

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

SEPTEMBER 2013 Volume XVIII

SEPTEMBER

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

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THERE WILL BE NO LOCAL MEETING THIS MONTH

The **2013 Festival of Fruit**, will be held in Hawaii from September 27th to October 3rd. The FOF will be held during these dates in conjunction with **The Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers**. Current information and a registration link for the festival can be found by going to our crfg.org webpage.

This is a wonderful opportunity to have not only a fruit experience, but a lovely vacation on the beautiful islands of Hawaii. You will have a chance to see tropical fruits that can not be grown here in California.

If you think it is too expensive to attend the full week of activities, you can select those that most interest you. It is not necessary to participate in all of the events.

Our chapter member, **Emory Walton**, has been working very hard putting together this project in conjunction with **Ken Love**, in Hawaii.



OCTOBER MEETING

Date: Saturday, October 26th

Time: 10 am

Place: Lewis Perkins' garden

Program: Come and see and learn what can be done in a standard size lot. **Lewis**, because of his clever use of space is able to grow an abundant amount of different fruit. Just to mention a little of what you will see in October: macadamia, kona & java coffee, fig, fuyu & Hachiya persimmon, orange, black sapote, mint. At other times of the year, **Lewis** has fruiting 7 types of guava, pitanga, cherries of the Rio Grande, pecan, apricot, 4 kinds of mulberry, and ginger. The list could go on, but it is obvious that **Lewis** is definitely a dedicated fruit grower

Directions: If you would like to attend, please contact editor@crfg.org Information.



Happy harvesting and giving,
Jim Schopper

The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters
will also be watered himself.
Proverb

WORDS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Los Angeles Chapter members and friends,

Oh, what a joy to live in Southern California where we enjoy year-round harvests of so many diverse fruits and vegetables. So what do you do with 600 hundred grapefruit, or 350 peaches, or six bushels of tomatoes? Every year we can stewed Italian tomatoes with basil, garlic, onion and bell peppers. We can enough for our own use with enough to give away to family and friends. We also can “HOT” salsa in ½ pint jars to enjoy throughout the year. This year we tried something new, sun dill pickles. Since they only last a couple of weeks in the refrigerator, we also canned enough to store for the winter. They turned out well for a first time effort, but next year I will tweak the recipe a little to perfect it to our tastes buds.

I juice my pomegranates and freeze the juice in small containers. It freezes well for up to one year without losing flavor. With my orange trees, I am able to juice gallons for us and give gallons away to family, friends and neighbors. One of our chapter members harvests pluots and peaches and makes the best jams and preserves. I love her peaches and hot chili jam! I also share my vegetable garden with family, friends and neighbors. So after all this I at times still have more than I can use. Lately, I’ve been picking fruit mostly grapefruit, oranges, tangelos, tangerines, etc. and bringing the fruit to food pantries and homeless shelters. This is deeply appreciated during these tough economic times. Just driving around I see many citrus trees loaded with fruit that nobody harvests, some the birds and squirrels eat, but most of it falls to the ground and is wasted. So here is where the rubber hits the road. I started asking if I could harvest some for food pantries and homeless outreaches. I take pictures of the fruit and the food pantry and post them on Facebook and discreetly thank the donors giving credit where credit is due. This so far has been a win-win situation. So back to my original question: What do *you* do with 600 grapefruit?

LOOKING BACK

BY **Debbie Schopper** our **Member-at-Large**

JULY MEETING

Our July meeting was a real treat with three speakers instead of one: **Charles Portney**, **Steve List** and **Gerry Katz**. **Charles** brought an assortment of plants, cuttings, fruits, and seedlings and spoke briefly about each plant. Among the plants were papaya, celeste fig cuttings, pineapple sage, white chayote squash, sugar cane, golden orb tamarillos, golden splendor pepinos, red tamarillos, kei apples, and loquats. All of these plants and fruits were donated to our LA Chapter. Our club always looks forward to **Charles**’ times with us. His passion and knowledge of plants is exciting and his generosity is much appreciated. Please remember, club members, to bring in your plants and donate them to our monthly meetings.



Steve List, who holds many titles, such as Sylmar High School Agriculture Teacher, President of the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers (and all around good guy with a huge vision)— was our first speaker. **Steve** brought with him a group of people including ten Sylmar High School students, members of MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity) a non profit food bank in Pacoima and other high school educators. **Steve** shared with us his plan in working to equip his students to leave high school with the education, tools, training, and certifications to either go into the

garden/landscaping business or on to further education.

