

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2016 Volume XXI Issue 4

MEETING

Date: July 23, 2016

Time: 10:00 a.m.

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

Program: "Unusual Fruit From Around the World" - **Steven Alan Murray Jr** is a fifth generation California young farmer who grew up on his family's cherry farm, Murray Family Farms, located near Irvine. His research facility is filled to the brim with over 400 species of 2,000 varieties of rare fruit and is growing rapidly. He has traveled to over 45 different countries and in addition to his native tongue, English, he speaks Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, & Portuguese. Steven is active in CRFG, Vice Pres. of Kern Chapter, on the Board of the North American Fruit Explorers, and has received scholarships from the CRFG Orange County Chapter and from the whole organization in 2012.

Chapter Board Meeting to Follow

Attention All Members: If your last name begins with A-M 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.

AUGUST

There will not be a meeting in August.

If you are interested in attending **The Festival of Fruit 2016 *The Year of Edible Landscaping: Apples to Zapotes***, the dates are August 26-28.

Updates from Central Coast CRFG: *If you haven't registered yet for Festival of Fruit, don't wait another minute! Some of the garden tours are already full, but we still have 23 great tours to choose from.*

New speakers have been added to Saturday's program. We have speakers talking about: Edible Succulents; Unusual Edibles with Strange Aesthetic Appeal; Honey Bees & Pollination; The Mystery of Chill; Transforming Dirt Into Soil; Heirloom Apples; The Secrets of Citrus History Revealed; Figs! Blackberries! And so much more.

Read all about the Festival and its speakers and the garden tours at <http://festivaloffruit.org>.

SAVE THE DATE

August 27th – No Meeting

September 24th – Meeting - Mark Steele speaking on bananas

October 22nd - Field Trip TBD

November 19th – Field Trip – La Verne Nursery (Note: date does not conflict with Thanksgiving)

December 10th - Sepulveda Gardens - Holiday Party (Note: date does not conflict with other Chapters' events)

2016 Chapter Officers & Committees

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Words From Our Chairman



Dear CRFG Los Angeles chapter members,

HEAT WAVE!

Today's weather report: low clouds then sunny and **HOT**, during the day high of 97 and low of 66. Thank God we don't live in Death Valley with a forecast of 124/89 degrees today! What relief no triple digit temperature's today. We have been experiencing very high temperatures in the valleys and inland area's lately. Last Monday our thermometers read 112 degrees, plants and trees wilted from the heat.

I've had to throw out my water conservation books and reset my garden watering timer to water three times a day just to keep plants and veggies from dying. I'm still watering daily because there are no restrictions for watering every day with a garden hose.

A nurseryman once told me the trick to keeping potted plants alive especially if they are in those black plastic pots you get from the nursery is to twice water them, they develop channels and the water runs out of them too quickly for the plant roots to absorb any water. So water each one and then about a half hour later water them all again, this will force the potting soil to rehydrate once again.

There are all kinds of watering devices for sale on line from hand blown glass watering globes to watering cans and automatic watering kits for when you go on vacation. These can be pricey but gives you peace of mind when you can't be there. Remember that at the last Tree Symposium in March, Tom Spellman from David Wilson

Nurseries said, to invest in a couple of moisture meters because it's easy to over water and in these heat waves to under water and suffer plant losses.

And please don't forget your animals both indoor and outdoor by supplying plenty of fresh cool water to your dogs, cats, rabbits, chickens, etc. A friend called me and said she lost her rabbit because of the high heat and she said it had plenty of water.

It looks like we are in for a hot dry summer. July, August and September can be very hot so remember while outdoors caring for your plants, keep yourself hydrated and drink lots of water!

Growing together,

Jim

PS: "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need" Marcus Tullius Cicero

Best,

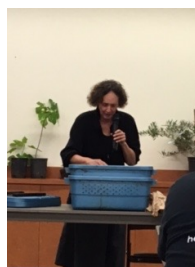
Jim Schopper

LOOKING BACK

Photos courtesy of Edgar Valdivia, Emory Walton and Catherine Diaz

May Meeting

Guest Speaker Ronni Kern - Vermiculture



Honoring Students



Huntington



Library



Pesticides in Big Box plants: A brief survey of local nurseries about their use of Imidacloprid Contributed by Member Deborah Oisboid

For me, it started with a plant tag. I was in line for one of the free trees being given away by LADWP/Cityplants (cityplants.org) as part of their campaign to make the city greener. The event was held at a Home Depot hardware store, and while waiting in line I noticed a tag in a potted succulent that said the dirt in that container had been treated with a pesticide. When I asked, I was told that the store requires all growers who add neonicotinoids in the potting soil to label those plants clearly. Why? What's a neonicotinoid?

