



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2020 Volume XXV Issue 6

CRFG-LA meetings at Sepulveda Garden Center are currently suspended. We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy.

Upcoming Chapter Zoom Meetings

For those without computer or smartphone, you will miss the visuals, but you can still listen to the audio stream. Instructions will be sent as soon as we set things up.

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

2020 Chapter Officers & Committees

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ZOOM MEETING:

Saturday, November 21, 10:00 am

Speaker: Steven List

Topic: Tour of Sylmar High's Agriculture Program and Fields

We know Steven List because of his amazing Agriculture / Horticulture Program at Sylmar High School which we visit(ed) every year for the Tree Symposium and Plant Sale. Steve is also a landscape contractor and on the Advisory Committee for Community Forestry. He is a man of many talents and much passion, which he shares not only with his students but with all who have a passion for growing. This will be an exciting, invigorating, and fun tour of all the wonders Steve has established at Sylmar High School. We will start at the beautiful mural dedicated to our dear Tony Stewart, and from there "walk" through the compost pile, the rainwater collection, the vermiculture set up and, of course, see the wonderful pomegranates, persimmons, jujubes, figs, stone fruit, and cherimoyas (and other wonderful plants) which his students have grown. Bring your questions - Steve thrives on dialoging with his listeners. Also be prepared for a few surprises along the way!

ZOOM HOLIDAY PARTY!!

Saturday, December 19, 10:00 am

We'll figure out something, somehow! Probably on Zoom.

SEEKING A NEW PROGRAM CHAIR/TEAM

If you are interested in becoming Program Chair, or being part of a Program Team, please contact any of the CRFG officers (see contact information to the left.)

Thinking positively, I have booked the Sepulveda Garden dates for 2021. I am hoping, like you and the rest of the planet, that 2021 will see us back to living a normal life again!! Please save these dates. Thank you and wishing all of you good health.

--Pat

(HOPEFUL) CALENDAR FOR LA CHAPTER 2021

Jan 23	Sepulveda Gardens	Scion Exchange
Feb 27	Sepulveda Gardens	Speaker
March 27	Field Trip	Sylmar High School
April 24	Sepulveda Gardens	Speaker
May 22	Field Trip	
June 26	Sepulveda Gardens	Speaker
July 24	Field Trip	
August 28	No Meeting	Festival of Fruit
Sept 25	Sepulveda Gardens	Speaker
October 23	Field trip	
Nov 20	Sepulveda Gardens	Speaker
Dec 18	Sepulveda Gardens	Holiday Party

Words From Our Chairman

By Jerry Schwartz



Yeah, this crazy year is almost over. I've been locked up since March and was unable to take care of my yard in Sherwood Forest due to the heat. Topping off at 119 and 120 degrees on consecutive days, and lasting with 104 degrees in October.

Finally, some cool weather has allowed evaluation of my fruiting plants. Lo and behold, they are alive. All my established fruit trees have grown and are now being reduced by 4 to 8 feet. Had one problem: pumpkins planted in early July have not produced. Heat caused the plants to shrivel up. The pumpkin plants are just now flowering on October 31st.

Thank goodness for Zoom and the newsletter! I want to thank Margaret, Pat, Debbie, Karen, the board members, and all the others who held CRFG together this year. Some time in 2021 we will hopefully return to "normal" - whatever that is going to be! Keep planting and enjoying the great rare fruits you grow.

Jerry

MANY THANKS TO PAT VALDIVIA

Written by Karen Payton

We want to thank Pat Valdivia for almost 20 years of wonderful experiences! Pat began her official

L. A. Chapter CRFG service 16 or 17 years ago, as the Chapter Newsletter Editor. By that time, Pat and Ed had become quite active in essential Chapter activities, and Ed – always eager to volunteer Pat's services – persuaded her to accept the position. After several productive years as the Editor, Pat chose, instead, to become Chapter Program Chairman. By that time, the Valdivias, for years, had been recommending the best field trips and clubhouse activities!