He also shared with us his vision of turning Sylmar High School into a nursery (many members remember touring the school on our June field trips) as well as a learning center where students both teach and learn, and a hub for other Valley high schools. Steve's reach goes beyond the high school and into the community as his work with MEND shows. Thirty-six low income families were recipients of two 4' x 8' raised beds complete with soil, vegetable plants (supplied by Sylmar High), and the education to grow and care for these plants. The families take care of the plants and give 10% of the crop back to the food bank, the 90% is theirs to eat and/or share. Steve thanked CRFG members for contributing their time to come and teach students grafting and to share their garden expertise. He encouraged more members of our Chapter to participate in any way they could.

Steve also donated trees and plants (grown by students at Sylmar High School) for our Chapter plant sale. Also, don't forget to attend the Plant and Garden Auction, Steve mentioned. (See box on page 4 for more information).



Gerry Katz, a member of our Chapter shared a slide show presentation of the amazing property he and **Sondra** tend in Somis. The many plants he grows include citrus: pink lemon, keifer lime and blood orange. Among the apple varieties are Russian apple, rose apple and kei apples (which are really not apples). Pears, stone fruits, native Australian trees and plants also can be found. We enjoyed seeing slides of the vegetable gardens which are covered by fencing that can be lifted up to weed and harvest, but stays down to deter the critters. Three amazing and inspirational speakers!! What a wonderful Saturday morning that was.

AUGUST MEETING

2013 Pitahaya/Dragon Fruit Festival

The Pitahaya Festival this year was the best of all the ones we have had in the past. This program covered 3 days.

Day One was filled with excellent speakers (most of them from the UC Davis agricultural department) covering important subjects. One of the speakers was **Grey Martin**. (Edgar and I had the opportunity to visit his new plantation, and I must say it is very impressive.)

The first day's meeting was held at the San Marcos Civic Center, a beautiful facility with great acoustics and ample room.

The breakfast and the barbeque lunch were very delicious. The people attending filled the whole room.

To finalize the day's meeting there was a wonderful Board Panel discussion with very experienced growers.

On **Day Two**, everyone met at the South Coast Field Station in Irvine. There were about 150 people attending. A tractor pulling wagons took them to the Field where the pitahayas are being grown. Four stations were set up explaining: 1) How to grow the pitahayas -presentation by **Ramiro Lobo**; 2). how to grow by trellis by **Gary Tanizaki**; 3) How to control your water and irrigation by **Jose De Soto**; and 4) How to control pests by **Cheryl Wilen**.

It is interesting to note that the entire pitahaya field is now covered with net to protect the fruit from the birds.

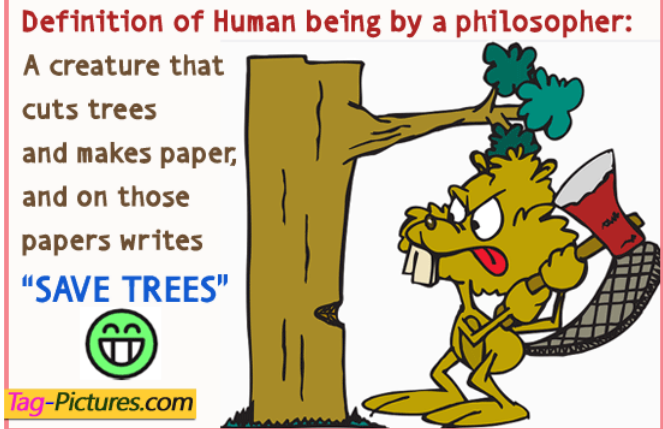
After the tour, everyone was invited to sample the many varieties of fruit (16 types) being grown at the Field Station in Irvine; and also to taste the wonderful ice cream made from this fruit.

The Paul Thomson award went this year to **Linda Nickerson** and her husband **Gary** for their outstanding work with the pitahaya.

To highlight the festivities, all the attendees went home with plenty of cutting of different types.



Day Three included field trips to different plantations. Linda Nickerson opened her ranch in Fallbrook; Valdivia Ranch (no relation) in San Diego was open and we opened our home. About 80 people had a chance to listen to a presentation by **Edgar Valdivia**, tour our garden and taste pitahaya. They also were able to see the display of almost 16 types of pitayas/dragon fruit. The highlight for many was sampling pitahaya/dragon fruit sherbet. The perfect refreshment for a day in the sun!



Plant & Garden AUCTION

California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers will have their annual event this year.

Wednesday October 23, 2013-08-30 6pm

Northridge Methodist Church
9650 Reseda Blvd.
Cost: \$5.00 per person

Prices below wholesale,
Fun and Bargains
Live Bidding
Silent Auction

(This simple yet unusual salad sounds like an interesting way to use all those figs we have.)

FIG & MINT SALAD WITH STRAWBERRIES

Handful of fresh strawberries, sliced
6 fresh figs, sliced
2 tbsp agave nectar
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped

Toss together all ingredients in a large bowl until fruits are well coated. Enjoy!