

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

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2019 Volume XXIV Issue 1

MEETING

Date: January 26, 2019 at 10:00 am
Place: Sepulveda Gardens
16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino, CA 91316
Program: Annual Grafting Demo & Scion Exchange

There will be grafting demonstrations by some of our most successful grafters at our January meeting, followed by our annual scion exchange. Please bring plant materials to share (scions, cuttings, seeds, etc.)

NO CUTTINGS FROM PATENTED TREES, NO CITRUS PLEASE

Scion wood preparation info:

- Wood should come from clean, disease-free plants. Cut as near to our meeting date as possible.
 - Select straight wood from last year's growth. Scions should be 1/4" - 3/8" diameter (pencil size) and contain several buds (2 -3 minimum).
 - Bundle by variety in a moist paper towel(s) and place in a ziplock-type bag, leaving a slight opening in the bag for the wood to breathe. Make sure that the towel(s) stay damp as long as the wood is stored.
 - Label each 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 bag, in case people have questions.
 - Keep scion bag in vegetable bin of your refrigerator until the morning of the exchange. Be careful not to let the scion wood freeze!
 - At the meeting, please limit yourself to two of any variety until everyone else has had a turn. Then feel free to go back for more!
- All Members: if your last name begins with A-M please bring something for our refreshment table.**

2018 Chapter Officers & Committees

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MEETING

Date: February 23, 2019 at 10:00 am
Place: Sepulveda Gardens
16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino, CA 91316

Program: Dario Grossberger - Cherimoyas

Dario Grossberger owns and operates Condor Growers in Ventura County, and has been growing cherimoya for nearly 30 years. Dario's ranch is one of the largest producers of cherimoya, supplying this delicious fruit all over the United States. Dario worked in the field of molecular biology prior to producing cherimoya. He will speak about various aspects of cherimoya production, including varieties, pollination, and marketing.

SAVE THE DATES - CALENDAR FOR 2019 LA CHAPTER

- March 16 Field Trip - Sylmar High School
- April 27 Field Trip
- May 25 Sepulveda Gardens
- June 22 Field Trip
- July 27 Sepulveda Gardens
- August 24 Field Trip
- September 28 Sepulveda Gardens
- October 26 Field Trip
- November 23 Field Trip
- December 14 Sepulveda Gardens

Words From Our Chairman



I hope everybody enjoyed their holiday season and was able to spend it with loved ones. Our chapter had a wonderful December holiday event with great participation from our members. I know we all enjoyed the opportunity to hear Marcia and Mark sing their holiday songs with such enthusiasm and talent. Our gift exchange table was possibly the biggest one we have seen in many years.

As we welcome the new year I'm sure everyone is looking forward to our January meeting and our annual scion exchange. I would like to thank everybody who participates in bringing in branches from their trees. I know it seems like you're cutting off the arms of your children but it's for a very good cause.

If you need information or help with grafting, this is the meeting where you will enjoy by learning from our members, who are happy to share their knowledge with you. For the rest of 2019, keep your eyes open for opportunities that you think our chapter would enjoy, such as visiting a special location that is of interest to us rare fruit growers. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everybody in our chapter who puts in so much time and energy and makes it a truly special group of people who enjoy each other's company and sharing our common knowledge of growing rare (and not so rare) fruit trees!

Tony

Please see "CRFG News" at the end of this newsletter and volunteer to be at our CRFG table at the LA Nature Fest in March!

LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

November Meeting

Our field trip in November was to Kim Nguyen's house. Kim has a lovely house with a huge backyard. She also had a delightful holiday scene set up in her front yard with decorated trees, a sleigh, and Santa prepared for a church meeting at her house the following day.

Kim described her special trees and plants one by one. What a variety! After removing the grass three years ago, she has planted many fruit trees such as pomegranate, persimmon, lime, orange, peach, fig, apple, and orange. She also grows several varieties of guava, wax jambu, jaboticaba, carambola, round (not oval) kumquat, two Hawaiian papayas, pineapple, and several red dragonfruit vines. In addition to trees, the yard also has several Asian plants such as Lalot, gynura procumbens, shiso, bitter melon, arrowroot, Talinum, champaca, and many others.

In the very center of the yard stands an enormous avocado tree, which was there when she moved in. She believes it is a Zutano, based on comparison of fruit at a local nursery.

All of the trees and most of her other plants were tagged with their names in either English or Vietnamese, and sometimes in both languages.

