



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

2024 Volume XXIX Issue 2

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

GARDEN TOUR

NOTE THE SPECIAL TIME FOR THE EVENT!!!!

Date: Saturday, March 23, 1:00 pm
Location: Sylmar High School Agricultural Center
Topic: Third Annual Tony Stewart Tree Symposium and Fruit Event

2024 Chapter Officers & Committees

Chairman: chairman@CRFG-la.org

Anwar Hachache

Treasurer: treasurer@CRFG-la.org

K.Payton

818-222-7556

Secretary: hospitality@CRFG-la.org

Margaret Frane

310-429-9455

Newsletter Editor: editor@CRFG-la.org

Deborah Oisboid

Program Chair: program@CRFG-la.org

Lydia Shabestari

818-572-3460

Historian: historian@CRFG-la.org

Emory Walton

805-497-8835

Food Coordinator:

Chris Warren

818-362-8537

Plant Sales: plants@CRFG-la.org

David Payton

818-222-7556

Members at Large:

Eve Guth

guth_atlarge@CRFG-la.org

Kathleen Doran

doran_atlarge@CRFG-la.org

Kevin Lieu

kevin_atlarge@CRFG-la.org

Art Fitzsimmons

art_atlarge@CRFG-la.org

Reza Shabestari

reza_atlarge@CRFG-la.org

Emeritus Members:

Pat Valdivia

edpitaya@gmail.com

Edgar Valdivia

This event is FOR CRFG-LA MEMBERS ONLY—NO GUESTS, NO FRIENDS, NO RELATIVES, NO CHILDREN, NO PETS. Everyone attending must use their most respectful guest behaviour during this visit. That means no running, no pushing, and especially no grabbing. Steve List, head of the Sylmar High School Agriculture Department, has invited us to participate in a Potluck Lunch and a tour of the remarkable “farm” he and his associates have developed on the Sylmar High Campus. Steve and his crew are dedicated benefactors, supporting the well-being of people in the community and elsewhere. Their gardens and growing areas were built over many years by students on an empty lot. Now they are a dynamic, multi-zoned field of dreams, with areas for fruit trees, hot houses, chickens, desert plants, and much more! We will learn about fruit tree growing, enjoy tours, and feast on the potluck meal we all create! Please bring a dish to share that will feed at least 6 people.

MEETING – TBD

Date: Saturday, April 27, 10:00 am

Location: TBD

Topic: TBD

To be announced...

Save the date!

CALENDAR FOR LA CHAPTER 2024

May 25 Field trip to Kelly Todd Gabrysch's home
June 22 Sepulveda Gardens - Annual Plant Sale
July 27 Field Trip to Dr. Mark Steele's home
August 24 Field Trip to Jose Ramirez' home¹
September 28 To be announced
October 26 To be announced
November 23 To be announced
December 7 Holiday Party

¹ Additional information about Jose Ramirez:

<https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/story/2022-08-18/planting-fruit-orchard-in-los-angeles-yard>

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-east/news/2019/08/10/artist-creates-work-inspired-by-his-urban-garden>

<https://gardenerd.com/blog/podcast-home-fruit-orcharding-with-jose-ramirez/>

<https://stonepierpress.org/goodfoodnews/rise-of-food-forests>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVVAi6Y9by0>

The CRFG-LA Board Welcomes Lydia & Reza Shabestari

By Karen Payton

We're delighted that Lydia and Reza Shabestari have agreed to join our Chapter Board! They have both been dynamic, generous, friendly members for the last few years. In 2023 we enjoyed an elegant field trip to their home, and at the last meeting Lydia, with Brad Golstein, taught us about fruit preservation. (Brad ran faster than Lydia did when we chased him also to join the Board.) We look forward to their valued input.

LOOKING BACK

By Deborah Oisboid

January 27, Annual Scion Exchange

Our annual scion exchange was a tremendous success this year! We added a few organizational rules, and everything flowed smoothly.

We started off with a Certificate of Appreciation awarded to Art Fitzsimmons, to thank him for all of the help and support he provides our Chapter.



Bill Brandt gave us a wonderful demonstration of various grafting methods (Cleft, Whip, and Whip-and-Tongue). Regardless of the style, the critically important thing is to make sure the cambium layers between the scion and rootstock come into contact with each other, even if it means placing the scion at right-angles to the rootstock!

