

**Foothill Chapter
California Rare Fruit Growers**

**Saturday, April 3, 2004 at 9:30 a.m.
Arboretum of Los Angeles County
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia
Lecture Hall A (free admission)**

Next meeting: Planning the L.A. Arboretum Fruit Orchard



Join us for a discussion of how the Foothill CRFG chapter is helping to guide the design of the planned fruit orchard at the L.A. Arboretum. Kazi Pitelka will lead us in an information-sharing discussion. Your input is welcome on everything from what trees, shrubs, and vines to include, to the overall design and intended purpose of the orchard. A visit to the proposed site may be part of the meeting.

Some ideas from Kazi to frame the discussion:

Purpose

Defining the purpose of the area's space will help define the content. Is this new space going to be a demonstration and education garden and/or a display of the beautiful elements? Producing backyard fruit is not always a thing of beauty by garden design standards, but it's still beautiful to those of us who love growing food. Our climate provides us with an huge range of possibilities. Here in the San Gabriel Valley we have enough chill to grow some pears and cherries but can still grow bananas and mangos. Should demonstrating this be a purpose? Is there space for research?

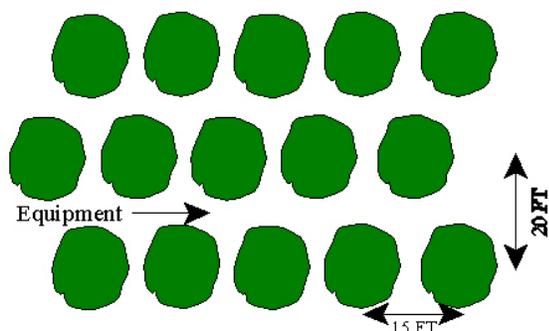
The history of Los Angeles is full of orchards; citrus and other trees helped shape the region. Should local history be a defining or organizing element? We are blessed with fabulous cultural diversity in Los Angeles County. Should the origins of fruits or the regional cuisine they are associated with be an organizing element?

Types of trees to consider:

Citrus-- tried and true varieties, exciting new cultivars, and oddities like Buddha's Hand and Australian Finger Lime. Semitropical/tropical - Avocados, White Sapote, Loquat, Cherimoya, Bananas, Mango. Guavas, Feijoa, Passion fruit. Stone Fruits of all kinds - Many new low chill cultivars and interesting Aprium and Pluot crosses as well as Los Angeles' old reliable standbys. Apples, European and Asian Pears, Quinces and Cherries. Persimmons, Pomegranates, Figs, and Mulberries.

Some of the oldest locally cultivated trees are the Olives planted by the padres in the San Gabriel Valley. Now growers in California are replanting Olives, trying to start a California Olive oil industry. A grouping of new and old varieties of Olives might be of interest.

Nuts - Macadamia, Walnut, Pecan, and Almond. Exotics - Guiana Chestnut, Raisin Tree, Babaco, Jaboticaba, Miracle Fruit, Acerola, Longan, Surinam Cherry, Jujube, Rose Apple, Tamarillo. Some of these are tried and successful varieties for our area that should be introduced to the public. Others are less well tried but we would all benefit from some experimentation.



Plants traditionally used in Southern California landscaping - Some people may not realize that plants in their garden make edible fruit. Natal plums (caress), Strawberry and Lemon Guavas (sodium) and even the Feijoa (although many of the Fajitas grown for landscape purposes have inferior fruit).

Fruits from plants other than trees- Kiwis and Grapes (these would require a support structure.). Blueberries, Strawberries, Raspberries, Boysenberries, Blackberries. Cape Gooseberries, Pepin Dulcet. Pithy (Dragon Fruit) or any other fruiting Cactus.

High density planting techniques to consider

Gardeners can plant trees very close together in any number of configurations to fit a site. Examples: groups of 2 to 4 trees planted 18" apart in one hole, and hedgerows of varying lengths with trees planted 30" apart. A gardener with room for only one or two trees can increase his possibilities by planting early, mid and late varieties together for longer yields or choosing more types of fruit. Another wonderful example of this system is to plant more columnar types of trees (like apples) 20" apart around a larger (15'-20'?) circle leaving an opening for a door. This creates a fruiting "room" or gazebo, which would be a wonderful focal point for the Arboretum.

With high density planting you can plant Haas, Lamb Haas, Forte and Reed Avocados in one hole and have fruit 12 months a year. All high density plantings require careful summer pruning as well as winter shaping .

Grafting Techniques to consider

Before the development of high density planting, people saved space by grafting several fruit varieties or fruit maturing times onto one tree - still an attractive solution. It is fun for people to see the "fruit salad" trees that are available. Graft the same tree onto three or four different rootstocks, and let them grow to their natural size with normal shaping. This would serve two purposes. First, it would be an interesting demonstration to the public about the significance of rootstock choice. Second, we would all benefit from learning which rootstocks thrive in our Los Angeles soil and climate. We would need to try this on several different types of trees. In the case of Apples there is some indication that different rootstocks might affect chill requirement. If we can learn what works best for our area we might expand the possible choices available to us.