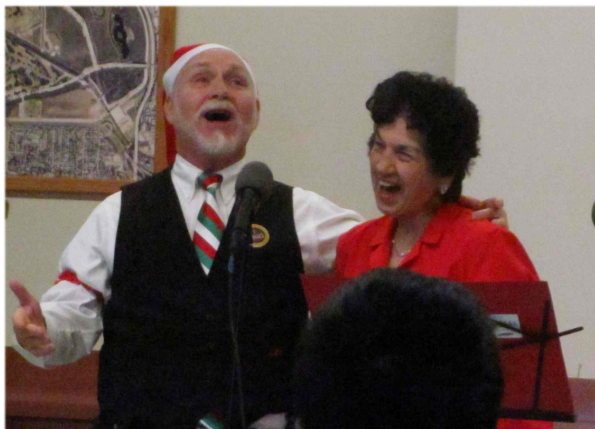
After a fascinating tour, we had a huge, wonderful potluck lunch. And we met Kim's dog Sumo, a small white Maltese with a delightful personality. A wonderful time was had by all and we thank Kim very much for her hospitality!

December Meeting

What a sweet ending to the year. Our annual holiday party started off with a few announcements by our chairman, Tony Stewart, and an invitation to participate in the silent auction of plants donated by our generous members.

Tony then introduced our talented member Marcia Melcombe and her friend Mark Nudelman, who sang us a delightful collection of holiday songs, starting

with our own CRFG theme song, written by Emory Walton. (Go to http://crfg-la.org/about_us.html to hear the original version.)



Our White Elephant gift exchange took place next, with ticket holders' numbers being called out to select their choice of (wrapped) gift from the table.

At last - Lunch! We had a wonderful buffet lunch full of all the best foods you can get from gardeners.

Finally, the Silent Auction took place, with the highest bidders winning their choices of herbs, succulents, vines, trees, seedlings, books, and even a large metal dolly. There was also a huge box of pomelos and a large bag of quince generously donated to participants.



Special thanks to Candace Rumenapp, who brought two huge bags of purple and white Pakistani mulberry cuttings, as well as lemon verbena and green fig cuttings, and for reminding us that December is the time to graft mulberries, and that January is usually too late.

A Piece of Pierce, Revisited

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

The previous CRFG-LA newsletter included an article about Pierce College student, Michael Bernard, and his project to bring an orchard back to the school. His project was recently completed, with 60 fruit trees planted by December 16. They include many varieties of citrus, fig, avocado, stone fruits, guava, and more. Congratulations, Michael, on a splendid place to teach!



View from inside the 1/3-acre fenceline



View outside the fenceline, looking in

Rootstocks

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

Information from Dave Wilson Nursery

www.davewilson.com/product-information-general/rootstock/comparisons

It's always exciting to pick up new graft material during our traditional January scion exchange. But where is the best place to put them? Let's talk about rootstocks.

When we graft we are putting two (or more?) plants together. The scions provide a known flavor and variety of fruit, or flower color, or leaf shape, etc. Rootstocks are often selected for certain desirable qualities such as disease resistance, drought tolerance, a fast- or a slow-growing habit, large or small size, and so on.

The following table was found on the Dave Wilson website, and lists some of the more common rootstocks for apples and stone fruit. Their website also has tables for grapevines and other types of plants.

