



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

May 2013 Volume XVIII Issue 3

<http://crfg-la.org>

MAY MEETING

Date: May 25, 2013

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

Time: 10 am

Program: Two for the price of one!! Rick Yessayian will first speak on the upcoming Festival in Hawaii. **Roger Meyer** will speak on his travels with his wife **Shirley**, in their hunt for various plants.

A retired educator, with 35 years of experience, **Rick Yessayian** has degrees in psychology, education, administration, the teaching of science, thermography and a host of experience in astronomy. An active member of the Orange County Chapter, **Rick** is a noted speaker and educator and has traveled to many countries sharing his love for science and rare and unusual fruit. I guarantee that after hearing **Rick**, the travel agencies will be swamped with requests from all of you for reservations to Hawaii!

Roger Meyer and his wife Shirley, have been rare fruit enthusiasts for close to 40 years. They have a farm in San Diego County and a nursery at their home in Orange County. They are constantly looking for the new and exotic for other growers! **Roger**, because of his vast knowledge and experience, has been asked to be one of the speakers at this year's Festival of Fruit in Hawaii. Fasten your seatbelts everyone. You are in for a ride!!

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS: If your last name begins with **N-Z** please bring something for our **MAY** table. Since we are usually eating at noon and even though we all love those sweet treats, **please consider bringing a dish more appropriate for a lunchtime meal.**

JUNE MEETING

Date: Saturday, June 22, 2013

Time: 10 AM

Place: Sylmar High School
13050 Borden Ave. Sylmar, CA 91342

****Potluck****

Steve List, Horticulture Instructor, and Los Angeles Chapter CRFG member has invited us to a student guided tour of the Horticulture Department at Sylmar High School.

Speakers will include **Maggie** and **Dennis** from ANC Technology and they will be demonstrating Solar Powered and Moisture Sensor based irrigation.

<http://www.ancotech.com>

Also, there will be a speaker from Kellogg Supply to talk about soil amendments and OMRI.

<http://www.kelloggsgarden.com>

****This tour will be followed by a POT LUCK. Please bring a dish to share with everyone.**

2011 Chapter Officers & Committees

Chairman:
Jim Schopper
818-362-3007 chairman@CRFG-la.org

Treasurer:
K. Payton
818 222-7556 treasurer@CRFG-la.org

Newsletter Editor:
Pat Valdivia
805-584-6244 editor@CRFG-la.org

Program Chairman:

Publicity:
Jim Schopper
818-362-3007 publicity@CRFG-la.org

Historian:
Emory Walton
805 497-8835 historian@CRFG-la.org

Special Events:
Richard Watts
805 484-3584 events@CRFG-la.org

Hospitality Chairman:
Anita Drapkin
818 888-8630
membership@CRFG-la.org

Food Coordinator:
Chris Warren
818 362-8537 food@CRFG-la.org

Plant Sales:
David Payton
818 222-7556 plants@CRFG-la.org

Secretary/Hostess:
Edith Watts
805 484-3584 hospitality@CRFG-la.org

Development Fund:
Bob Vieth
805 495-9789



WORDS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

I had a wonderful experience in early April. Edgar and Pat Valdivia asked me to inspect their bee hive. They had actually asked me to look into it earlier but I wanted to wait until spring. Edgar has a very pretty hive painted in pastel colors. Four boxes high two 10 inch and two six inch supers. Mine were all boring white. When working a hive they have 100 percent of my attention. I always go into slow motion when opening up a hive, nice and easy and no fast moves. So we smoked it down; this calms the bees-- they think a forest fire is near and gorge themselves with honey for the trip to find a new hive. (And who wants to fight with a full stomach?) We opened it up, and man was it loaded with honey, so we started harvesting the honey. Edgar's bees were very gentle, not aggressive at all. So gentle that at one time I removed my gloves. I had brought my centrifugal extractor and planned to de-cap the frames to spin the honey out. But the frames were installed without foundation or wires to hold everything together. So it was quite a tedious task for Pat to separate the honey from the comb. I'm told the new thinking is the foundation could be tainted with medications or chemicals so most backyard bee keepers don't install foundation.

Edgar told me his bees are making a difference in his yard. Everything is being pollinated and flowering and he is looking forward to gathering many fruits. Pat & Edgar gave me some honey, but I wasn't there for the honey. I didn't realize how much I had missed it over the years and am looking forward to working a hive again.

Bee Blessed,

Jim Schopper



LOQUATS

Many people, including many gardeners, are unfamiliar with loquats. Perhaps it's that loquats are not good keepers and are best consumed fresh, making them a poor commercial crop. Or that, like almonds, their early blooming leaves them vulnerable and subject to weather vagaries that can affect pollination. As the **California Rare Fruit Growers** site says: "Where the climate is too cool or excessively warm and moist, the tree is grown as an ornamental but will not bear fruit." Whatever the reason, loquats are not the most widely grown backyard crop.

It's surprising, because loquats have been in California since the late 19th century. In fact, **Luther Burbank** experimented with improving the fruit and recorded his work in the essay, "*The Apricot and the Loquat: An Opportunity for the Experimenter*".

Loquats have large, leathery, deeply-lobed leaves. *E. japonica*, the edible species, has in addition, fragrant white blossoms and produces clusters of sweet-to-tart, sub-acid fruit. The trees have adapted to sub-tropical, warm, mild climates in Asia, Africa, the Americas, Hawaii, Australian and New Zealand. The fruit is particularly prized in Japan.

In California, commercial loquats production is limited mainly to the coastal areas between Santa Barbara and San Diego.

