, just bring moist, bagged, and labeled scions (both ends can be straight cut as long as the upside is obvious) as well as fresh large cuttings. We will let the people who select the scions and cuttings for personal use be responsible for sterilizing them. We're tired of seeing only the same familiar names on the same varieties. Those folks and those varieties are welcome and will be there too, but please bring more of YOURS. Also, keep in mind that many independent new plants grow from seeds and cuttings, so seeds and cuttings are welcome as well. Thank you so much. It's your ongoing spirit and enthusiasm that makes ours such a dynamic and thriving chapter! All NON-members will be charged \$8 for participating in the exchange. **(See next page for more information on preparing for the scion exchange).**

****BOARD MEETING TO FOLLOW EXCHANGE****

On January 18th, the Orange County Chapter of CRFG will hold their annual Scion Wood Exchange in the Millennium Barn of the OC Centennial Farm at the **Orange County Fair Grounds**. The event will take place from **9am to 11am**. And, if you're bringing scion wood, try to get there by **8:45am**. REMEMBER: NO CITRUS SCIONS OR BUDS ALLOWED

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!! If your last name begins with **A-M** please bring something for our **January tasting table**. Since we are usually eating around noon and even though we love all those sweet treats, **please consider a dish more appropriate for a lunchtime meal.**

For all you Cherimoya lovers

On Friday, January 24th, a Cherimoya Tasting will be held at the South Coast Research & Extension Center

Time: 10am to 12pm.

The event is **FREE** and open to the general public - Rain or Shine.

South Coast Research & Extension Center

Address: 7601 Irvine Blvd. Irvine, CA 92

FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: February 22nd

Time: 10am

Place: Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

Program: TBA

<http://www.crfg-la.org>

2013 Chapter Officers & Committees

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Words from our Chairman

Dear Los Angeles Chapter Friends,
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I sincerely hope for all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014. I love the New Year. To me it's another chance to do it right; or to do what you planned to do, but never did in your garden or orchard. After noticing scale and some bore damage, I'm treating my fruit trees with dormant sprays (something I did not do last year). I learned that you should apply it to your fruit trees three times a year. An easy reminder is around Thanksgiving, New Years and Valentine's Day, that's late Nov, first of January and mid-February.

Water your trees with enough water to reach the roots. Wear protective clothing, gloves, respirator etc.; and please, use only organic products. I mix Monterey Horticulture Oil and Lidqui-cop together (following the label directions) and spray making sure to fully cover the entire tree. I found these products at Peaceful Valley farm supply, www.groworganic.com. Many nurseries stock organic products.

We, as organic gardeners, are hopefully taking a holistic view of the ecosystem in the garden and use techniques year around to insure a healthy garden-- a long term one. Going organic may be a slower process than when using harsh chemicals so let's think of using them as a last resort.

UC Davis has a great website www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/index.html that is chuck-full of information offering pest identification and while I certainly don't endorse all of their methods for a home gardener. I enjoy most of the info.

May I leave you with this thought?

No one can go back in time to change what has happened. So work on your present to make yourself a wonderful future. Happy New Year 2014!

Jim Schopper

ATTENTION NEW GRAFTERS!

There will be grafting demonstrations by some of our most successful grafters at our January meeting.

**NO CUTTINGS FROM PATENT TREES
NO CITRUS SCION WOOD PLEASE**

SCION WOOD PREPARATION

- “ Wood should come from clean, disease-free and non-patented trees.
- “ Select straight wood from last year's growth and cut as near to our scion wood exchange date as possible.
- “ Wood should be 1/4” – 3/8” diameter (pencil size) and contain several buds.
- “ Cut to lengths that fit easily into a ziplock-type bag
Bundle by variety in a moist paper towel(s) and place in a ziplock-type bag, leaving a slight opening in the ziplock bag for the wood to breathe. Make sure that the towel(s) stay damp as long as the wood is stored.
- “ Label outside of bag with fruit type and variety, as well as any additional information you feel is pertinent (i.e. minimum chilling hours; needs pollinator; vigor; zip code where successfully grown, etc).
- “ Put your name on the outside of bag
- “ Keep scion wood bag in vegetable bin of your refrigerator until the morning of the exchange. Be careful not to let the scion wood freeze!
- “ At the exchange, please wait to make your selections until directed by the chairman.
- “ Please limit your selections to two of any variety, until all the groups have had their opportunity. Then feel free to go back

A Letter from the Editor-

Dear Members,

Wishing you all a wonderful 2014! Let's begin this year by remembering all the benefits of belonging to California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG) and our Los Angeles Chapter.

