



# LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2019 Volume XXIV Issue 6

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

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## MEETING:

**Date:** November 23, 2019 at 10:00 am

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

**Program:** Steve Murray - Fruit Around The World  
Steve grows a huge variety of rare fruit - over 550 species of 2000 varieties - and scours the globe for more. He has just returned from a "fruit hunting" in China. He will be discussing fruits which he has encountered across the world in his travels, and there will also be samples of some of the interesting things he has which are currently in season.

**All Members: if your last name begins with A-M please bring something for our refreshment table.**

## MEETING:

**Date:** December 14, 2019 at 10:00 am

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

**Program:** Our annual CRFG-LA Holiday Party!

**MEMBERS (and significant others) ONLY, PLEASE**

**All Members: please bring something for our lunch table.**

Remember this is a full meal, not just snacks. It is a chance to prepare your favorite dish. Please bring a dish that serves 8 - and it would be great if you would include the recipe.

Bring food to share and wear colors of the Season! Once again we can look forward to Marcia Melcombe and Mark Nudelman entertaining us with some wonderful music!

We will be having a white elephant gift exchange, so if you want to participate, wrap up something you think others would like; it does not have to be new, but in "gently used condition." Those that bring a gift will receive a raffle ticket at the door.

## **SAVE THE DATES - CALENDAR FOR 2020 LA CHAPTER**

- January 18 Sepulveda Gardens - Scion Exchange
- February 22 Sepulveda Gardens - Annemiek Schilder - Fruit Pathology
- March 21 Sylmar High School - Dave Wilson
- April 25 Field Trip - TBA
- May 30 Sepulveda Gardens - John Chater - Pomegranates
- June 27 Field Trip- Dr Kiewiet and Kelly Gabysch
- July 25 Sepulveda Gardens - Dave King
- August 15 FESTIVAL OF FRUIT
- September 26 Sepulveda Gardens - TBA
- October 24 Field Trip - TBA
- November 21 Field Trip - TBA
- December 19 Sepulveda Gardens - Holiday Party

# LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

## September (Working) Field Trip

Lots of excellent work was accomplished at our Working Event at the end of September. The Watts house has a beautifully laid out back yard,

with a steep hill behind it terraced into four levels, each with lots of fruit trees stretching along the length. The yard is impressive in scope and organization. It



is a huge amount of work to maintain in any situation, but was rather overgrown due to the sad passing of Dick Watts in June. So our chapter pitched in.



The patio area had become so overgrown there was no place to sit or walk any more. Many trees that were still in pots had produced huge roots that

broke through the plastic and into the ground, and had to be removed with a jackhammer (yes, you read that right!!).

Nearly a score of people worked hard together to clear out deadwood, prune trees, sweep and



sort, and discard whatever needed to be thrown out. A lot of cuttings and a few potted trees were collected. Two huge rented trash dumpsters were filled, as well as half a dozen city-provided green-waste barrels. Edith also had a workman (and his sons) doing some construction on the terraced area.

By the end of our workday the place was much cleaner and we sat down to a well-deserved pizza lunch. Bill Brandt brought some delicious lychee fruit and Paul Talley brought a big box of fresh figs to share.



We hope Edith is enjoying her newly rediscovered patio!

## October Double Field Trip

Two field trips in one day: The attendees were split into two groups, with about 15 - 20 people each, taking turns visiting the two locations. Tours of the Perkins and Portney gardens began at 9 am, and the groups switched to each other's garden between 10:30 - 11:00 am.

### Perkins Garden

The gardens of Lewis Perkins and Tara Fass are a



work in process. Literally. They told us we were taking the "Before" tour. They're halfway through a lot of remodeling and rearranged gardens. Our first sight was

when they removed three large plywood panels from an opening in their hedge (which wasn't there yesterday). We entered along a bare dirt path carved into the ground and lined with wood stakes for a future concrete walkway, and gazed at a tiny plot of land full of so many rare and wonderful plants.

The front yard has exotics such as Cherry of the Rio Grande, Surinam cherry, chamba, a grafted sapote, many types of guava, pecan, "the best smelling macadamia you've ever met," moringa, ginger, curry leaf tree, horseradish, fuchsia, maple-leaf oak, and tree dahlias, as well as several citrus, succulents, and aloes. A giant pine tree resides in the northwest corner, taller than the house.



Surinam Cherry in the Perkins garden

Tara offered some beauty tips using their plentiful aloes: rub the gel directly on your face, hands, and hair. It has no preservatives, softens skin, and works as a curl-enhancer in the hair. Some of the braver souls tried it. It's true, wiping it on your hands does not leave a sticky residue after it dries!

We were introduced to what was left of the driveway, shredded to bare dirt with new pipes for water runoff being installed.

Around in back the garden is thick and tall, and overlooked by a large new patio. Some of the wonderful plants they have in back are Monstera Deliciosa, pecan trees, longan, a jackfruit tree (which has not yet fruited), Oscar and Pakistan mulberries, Malaysian and other guavas, hachiya persimmons, champagne loquat, black sapote, a

grafted fig, and multiple coffee plants: Java and Kona. There were also plenty of non-fruiting plants such as white-flowered "midnight bloomers," white bird-of-paradise, mimosa, and Gabriel's trumpet in three different colors.

