

# LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2017 Volume XXII Issue 1a

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

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## FIELD TRIP – Sylmar High School

**SPECIAL GUEST - Tom Spellman, lecturing**

**Date:** March 25, 2017

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. *PLEASE NOTE THE EARLY TIME*

**Place:** Sylmar High School  
13050 Borden Ave  
Sylmar, CA 91342

**Program:** Tours of Sylmar High School's agricultural gardens and hothouse, followed by the **Fruit Tree Symposium** by **Tom Spellman** of *Dave Wilson Nursery*.

**Potluck to follow.** Please bring a dish that will serve 8 – 10 people. Remember, students will be joining us.

## FIELD TRIP: Nancy Weilgart home

**Date:** April 22, 2017

**Time:** 10:00 am

**Place:** (private address)

**Program:** Garden **Tour.** Some of the fruit trees Nancy has growing include citrus, peach, plum pomegranate, apricot, nectarine and figs. Many of her starts are thanks to the CRFG auctions such as the dragon fruit, sugar cane and elderberry. As you know Nancy has often brought her little grandson to our meetings and with him in mind has included some really pleasant areas in her garden for parents and grandparents to enjoy while outside.

*Chapter Members Only*

## **SAVE THE DATES**

### **CALENDAR FOR 2017 LA CHAPTER**

**May 27<sup>th</sup> - Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens**

**June 24<sup>th</sup> - Field Trip**

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> - Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens**

August 26<sup>th</sup> - No Meeting planned (yet)

**September 23<sup>rd</sup> – Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens**

**October 28<sup>th</sup> - Field Trip**

**November 18<sup>th</sup> – Meeting - Sepulveda Gardens**

**December 16<sup>th</sup> - Sepulveda Gardens - Holiday Party**

## Words From Our Chairman



Dear CRFG members,

Greetings, I hope this letter finds you all in good health and spirits. Well, it's another rainy day in Los Angeles, and I'm thankful for every day it does rain. And it's a perfect day to stay inside and write a newsletter to our members.

I've been busy in the garden this year. In November, as my friend Bob at L.E. Cooke advised, I shut off all irrigation to my fruit trees. This is done so as not to wash all the sugars away from the roots. And, if it keeps raining, I may not turn on the water until sometime in late March/April. Because of all the chill hours and rains, I'm expecting a great stone fruit harvest.

I seem to have a bore problem on my Santa Rosa plum, almond and hybrid trees, pluots, apriums and plumcots. I sprayed them with a dormant oil spray, and hopefully this will protect my trees. Always spray twice: first before buds form, and again just before the blossoms open. I also fed them with G&B Organics Fertilizers some with Fish Meal 9-4-1 and others with All Purpose 4-4-4 a balanced mix. I also transplanted eleven pomegranates out of five gallon plastic pots and ran a separate drip line to each one of them; ten were Russian varieties that I got from U.C. Davis. I am going to try and grow them into single trunk trees, instead of bushes. I'm so excited now that the pomegranates are in the ground, they were in pots for years... What in the world took me soooooo long?!!!!

Then I transplanted all my potted blueberries into the ground. (My friend, Steve List, did not

agree with this. He grows his blueberries in pots and they do terrific.) I used a heavy dose of peat moss and coffee grounds, mulched with pine needles and installed a separate drip line to water them. I had them in five gallon black plastic nursery cans with no dedicated irrigation. They did not do well; I was not watering them as I should have. Then Steve told me to fertilize 2 months after transplanting with a light dose of Cottonseed Meal. I used G&B Organics Fertilizer 5-2-1. The blueberries appear to be doing fine and are just beginning to leaf and blossom out.

Well, I hope your garden/orchard is progressing nicely. I look forward to a great year of spending time in the garden and spending time with friends like you.

Best,  
Jim Schopper

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## LOOKING BACK

By Debbie Schopper, Member at Large

### February Meeting

How delightful to have our favorite member/speaker, Charles Portney at this month's meeting. Charles spoke on the topic "Propagation". He began our meeting introducing the many and various plants and trees that he propagated and also plants and trees other club members brought to the meeting.



All plants were then part of a silent auction for members to bid on. Plants included Cherry of the Rio Grande, lemongrass, golden



tamarillos, alpine strawberries, succulents, sago palms, paprika seeds, Becky's Mystery Banana, Flavor Supreme

Plumcot, black sapote, several fig varieties, parsel and French sorrel, to name a few.

Charles spoke of the various types of propagation (forming new plants): seeds, air layering, leaf cutting, grafting, divisions, root cuttings, root stock, root stems, soil layering, dodo birds (you had to be there to understand this one), accidental propagation and compost volunteers.