Pat has planned 12 or more well-attended meetings each year. She's nailed down not only what events we'd enjoy, but every other detail for regular meetings and special events—dates and sites, adequacy of accommodations, gifts and tributes, transportation and parking, appropriateness of a meal, and so on. She has uncomplainingly juggled availabilities and meeting dates, seasonal considerations, individuals' special needs, and whatever else came up.

We want to express our appreciation for the many outstanding memories she's brought us through the years. She's introduced us to awesome and interesting new fruits, plants for our yards, people and knowledge, and even arranged badges and unique gifts, trophies and tributes. And all along the way, Pat initiated and worked on other Chapter and CRFG, Inc. projects!

The Valdivias have invited us many times to their home, where we've always had a great time and delicious food! Always sensitive to the needs of the Chapter and CRFG, Inc. in general, Pat and Ed have recognized and undertaken improving organizational functioning, and made numerous noteworthy contributions. They created the two remarkable Festivals of Fruit—in 2004 and 2010—that our chapter has hosted in the 24 years they've been members.

There's a great deal more that could be said. In brief, you, THANK YOU, PAT for all you have given us! Finally now YOU can enjoy the meetings and membership with us as freely as we've been able to all this time!

LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid, Editor

September

The speaker for our September meeting was Dr. Matt Daugherty, a Cooperative Extension Specialist in UC Riverside's Department of Entomology. He spoke to us about Backyard Bugs, starting with what he called a "crash course" in entomology.

Did you know *Arthropoda* is the largest family in the Animal Kingdom, including extinct animals? Science has identified about 1 million species of bugs, but it is thought there are possibly 5 - 10 times that number yet to be discovered!

The vast majority of insects are NOT pests. In fact, most insects are kept in check by other insects.

There are more than 30 insect orders (Lepidoptera, Hemiptera, Diptera, etc.), which makes it very challenging to identify everything - too much diversity! And, of course, all "rules" have exceptions.

For example, spiders are typically considered to be predators. It was only a few years ago that plant-eating spiders were identified.

We received anatomy lessons on several types of bugs: *Arthropods* (exoskeletons and segmented bodies), *Insects* (3 segments, 3 leg pairs, 1 antennae pair, usually 2 pairs of wings), and *Arachnids* (2 segments, 4 leg pairs, no antennae, wingless).

True bugs, such as grasshoppers and mites, have "incomplete" metamorphosis: there are 2 - 3 life stages (such as egg, juvenile, adult) where the juveniles are physically similar to the adults. Moths, flies, and beetles have a "complete" metamorphosis set: 4 life stages (egg, juvenile, chrysalis, adult), where the juveniles (larvae) are very physically different from adults.

We then learned how insecticides are designed to target specific points in a bug's lifecycle, usually between stages. They either stop a metamorphosis from occurring, or over-encourage it so the critters don't replicate properly.

Another way to kill a bug is to hamper its breathing. Insects do not have lungs. Pores ("spiracles") on the

body's exterior branch into finer structures inside the body. Body movement pumps air in or pushes it out. Stop the body movement, hamper the breathing.

Insects have a ventral (spinal) nerve cord with collections of nerves called "ganglia" along the length. A "brain" is 3 fused ganglia. Insects have multiple brains along a line! Some insecticides target their nervous system: they block nerve signals or over-stimulate them.

Dr Daugherty then reviewed the concept of "Integrative Pest Management." IPM focuses on long-term prevention of pests or their damage by managing the ecosystem. IPM

combines several methods of pest control (cultural/biological/chemical) with monitoring the situation so each control type can be adjusted as needed.

Cultural controls include partner planting, maintaining a clear area around a plant so insects can't reach it, crop rotation, sanitation, resistant plant varieties, and diversity.

Biological controls include pheromones (used to disrupt mating), classic biocontrol (introduce their natural enemies), and conservation biocontrol (encourage existing natural enemies).