There was a lot of discussion about the best way to graft. For example, what was the best kind of grafting tape/seal? Bill likes colored tape to show where the graft is. You can even try beeswax to keep the graft

from drying out. Citrus and tropical plant grafts must be completely sealed or they will die from lack of moisture.

By the way, you don't have to limit your grafting to February and March. You can try it any time of year. However, the best time is just as the plant is breaking dormancy. Try making bud grafts on tropical plants in June and July instead of February and March.

Other useful things we learned: scions work best with two or three buds on them. (Too many buds require more energy to keep the scion alive.) Always label everything, or at least take a photo when you're done so you remember the name of the new scion. To prevent sunburn, use a wash of half water/half latex paint on the south side of the trunk. To prevent a bird or other animal from breaking a young graft, tie a chopstick or twig to add support.



But the most important thing about rules is that most of us like to break them! Want to experiment? Let us know next year what worked for you!

Then we began our very well-organized and coordinated scion collection.

People had good manners as they collected their cuttings, which were arranged more or less alphabetically around the horseshoe of tables. There were so many types of scions, from "Apple" to "Ume!" The widest variety were in the Fig and Grape categories. Some of the more unusual cuttings were elderberry, Longevity Spinach, and Barbados Gooseberries.



The potluck table was delightful and delicious as always. Thanks to everyone who shared their bounty that day.

It was a splendid event and a lot of fun!**February 24, Preserving Fruit**

When the fruit trees start to bloom, a gardener's mind turns to thoughts of delicious harvests. For those lucky ones who have an excess, what can you do with it? Sure, you can give it away fresh. But how about making it even better?

In February, two of our very talented and knowledgeable Chapter members taught us about the art of preserving fruit.

Lydia Shabestari and Brad Golstein have been making jams, jellies, marmalades, and other fruit preserves for many decades. (Brad began his culinary experiences in his teenage years.) Both have developed their favorite recipes and found ways to make jam-making easier, and they shared their expertise with us.

Lydia started off by teaching us the 10 different types of fruit preserves: Jams, compotes, and conserves; jelly; marmalade, fruit curds, fruit butters, and fruit spreads; fruit cheese; and candied fruit.



What they all have in common is mixing fruit, sugar, acid, and (natural or added) pectin, processing them together, and preparing them for storage. Both Lydia and Brad use water bath canning to preserve their fruit for up to a year.

- **Jams** are made from a (single) fruit variety, either whole, chopped, or crushed. Processed in a water bath, it can be stored for a year.
- **Compotes** are made from whole fruit poached over a slow simmer, then cooked in sugar syrup. It is not meant for long term storage.
- **Conserves** are a type of jam made with two or more varieties of fruit. (Strawberry rhubarb, pear-apple, apple-blueberry.) It is very chunky and can be stored for a year after water bath canning.
- **Jelly** has a clear composition and spreadable consistency. The pulp is strained out, and additional pectin is sometimes needed to help it set. Put it through a jelly bag or cheesecloth to

strain it. Boil it to the consistency that you like before canning.

- **Marmalade** is made predominantly from citrus fruit (whole or chopped), including the peel. It was originally developed by Janet Keiller of Scotland near the end of the 18th century. The peel itself has a lot of pectin and provides extra texture.
- **Fruit Curds** are rich, glossy, and spreadable. They often include eggs and butter, and are not meant for long-term storage or canning.
- **Fruit Butters** are made from pureed fruit boiled down for a longer period. They require less sugar and have a more intense flavor.
- **Fruit Spreads** are made without sugar, using heavy-pectin-containing fruit like apples and apricots. (Low pectin fruits can use chia seeds to help them gel.)
- **Fruit Cheese** is not made with dairy. It is made with softened fruit run through a sieve, then cooked down with sugar until it sets. It is firm and sliceable and often served with cheese.
- **Candied Fruit** is also called **Crystallized**, **Glace**, or **Confit**. It is made from ripe whole fruits, pieces, or peels, and cooked slowly in a saturated sugar syrup which absorbs moisture inside the fruit. The best fruits for this include citrus, pears, apples, plums, peaches, pineapple, and quinces.