Rootstock	Advantages	Disadvantages
M 9: apple Layered cutting	Dwarfs to 40-45% seedling size, very precocious and productive, increases fruit size, has field resistance to cherry stem pitting disease	Shallow rooted & drought sensitive, trees require support, susceptible to fireblight and wooly apple aphid
M 26: apple Layered cutting	Dwarfs to 55-60% seedling size, precocious and productive	Shallow rooted & drought sensitive, staking or trellis usually required, susceptible to Phytophthora, susceptible to fireblight and wooly apple aphid
M 7: apple Layered cutting	Dwarfs to 65-70% seedling size, widely adapted to various soil conditions, moderately resistant to Phytophthora	Suckers, staking may be required, susceptible to wooly apple aphid
M 111: apple Layered cutting	Tolerates waterlogging and drought, well-anchored, resists wooly apple aphid, dwarfs to 90% of seedling-rooted size, good for sandy soils	Susceptible to crown rot under very poor conditions
Atlas™ : interspecific peach, almond, plum & apricot Rooted cutting	Extremely vigorous, root-knot nematode resistance similar to Nemaguard, productive, increases fruit size, considered well anchored, tolerant of saline and alkaline soil conditions	Delays fruit maturity in some varieties, intolerant of wet soil conditions, intolerant of dehydration in transplanting ¹
Citation: interspecific peach & plum Rooted cutting	Highly compatible with apricot and plum, induces early bearing, tolerant of wet soil conditions, resists root knot nematode, advances maturity and increases size and sugar content of fruit	Susceptible to crown gall, bacterial canker and oak root fungus, intolerant of virus with peach or nectarine
Hansen 536: interspecific peach & plum Tissue culture	Vigorous, well-anchored, some resistance to root-knot nematode, very tolerant of saline and alkaline soil conditions	Susceptible to root-lesion nematode; very susceptible to bacterial canker, oak-root fungus, crown gall, Phytophthora and ring nematode, intolerant of virus with peach or nectarine, intolerant of dehydration in transplanting ¹
Lovell: peach Seedling	Slightly more resistant to wet conditions than Nemaguard but prefers well-drained soils, slightly more resistant to bacterial canker than Nemaguard	Susceptible to root-knot and root-lesion nematode and to oak-root fungus, somewhat susceptible to bacterial canker, prunes on this rootstock are subject to brown line
M40 Marianna: plum Rooted cutting	Similar to Marianna 26-24, but having a deeper root system, better anchorage, and fewer suckers	---
Marianna 26-24: plum Rooted cutting	Slightly dwarfing, moderately resistant to Phytophthora crown and root rot and oak root fungus, tolerates wet soils, root-knot nematode resistant	Tends to lean, shallow roots the first few years, very susceptible to bacterial canker, incompatible with peaches, nectarines and some almond varieties, suckers profusely, susceptible to crown gall, almonds subject to brown line disease and union mild etch
Myrobalan 29C: plum Rooted cutting	Makes large tree, immune to root-knot nematode, tolerates wet soils, less sucker development than Marianna 2624	Tends to lean, some incompatibility with almonds, prunes subject to brown line on this rootstock, may set lighter crop than Marianna 26-24, susceptible to oak root fungus
Nemaguard: peach Seedling	Root-knot nematode resistant, vigorous, strong tree	Susceptible to root-lesion nematode, prefers sandy soil, susceptible to oak root fungus & bacterial canker, prunes on this rootstock are subject to brown line

¹ Trees on peach x almond hybrid rootstocks, including interspecifics, are very sensitive to dehydration. While planting, keep roots damp and irrigate after planting.

In Defense of Plants

Resurrecting Café Marron

Excerpted from a blog by Matt Candeias at www.indefenseofplants.com

Forward by Deborah Oisboid, Editor:

While this article does not highlight fruit per se, I thought the morphology of this endangered plant, and the propagation techniques used to rescue it were too fascinating not to share with you.

Back in 1980, a school teacher on the island of Rodrigues sent his students out to look for plants. One of the students brought back a cutting of a shrub that astounded the botanical community. *Ramosmania rodriguesii*, more commonly known as café marron, was only known from one botanical description dating back to the 1800's. The shrub, which is a member of the coffee family, was thought extinct.

What the boy brought back was indeed a specimen of café marron but the individual he found turned out to be the only remaining plant on the island.

News of the plant quickly spread. It started to attract a lot of attention, not all of which was good. There is a belief among the locals that the plant is an herbal remedy for hangovers and venereal disease (hence its common name translates to 'brown coffee') and because of that, poaching was rampant. Branches and leaves were being hauled off at a rate that was sure to kill this single individual. It was clear that more was needed to save this shrub from certain extinction.

Cuttings were sent to the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew, in London. After some trial and tribulation, a few of the cuttings successfully rooted. The clones grew and flourished. They even flowered on a regular basis. For a moment it looked like this plant had a chance. Unfortunately, café marron did not self-pollinate.

The key to saving café marron was to somehow bypass its anti-self-pollinating mechanism. Though plenty of flowers were produced, it seemed the only thing working on the plant were its anthers. Could it be that the last remaining individual (and all of its subsequent clones) were males?

This is where a little creativity and a lot of experience paid off. During some experiments with the flowers, it was discovered that by amputating the top of the stigma and placing pollen directly onto the wound one

could coax fertilization and fruiting. Unfortunately, the seedlings were never able to establish [sic]. Still, this was the first indication that there was some hope left for the café marron.