Chemical controls - poisons, bait stations, and so on - are only used when the other two are not effective (enough).

A critical part of IPM is being able to correctly identify the pest itself. Dr Daugherty highly recommends ipm.ucanr.edu, and uses it a LOT himself. It lets you drill down to specific problems. Some topics are covered more thoroughly than other topics but it's all good.

Toward the end of his presentation Dr Daugherty talked about the specific bugs that CRFG members had inquired about during the weeks leading up to this presentation.



CITRUS LEAF MINER - these are moth larvae. They tunnel under the surface of the leaves, distorting them. Miners usually just a cosmetic issue for older trees, although they can stunt growth in younger trees. If needed, control them with systemic insecticides. (Topical poisons won't get inside the leaves.) The problem with frequent pruning is citrus trees want to put out new leaves when pruned - where they get infested again by miners. You should minimize pruning, and limit fertilizing from summer through fall. This will reduce the flush of new growth, and (hopefully!) the problem.

CODDLING MOTH - this fruit tree pest loves apples, pears, walnuts, and quince. The larvae tunnel inside fruit, rotting it from inside out. Apply insecticide (timing is important). Grow early maturing fruit varieties which might avoid the natural lifecycle of borer. Environmental solutions include sanitation (clean up fallen fruit), bagging fruit as it ripens, and trunk banding. (Wrap the trunk with a cardboard band; insects will crawl down and try to pupate inside the cardboard instead of going in to the soil. Then throw out the cardboard.)



Leaf Miners and their damage

LEAF FOOTED BUGS - California has three species of *Leptoglossus*. These bugs love to suck fruit, causing necrosis and fruit drop. They typically attack tomato plants, pomegranates, pistachios, and almonds. (Also lychee and longan, per CRFG member Fang Liu.) Insecticides are rarely recommended against Leaf footed bugs because timing is critical. (They work best against young nymphs.) Physical removal of the bugs

will help. So will clearing weeds (remove their overwinter habitat).

SCARAB - These colorful beetles feed on overripe or spoiling fruit, and rarely cause significant damage. Since they go after fermented fruit smell, try using an inverted funnel trap. Cleanliness measures also help, like cleaning up dropped fruit, sifting the grubs out of the soil, flooding containerized plants, and trapping adults.

"TINY BITING FLIES" - What do you advise when you can't identify the pest? The only description was "tiny biting flies." Mosquitos can be vectors for diseases such as West Nile Virus and Dengue Fever to humans, and heartworm to pets. Fleas could be an invisible biter. The other potential culprit are biting midges. They are SUPER tiny, too small for the naked eye. They are sometimes nicknamed "punkies" or "no-see-ums." Most biting insects are typically crepuscular (dawn and dusk eaters). Limit standing water (buckets, garbage cans, plant trays). But we don't have a lot of control beyond our yard. No-See-Ums are small enough to squeeze through window screens, but it's better than leaving the door open.

COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER - Starting in about 2006, multiple reports came in that beehives were emptying. Upwards to 30% of hives were lost in 2006, where normally about 15% of hives are lost over the winter. CCD has a combination of possible causes: parasites, inbreeding, insecticides, even beekeeping practices. Be skeptical of anyone who says "this is the definitive cause." There is not one single cause. We don't know for sure, but it's most likely a combination of factors.

ANTS - The root of the problem of mealybugs, scale, and aphids are the ants which farm them. Ants provide protection for those insects, and kill off their parasites. If you see a line of ants heading up your tree trunk, you probably have aphids or another problem at the top. Two solutions to ant problems are bait stations (boric acid & sugar water - the ratio can be critical) and Tanglefoot barriers. First wrap a trunk with (flagging) tape - making sure to cover all crevices - and put Tanglefoot on top as a barrier. Dr Daugherty notes you need to maintain the barrier to ensure it keeps the ants out.