The question came up: what exactly is pectin? Other than knowing it helps the processed fruit to gel and thicken, the answer wasn't readily available. Someone finally looked it up: it is a heteropolysachharide, which is a complex molecule some websites describe as either a starch or carbohydrate.

"According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, pectin is found in nearly all fruits and vegetables because it's found in the cell walls of all green plants. The richest sources of pectin are found in the peels of citrus fruits such as oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit and passionfruit." Source: <https://www.livestrong.com/article/289067-list-of-foods-high-in-pectin/>

When adding acid to a batch of fruit, Lydia prefers using bottled lemon juice because the acid level is more consistent than fruit which might have more or less than you need.

Both Lydia and Brad agreed you can replace packaged

pectin with apples or citrus, or even chia seeds for freezer jams

Most preserves will gel, or "set" when they reach 217 - 220°F. To check if it's gelled, keep a plate in the freezer. When the jam reaches the right temperature, put a dollop of jam on the frozen plate, stick the plate back in the freezer for 2 minutes, then take it out and run your finger down the center of the jam. If you can "divide the Red Sea" (if it separates with a clean plate in the middle), then it's ready to put in jars. As it cools, you should hear the lid "pop" - that means it's sealed well!

When using a water bath for processing: boiling water for 10 minutes, rest in hot water 5 minutes.

If you're cooking at a higher altitude, you need to boil it longer. There are charts online which tell you the increased time versus your altitude.

Brad has been making preserves since he was a teenager. His goal is to spark imagination and creativity in making preserves.

Why make preserves? It tastes good. You get to use up all the fruit in your garden. You get to control the ingredients. The only limit is your imagination. (It also tastes a heck of a lot better than the grocery stores!)

Having a lot of jams in your cupboard is helpful when you need a gift to give. Brad says you know they like the gift if they bring the jar back washed. And especially if they say, "Can I have some more please?"

It isn't that hard and doesn't take great skill. The only drawback is it can be time-consuming.

Equipment. You don't need fancy tools to make preserves. The most important things you need are: a very large stock pot (or water canner) with some way to safely raise the jars from the bottom of the pot, a second large, heavy-bottomed pot to cook the preserves, canning jars, lids and rings. A large spoon, spatula, and a wide mouthed funnel make it easy to fill the jars. Other useful tools include a chop stick or "bubble popper" (available in canning kits) and a jar lifter or tongs. Several online sites such as Walmart or Amazon offer reasonably priced canning kits that include some or all of the above items. You can also find used water bath canners on eBay or Craigslist.

Preparation. When making jam, it helps to set things up like an assembly line in front of you. Get your

recipe, get two stock pots. (One pot for jar boiling, one for fruit processing) Have everything measured in advance so you can pour it in when you're ready. Have your ingredients chopped and ready to go. Have a moist towel for when you ladle the jam into the jar. (Some will get onto the edge - you need to wipe that off!) Work quickly but don't be fanatical about it. Don't make yourself crazy! Re-use the stockpot as a water bath to seal the jars.

Sterilizing the Jars. Jars should be clean before use. Sterilization used to be recommended but lid manufacturing processes have changed and overheating them may adversely affect the sealing action. According to USDA guidelines, the actual "sterilization" occurs during the 10-minute boiling water bath canning process. Jars² should be washed in hot, soapy water and then placed in the water bath to become hot before the preserves are added (to prevent jars from cracking). Remove a jar at a time from the hot water and drain upside down on a kitchen towel.

A recipe will typically say how much will be produced and how many jars you will need. Brad says they're never right. He always sterilizes at least one extra jar to be on the safe side.

Prepping the fruit. Wash and peel (if necessary). If you need to peel a soft fruit, you can drop it in boiling water for a minute and then put it in ice water and then you can peel it off with your hands. Instead of chopping, you might squish the fruit with your fingers, like you're 8 years old again!

Some fruit can be squashed with a masher. Or a standing mixer and a beater attachment. Brad doesn't like using Cuisinart (food processor/blender) unless you want to have something between jam and jelly. Unless it's plums. Plums have a stronger cell structure than other fruits.

Real British marmalade is laborious because it must be sliced extremely thin. But you can poach it and then chop it up. Use seedless fruit, it's better than trying to pull the seeds out later.