Fruiting

Successive bearing- there are some great low chill varieties to demonstrate this. The peaches May Pride, Eva's Pride, Mid Pride, and August Pride are a great example. This can be demonstrated with citrus, too-a well planned collection of citrus can have different fruits coming in for most of the year. In keeping with the idea of successive bearing, it is important to make the point that in our climate we can have fresh fruit 12 months a year.

Placement

Is there a cyclone fence in this area? Passion fruit LOVE cyclone fences.

Is there a south facing wall that might offer some of the more tropical plants reflective heat?

Is there a low spot on the site to put the cultivars that need the most chill?

Design

Do you want to make a point of extra beautiful flowers (like the Red Baron Peach or some of the quinces) or bizarre and beautiful growth habits (like the corkscrew Jujube)? Espalier - It would be inspiring to demonstrate how beautifully fruit trees can be trained: in several styles flat against a wall, trained on wires to create a fruit tree fence, or trained over an archway or tunnel. Consider a tunnel of Apple and Pear trees as an entrance; a Grape or Kiwi arbor under which visitors can rest in the shade. Since citrus is evergreen, a row of trees can beautifully define or separate a space. With all these diverse ideas let's not forget how beautiful it is to walk between rows of traditionally planted orchard trees.

History and Education

Classes and Demos in choosing, planting, caring for, and pruning fruit trees with their different needs. In my garden I love knowing where trees originated: that Peaches, Kiwis and Citrus all came from China, that the Buddha's Hand Citron is placed on a grave in China in the same way we would put flowers. I think it would be a good idea to find a way to share this kind of history and lore with the public.

And finally

Let people sample whatever fruit is ripe!



Mandarin Fundraiser

Many thanks very much to Martin Koning Bastiaan for organizing the fundraising sale at the last meeting of the new mandarin varieties Golden Nugget and TDE2. This was a huge success, with the stock entirely sold, and complete with piles of example fruit to taste. My trees are already leafing out and very healthy.

Annual Scion Exchange

February's annual Foothill CRFG scion exchange was possibly the best ever, with good participation and contributors filling many tables with scions. It's great to see many of my grafts leafing out already. (But not all - what's the secret to grafting figs?). Many thanks to those of you who contributed scions, advice, help in setting up, and most importantly, your enthusiasm and support for this annual event.



Successful Launch of "Garden Gatherings"

Many thanks to Joel Johnson for organizing a successful first Foothill CRFG Garden Gathering! Joel was a gracious host and tour guide around his interesting garden. The rhubarb pie and other goodies were excellent, and the conversations were interesting. The cactus garden alone made the trip to Alta Dena worthwhile. Finally, the plant barter was a success, with Joel priming the process with many plants available for trade. We already have a gracious volunteer for the May Garden Gathering - more details at Saturday's meeting.



A note directly from Joel:



I would just like to thank everybody who came to last week's Gathering and helped make it such a success! It was wonderful listening to all the great conversations, and getting some much-needed feedback on my (and I use the term loosely) 'technique'. I wish I hadn't been pulled in so many different directions, and could have spent more time with each of you. And while it certainly didn't seem like a show stopper, I do hope to get the next Plant Swap a little more organized- many thanks to those that

participated. So spread the word, and the May Gathering should be even better! I'll announce the location at the next chapter meeting, April 3rd. Thanks for your enthusiasm, and I look forward to seeing you all again soon!

Foothill CRFG Plant Database

The Foothill CRFG Plant Database is now in progress. Joel Johnson is gathering information on who grows what, where, why, and how. Please continue to provide this information to Joel at the meetings, or by email at joel@aridscapes.com Thank You!



Sharing Table:

Members with last names starting with 'N' through 'Z', please bring goodies (fruit, baked goods, etc.) for the Sharing Table. Fruit from your own garden is especially welcome!

And everyone, please lend a helping hand by cleaning up during and after the meeting.

Chapter Miscellany:

Request:

As always, I would be happy to include photographs of interesting plants from any Foothill CRFG member. Please send your digital photos, with a description, to me at david.szymkowski@adelphia.net.

Plant Raffle:

Please bring a plant in a pot with information and instructions for care.

Dues:

Please pay membership dues at next meeting if past due.

Save a stamp!

Thanks to those of you who have already indicated your preference for an email reminder of our meeting. To save the club's time and money, please respond to me at david.szymkowski@adelphia.net and I will remove you from our postcard list.

<p>THE FOOTHILL CHAPTER OF THE CRFG meets at 9:30 a.m. the first Saturday of alternate months (February, April, June, August, October, December) at the Arboretum of Los Angeles County, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia (just south of the 210 Freeway). There is no charge to enter the Arboretum to attend the meeting, which is in Lecture Hall "A". The easiest access is straight through the Gift Shop, then down the stairs to the right in the adjacent building. CHAIRMAN: Rod Kiewiet, foothill@crfg.org</p>
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Tentative date of next Garden Gathering meeting: Saturday, May 1, 2004

Date of next CRFG chapter meeting: Saturday, June 5, 2004