After subsequent attempts at stigma amputation continued to fail, they started looking closer at the growing conditions of the first plant. And by repeating the same conditions, the team was able to coax some success. Plants growing in warmer conditions started to produce flowers of a slightly different morphology towards the end of the blooming cycle. After nearly 300 attempts at pollinating these flowers, a handful of fruits were formed!

From these fruits, over 100 viable seeds were produced. What's more, these seeds germinated and the seedlings began to mature. Even more exciting, the seedlings were a healthy mix of both male and female plants. Thanks to Kew's dedicated work, we now know that café marron is protandrous, meaning its male flowers are produced before female flowers.

However, the story doesn't end here. Something surprising happened as the seedlings continued to grow. The resulting offspring looked nothing like the adult plant. Where the adult plant has round, green leaves, the juveniles were brownish and lance shaped. This was a puzzle but not entirely surprising because the immature stage of this shrub was not known to science. Amazingly, as the plants matured they eventually morphed into the adult form. The question remained, why go through such drastically different life stages?



Leaves of immature (left) and mature (right) café marron

©Wolfgang Stuppy©The Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

The answer has to do with café marron's natural predator, a species of giant tortoise. The tortoises are attracted to the bright green leaves of the adult plant. By growing dull, brown, skinny leaves while it is still at convenient grazing height, the plant makes itself

almost invisible to the tortoise. It is not until the plant is out of the range of this armoured herbivore that it morphs into its adult form. Essentially the young plants camouflage themselves from the most prominent herbivore on the island.

Half of the first 1000 seeds were sent back to Rodrigues to be used in restoration efforts. As of 2010, 300 of those seeds have been germinated, opening up more opportunities for reintroduction into the wild. Those early trials will set the stage for more restoration efforts in the future. It is rare that we see such an amazing success story when it comes to such an endangered species. We celebrate these efforts because they remind us to keep trying even if all hope seems to be lost. My hat is off to Carlos Magdalena and the dedicated team of plant conservationists and growers at Kew.

<http://www.indefenseofplants.com/blog/2018/11/14/the-resurrection-of-caf-marron>

Original post on November 15, 2018

CRFG NEWS: From the Editor

Request for Participation – March 16 – 17 at NHM

We *really* need your help, please let us know your availability as soon as possible! Contact Emory at historian@crfg-la.org by 1/6/19 to sign up!

The CRFG has been invited to participate in the 5th Annual L.A. Nature Fest at the Natural History Museum. The event will run March 16th - 17th, 2019. The Museum will be celebrating L.A.'s impressive biodiversity. One of the festival's main goals is to share local stories of native, introduced, and invasive species to the region.

The CRFG would host an informational or activity table at the event. Details are still being worked out, and our participation is contingent on having a sufficient number of volunteers lined up. Since Registration closes so soon, we need to know no later than January 6th how many people are interested in working at the booth.

If enough people sign up, Emory will contact those who reply and let them know our project is a go by

Jan 8th. Unfortunately the first day of the event coincides with our own field trip to Sylmar High School, so please be sure you can get to the Natural History Museum in good time for your shift.

We need people to set up the booth on March 16 between 8-9 am.

The event runs from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm on Saturday and from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm on Sunday. We hope to have enough people to work several shifts each day. Volunteers are needed to clean up our display(s) starting at 5 PM on Sunday, March 17th.

Ideally, 2-3 people would be working our table at a time, in 2-3 hour shifts. That would mean that we need as many as 24 volunteers.

Emory believes that this exhibit would provide an excellent outreach opportunity for recruiting new members. It was a similar exhibit at the Ventura County Fair that first attracted his own interest in the organization decades ago.

I really need to emphasize that time is short for us to register to participate at the LA Nature Fest. Please let Emory know what day(s) and time(s) you would be willing to help out. Thank you very much!

Grafting Addendum included with Newsletter

This January's newsletter gets a special addendum: illustrated instructions for performing a Vee graft. Your attachment also offers useful advice for scion selection and preparation.

Request for ideas

Now I have a request. All CRFG members, if you're willing to share your secret, what is your favorite place (nursery, hardware store, grocery, discount shop, etc.) to get new plants, and why? I would love to write an article, or maybe a series of articles, with great tips on the best plant sources. Please send your ideas to editor@crfg-la.org. Thanks in advance and I hope to hear from you!

-Deborah Oisboid, Editor