It is an insecticide that mimics nicotine. Nicotine is naturally found in many plants (including tobacco) and is toxic to insects. Neonicotinoids were developed in the early 1990s because they showed reduced toxicity to wildlife compared with previously used organophosphate and carbamate insecticides. Imidacloprid and Clothianidin are used to control destructive sucking insects in gardens as well as termites and fleas on pets. However.

It has been suggested that neonicotinoids may be a partial cause of Colony Collapse Disorder. The Disorder, known as CCD, is where beehives lose a large percentage of their worker bees, and is a major problem in commercial agriculture because honeybees are the primary pollinator of crops.

The USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has been investigating this, as is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). According to the LA Times, "Several studies have linked high levels of neonicotinoids to decreased foraging, failures of queen bees, breakdowns in hive communication and other colony-threatening phenomena. Last year, however, a study suggested that exposure to levels of the pesticide [used] on most farms would pose no significant negative effects on bee colonies." [2] Basically, the worst problems happen when combinations of bad things happen all at once: the timing of a pesticide application, the health and

stress level of a colony, mixes and interactions of pesticides, crop type, weather, and so on. There is a wild beehive in a tree in my yard. I love my "girls" and don't want anything bad to happen to them. However, in the past 10 months they swarmed at least three times (which I understand is unusual) and were very quiet for about 2 months after the last swarming. I began to wonder if it had anything to do with all the plants recently added to my yard that were purchased from so-called "Big Box" stores such as Home Depot and Lowes. So I called several companies to ask what their policy is on Imidacloprid, since that pesticide seems to be at the center of this controversy.

What I found was that Imidacloprid is sometimes used and sometimes not used. It mostly depends on the company growing the plants in the first place, companies such as Monrovia or Color Spot. All plant nurseries are required to follow EPA rules regarding the pesticide, and right now they mandate its use on particular types of plants, particularly those being transported across the state. Plants identified as "organic" do not require the pesticide. Meanwhile, the EPA is reviewing the use of four pesticides with the intention of reducing their use. "Preliminary pollinator risk assessments for [imidacloprid,] clothianidin, thiamethoxam, and dinotefuran, are scheduled to be released for public comment in December 2016." [3]

You may want to ask your local nursery about their policy on the use of neonicotinoids. But be prepared to either get a blank stare (some companies took several days to get back to me) or a very long and detailed answer. Here are the companies I contacted, and the information they provided. Your results may vary.

- **Home Depot** says they comply with the EPA and label all plants wherever Imidacloprid has been used. "Organic" plants do not require labels. They do not apply the pesticide: it all depends on the company from which the plant originates.
- **Lowes & Wal-Mart** (same owners) began reducing the use of Imidacloprid about 48 months ago. They knew of some problems as long ago as

2014 and originally planned to stop by 2016, however not all of their suppliers have stopped using the pesticide; Lowes/Wal-Mart now estimate they will finish in 2019.

- **OSH** told me that all shrubs - particularly those shipped from Southern to Northern California - and all citrus trees are required to be treated (called a soil "drench"). However bedding plants, perennials, annuals, and veggies are not treated.
- **Armstrong:** The agent told me EPA rules require neonicotinoids in all nursery plants. Organic plants do not use the pesticide.
- **Green Thumb Nursery:** Their supplier on Canoga Avenue does not drench their dirt. Their potting soil is purchased as "organic" and does not include neonicotinoids.
- **Cityplants.org** is the group that provides free shade (and fruit) trees to LADWP households. Their source does not use neonicotinoids.



References

- <http://www.ars.usda.gov/news/docs.htm?docid=15572>
- <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-pesticide-bees-20160106-story.html>
- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/epa-releases-first-four-preliminary-risk-assessments-insecticides-potentially-harmful>
- <http://www.nurserymag.com/article/home-depot-mandates-neonic-tag>
- <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lowes-pesticides-idUSKBN0N023F20150409>
- <https://entomologytoday.org/tag/imidacloprid/>