



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

November 2013 Volume XVIII

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

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NOVEMBER MEETING

Date: November 23, 2013

Time: 10:00 A.M.

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

Program: Charles Portney will be speaking on "Composting Made Easy". Too many people hesitate to compost because it is presented as complicated. Come and listen to Charles explain why it isn't!

Charles will also be generously donating the following plants for our plant sale: special banana plants--rooted rare specimens of the Becky's mystery banana, (an article about this banana is featured in the latest *Fruit Gardener* Magazines); cape gooseberries, mountain papaya, babaco, cherry de rio grande, golden tamarillo---which is a very tasty and hearty variety, the Bruce Blavin ice cream bean tree, and many other plants.

Charles has requested that members not take or ask about any of the plants until he be given an opportunity to discuss what he has brought in for the sale. Please note, that none of these items will be available until after the lecture is over and David officially opens up the plant sale.

Let's follow **Charles'** generous lead and also bring in plants for the sale. He would appreciate any donations of plastic pots, 4", 1, 2 and 3 gallon size; plant labels which can be wood, metal or plastic.

Please be courteous to our speaker and not converse with others during the talk. Not only will the speaker be appreciative but our members will also.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!! If your last name begins with N-Z please bring something for our **November 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.**

DECEMBER HOLIDAY MEETING

Date: December 14, 2013

Time: 10am

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

Program: Our Festive Holiday Potluck! Program: Our Festive Holiday Potluck! 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 her singing partner **Mark Nudelman** entertaining us with some wonderful music!



WORDS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Los Angeles Chapter Friends,

I'm so glad that fall is here, yes cooler temperatures, rain, seed catalogs, fireplaces, comfort food, Thanksgiving, Hanukah, and Christmas Holidays will be here before we know it. Wow! How time flies when you're busy.

And busy the Los Angeles chapter has been. We have planted an orchard at Sylmar High school. We rototilled and removed a lawn area approximately forty feet by forty feet, installed irrigation and planted twenty five fruit trees that have been donated to the school; planted with mostly stone fruit trees, plum, peaches, nectarine, almond, apricot, plums, cherry and some to be determined rare fruit trees. With this tool we plan to teach students proper care of fruit trees: pruning, grafting, harvesting and taste evaluation.

Volunteers from the Los Angeles Chapter of California Rare Fruit Growers will work with **Steve List** to maintain the orchard. And yes, you are welcome anytime to help. Just call Steve List.

A **BIG** thanks to our chapter members who helped plan and plant the orchard and a special thanks to our donors: **Alex Silber:** Papaya Tree Nursery, **Bob Ludekens:** L.E. Cooke Co. and **Tom Spellman:** Dave Wilson Nurseries.

Jim Schopper

The Black Sapote—*Diospyris dignia*---

Ebanaceae

by *Alfredo Chiri*

Common names: Chocolate Fruit, Black Persimmon, Sapote Negro, Zapote Prieto, Zapota do Mico, Matasano do Mico and Ebano.

This tree is not really a sapote, it is closely related to the persimmon family rather than allied to the sapote (*Pouteria sapote*) or to the white sapote (*Casimiora edulis*). For many years it was misidentified as *Diospyros ebenaster*, a name applied to a wild species of the West Indies. The presently accepted binomial for the black sapote is *D. digma*.

The black sapote is native to Mexico and Central America. Apparently in 1692 the Spaniards spread the plants through the Philippines and some of the Asian



countries.

The tree is handsome, broad-topped, slow growing to eighty feet in height, has a furrowed trunk to thirty inches in diameter and black bark.

The leaves are elliptic-oblong, tapered at both ends, glossy, and four to twelve inches long.

The flowers, borne singly or in groups in the leaf axils, are tubular, lobed and white. Some have both male and female organs with a faint fragrance; others are solely male and have a pronounced gardenia-like scent.

The fruit is bright green and shiny at first. On ripening, the smooth skin becomes an olive green and then a rather muddy green. Within is a mass of glossy, brown to very dark brown, almost black, somewhat jelly-like pulp, soft, sweet and mild in flavor. In the center are one to twenty flat, smooth brown seeds three quarters to one inch long. The fruits are often seedless.

Certain trees tend to bear a very large, seedless or nearly seedless fruits during the summer months instead of the winter months as most trees do. No variety names have been given to these cultivars.

The black sapote is not strictly a tropical tree, it is more of a hardy tree when the tree has become well established. Young trees need to be protected the first few years. Older trees have withstood brief temperatures of 28 degrees to 30 degrees F. In Mexico the tree is cultivated up to elevations of 5,000 feet.

The black sapote has a broad adaptability as to terrain. The tree thrives on moist sandy loam, on well-drained soil. The tree will also adapt to dry areas and clay that is in constant exposure to water.

The black sapote is usually grown from seeds. Seeds remain viable for several months in dry storage and

germinate in about thirty days after planting in flats. Seedlings are best transplanted to pots when they are about three inches high, and they are set in the fields when one to two years old. At that time they are one to two feet tall. They should be spaced at least twenty-four feet apart.

Fruits picked when bright green (full-grown) ripen in ten days at room temperature. Firm olive green fruits ripen in two to six days. Black sapotes are very soft when fully ripe.

