



California Rare Fruit Growers – Central Coast Chapter

January 2020 Newsletter
by Lori Bright

Meeting January 11, 2020



After listening to Dean in the classroom, the group gathers in the CRFG Demonstration orchard for hands-on pruning experience. Photo by Dara Manker.

Tucker started our meeting off today.

- Thanks to Cal Poly and Dr. Lauren Garner for the use of their crop Science Building. Let's all support Poly by buying at their fruit stand.
- The Fabulous February Meeting is our Scion Exchange on the 22nd. The Scion Exchange has been moved from the 3rd Saturday to the 4th Saturday of the month to ensure we get our rootstock in time for the event.
- The March Meeting will be on the 14th at the Master Gardeners' Community Garden, the Seven Sisters Garden, [2156 Sierra Way, San Luis Obispo, CA](#).

An additional note: DP is offering to give his personal wheelbarrow to anyone who is in need of one. If you would like more information about this wheelbarrow, please talk to DP at the next meeting. If you don't know who DP is, please ask anyone in charge. We can steer you his way.

Yearly Pruning Meeting

Today we are honored by Dean Harrell, instructor at Cuesta College, North County. Dean starts us off with a "Shameless Plug" for his upcoming class. 😊 Dean will be covering Plant

Propagation and Production, AGPS 243. He will cover everything around the care of plants in a nursery. You will learn skills from how to graft fruit trees to growing vegetables for a community plant sale! Dean also teaches Soil Science, Plant Science and Viticulture classes. If you are interested in participating in his classes you can email him at



Dean explains how to make your initial cut on a bareroot fruit tree to reduce its height and allow for greater productivity. Photo by Dara Manker.

Dean_Harrell@cuesta.edu.

Why do we prune? When we remove buds from the tree there are consequences such as:

- The tree will be smaller
- There will be less leaf area
- Possibly less fruitfulness
- The tree will be invigorated

Dean will discuss winter pruning and therefore wants us to avoid pruning Apricots, Cherries and Grapes during the winter season. These plants are susceptible to diseases predominant in the wet Winter season. Dean wants us to use the 3 D's. Cut out Disease, Damaged and Dead wood first. Next keep an eye on Spatial areas. Size up the tree based on Sun Exposure, Ultimate Height and Width desired. If you are doing restorative pruning, don't hurry it. You might take up to 3 years. When uncertain "Wing it, Learn and Repeat."

Know the bearing habits of your tree. Nectarines and Peaches bear on 1-year old wood. You can remove 40 - 50 percent of the wood on those trees. Many fruit trees bear on spurs which are formed over a longer time period. Some, such as Cherry have mixed buds (the terminal bud has fruit

and leaf potential). On these trees you will want to remove 20 – 30 percent of its wood. For more information on Fruit-Bearing habits of fruit trees you might want to see

http://fruitandnuteducation.ucdavis.edu/generaltopics/Tree_Growth_Structure/Bearing_Habit/



Dean goes above and beyond to demonstrate pruning techniques. Photo by Joe Sabol.



Don't be afraid of pruning. Dean says you can think of the root system as the "gas tank" of the tree. When you get rid of dying branches, diseased wood, water sprouts and suckers, the tree can put more effort into producing healthy branches and fruit. Photo by Dara Manker.

When pruning your new tree, prune to accommodate its function. Are you short and want to harvest low, do you need the tree to accommodate a narrow area? Face your tree's graft to the North or North East. Avoid getting Sun Scald by using a thin paint mix made up of 50 percent latex paint to 50 percent water. Paint the graft union, the trunk and branches. Dean likes to use an organic nitrogen fertilizer, but if you want to use a conventional fertilizer just "go easy" on its application. Dean led us over to the CRFG Demo Orchard and continued educating us on pruning techniques. Thanks so much Dean, we learned oodles from you today!



The pruning curious gather in the orchard to hone their skills. After listening and watching Dean, we gathered in smaller groups led by experienced pruners to ask our specific questions and try pruning under supervision. Photo by Dara Manker.



Lori explains the advantages of various types of pruners. Photo by Dara Manker.



Tucker answers questions and shares experiences with backyard fruit tree gardening with his group. Photo by Dara Manker.



*Larry discusses tree scaffolding with his group.
Photo by Dara Manker.*



*Art explains about apical dominance to his group.
Photo by Dara Manker.*

The orchard looked amazing before we began pruning but when we left it looked even better. Thanks be to everybody that pruned their little hearts out. Dara and Manny are working hard to keep up the orchard and they are doing a great job. Having said that: when D & M propose "Orchard Days", let's pull together and further that pruning, weed-pulling and raking. Our Orchard looks lovely. Thanks again Dara and Manny!



Jim Gaetly came early and pruned many trees. Thanks,



Jesse helped prune trees at this meeting, and frequently

Jim! Photo by Dara Manker.

volunteers pruning in the orchard on his own time. Dara and Manny greatly appreciate Jesse's help throughout the year! Photo by Dara Manker.



Dean shows us how to make a spreader by twining two branches together to separate branches (see spreader in foreground). Photo by Dara Manker.



Surinam cherries are ripening in the orchard! Photo by Dara Manker.



The orchard in winter. Photo by Dara Manker.