MONARCHS - Dr Daugherty was happy to discuss a non-pest insect for a while. He calls the monarch butterfly the "ultimate poster child for entomophiles." Eastern populations migrate to Mexico, West Coast monarchs migrate east-west. They are good pollinators on a wide range of plants: citrus, loquat, jujube, plum, peach, etc. - although bees handle the majority of pollination.

APHIDS - ON MILKWEED - There are multiple species of aphid. The most typical is bright yellow (oleander aphid). They are seasonal, move in and move out. They might scare off monarch caterpillars, but Dr Daugherty couldn't think of any study which supported that idea. He cautioned doing anything against milkweed aphids because you can harm the caterpillars as well. Just wait a while. Predators will eventually find them. Avoid fertilizing the milkweed - aphids respond **STRONGLY** to nitrogen.

The presentation ended with questions and answers about people's personal garden issues. There was an incredible amount of good advice shared and hopefully a lot of problems were solved. Here are some additional resources he recommends:

- ipm.ucanr.edu - as discussed earlier
- projects.ncsu.edu/cals/course/ent425 - online entomology course
- nathistoc.bio.uci.edu/Arthropods.html - insects of Orange County and nearby
- bugguide.net - great source of photos
- www.rinconvitova.com - commercial insectaries - buy beneficial insects here
- www.alexanderwild.com/insects - gorgeous photos, macro-photography of insects

We are all very thankful to Dr Daugherty for sharing the morning with us, as well as his patience and knowledge.

October

And then it was Halloween's month. Noel Ramos was our guest speaker, and he regaled us with stories of incredible Fruit Hunters (past and present). Noel, who lives in Miami, Florida, is good friends with Pat and Edgar Valdivia, and has similar problems like critters in the garden. He also had some minor complaints about

too much rain lately, which we couldn't quite relate to at this time of year! (It's a bit drier in California than it is in Florida.)

During Noel's presentation, we learned there were very few native fruits in the early years of the United States. The diet used to be ordinary and bland. Explorers saw great fruits & vegetables as they traveled the world, and knew what we were missing. This knowledge inspired some to search out better crops for U.S. farmers and consumers.

WILSON POPENOE - Born in 1892, Wilson worked for the USDA between 1912 and 1925. He was also the chief agronomist for the United Fruit Company. Wilson is particularly well-known for avocados. Hired by David Fairchild, he was sent by the USDA to the Guatemala highlands to find superior cultivars.

A seedling from one of the original avocado buds became the most popular avocado of all time: the Hass (patented in 1935). He also has one named for himself: the Popenoe avocado. Huge and smooth, 16 - 18" with a long neck, it is too soft to ever be sold in a grocery store, but Noel assured us it is delicious.

United Fruit purchased property in northern Honduras, and started an agricultural garden to see what other fruits could be grown commercially. Started in 1925, the facility now spreads over 1681 hectares (about 4150 acres). It contains over 600 species of Asian plants including *Artocarpus*, *Sapindaceae*, and *Durio*.



The bright red upper trunks of the Lipstick Palm

Popenoe was made an honorary citizen of many Latin American countries. He retired to his home in Old Guatemala in 1957, and lived there until 1975. The house was originally a ruin and he and wife restored it. (His wife was an archaeologist.) The house is full of period furnishings from colonial days. They hold an annual avocado festival there. Their tours are wonderful! (<https://casapopenoe.ufm.edu/en/>)

DAVID FAIRCHILD - David Fairchild was a famous American botanist-adventurer. Like Popenoe, Fairchild also worked for the USDA. Fairchild is credited with introducing 80,000 plant species to United States. He collected plants, seeds, and cuttings from around the world. In particular, he brought new mangos, citrus, and potatoes into the USA. He is the namesake of the famous Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden in Florida (established in 1938). Noel assures us it is well worth a tour.

Fairchild helped organize the USDA Office of Foreign Seed & Plant Introduction (1897-98). And he was integral to the importation of the famous Washington DC cherry trees from Japan.

