



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

Jan./Feb.2016 Volume XXI Issue I

MEETING

Date: January 23rd

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Sepulveda Gardens
16633 Magnolia Blvd.
Encino, CA 91316

Program: GRAFTING/SCION EXCHANGE (see below)

We need your participation in our **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. . 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!

Attention All Members: If your last name begins with N-Z please bring something for our January table. Since we are usually eating around noon, and even though we love all those sweet treats, please also consider a dish more appropriate for a lunchtime meal.

MEETING:

Date: February 27th

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Sepulveda Gardens
16633 Magnolia Blvd.
Encino, CA 91316

Program: Daniel Nelson of La Verne Nursery will speak on citrus and greening disease.

Attention All Members: If your last name begins with A-M please bring something for our February table. Since we are usually eating around noon, and even though we love all those sweet treats, please also consider a dish more appropriate for a lunchtime meal.

Save the Dates 2016 Calendar – Pat Valdivia

March 26th - Field Trip: Sylmar High School 10:00 a.m. - Tom Spellman Tree Symposium and scholarship fundraiser

April 23rd - Field Trip: Field Trip: Hansen Agricultural Center, Santa Paula

May 28th - Sepulveda Gardens 10:00 a.m. - Ronnie Kern (LA Chapter member) on Vermiculture

June 25th - Field Trip: Huntington Farms 1:00 p.m. at Huntington Gardens

July 25rd - Meeting: Sepulveda Gardens 10:00 a.m. **TBD**

August 27th - Field Trip 10:00 a.m. **TBD**

September 24th – Meeting Sepulveda Gardens 10:00 a.m. **TBD**

October 22nd - Field Trip 10:00 a.m. **TBD**

November 26th – Meeting Sepulveda Gardens 10:00 a.m. **TBD**

December 10th - Sepulveda Gardens 10:00 a.m. - Holiday Party

<http://www.crfg-la.org>
2016 Chapter Officers & Committees

Chairman:
Jim Schopper
818-362-3007 chairman@CRFG-la.org

Vice Chairman:
Tony Stewart,
213-760-5142 co-chair@crfg-la.org

Treasurer:
K. Payton
818 222-7556 treasurer@CRFG-la.org

Newsletter Editor:
Catherine Diaz
818-772-9523 editor@CRFG-la.org

Program Chairman:
Pat Valdivia
805-584-6244 editor@CRFG-la.org

Photographer:
Edgar Valdivia
805-584-6244 photo@CRFG-la.org

Historian:
Emory Walton
805 497-8835 historian@CRFG-la.org

Food Coordinator:
Chris Warren
818 362-8537 food@CRFG-la.org

Plant Sales:
David Payton
818 222-7556 plants@CRFG-la.org

Plant Sales Associates:
David Melcombe
Tony Stewart

Secretary
Margaret Frane
310 828-0092 hospitality@CRFG-la.org

Development Fund:
Bob Vieth
805 495-9789

Members At Large:
Marcia Melcombe
818-349-8677 atlarge@CRFG-la.org
Debbie Schopper
818-362-3007 atlarge@CRFG-la.org
Lea Johnson
310-924-2168 atlarge@CRFG-la.org

Words From Our Chairman



Dear Los Angeles Chapter Members,
I certainly hope everyone enjoyed the holidays.

We had great time at the holiday party;



there was soooo much good food and table conversation. Once again Marcia and Mark provided a great mix of holiday music. The gift exchange, as always, was fun.

I have been thinking about this coming year and feel that our Sepulveda Garden center meetings may have become a little routine. Perhaps they could be changed to make them a little more interesting **[Do I have your attention now?]** I'm looking for any suggestions or ideas that anyone may have for changes to the meeting. Remember this is your chapter and I value your input. Please email your ideas or suggestions to me.

I'm looking forward to this year as we have many interesting speakers and places to go lined up. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the scion exchange meeting as I am taking a class that Saturday. But I have asked Tony Stewart [Vice Chair] to handle the meeting. I am confident in his leadership and know everything will be done right. I look forward to seeing more of you at our meetings and especially the field trips this coming year. Wishing and hoping everyone has a healthy, happy 2016.

Keep digging, growing, pruning, tasting, etc.

Jim

LOOKING BACK

By Debbie Schopper
Member-at-Large

November Meeting

Dr. Ivan Thomas spoke to our chapter regarding pomegranates. Many of us purchased varieties of pomegranates from him two years ago and he was asking for updates on the plants.



The problems experienced with the pomegranate this year included the extreme heat, sunburn, cracked skins, fungus and, of course, pests. What we took away from this question and answer session was:

- Covering the fruit with mesh bags didn't help with the burning
- Two bags per fruit did help against pests eating the fruit
- Grey powder mold enters the fruit during the flowering stage so there is not a cure against it
- Poms should be fertilized two times per year with a high nitrogen fertilizer

Edgar Valdivia sent six varieties of poms for our tasting via Emory Walton.