If you want to break up the task, prep the fruit the

² Lids do not need to be heated because the new sealing ring will self-seal.

night before so it's ready to be cooked the next day.

Pectin. There are many off-the-shelf pectins and thickeners. Brad likes Sure Gel Low Sugar because it's easy to use. He writes the date of purchase on the box so he knows which one is the oldest. (Just in case he has multiple boxes in the cabinet.) Pectin loses its potency over time, so replace your stock annually.

Other thickening options include lemon juice, citrus peel, and shredded apple or pear. When using citrus peel for pectin, take out the pith and leave the peel because the pith is bitter.

Chia seeds can do the trick for refrigerated or freezer jams! Another thing to remember is younger, newer fruit have more pectin than the older fruit. Master preservers suggest combining old and new fruit for increased pectin.

Sweeteners and Flavorings. Flavorings, especially dry seasonings such as cinnamon and cardamom can be mixed into the sugar so that everything's ready to go. Vanilla flavor tends to fade over time. Also, only add liquid vanilla after the fruit is cooked, because boiling will cause it to evaporate. (Brad recommends using more than is called out: 3 tsp instead of 2 tsp.)

Stevia can be used instead of sugar if you use recipes developed for artificial sweeteners or special gelling products. In regular recipes, sugar is needed for gel formation. Stevia changes the chemistry and the recipe needs to be adjusted to accommodate those changes. The University of Georgia has several recipes for uncooked jams and jellies using artificial sweeteners

(nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/no_sugar_jelly.html). Some people say it has an aftertaste.

You can use frozen concentrated juices, such as apple juice, as a sugar replacement. But the shelf life of the jam is going to be different. Check the Master Fruit Preservers for additional information.

https://mfp.ucanr.edu/Resources/Extension_Document_Library/Food_Safety_884/

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/camasterfoodpreservers/files/337818.pdf>

Don't add the sugar all at once. Put in a little bit at a time and stir it. You don't want the fruit to clump, you want it nicely melted throughout.

Making preserves. Simply put, follow your recipe and

cook everything down until it gels. When making a small batch use a pan that's wide and shallow so the water from the fruit evaporates faster. Jams will gel between 200 - 220F.

Use an oversize pot for cooking, to provide lots of space on top. The boiling fruit will foam and rise while cooking. Do not turn the heat down. Keep the roiling boil going but keep an eye on it. The foam may subside somewhat. Then you test it with a thermometer. The foam is edible but looks bad in the jar so screen it out when/before pouring into the jars.

Fruit butters and spreads don't need pectin. They generally have less sugar content because sugar is not added. They are made using the same process, just cook the fruit and liquid until it thickens. The Frozen Plate method is perfect for testing the readiness of butters.

SHORTCUT: Rather than stand over the pot for an hour or two, Brad will put his ingredients in a crock pot and cook on low overnight. In the morning, he puts the fruit in the blender, then back in the crock pot with a little sweetener and/or spices. Then he lets it cook it down again to the right consistency and cans it.

Sealing. For the water bath, the water should be one or two inches above the jar. It's okay to be lower when you just boil to clean. Jars should sit not touch the bottom of the pot while boiling. Use a jam rack for this.

Pour gelled fruit into sterilized jars, using a funnel if needed. Fill to within about $\frac{1}{4}$ " of lip because when processing in a water bath, the liquid will expand and push out the remaining air. Wipe the top edge of the jar clean. Place the lid and ring on the jar and tighten until you feel some resistance is met. Do not overtighten the bands! Put hot jars back in the water bath and bring to a boil (with the lids on). Once boiling resumes you should wait 10 minutes (check altitude charts for additional time required if you live above 1,001 feet), then turn off the flame and wait for five more minutes for the contents to settle. Remove the jars using a jar lifter or tongs and place on a rack or



kitchen towel to rest. The jars should remain undisturbed for 24 hours.

Once cool, check lids for a good vacuum seal by pressing on center of each. It should not move. If the lid pops up and down, store it in the refrigerator, since it did not seal 100%. The jam should be eaten within 3 weeks. If the lid does not flex and you cannot lift it off, the seal is set. Store your jars in a cool, dark, dry place for up to one year.

Freezer jams do not require either boiling the jam or water bath processing.