In spite of weather unpredictability, and a tendency toward alternate year bearing, home gardeners can enjoy good harvests of this uncommon and delicious fruit. As with any crop providing the correct growing conditions and choosing the right varieties makes all the difference.

Loquat culture and care

Loquats do best in full sun or light shade; require moderate water for a good harvest, and adequate space for growth. *Sunset Western Garden* book states that loquats do well espaliered or in containers. Loquat trees average 15 – 30 ft in height, and as wide if not adequately pruned. They respond well to moderate pruning to keep the canopy down, and to allow light and air to circulate. Pruning is best accomplished after harvest, in late summer and early autumn, well before autumn rains and winter bloom.

Loquat fruit

Loquats trees bring a tropical evergreen lushness and Asian influence to the landscape. But, it is the fruit that fuels the fervor of loquat lovers. **Luther Burbank** wrote “the flavor suggests that of some early apples, but is generally considered superior.” Fruit enthusiast **David Karp**, sings its praises: “... a pleasant blend of apricot, plum and cherry with floral overtones, and is quite sweet when ripe.”

Harvest

Harvest fruit when soft-firm and vibrant in color. Fruit is not a good keeper and is best fresh right off the tree or refrigerated and eaten within a day or two at most.

Loquats also make good jam. Enjoy them fresh in salads combined with apricots, cherries, plums, blueberries and/or strawberries, chilled and tossed with a dash of balsamic or violet infused vinegar and a dollop of whipped or ice cream. Try a loquat cobbler (recipe below).

You can also look for loquats at farmer’s markets and at specialty Asian stores that sell produce.

Varieties

Sunset Western Garden book advises getting a grafted variety, if you want to be sure to get a good fruiter. You can find many varieties listed in great detail on the California Rare Fruit Growers site. The following varieties are recommended by *Sunset*:

Champagne’ (best in warm areas)

‘Gold Nugget’ (best n cooler regions)

‘MacBeth’ (exceptionally large fruit)

Loquat Cobbler

Filling

2 lbs loquats, seeded and quartered

7 TBS Sugar

1 TB All Purpose

Topping

3/4 cup All Purpose

Flour

3/4 teaspoon Baking

Powder

Flour

1/4 teaspoon Almond

Extract

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 1/2 teaspoons Lemon

or Orange Juice,

fresh squeezed

1/4 teaspoon Baking

Soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

3 teaspoons sugar

(reserved)

1/2 cup Buttermilk well shaken

3 TBS Cold unsalted butter cut into bits

Make Filling

Toss all filling ingredients together in a 9-inch glass or ceramic pie plate and let stand until juicy, about 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Make Topping

Sift together flour, baking powder and soda, salt, and 1 teaspoon sugar in a bowl.

Blend in butter with your fingertips or a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal.

Stir in buttermilk with a fork just until combined (do not over mix).

Drop rounded tablespoons of dough over filling, leaving spaces in between to allow topping to expand.

Sprinkle with remaining 2 teaspoons sugar.

Bake cobbler in middle of oven until fruit is tender and topping is golden, about 30 minutes.

Cool slightly, about 15 minutes, and serve warm.

A GENEROUS OFFER

Roy Imazu has very generously asked me to pass on this information: He has about 30 avocado seedlings, mostly in one gallon pots, ready for grafting possibilities. He is offering these free to anyone interested. Give **Roy** a call at 818 522-4891 or his cell: 818 522-5891 Although **Roy** doesn’t often make it to our meetings because of health reasons, he has been a wonderful and supportive member of our Chapter for many years. We thank him for thinking of us.

LOOKING BACK

By Debbie Schopper
Member at Large



APRIL MEETING

Our April meeting was a field trip to the home of **Sandy and Robbie Patten** that was landscaped by **Jackie Surber**. Wondering what you can do when you opt for a non-lawn home? Well, this home begins with a beautifully planted parkway of salvias, purple sage, and pigeon point dwarf coyote bush. The front yard has among its plantings, crape myrtle, giant sequoia, 'Pink Lady' apple, wood strawberries, salvias, sages, lavender, hydrangeas, oregano, and roses. The backyard is planted with standard, semi dwarf, and ultra dwarf fruit trees including grapefruit, orange, tangerine, lemon, and blood orange citrus trees. Also growing are mission fig, asian pear, nectarine, peach and low chill lilacs, guava, and apple. Among these trees are verbena, lilacs, sunflowers, Bruce Dickinson buckwheat, roses, iris, geranium, mint, freesia, paper whites, garlic chives, alyssum, borage, California poppies, pittosporum, fruitless olives, star jasmine and hedge-nettle. Running through the center of the yard is an arbor on which two types of grapes grow: an early green and a larger oval red blush. The words charming, inviting, and current come to mind while touring this property. Many of these plants produce blooms that attract humming birds and bees: year round food for the pollinators. Wood chips cover any unplanted ground area. Sculptures, pathways made of different mediums, and sitting areas add to the beauty of this yard.

You can find out more about **Jackie's** vision for our valley at: Urbafloria.com



We had a two for one field trip this month. Because we were only a few miles from his home, **Paul Kao**, one of our members invited everyone to come and visit his place also. **Paul** has a large property and raises exotic birds along with koi, water gardens, and many fruit trees and other garden plantings. A delicious tangerine tree, grafted mulberries, many citrus trees, and pomegranate were among his fruit trees.

MARCH MEETING

Glen Woodmansee's very informative power point presentation was loaded not only with wonderfully practical information but humor as well. All walked away not only with a better understanding of air-layering but a big smile as well.