Recommended books: [Seed to Seed](#), [Fruits of Warm Climates](#), and [Sunset Western Garden Book](#).

We were challenged to try these various ways of propagation. Find out which ways are the easiest and most challenging methods, observe, keep a log, keep learning, approach this as fun because each new plant is a miracle, come on, get hooked!

### January Meeting

Our LA Chapter meeting started out with a whopping 80 plus in attendance. This was, of course, our scion exchange meeting, a most popular gathering each year. Member Bill Brandt demonstrated grafting and answered questions from members.

Bill volunteers at various high schools in the San Fernando Valley and Ventura areas teaching grafting to students. Member Barry Levine volunteers in the Antelope Valley areas, teaching grafting to horticulture students.

Bill and Barry are both asking for your help in this venture. Come and volunteer and see for yourself how these students respond to learning this



technique. I remember a very excited student from Sylmar High School who grafted every fruit tree on her property and many neighbors' trees. Remember, the next generation needs you!

In addition to the scion exchange, there was a



plant sale and silent auction. And, a great lunch was provided by our members. What a way to begin 2017.

### December Meeting

December is when we celebrate with our annual Holiday Party. There were year-end tributes, thank yous and photos, delicious food prepared by our members, raffles, a white elephant gift exchange, and entertainment. Who could ask for anything more?

Our delightful and talented chapter member, Marcia Melcombe entertained us with holiday songs and had us all singing Feliz Navidad, the CRFG song, and Jingle Bells. It is always a joy and a highlight when Marcia sings. Thank you, Marcia for sharing your gift with us and getting us in the holiday mood. A wonderful ending to our 2016 year.



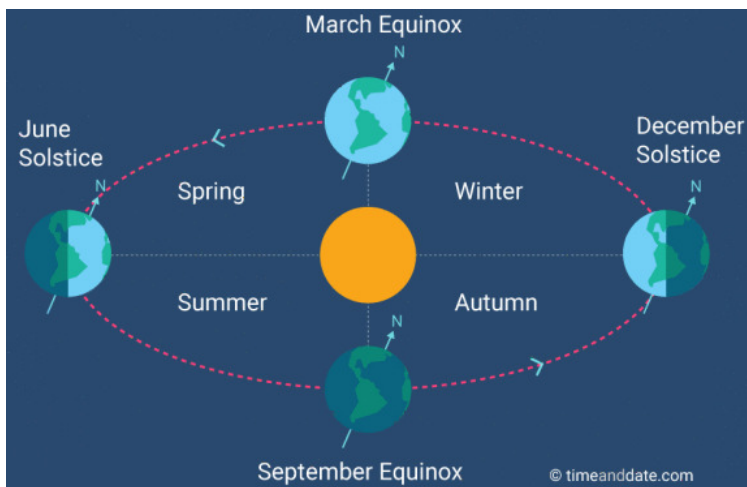
## Time of the Season:

### Info & Garden Tips from The Old Farmer's Almanac

The first day of spring this year is Monday, March 20, 2017 at exactly 3:28 A.M. PST. The equinox happens at the same moment worldwide, regardless of time zone.

Astronomically speaking, the equinox marks spring's beginning in the Northern Hemisphere (and fall's arrival in the Southern Hemisphere).

All over the world, days and nights are approximately equal. The name **equinox** comes from Latin words which mean "equal night" - **aequus** (equal) and **nox** (night).



On the equinox, Earth's two hemispheres are receiving the Sun's rays about equally because the tilt of the Earth is zero relative to the Sun. By the way, the Earth never orbits upright, but is always tilted on its axis by about 23.5 degrees.

### Gardening Tips for March/April for Los Angeles (Southwest Region)

This list merges Almanac recommendations for March/April. For the full list check out <http://www.almanac.com/gardening/tips/CA/Los%20Angeles/03>

#### CLEANING:

- Remove winter-damaged branches.
- Prune evergreen and summer-flowering trees and shrubs.
- Prune frost-sensitive citrus trees after new spring growth.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs only after they finish blooming.

#### PREPARING:

- Divide and replant summer- and fall-blooming perennials.
- Apply mulch around the base of edibles and flowers to conserve moisture (and prevent weeds).
- Fertilize deciduous fruit trees when they leaf out. NOTE: Too much nitrogen usually results in a smaller fruit harvest.

#### PLANTING:

- As weather warms up, plant new citrus trees.
- Plant almost every kind of landscape plant, and sow seeds for annual flowers.
- Plant transplants such as: artichokes, eggplants, peppers, and tomatoes.
- Plant herbs such as: basil, chamomile, chives, lavender, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, sage, savory, thyme, and yarrow.
- Sow Summer vegetables: beans, corn, cucumbers, melons, green onions, peanuts, pumpkins, summer squashes, and sunflowers.
- Add carrots, cucumbers, melons, okra, peppers, squashes, and sunflowers as the soil warms up.