The first plus is of course, our beautiful magazine, the *Fruit Gardener* that you receive every 2 months. Not only do you read interesting and informative articles about various fruits, questions are answered, recipes are

found, a list of pertinent books and publications are made available and of course the Seed Bank. By reading the column of our CRFG President, **Margaret Frame**, you will know what our organization is doing. There is also a list of activities that our other 21 Chapters are involved with. As a member you are welcome to attend any other Chapter meeting. Let's not forget, that thanks to the hard work and dedication of **Ron Couch**, the editor of this magazine, we are able to enjoy such a beautiful publication. As you can see, the small amount of \$36 a year that you pay to belong to CRFG is put to great use. Another valuable tool is our website: <http://www.crfg.org>. What a wealth of information can be found there. A list of all our Chapters websites, nurseries, videos, fruit experts to name a few are available to you.

Now let's take a look at our own wonderful Los Angeles Chapter. For a measly \$6 a year (which is a drop in the bucket) you receive a newsletter every two months, you have opportunity to participate in 12 activities a year-informative speakers, field trips, time to exchange ideas with your fellow gardeners, and great food and socialization. Then, there are our wonderful plant sales-beautiful plants that you can buy at next to nothing. Thanks to generous members who donate these plants, our Chapter can support our expenses. The highlight of our meetings, of course is our annual January Scion exchange. What an opportunity for you to add to your existing collection of fruit trees. I want you to know that the money we collect from your dues and plant sales goes to covering our expenses-liability insurance, postage for our newsletter, stipends given to our guest speakers, etc. As you can see, we are not a money making organization, but a group of fruit lovers who are learning from each other and at the same time reaching out to our community – teaching grafting in the high schools, supporting future horticulturists (i.e. **Steve List's** program), and educating the public by opening our meetings to all.

So please, if you can help our Chapter by donating your time in taking on different responsibilities or contributing monetarily, you are insuring that our Chapter will continue to be a wonderful source of knowledge and joy for us and future generations to come.

Lastly, I want to take a moment to thank our Chapter Chairman, **Jim Schopper**, our hard working treasurer, **Karen Payton**, and **David Payton** who manages our plant sales and raffles, **Chris Warren** who always sees we get enough to eat, **Edith and Dick Watts** for welcoming us at each meeting, **Bob Vieth** for organizing the grafting program every year, **Emory Walton** for his technical support not only for our

Chapter, but the CRFG organization (fruit shoot and Festivals), **Charles Portney** for his consistent generous donations of plants and **Kathy Vieth**, for proofreading our newsletter before each mailing. To all of you on our LA Chapter Board, we give a standing ovation. Thank you, each and every one for all that you do. You are the bones of our great Chapter.

A special thanks to **Edgar Valdivia** whose passion is not only contagious but an inspiration to all of us!

Pat Valdivia

Jerusalem Artichoke

by *Deborah Oisboid*

It's not an artichoke and it doesn't originate from the Middle East. The top looks like sunflowers but you don't eat the seeds – or the petals or the leaves. The root looks like ginger but isn't used for seasoning. The Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) has many aliases including sunchoke, sunroot, earth apple, French or Canada potato, topinambour, and lambchoke. This is one seriously confused plant.

The Jerusalem artichoke is actually a sunflower relative, native to North America and grown widely. The edible part is the tuberous root, which grows thick and bulbous. So why call it "Jerusalem"? One popular theory is that because the flowers follow the sun, the Italian settlers to North America called them "girasol" ("sunflower" in Spanish) which slowly evolved to "Jerusalem" by the English-speaking immigrants. Another possible origin is that as they became a food staple to the first Europeans in the Americas they named it as food for "New Jerusalem."

