

# LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

July 2013 Volume XVIII Issue

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

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## JULY MEETING

Date: July 27, 2013

Time: 10:00 A.M.

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

**Program:** Tucked into a green and lush area of the San Fernando Valley, Sylmar High School makes you feel as if you were hundreds of miles from downtown LA. It is here at Sylmar High School, that **Steve List** an incredible horticulture program. What an inspiration! Come and hear him explain what goes on in the program he runs for the high school students and let's brainstorm ways in which our Chapter can further this wonderful program. (Be sure to read *Words from our Chairman*—page2)

**Gerry Katz** will give a photograph tour of his place in Somis. You may remember visiting his fantastic garden in 2012. He will now share with us an update on all that is going on in his wonderful garden.

**Charles Portney** will be talking about the plants he is donating to our Chapter. Let's follow Charles' generous lead and also bring in plants for the sale.

**ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!!** If your last name begins with **A-M** please bring something for our **July 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.**

## AUGUST MEETING

Date: Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday August 25<sup>th</sup>

Time: 8 am on Friday

Place: South Coast Field Station

Program: Annual Pitahaya Festival

The UC Extension Center in Irvine, under the direction of **Ramiro Lobo** will be conducting the annual **Pitahaya Festival**. The location is at the **South Coast Field Station, 7601 Irvine Boulevard, Irvine, CA 92618**

The dates will be on **Friday August 23<sup>rd</sup>** (conference-with wonderful speakers); **Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup>** (research field day, lectures, pitahaya cuttings and fruit tasting)). There is a fee to cover the cost and help to maintain the pitahaya/dragon fruit collection. **Further information about registration will be sent to you at a later date.**

If you do not wish to attend either or both of these events you are welcome to come on **Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup>** to the **Valdivia** home. Edgar and Pat will have tours **from 10 am to 12 pm** of their wonderful pitahaya collection as well as tasting (no charge).

**\*\*\*CRFG FESTIVAL OF FRUIT IN HAWAII-SEPTEMBER 26-OCTOBER 4\*\*** (For more Information go to our *Fruit Gardener Magazine*)



## WORDS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Los Angeles Chapter friends,

I have a dream, maybe it isn't as big as one of my modern day hero's, Dr. Martin Luther King's; but it's mine and very important to me. At a recent lunch with different garden club presidents, we were discussing the average age of membership in our organizations. Now, although it wasn't a scientific study, our estimations were 60 to 70+ years as the average ages of garden club members.

The California Rare Fruit Growers and many other garden clubs, along with growing flowers and delicious and exotic fruit, are also growing old. And like any organization we have to attract the next generation. And that's my dream: ***Bring in the next generation; pass on to them what we have learned!***

That's why many of us are working in the local High Schools, passing on information, and what we have learned to the next generation. We are teaching such things as grafting, fruit tree propagation, fruit tree pruning, vegetable gardening, composting, and soil enrichment to students. There are three high schools, a middle school and even a few elementary schools in the San Fernando Valley where we are teaching these skills.

**Steve List**, one of our chapter members, is the Horticulture instructor at Sylmar High School. Many of our chapter members visited the school in March for the Tree Symposium and in June of this year for a tour. I've discussed and am discussing ways with board members as to how our chapter can be proactive in working with the schools. Believe me, opportunities abound! At our July meeting, we will discuss this more and Steve will update us on how our chapter can help. I've found that networking with other organizations, sharing information and materials builds relationships that make us all stronger. Will you join with me and others? Together we can make a difference.

Dreaming,

Jim Schopper

## TWO TYPES OF CARDAMON



**True Cardamom**

Article by **Debbie Oisboiad** (LA Chapter Member)

Cardamom is one of the highest priced and most expensive spices. (Saffron and vanilla rank first.) The seeds have a pleasant aroma and a characteristic warm, slightly pungent taste. True (or small) cardamom is identified as *Elettaria Cardamomum* and is referred to as the 'Queen of Spices'. But there's also false or dwarf cardamom, *Alpinia Nutans*.

Both of these plants are tropical shade lovers in the family Zingiberaceae. They grow from a rhizome, and their true stem is underground while the leafy clusters on the pseudostems form above ground. Leaves are very long, lance-shaped, and dark green on both plants.

In spite of these similarities, it is not too difficult to tell them apart. *Alpinia*, the "false" cardamom, is the easiest to find in the United States. It has glossy, aromatic leaves on smaller plants 2 – 3 feet tall. It rarely blooms, but when it does the flowers are quite beautiful and resemble those of shell ginger, to which it is closely related. It is an easy-going plant, and frequently mislabeled in local nurseries as *Elettaria*. Gently brushing the leaves is all it takes to release their spicy

cardamom-like aroma.



False Cardamom

*Alpinia Nutans* is an evergreen perennial, hardy to zone 7. It is very easy to grow, and can grow from a small rhizome division into an enormous specimen in just a couple of years. It prefers a shady, tropical environment. If protected it will die back to the ground, but will re-emerge from the rhizomes in the spring, as long as the ground doesn't freeze. The flower spikes appear on the ends of mature canes. (Don't cut down the foliage in winter or you won't get blooms.) They do not grow seeds; however the aromatic leaves can be used to add a little flavor to foods. (The related shell ginger, *Alpinia zerumbet*, has a low level of toxicity, and contact with shell ginger sap sometimes causes minor skin and/or eye irritation.)

The leaves of true cardamom, on the other hand, are not glossy. They have a slightly fuzzy texture but very little or no fragrance. *Elettaria Cardamomum* grows in clusters of up to 20 shoots which can reach 10 – 12 feet in height. Their flowers grow on short stalks along the ground. It takes 2 to 3 years for a young cardamom plant to produce flowers. These are small, pale green and inconspicuous at first glance, but a closer look reveals that each flower has a larger white petal with a lovely delicate violet pattern.