If you're making a fruit butter or spread, you may end up with air pockets on the side of the jar. Try to push the fruit down to get rid of the pockets as much as you can. Tap it on the bottom, tap it on the side. You don't have to get rid of 100% but do try to get rid of as much as possible.



Brad lets his jars cool about a day to make sure they are sealed. He labels the lid with a date or batch number to keep track of it.

Pressure canning is a different process entirely. It's not necessary for jam. A water bath is considered safe. The National Fruit Preservers have a whole series about pressure canning. (<https://nchfp.uga.edu>) When you pressure can, you use a valve on top and a pressure gauge and have to calibrate it to get it right.

Food safety. You can reuse the jar and bands, but don't reuse the lid. They are supposed to be a one-time use. Stores sell packs of lids for this purpose.

Keep everything sanitized. Wash fruit well. Make sure you fill the jars to within $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the top edge before sealing. If you are cooking at high altitude, it will take longer to cook. (Refer to altitude charts.) Also, the water bath will need to be longer based on altitude.

Check that the seal is still intact before consuming anything. If the lid of a jar is popped up at a later date, don't use it. Don't even try to salvage it. You

don't know what's gotten inside.

If you find mold throw it out!!

If you make a lemon or lime curd, do not store them at room temperature. Always put them in the fridge. Don't bother putting them in a water bath because it's not needed. Brad says if you put curds in a tart shell and bring it to your next party, you will be very popular.

Christine pointed out that "shelf stable" means only a few months. Fruit that have anthocyanins like plums and cherries are not stable. They will deteriorate and turn brown and you may want to throw it away very soon. But they will be stable for years in the freezer.

When making freezer jam, do not fill it as high as regular because the jam will expand as it freezes and you could break the jar. Margaret says to make freezer jam you take pectin and hot water and then add that to the mashed fruit. You don't even need to cook the fruit first. She says the flavor of the entire fruit is retained that way.

Brad encourages everyone to use their imagination. Almost any fruit can be made into a jam.

When he got married, they had two bottles of wine at each table, one red and one white. At the end there were 30 leftover (open) bottles of wine! What do you do with 30 open bottles of wine? One guess.

Brad made wine jelly and it was perfect. He used a regular jelly recipe and the alcohol boiled off during the simmer. The jelly had a lovely wine flavor.

Think about experimenting. Try making jam out of prickly pear fruit. (Strain it REALLY well, though.) Think about mixing fruits. Strawberry and bananas are surprisingly good together. (I, personally, vouch for his ginger peach preserves, which I won at the last White Elephant exchange.) Speaking of ginger, you can mince up sushi ginger to add to jams for an additional flavor kick.

Other suggestions from the membership included tamarind (sweet and tart) or watermelon.

Compotes are fruit poached in a simple syrup and are great for added spices. Figs can be poached with cinnamon sticks, star anise, citrus peel, or cardamom. Chinese five-spice powder with plum jam is awesome!

What do you do with preserves other than spread it

on toast? It makes a fine topping for waffles, peanut butter sandwiches, pancakes, even ice cream! Thin it out and make a syrup for pancakes and waffles.

Use it whole as a cheesecake topping. Swirl it into the batter to make a marbled cheesecake. Or swirl it into ice cream.

Two words: jelly rolls! If you make cakes, you can put jam or jelly in the middle instead of icing or frosting.

Persimmon butter is excellent in cake frosting, especially carrot cake.

Speaking of plum jam, try making dipping sauces for potstickers, like a homemade Hoisin sauce.

Make fruit smoothies with bananas and guava and apple and preserves!

If you want to learn more about preservation and canning, and how to make scrumptious jams, check out Lydia's special addendum to this newsletter. Here is just a taste of what she includes:

- Martha Stewart's step-by-step instructions <https://www.marthastewart.com/1009782/su-mmer-preserved>
- Selections from the UC Master Food Preserver Program: <https://mfp.ucanr.edu/>
- The National Center for Home Food Preservation at U.Georgia <https://nchfp.uga.edu>
- UCANR's food safety program https://ucanr.edu/sites/MFPOC/Food_Safety
- And many other useful and delicious links.

After the presentation - and lots of questions and suggestions - we got to taste-test several homemade (and a couple of store-bought) preserves. Between the two of them, Lydia and Brad brought samples of almost every type of preserved fruit, from jelly to compote to butters. No curds or cheese, though.