Oh, and what a treat the "Blow-Out Yearly Plant Sale" with Charles Portney. We love when Charles brings plants! There were Orange Tamarillos, Babaco Papayas, Finger Limes, Pitayas, two kinds of Pepinos, Cherry of the Rio Grande, Mystery Banana plants, the list goes on. He generously grows and gives away so many plants and he tells us about the plants that he brings, not just the names but how to grow them, how to take care of them, and recipes.

Our meeting concluded with a potluck luncheon and, of course, the silent auction.

December Meeting

Our Holiday Party was held at the Sepulveda Garden Center. What a wonderful way to end 2015! The talented Marcia Melcombe and Mark Nudelman entertained us. They had us all singing.

There were presents, awards, food, plants, raffles, laughter, costumes, and a good time was had by all.



HIGHLIGHTING MEMBERS

Who are We?

Catherine Diaz, *Editor*

Recently our member, Gary Richwald came to my house to pick up some olive oil that I picked up for him during our field trip. He was unable to attend. I set up some olive oil tasting for him and his wife (she couldn't make it after all) but we had a chance to talk and get to know a little about each other and our interest in CRFG. As Jim suggested in this issue of the newsletter, perhaps there are other things we can do at our meetings. During Gary's visit we decided that there is not always an opportunity to get to know each other as individuals during the meetings but the newsletter might be a way to facilitate getting to know each other.

So, to enhance this part of the newsletter I would like to ask people to step up and share something about themselves. Gary has offered to come up with some topics that we could ask members and then highlight them in future issues. Here are some questions that we might consider...

When/why did you join CRFG?

What do you like best about CRFG?

How have CRFG activities helped you with their gardens/orchards?

What's their favorite fruit tree/shrub vine?

What is/was your regular job?

What is something interesting very few people know about you?

What is a burning question that might be answered by CRFG?

What is something you would really like to know how to do?

These were just some ideas that we came up with, what do you think?

As Jim said in his newsletter message, the chapter should reflect the membership... Speak up.

DIARY OF A GARDEN

(from January - October 2015)

Debi Oisboid, Member at Large

I'm thirsty. My human hasn't given me water in more than a month and I'm getting very dry. Why hasn't she given me water? All my pretty green grass is drying up. I get some water from the human who lives next to us - their water sprinkles along my edges. And the big mulberry tree near the house shades the grass so it's still green. My human was climbing the tree this week and adding more sticks to it. I heard her tell a neighbor she's grafting fruit-producing branches onto the tree. She's done that before and the squirrels and raccoons have really enjoyed eating it.

I remember when my human was happy that some bees moved into the tree. She had some vegetables growing in me at the time, and I was sure she would continue to plant things but she hasn't. I can hear the garden on the other side of the house through the mulberry roots. That poor garden is also very dry and it has no trees to shade the grass and it's all dry and brown and very, very sad.

My human was talking about another human's garden today. The other garden got changed recently. They buried water hoses and new plants in a square pattern, and then covered the whole thing with white rock. That sounds interesting, but a bit heavy. I think being all covered in rock would be hot on a sunny day. I wonder if the other garden likes it that way?

Yummmmmmm! That was delicious! I got sky-watered today. Sky-water has fallen on me a few times now and it's refreshing. But my human still

hasn't planted anything new. Instead she went to work in someone else's garden yesterday and I'm jealous! The other garden enjoyed lots of humans digging and planting all over it all day long. My human said volunteers were turning it into a Permaculture garden. Maybe she's learning how to do that to me?

My human was very excited today. She was telling someone that she applied to the DWP for turf replacement. I don't know what a DWP is but I do know what turf is and I love my grass! Maybe she's going to get Replacement grass for me. That would be nice. I wonder what Replacement grass looks like? I have Bermuda grass and St Augustine right now. Except they're not really growing.

What's going on? It rained again and my dirt was nice and soft, but instead of planting new life my human dug up my adorable prickly juniper bushes that have been here since before she even got here! That's not right! Why is she taking everything away and leaving me empty and bare? My human went to a gardening event at a place called Tarzana. I thought she would bring some plants back for me but instead she brought back words like native California gardening and wildlife habitat. She said she had invited someone from SFVAS to look at me and do some garden design. What is SFVAS? And what's garden design? If it means new life to grow, I'm all in favor of it!

Today was unusual. My human and another one walked all over me and talked about plants and water and trees and rocks and paths and creeks and all sorts of things. It was very interesting! Humans don't usually stay with me for very long. Usually they arrive and then disappear into the house, and only come out and go away again.