Sir Walter Raleigh first saw the Jerusalem Artichokes being cultivated by Native Americans. Because it was grown so widely and by so many different tribes its exact origins are not known to this day. By the middle of the 17th century it had become a common vegetable in Europe and the Americas, as well as being used for livestock feed.

During World War II Jerusalem Artichokes was one of the most commonly grown vegetables, giving them the reputation as a poor man's vegetable. In the 1960's they were renamed "sunchoke" by produce broker and new-food marketer Frieda Caplan, who was trying to improve the vegetable's popularity. However the renamed "sunchoke" were originally a hybrid between the Jerusalem Artichoke and the common sunflower.

So what, exactly, is the Jerusalem Artichoke?

It is an herbaceous perennial growing between 4 – 10 feet tall. The upper part of the plant is a sunflower with a single main stem with multiple branches which produce dozens of 2-4" yellow flowers. The stem and leaves are covered all over with rough fibrous hairs.

Underground, the tubers grow in elongated shapes and

clusters. The tubers can have multiple round protrusions, or they can be smooth depending on the variety. The color can vary from pale brown, to pink blush, to deep maroon-red, or even white. The top can die back at the end of the year but will reproduce as the ground warms up again in spring.

Because it is a sunflower, it loves to grow in a bright, sunny spot in temperate weather. It thrives in a large range of soils, rapidly growing up to 10 feet tall.

Propagation is easily done by breaking off a growth knob from the root cluster and planting in frost-free soil. The roots happily regrow into new plants and can even become invasive if not careful. However, leaving the roots year after year will result in poorer taste and nutrition, and the roots should be replanted in fresh soil for optimum flavor.

Harvesting is done after the flowers die back. The roots can be stored in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks, or can be left in the ground over winter and harvested in the spring. A slight frost may help bring out the sweetness of the root.

The Jerusalem Artichoke is a very healthful food. It contains about 10% protein, no oil, and a surprising lack of starch. However, it is rich in the carbohydrate inulin (not “insulin”!), which is a fructose with prebiotic (“good” bacteria promoting) properties. (This property can become, er, slightly embarrassing to some people who eat it raw). The roots also contain vitamin C, phosphorous, and potassium, and are a very good source of iron. Because of their fructose content, the roots are considered a healthy choice for diabetics.

The tubers can be prepared in hundreds of ways. They add a nice raw crunch to salads, turn soft as potatoes when steamed, can be fried, baked, roasted, pickled, pureed, used in soups, casseroles, and pies.

Commercially, they are used to make low-starch “artichoke pasta”. Raw, it is an excellent substitution for water chestnuts in stir fries. Boiled, it becomes the as soft as a potato but with a much more intense flavor. The skin can be peeled off or left on after a thorough scrubbing.

LOOKING BACK

BY Debbie Schopper our Member-at-Large

December Meeting

Always a wonderful speaker, **Charles Portney** did not disappoint in his presentation to the Chapter on composting. Ever indebted to **Charles** for all he does for the Chapter, an award was presented to acknowledge our gratitude. A big thank you **Charles!**



December Meeting

Our annual December Holiday Meeting was again such a success on so many levels. The food, the entertainment, the gifts, the raffle, but more importantly the wonderful members of the CRFG Los Angeles chapter! Yes, our holiday meeting was an enjoyable time of getting together and celebrating the season. Our room was beautifully decorated. Members arrived loaded down with smiles, plants, gifts and, of course, delicious food.

We were delightfully entertained by our own, **Marcia Melcombe** and singing partner **Mark Nudelman**. We Soon we were singing along. Thank you so very much **Marcia** and **Mark** for sharing your wonderful, talented selves with us.

Chris Warren, also brought videos of her latest dance competition. Wow, beautiful, elegant- what talented people belong to the LA Chapter of CRFG!