Tropical Black Sapote Pudding

(If only Edgar and I were as lucky as **Lewis Perkins** to have this exotic fruit growing in our back yard!)

1 cup black sapote mashed in brandy
Ladyfingers or other plain cake
1 cup whipped cream
Line a deep glass dish with ladyfingers, or two layers of thinly cut sponge or plain cake to form a shell about a half inch thick. Fold brandied black sapote on top of the cake. Chill two hours. Top with whipped cream.

Fall Leaf Color Tour at the Arboretum

The Arboretum is home to many unique trees that display brilliant color in autumn. As a result, it is the best place to view fall color in the city. Join **Frank McDonough**, Arboretum botanical consultant, on an informative tour that will take you to the least known but most brilliant fall color trees. The tour will involve walking so please wear sturdy and comfortable shoes. Space is limited to the first 38 who **RSVP to 626.821.4623**.

DATE: November 16, 2013
Saturday

10:00AM - 11:30AM

ADMISSION:

Seniors: \$6

ADDRESS:

301 North Baldwin Avenue
Arcadia, CA, 91007

DIRECTIONS:

From the 210 heading east
Exit Baldwin, turn right (south), go for .25 miles.



Cranberries growing on long-running vines in sandy bogs and marshes.

History of Cranberries

The cranberry, along with the blueberry and Concord grape, is one of North America's three native fruits that are commercially grown. Cranberries were first used by Native Americans, who discovered the wild berry's versatility as a food, fabric dye and healing agent. Today, cranberries are commercially grown throughout the northern part of the United States and are available in both fresh and processed forms.

The name "cranberry" derives from the Pilgrim name for the fruit, "craneberry", so called because the small, pink blossoms that appear in the spring resemble the head and bill of a Sandhill crane. European settlers adopted the Native American uses for the fruit and found the berry a valuable bartering tool.

American whalers and mariners carried cranberries on their voyages to prevent scurvy. In 1816, Captain Henry Hall became the first to successfully cultivate cranberries. By 1871, the first association of cranberry growers in the United States had formed, and now, U.S. farmers harvest approximately 40,000 acres of cranberries each year.

Festival of Fruit/Best of Both Worlds

By **Emory Walton**

Several members of our chapter had the opportunity to attend the Festival of Fruit/Best of Both Worlds in Hawaii that began in the last week of September. We visited four different islands: Oahu, Maui, Hawaii and Kauai. Some of us traveled between islands by plane while others traveled on a cruise. Although a few things went awry, such as the government shutdown interfering

with several tours scheduled on our itinerary, for the most part, our trip was very enjoyable. Here are a few highlights of the trip.

On Oahu, amongst the many nice places that we visited the venue of the main conference stands out. The venue was Kapiolani Community College in Honolulu. It is situated at the foothill of Diamondhead with a spectacular ocean view. There was a busy farmers market on site that started our day and there were a multitude of wonderful speakers, including Jim West, who comes from a remote region in Ecuador. He brought some tasty jams from his farm in Ecuador for us to sample. There was a delicious buffet lunch with plenty of fruit for us to taste, many of which we do not get to taste here in California. The lunch partially made up for the dinner that was served the previous night. The dinner had a selection of dishes prepared by the students from the college, however there were very few dishes suitable or those of us who do not eat meat or seafood.

On Maui, the Maui Gold pineapple tour was quite memorable. A number of us did not arrive in time to take the tour with the main group however the owners took it on themselves to personally guide us on a tour of their pineapple fields. The pineapples that they cut in the field and gave us to sample were indescribably delicious. They explained that the pineapples they grow have lower brix (sugar content) than those grown by their competitors (Dole) but they still taste sweeter because they also have less acid and the balance between sugar and acid is the critical factor.

Once on the big Island of Hawaii we visited both Hilo and Kona. One very interesting tour in Kona was the original Hawaiian chocolate factory. Bob and Pam Cooper were very gracious hosts who greeted us with their southern hospitality (they are relatively recent transplants to Hawaii, starting the business there 14 years ago). At the beginning of the tour we were treated to samples of several different varieties of chocolates they produce. We were then taken to see their cacao trees (they grow different varieties of cacao) and then into their factory where we saw the equipment that they use for producing chocolate.

The last island that we visited was Kauai. There we visited the National Tropical Botanical Garden and the Allerton Gardens which are adjacent. They have a wide variety of fruit trees growing there including the miracle fruit, which was producing fruit at the time of our visit. The Allerton house where Robert Allerton, (after whom the garden is named) used to reside is beautifully situated right by the ocean shore. Our final lunch was served there and it was delicious. It included

pit roasted breadfruit and coconuts, as well as a good sampling of other exotic fruits.



Fruit Shoot 2013 Display in Hawaii

The Hawaiian tropical fruit growers were very gracious hosts throughout the entire tour and we owe them a big debt of gratitude for their tireless and gracious efforts in planning and hosting the entire conference.



The October field trip was such a treat! **Lewis Perkins'** garden is a wonderful example of how enthusiasm and love can create a paradise of fruit even in a standard size back yard. Seeing fruiting longans and black sapotes had even the more experienced gardeners green with envy (Edgar being one in particular). Did I mention **Lewis** is also successfully growing coffee? It was a wonderful day, and we thank Lewis so much for hosting this event.

"In every gardener there is a child who believes in the Seed Fairy."
-Robert Brault