A major garden concern right now is to get the slope of the land and plumbing appropriate to move water from the house downhill and into a future cistern/French drain and avoid soggy areas when it rains. They hope to have a follow-up garden tour next year to show off their "After" garden.

### Portney Garden

When Charles Portney's family first moved into the house there was hardly anything edible in the garden. After the 1994 earthquake everything started over from scratch. He calls the native soil "Boca de Santa Monica: sand, stone, and plant diseases."

Over time he has organically converted the front and back yards so nearly everything is edible, with about 20% of his lawn left to walk on. He admits he seriously overplants. And he brags that nothing leaves his

property; he uses NO green barrels. Leaves are raked and bagged for leaf mold, branches are chopped into plant stakes, some deadwood is burned into fireplace ash to increase alkalinity around bananas and other non-acid-lovers; everything else is coarsely chopped and composted. And the fruits of his labor include about 200 - 300 thriving amazing and rare fruit plants, and 150 or so vegetables, herbs, and other plants!



In the front yard is a large stand of Rose Apple, with a small stand of wax jambu up against the house. Surrounding the grassy area are culinary sage, elderberry, two varieties of Mayhaw, goldenberry/cape gooseberry, Satsuma plum, "Goat nipple" berry<sup>1</sup>, Otamala, male and female Allspice (which was fruiting at the time), Mandarinquat, goumi, Malabar chestnut, wampi, fig, apples, stone fruit, jujube, acerola cherry, green sapote (no one in So Cal can get them to fruit but he's trying!), lucuma, Surinam cherry, three types of alpine strawberries, and enough blueberry bushes to allow him to pick multiple gallons of fruit per week when they're in season.



**Fruiting Allspice in the Portney garden**

The back yard is about four times the size of the front but has less room to walk due to the intense plantings. A double-row of strawberry guavas lead to the compost area, and the grassy area is surrounded by shorter plants such as herbs and vegetables. But the rest of the lush area it is stuffed full of figs, Superstar starfruit, Becky's Mystery banana (and other banana varieties), passionfruit, mamey sapote, 6 kinds of pawpaw, cherimoya and atemoya, tea and coffee plants, moringa, naranjilla (VERY spiky), paprika, stevia, horseradish, Violette De Bordeaux fig, Fuyu/hachiya/chocolate/coffeecake persimmons,

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<sup>1</sup> Warning to reader: DO NOT do a generic internet search on "goat nipple berry" or you will have lots of evil results and be offered nasty advertising as well.

multiple guavas, an ice cream bean tree, many citrus varieties including Cara Cara orange, Oro Blanco pomelo, and Etrog citron, sopadilla, mulberries, chayote, black sapote, jelly palm, and too many others to list here without going into multiple pages.

Truly impressive in variety and scope, both gardens are inspirations. Thank you very much to both of the Perkins and to Charles for graciously sharing their amazing gardens with us.

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## Rotten Root (Knot Nematodes)

[Wikipedia](#): Root-knot nematodes are plant parasites from the genus *Meloidogyne*.

Although California has many different species of root-feeding nematodes, the most damaging ones to gardens are the root knot nematodes, *Meloidogyne* species. Root knot nematodes live in the soil of areas with hot climates or short winters. They attack a wide range of plants, including many common vegetables, fruit trees, and ornamentals. They are difficult to control, and they can spread easily from garden to garden in soil, on tools and boots, or on infested plants. About 2000 plants worldwide are susceptible to infection by root-knot nematodes and they cause approximately 5% of global crop loss.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Root-knot\\_nematode](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Root-knot_nematode)

If you've ever seen clusters of knots, swellings and galls on plant roots, you have seen the effects of the root-knot nematode. When the galls are broken open, the enlarged nematode can be seen as a shiny white worm about the size of a pinhead.

Root knots are caused by juveniles penetrating the root to reach the center, usually near a growing tip. As they eat, root cells swell and serve as food sources for females. The female will deposit literally hundreds of eggs in a jelly-like matrix at the root surface. The jelly protects the eggs, allowing them to withstand unfavorable environmental conditions, and helps the eggs overwinter.

While most damage occurs below ground, symptoms can also appear above ground. Galled roots have limited ability to absorb and transport water and nutrients to the rest of the plant. Thus, severely affected plants will often wilt, even in the presence of sufficient soil moisture, especially during the afternoon. Plants also may exhibit nutrient deficiency symptoms such as chlorosis and/or stunting, because they can't absorb nutrients easily from the soil. Crop yield is reduced. Fertilization will not improve these root-knot nematode-induced symptoms.

The most effective strategies for preventing and managing most soil dwelling nematodes are sanitation, employing good cultural practices, crop rotation, and pasteurization/solarization. Soil amendments and biological controls help but are less effective.

Sanitation and Cultural Practices: Avoid introducing nematode-infested plants into growing areas. Use growing media known to be free of nematodes, or pasteurize growing media before planting. Remove infested plant(s) when found, and avoid moving soil from around infested plants to healthy plants. Do not allow irrigation water from around infested plants to run off onto healthy plants, as this also spreads nematodes.