The potluck was also full of wonderfully preserved and prepared foods. Monica brought a delicious Middle-Eastern plate full of olives, nuts, oils, cheese and spices. And Lydia and Reza brought a pot of homemade lentil

"sloppy Joe" sandwiches. There were also fresh and

dried fruits, breads and crackers, and wonderful desserts including Christine's modified carrot cake with mince.

So much good information, and so much good food! In the end, remember when you make jam or jelly or compote or any other preserve, you're only limited by your imagination! Thank you so much to Lydia and Brad for expanding our horizons with such good taste!



CRFG-LA Classified Ads

WANTED: Seeking a chapter member to be our new webmaster to maintain our chapter Facebook page. If you are interested, please contact Jim Schopper at 818-314-8735, or send a message to editor@crfg-la.org.

If you never knew about it, check out our (slightly out of date) Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/108648579214441>

NEWSLETTER ADDENDUM:
The Art of Fruit Preservation

By Lydia Shabestari

No matter if you're a complete novice to preserving the bounty from your home garden, or a long-time jam maker, the following links will provide all the recipes, instructions, guidebooks and food safety protocol you'll ever need. Many of the sites by the UC Master Preserver Program offer research-tested recipes that are worth checking out.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Martha Stewart website:

<https://www.marthastewart.com/1009782/summer-preserved>

Learn How to Make and Can Jam with this Step-by-Step Guide

America's Test Kitchen YouTube site includes an excellent video called "How to Make Classic Strawberry Jam at Home." The video demonstrates each step required to make, jar, and water bath can a revised classic jam recipe.

UC Master Food Preserver Program Websites

This program is available in many cities across the U.S., and you can locate links to specific programs below. All information provided is based on tested research results. The program's website is mfp.ucanr.edu.

The Master Food Preservers from UC Davis site, under the "resources" tab, includes information about food safety, research-based recipes, and comprehensive video and publication libraries (<https://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/consumers/food-safety-home/home-food-preservation>).

The UC Master Food Preserver Program of Central Sierra site includes a "Preserve It Series" (https://mfp.ucanr.edu/Resources/Recipes_and_Information/Preserve_It_Series/) that includes links to PDFs and recipes for preserving citrus, a wide variety of fruits, a youth jelly workshop, and information about preserving vegetables.

The UC Master Preserver Program of Sacramento website is also a very comprehensive resource of information. Go to

<https://sacmfp.ucanr.edu/Resources/Jam/> for instructions, PDF guides, to learn how to do boiling water canning, to make low sugar jams and jellies, and a PDF about making uncooked jams. The site also includes recipes from their Wednesday evening programs. This group offers a number of monthly demonstrations and recorded ZOOM presentations. To sign up for an upcoming event, go to https://sacmfp.ucanr.edu/Monthly_Demonstrations/.

Other Resources

The National Center for Home Food Preservation at the University of Georgia (<https://nchfp.uga.edu/>) offers guidelines to preserve fruit by canning, making jams and jellies, freezing (by type of fruit), drying and storing.

Oregon State University's home food safety and preservation program website (<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mfp/publications>) provides PDF documents about fruit butters, remaking soft jellies, pectin facts, preserving berries and other fruits, uncooked freezer jam, low-sugar jams and jellies, and fruit spreads.

The Ball company website (ballmasonjars.com) offers guidelines and recipes, a community Facebook forum (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ballcanningcommunity/>), and a helpful pectin calculator for a wide variety of fruits.

Food Safety Best Practices

It's important to be aware of the principles behind food safety when you plan to preserve fruits and other food items. The UC Master Food Preserver Program of Orange County offers guidelines that are chock full of tips and research-based information that's easy to follow (https://ucanr.edu/sites/MFPOC/Food_Safety/).

UC Davis' website for UC Food Safety is another comprehensive resource: (<https://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/consumers/food-safety-home/home-food-preservation>).

The USDA offers consumers support via a chat session, email, by completing the online form, or by telephone. To contact the USDA with your questions, call (833) ONE-USDA or (202) 720-2791, askusda@usda.gov, or go to <https://ask.usda.gov/s/contactsupport> and select the chat box at the bottom of the page.