Did you know the first batch of cherry trees were found to be infested with a pest - they had to burn all of them! And Japan was NOT happy when they were told! But after much diplomatic effort, a new collection of pest-free trees was put together and the second batch was planted.



Kampong

Fairchild would tour all over, making friends everywhere. He offered "prizes" for people to come

back with the best plant varieties they could find, which made the hunt easier (for him).

Part of Fairchild's legacy is a house he built in Miami in 1928. He called it "Kampong" and planted an extensive collection of edible tropical plants & trees. He retired there in 1934, and died there 1954.

BILL WHITMAN - Whitman was a wealthy businessman and well-known fruit tree enthusiast and collector. He gifted and funded the Fairchild Tropical Garden's Whitman Fruit Pavilion, where they grow durian and other exotic fruits.

Bill was one of the first people to get mangosteen, rambutan, and breadfruit trees to fruit in the USA. He was willing to do whatever it took to grow and produce fruit, even if it cost him \$10,000 to make the proper microclimate for the tree!

He traveled widely to find new varieties and introduced a tremendous variety of fruits into the USA, including the Green Sapote, Hua Moa banana, Button Mangosteen, Okrong Mango, NS-1 Jackfruit, Cuban fibreless Guanabana, Charichuela, and the Emperor Lychee.

If you want to try growing something rare and exotic, Noel recommends you read Whitman's book first, "Five Decades with Tropical Fruit - A Personal Journey," because whatever you try to do, he probably did it first!



Bill

Whitman and his Durio Dulcis

ALAN CARLE - Alan is an American living in Queensland, Australia. He has traveled to over 40 countries, and collected all kinds of fruit. Now he

grows just about everything you can think of, literally hundreds of varieties of rare fruits! His property was previously an eroded cow pasture/cane farm. Sugar cane had badly depleted the soil, but now it is a world class botanical garden and learning center.

JIM WEST - Jim is the founder of Reserva Guaycuyacu, a 32 hectare (79 acre) farm in Ecuador. He planted 16 acres of rare tropical fruit and nut trees from all over the world, over 600 species! It is completely self-sufficient. His main income is from seed sales. He set up an apprenticeship program to teach university students around the world how to grow, care for, and process exotic fruits.

DAVID KARP - David is a pomologist, sometimes better known as "The Fruit Detective" writing for the L.A. Times. His focus is on stone fruit and rare heirloom fruit varieties. He is a great enthusiast of rare fruits, promoting the industry, even if he's not growing that particular fruit variety.



Alan Carle's Bounty

RICHARD CAMPBELL AND DR NORIS LEDESMA - These two "locals" are tireless promoters of tropical fruit which can be grown in the USA. Both worked for Fairchild at one time, and both are intrepid mango enthusiasts.

For many years, Campbell was the curator of the largest collection of mangoes in the Western Hemisphere: over 600 varieties of Mango at Fairchild Tropical Garden. He is now Chief Science Officer for Ciruli Brothers, a grower and shipper of tropical fruits and vegetables. But he also raises rare mangoes with his sons, as "The Mango Men."

Dr Ledesma is an avid plant collector and tropical fruit specialist focused on mangos. She traveled widely through tropical Asia, Malaysia, Africa, and the Americas searching for new fruit and lecturing on their care and production.

Someone asked Noel about his own Hunting. He admitted some of his best finds were made in his own neighborhood. He walks down the street and talks to people about what's growing in their garden.

He went to a fruit meeting and someone had brought jackfruit they'd grown at home. It was amazing and creamy and delicious. The owner brought in some budwood to a subsequent meeting (literally dragged in a huge branch!) and Noel was able to graft it onto his own tree with help from a Californian CRFG member. His graft recently fruited and it has the same clean, great taste.