Unless soil is treated first, do not plant susceptible crops in field soils where nematodes have previously been a problem. Provide crops with proper cultural care so that they are vigorous and better able to tolerate feeding by nematodes and other pests. More frequent irrigation of drought-stressed plants can reduce damage caused by root knot nematodes, although it does not reduce the nematode population.

Crop rotation: Do not replant the same type of plant into the old site; rotate crops by replanting with species or varieties more tolerant of, or resistant to, the specific nematodes present.

Pasteurization: Pasteurizing media with heat can control nematodes and other pests in container mix and greenhouse beds. Heat generated during composting can control certain nematodes, but preparing pathogen-free compost requires careful management and monitoring.

Solarization: Solarizing the ground before planting can temporarily reduce nematode populations in the upper 12 inches of soil. Solarization involves covering moist, bare soil with clear plastic for several weeks during hot weather. In some cases, incorporating amendments (such as compost or green manure) or applying low rates of pesticides while solarizing an area can improve nematode control.

Biological Controls. A few plants produce substances known to be detrimental to nematodes. Asparagus, pangola grass, neem, castor bean, and marigold produce substances in their roots that are toxic to at least one kind of nematode. Marigolds are said to be particularly effective against root-knot nematode. However, the most effective marigold protection is not from their naturally-produced nematicide, but by using the plants as a trap crop. The nematode enters roots of the plant but can't develop further in its life cycle, or may be actively killed by the plant when it attempts to feed. Meanwhile, adjacent plants are still susceptible to nematodes.

Growing marigolds as a cover crop means you will need to till them back into the soil at the end of their growing season. Don't expect the influence of the marigolds to be good for more than one crop or maybe one season. Nematodes are quite prolific and populations will quickly return.

A number of other nematode species also can damage home garden and landscape plants, including the ring nematode (*Criconeoides xenoplax*), root lesion nematodes (*Pratylenchus* species), the sugarbeet cyst nematode (*Heterodera schachtii*), the citrus nematode (*Tylenchulus semipenetrans*), the stem and bulb nematode (*Ditylenchus dipsaci*), and others.

Sources:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nematology>  
<https://www.epicgardening.com/root-knot-nematode/>  
<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7489.html>  
<http://www.cdca.ca.gov/phpps/pe/nipm.htm>  
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## Stroz Certified! A follow up

By Deborah Oisboid

The September-October newsletter included an article about certifying new fruit varieties with CRFG. I followed the process to register my own "Stroz" fig variety and have to say the process was quick and easy. The registration

paperwork arrived quickly after I sent in an email request, and was easy to fill out. Marta Matvienko, who instructed me on the process, recommends going into plenty of detail about your plant, describing not only the physical characteristics of the fruit but also of the tree, as well as behavior under seasonal conditions. In the end, your plant is registered and you receive the official paperwork.

FYI, this is what the fruit registration looks like:



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## Secret Source, Part 5

By Deborah Oisboid

*Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not constitute any endorsement or approval by the CRFG.*

Where is your favorite place to get new plants? Let me tell you about some of my local nurseries and why I like them.

Four Seasons Wholesale Nursery, 18840 Nordhoff St. Northridge, CA. 91324. <http://www.4seasonnur.com/> Another family owned and operated business, Four Seasons has excellent placement along Nordhoff St, about a mile from the shopping mall. Although the sign says "Wholesale," they do sell to the public. 20 acres of plants, laid out in sections, with some fantastic prices. However the plants aren't always labeled, so be sure you know what you're looking for. I like their selection of drought-tolerant plants, and usually manage find something different and interesting. Not too many trees or edibles, though.

Bertha's Gardens. 18451 Lassen St, Northridge, CA 91325. (no website)

Literally on the corner of Lassen and Reseda, it has fascinated me for years, located under a plethora of electrical towers, but with a huge field full of plants. I finally checked it out this year. This nursery stock grower is not the largest, but they have some excellent plants for sale. I saw mostly succulents but there were a few fruit trees towards the back. Since pricing is more or less wholesale, it's quite a good deal, especially if you're interested in a large purchase of similar stock items.

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## Editor's Column

(With Classifieds!)

### FIG TREE OFFER: THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

There was so much interest in the Watts Fig Trees that all available trees now found new homes. Thank you all for your help with the garden! It was such a nice day and it really helped a lot. I now have a good back yard and soon a new building in the back.

-Edith Watts

### OFFER: CARMINE-RED BOUGAINVILLEA PLANTS



Lewis Perkins has four bushes that he would like to re-home. Come and dig them up and bring them back to your own garden! They're mature plants which have been cut back to dirt level for easy transport. They will be available after December 11. If interested, please contact [editor@crfg-la.org](mailto:editor@crfg-la.org).

### WANTED: SECRETS

In 2020 I'd like to offer special garden recipes that you, the membership of CRFG, really love to use. If you're willing to share, please send your favorite recipe to [editor@crfg-la.org](mailto:editor@crfg-la.org). Thanks in advance and I hope to hear from you!

-Deborah Oisboid, Editor

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!