## OTHER:

- Do successive plantings so you have a continuous harvest throughout the growing season.
- Beware of pests that are attracted to new growth, such as aphids and cutworms.
- Beware of insects and other pests in your garden. Keep an eye on your garden for aphids, spider mites, etc., and take action when necessary to eliminate the pests.
- Arbor Day is celebrated in California on March 7 in honor of horticulturist Luther Burbank's birthday. Burbank is famous for his work improving varieties of flowers (like Shasta Daisy), fruits (Santa Rosa Plum), grains, grasses, vegetables (Russet Burbank Potato), and trees.

## A Rainbow of Hibiscus

By Deborah Oisboid, *Editor*

When someone says "hibiscus," the image of a dark-haired island beauty with a 5-petalled flower behind her ear typically comes to mind. The yellow hibiscus is Hawaii's state flower.

**Ma'ohauhele** is the Hawaiian term for yellow Hibiscus. It literally means "green traveling introduced hibiscus", perhaps due to the way the flowers turn green as they dry out. There are 7 known native **Hawaiian Hibiscus** species. But there are more than the Hawaiian varieties. In fact, there are many HUNDRED different species. The hibiscus genus includes both tropical and non-tropical species.



**Sharon.** It is the national flower of South Korea.

One of the best known species is **Hibiscus Rosa-Sinensis**, also known as tropical or Chinese hibiscus. It originates from the Indian Ocean /



East Asia area. It is used in Chinese herbology and in India for haircare. Some of the species are used for herbal teas.

Another edible variety is **Hibiscus Sabdariffa**,



the 'Jamaican cocktail' hibiscus also known as **Roselle**. It originates from India to Malaysia, but came to the United States from Jamaica where it is also known as "Flor de Jamaica." It is used as a

vegetable and for making teas and jam of its sepals (calyxes).

For sheer impact, try hardy hibiscus, **Hibiscus Moscheutos**. It is a cold-hardy perennial wetland plant that can grow into large colonies. These Hibiscus have huge dinner plate sized blooms 6 inches across. Bees and butterflies just love them!



For a different type of showy, look at newer varieties of **Hibiscus Acetosella**. Red-leaf hibiscus such as 'Haight Ashbury' and 'Maple Sugar' are grown for their leaf shape and color, which are similar to Japanese Maple leaves. The burgundy flowers are quite plain compared to the deep bronze leaves. The bushes are fast-growing, hardy, drought-tolerant, and provide a stunning backdrop in any garden.



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**Hibiscus Mutabilis** is hardy to Zone 7b and is seen throughout southern states which explains its common name, Confederate rose. It has huge flowers and can have single or double petals.



**Hibiscus Coccineus** has unique, palmate leaves. Also known as Texas hardy hibiscus, scarlet rosemallow, swamp hibiscus and crimson rosemallow, it is native to Texas and much of the deep south. It is often found near swamps and other boggy conditions.



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Interesting facts about hibiscus:

- Large leaves of some varieties attract Japanese beetles and grasshoppers.
- All varieties are very easy to grow and provide great flowers or landscape foliage.
- Blossom drop on tropical varieties is a sure sign of distress. Check soil moisture and ambient outdoor temperature.
- Hibiscus are excellent pollinator plants, being attractive to bees, hummingbirds, butterflies and other pollinators.

**Sources:**

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/2699>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hibiscus>

<http://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/flowers-and-plants/flowers/how-to-grow-hibiscus>

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## Letters to the Editor

Here are my observations about our Chapter's recent scion exchange. I really look forward to this yearly program since it gives me an opportunity to diversify my orchard plus the trees of some of my friends. Those of you who made contributions will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping your fellow chapter members in their goal of growing fruit. Some of you made this project very user friendly. For instance, Lianne Rugeroni included in her package of Methley plum cuttings very readable instructions (printed – not hand written) which included chill requirements, fruit descriptions, etc., -- very thorough. Karen and David Payton packaged their cuttings wrapped in a moist paper towel and proportioned for individual taking.

On the other hand, a few of you did not package your cuttings. The wood became separated and without identification. I noticed one package with the fruit type but not the specific variety. Next year, keep in mind that the scion wood needs to be kept as damp and cool as possible; and with legible and specific identification. This will help ensure that you as a donor have done as much as you can to deliver a meaningful product.

All in all, the attendees went home with useful packages of scion wood.

--Roy Imazu

Have a suggestion? A question? A story to share? Send it to [editor@crfg-la.org](mailto:editor@crfg-la.org) and see it published here!