Noel encouraged us to do our own Fruit Hunting. We don't even need to leave the country. Some suggestions:

- Search out local outstanding varieties. Buy local. Graft trees and distribute them.
- Travel and visit the great botanical gardens and fruit growing regions.
- Teach your friends and neighbors how to grow and enjoy fruit tree horticulture. (Tell them it's ok to grow more than grass!!!)
- Help promote the tropical fruit industry and agri-tourism. (He is impressed that California does stone fruit so well - he doesn't get so many in Florida) This will help preserve some slowly disappearing varieties.

- Support the local tropical fruit clubs like CRFG and other Rare Fruit Council groups: volunteer, attend club events, go to fruit tastings, etc
- The best way to save something is to eat it!

Another excellent resource is TFF - the Tropical Fruit Forum (<http://tropicalfruitforum.com>). This website was started by friends of his in Florida, and now has worldwide participation. For instance, there are people in Russia growing guanabanas in their living room!

We learned so much history from Noel and are very thankful for his knowledge and enthusiasm for rare fruit. Thank you for speaking with us!

Secret Sauce, Part 4

Gac

Inspired by Ray Tyndal

Gac is fairly tasteless but loaded with good vitamins. Ray Tyndal made *Xoi Gac* from a recipe on YouTube. He bought the fresh ripe fruit in December in the Little Saigon area of Orange County. He mixed sweet rice with coconut milk and Gac fruit flesh. He steamed it for 45 minutes and served it on fresh banana leaves. It was really good. He tried to do the same with fresh frozen Gac and it was not anywhere near as good. This may be the recipe he used:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0L9AujOL3Y>

- 3 cups Sweet Rice
- 1/2 cup Coconut Milk
- 1 Tbsp. Chinese White Cooking Wine
- 1/2 tsp. Kosher Salt
- 2 Tbsp. Sugar
- 2 Tbsp. Baby Jackfruit Paste
- Banana Leaves
- How to make Baby Jackfruit Paste:
https://youtu.be/qB_rbflx7BA

Soak 3 cups Sweet Rice overnight. Rinse about 2-3 times. Drain out the water and set it air dry for about 15 mins.

In a bowl add in 1 Tbsp. Chinese White Cooking Wine. Mix in about 2 Tbsp. Baby Jackfruit Paste.

Add in the Sweet Rice. Add 1/2 tsp. Kosher Salt. Mix until it's evenly coated with the Baby Jackfruit Paste.

Have your steamer ready, put a layer of Banana leaves in steamer. Then pour in the Sweet Rice. Steam for 10 mins.

Meanwhile, mix 1/2 cup Coconut Milk with 2 Tbsp. Sugar. After 10 minutes open up the steamer lid and drizzle some of the coconut mixture on top.

Toss the Sweet Rice, cover to let it continue to steam. After about 5 minutes, open the lid again and drizzle more of the coconut mixture.

Repeat drizzling the coconut mixture onto the sweet rice every 5 minutes. Steaming time should be about 20-25 minutes.

Once the Sweet Rice is cooked, remove from steamer and let it cool.

Editor's Column (With Classifieds!)

OFFER: Metal Wheelchair

Candace Rumenapp is offering an old style metal wheelchair, no footrests. Wheelchair folds in half, but does not have footrests. She originally paid \$55 at Salvation Army. Free to whoever needs it, or donate to some charity or homeless person. Please contact editor@crfg-la.org.

WANTED: Your Surplus

Many of us are lucky enough to have gardens which provide not only spiritual but physical sustenance. (ie: FRUIT!) However, not everyone is so fortunate. Please consider donating extra fruit from your yard to a local food bank. The L.A. City Controller's office has an interactive map showing food distribution sites, many of which would appreciate your donation. Also, at the end of the same website, there is a map showing grocery stores which have special Senior hours for those who have health considerations when shopping.

<https://lacontroller.org/data-stories-and-maps/foodforcalifornians/>

Have a suggestion? A question? A story to share? Send it to editor@crfg-la.org and see it published here!