*Elettaria* pods are harvested by hand while still green, to avoid splitting and loss of the precious seeds. They are then dried and sold whole to retain flavor. Other varieties of cardamom, such as black, are harvested later in their growth cycle.

By the way, the Zingiberaceae family also includes ginger (*Zingiber*), galangal (*Alpinia galanga*), and turmeric (*Curcuma*). In these plants the underground stem (rhizome) is the commercial product.

Resources used:

<http://www.eolss.net/Sample-Chapters/C10/E1-05A-49-00.pdf>  
<http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/59557/#ixzz2UYW4QyTN>

<http://www.randys-tropicalplants.com/Alpinia-nutans.html>

<http://plantsandrocks.blogspot.com/2012/03/queen-of-spices.html>

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## CARDAMOM ROSE MERINGUE

- 2 egg whites
- \* 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- \* 2/3 cup white sugar
- \* 1/4 cup water
- \* 2 teaspoons rose extract (see note)
- \* 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- \* 1/8 teaspoon salt
- \* 1 drop red food coloring (optional)

Preheat oven to 225 degrees F and then line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

In a bowl or mixer beat egg whites and cream of tartar together with an electric mixer on high speed until the mixture forms stiff peaks.

In a small saucepan combine sugar, water, rose extract, cardamom, salt, and food coloring over low heat and bring to a simmer, stirring until the sugar has dissolved completely. Continue to simmer the mixture for a minute or two, stirring constantly.

Then very slowly pour the syrup in a thin stream into the beaten egg whites, beating constantly with electric mixer on high speed. You must be very careful to avoid being splattered by the hot syrup!

Beat until the syrup is incorporated and the meringue is stiff and shiny.

Drop by spoonfuls or pipe into rosettes with a star tip onto the prepared baking sheet.

Bake in the preheated oven until the meringues are hard, 1 to 1 1/2 hours; turn off the oven, and allow them to cool inside the oven to finish baking the insides.

### Note:

If you do not have rose extract, you can use 1 Tbls of rose water in its place; reduce the amount of water in the recipe by 1 tsp. Makes 18-20 Cookies

### FRUITERS FANTASY

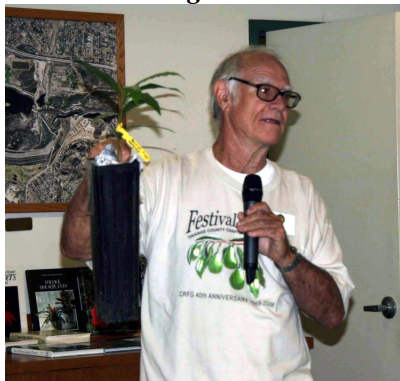
Fabulous 4 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath home. 2500 sq. ft. with tropical and exotic fruit trees galore in ideal Thousand Oaks setting.

Call Phil at 805 231-9832 for details  
\$619,000 non negotiable. No brokers



## LOOKING BACK

By Debbie Schopper  
Member at Large



*Roger*



*Rick*

### MAY MEETING

Our May meeting was a double treat! First, Roger Meyer delighted us with slides that he titled, "Travels with Roger and Shirley". We traveled with Roger and Shirley (via the slides) to the exotic lands of Italy, Israel, New Zealand, Australia, Florida, the South Pacific and the Caribbean. We viewed beautiful slides of botanical gardens, tropical research station, and many orchards. We were entertained with stories from other countries and places, and we were educated on the growing of such rare fruits as mangosteens, chupa chupa, jujube, mamey, sapote, miracle fruit, jack fruit, praying hands banana, and pitahaya (dragon fruit).

**Roger and Shirley** also brought an assortment of fruit trees and plants for sale to our chapter members. Also available for purchase were grafting DVD's.

**Rick Yessayian** was the second speaker for our May meeting and he spoke on the subject "What Happens at a Festival of Fruit?" Rick showed slides of some of our previous Festivals of Fruit and spoke about several, including 2012 Santa Rosa Festival of Fruit & Heirloom Seed Expo. , 2011 The Year of the Pomegranate held in Arizona, 2010 Festival in Cal Poly, 2009 Redwood Chapter, and 2008 Orange County's Festival of Fruit, the year of the Avocado. This year the Festival of Fruit will be in the beautiful

state of Hawaii, from September 26 to October 5. Make your reservations which may include a cruise (your option).

### JUNE MEETING

The June meeting was held at the grounds of Sylmar High School. **Steve List**, Horticulture Instructor and LA Chapter member invited us to tour the Horticulture transformation that has taken place at Sylmar High School. Students were on hand to guide us through the grounds, sign us in, and answer any questions that we had. Steve is training, certifying, and educating students with skills that will be transferable to the job market. Steve also has been working with MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity).

Two speakers addressed our group. **Toby Lebron**, Territory Manager of Kellogg Garden Products, Inc. <http://www.KelloggGarden.com> Toby spoke on Kellogg, the family owned company that has been perfecting soils, mulches, amendments and fertilizers since 1925. Their products under the Kellogg and Gardner & Bloom names can be found in most garden centers. Kellogg products are OMRI approved, and some products contain mycorrhizae, the beneficial fungus.

The second speaker, **Dennis** from ANC Technology made a power point presentation demonstrating the solar powered, moisture based irrigation system that he invented and sells. This system with an Intelligent Controller will water when the moisture is at a certain level. It can also show if a pipe is broken. As one member stated, "This is the real deal!"

Every member who left the June meeting did so with tomato plants, impatiens, and gerbera daisies.



**Steve List**