This time, my human went inside but the other one took out a chair and sat in one of my corners and didn't talk. He just looked at me for a very long time. Finally he took a stick and moved it around on some paper. Then he went into the house and I heard him talking with my human

again. There were familiar words like arbor and mulch. And there were strange words like decomposed granite and dry creek. Then he left. And then my human left for a while, but came back later and was talking excitedly about the other human's garden! It's all very mysterious. My human has been going to lots of new places. One was a place called Bearstatenursery which had lots and lots of plants that I've never heard of. She said they have the kind of plants that don't need a lot of water. What kind of plants don't need a lot of water? Another place she went was Arlingtongarden. That one sounds very pretty. And another place is called Arboretum. My human went there to learn things and came home with some more interesting words like lasagnagardening and mycorrhiza and berm and heugelkultur.

Today my human told a neighbor that her turf replacement was finally approved. It's been at least two moon cycles since she first started talking about turf replacement. Does this mean I'm going to get new turf soon?

Something's happening! The people who used to mow my grass just dug it all up. Then they dug a shallow trench from one side of me to another and lined it with rocks. They also brought some truckloads of lovely black compost and made a BIG pile of it in one corner. It hasn't been spread around yet, though. Come on, already! I'm hungry and that compost looks delicious!

My human has been using the same two words a lot lately: Craigslist and free. Craigslist sounds like a good place to get stuff because she has been bringing a LOT of things home from there. She now has two trash barrels full of round rocks, another one full of wood chips, and a pile of huge flat stones. She built a stack of dry, flat cardboard near me. What's that all about? She has also been bringing bags and boxes full of plants, and I even got some yummy topsoil dirt dumped onto me. But nothing has been planted, and the plants were carried into the back garden.

I asked the back garden where she planted them but the other garden said they are still in the boxes. What is she waiting for??

My mulberry tree got trimmed today. The poor bees! They complained a lot and some of the humans got stung but I scolded the bees and said leave the humans alone because they're being nice to me. The bees went back to their work after the humans left. They had a lot to catch up on because they had just swarmed a few days ago and there weren't many of them left

My human has been digging in me almost every day. She moved all the lined-up rocks and dug the ditch a lot deeper. I like that because it means the skywater won't flow away but will have time to percolate down instead. She's also been digging out the roots of my wonderful Bermuda grass. The back garden says it's getting all the grass roots and is happy, even if they aren't growing yet. I'm very jealous, even if the back garden isn't getting any water. But today when my human was digging her tool hit an underground pipe and there was water *GUSHING UP HIGHER THAN THE HOUSE!* Yay! It was so much fun! I got water all over me. My human didn't seem very happy though and called for help to turn off the water. What's a watermain? Whatever it is, she didn't want to break it. Another human put the pipe back together again. He used fire.

My human has been pushing me into interesting shapes every few days. Now I have tall spots and flat spots and the line of rocks running across the deep ditch. And today she brought me several carloads of sandy stuff she called decomposed granite. She put down a long line of cardboard on the smooth path and then dumped greywater on it. (I know about greywater because she used it to water some of my former plants. It tastes funny but it's not too bad.) Then she spread the sandy stuff on top of the cardboard. You know what? Decomposed granite makes a nice place for humans to walk.

I'm starting to look good again. My human has graded my dirt near the house and spread the compost all over. She put a bunch of very large flat stones into a very small area under the mulberry tree and said it was for a sitting area. And one day she brought me a lot of palm trunks cut into short logs and lined them up along the decomposed granite path. But the best part was when she planted some groundcover on the other side of the tree! I have green plants in me again! *WOW!* My human was with me all day yesterday, planting all the living things she had been collecting. She grouped them together into patterns. One corner of me is now full of cactus and spiky things, and nearby there's a flat-rock path surrounded by succulents. She got some new mulch and dumped it below the drycreek, then planted rosemary and yarrow and tiger lily. On the other side of the path she planted a baby acacia tree, a line of flax grasses, some rosette succulents, and gave me a whole section with nothing but aloes which she protected with a thick layer of wood chips. She planted some spiky bromeliads all in a row under the mulberry tree. Mulberry is very happy right now. I can tell because it has been growing mulberry fruit, which makes my human happy also. I like all the company I've been getting because the nearby humans have been coming over to say how nice I look. I do! I look good! It's nice to be growing again.

Footnote. That's a note about feet, I think. My human very excitedly brought home a wooden bridge to put across the drycreek line of rocks. She said it's amazing what people give away on Craigslist. And I look better than ever!

My story in photos can be seen at tinyurl.com/drygarden

*The slide show photos are enjoyable.
C. Diaz, Editor*