

The Leaflett

California Rare Fruit Growers - Central Coast Chapter Newsletter
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2005--The Year of the Apple

Apple

Rosaceae—Malus

The History of the Apple—Part Two Apples in America



“Oh, the Lord is good to me, and so I thank the Lord, for giving me the things I need, the sun, and the rain, and the apple seed...” are some of the words to a song many of us sang in grammar school in the days before budget restraints cut music from the curriculum and “political correctness” would have disallowed it anyway. The song was about a man named John Chapman who was born September 26, 1774 near Leominster, Massachusetts. Little is known of his early life, but by the age of 25, he had become a nurseryman who planted apple trees in the western portions of New York and Pennsylvania.

When the fertile lands lying south of the Great Lakes and west of the Ohio River were opened for settlement in the early 1800's, John Chapman was among the first to explore the new territory from which the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois were later formed. For nearly half a century he planted apple tree nurseries all around the area so that when settlers arrived, they found John Chapman's trees ready for sale. In the years that followed, he became known as the Apple Tree Man, or Johnny Appleseed.

Johnny Appleseed obtained his apple seeds every fall. At first, he went back to the cider presses in western Pennsylvania where he selected seeds from the discarded apple pressings. He washed the seeds carefully and packed them in bags for planting the following spring. In later years, as cider presses were located in the new territory, he gathered his seeds closer to home. After clearing areas in the wilderness in sizes from an acre to many acres and constructing brush fences to keep the animals out, he'd plant the seed. As settlers passed through, he'd sell them the seedling apples for about a penny each—taking money when he could get it, but often bartering for goods when he couldn't. He was convinced that pioneers who planted his trees made their new cabins seem to be a permanent and loving home. His dream was that with enough apple trees growing no one would ever need to go hungry.

He walked almost everywhere, usually barefoot, carrying his precious apple seeds and the simplest of camping gear on his back. He also used a boat, canoe, or raft to transfer larger loads of seeds along the many waterways. Johnny ate no meat and carried a simple pot along with him. In this pot he could gather nuts and berries, collect milk from a generous settler's cow, or pour a handful of coarse-ground meal into the pot of boiling water to make porridge. Some drawings even depict him as wearing the pot on his head, but it's not too likely he actually did that for any length of time! Those pots were hand-made and very heavy! He died in March of 1848 near Ft. Wayne, Indiana of a disease known as "winter plague" that he caught as a result of going out on a cold spring day to take care of one of his nurseries that had been ravaged by some cattle. If he'd had a choice, that is probably just how he would have preferred to go—quickly, and taking care of the trees he loved.

But before Johnny Appleseed, apples came to America by boat. Although *Malus angustifolia*, *Malus coronaria*, *Malus ioensis*, and *Malus fusca*, all varieties of crab apples, were native to North America, they had not been developed into highly edible varieties by the time the first European settlers arrived in the New World.

In 1623, Rev. William Blackstone (aka Blaxton) arrived in Massachusetts from England. Historians write that he carried a bag of apple seeds (also called "pips") with him and soon planted an orchard on Beacon Hill in Boston. However, Blackstone didn't establish himself on the western slope of the peninsula of Shawmut (Boston), opposite the mouth of the Charles River, until at least 1625. If he planted trees earlier, nothing is known about them. Actually, since Blackstone was a minister, it is not likely he took seeds with him from England, but he probably had the foresight to collect seeds from the apples that had been brought by settlers for their rations.

In any case, when Governor John Winthrop and his Massachusetts Bay Colony ships arrived in 1630, Blackstone's apple orchards were well established. He willingly shared his bounty with the new arrivals even though they were laying claim to land Blackstone had been using for years already. In 1633, Governor Winthrop awarded Blackstone 50 of the 800 acres he'd felt he'd owned for eight years! Much of the dissention, of course, was caused by whose form of religion was right (Blackstone was Anglican and Winthrop and his settlers were Puritans), but finally, in the Spring of 1635 Blackstone left Boston and ended up settling near Rehoboth, RI. It was there he spent the next 40 years of his life and there **he developed the first named American apple**, the Yellow Sweeting. According to his biography, "He had the first of that sort called yellow sweetings that were ever in the world perhaps, the richest and most delicious apple of the whole kind." The apple is known today as Rhode Island Greening Apple and is the state apple. It is a good "keeper", late maturing, and gets more yellow and sweeter the longer it ripens on the tree.



While Governor Winthrop was intolerant of Blackstone's religious views, he was very impressed by the apple orchards. Boston's water was notoriously bad and Winthrop saw apples, in the form of apple cider, as solving that problem. He ordered apple trees from England and soon apple orchards sprang up all around Boston. He even paid rent on his land in apples according to early records. An interesting note here is that there were no honey bees to pollinate these early apple trees, so the crops weren't heavy. It wasn't until settlers began bringing honey bees in (called "White Man's Flies" by the Native Americans) that the fruit crops really developed.

Jumping ahead a hundred years, Robert Prince in 1737 established the first commercial apple tree nursery in America called William Prince Nursery in Flushing, New York. The nursery survived through four generations of the Prince family until just after the Civil War. The British who occupied Long Island during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) had considered the William Prince Nursery so important that they put an armed guard around the nursery to protect it.

Johnny Appleseed single-handedly did more to promote the spread of apple orchards toward the west than anyone else, but apples actually reached Washington State, now so renowned for its apples, in the same way apples reached the East Coast—by boat! In 1825, Captain Aemilius Simmons attended a farewell banquet in his honor in London. At this party, a young lady slipped some apple seeds into his pocket and asked him to plant them in the wilderness. After Simmons' arrival at Fort Vancouver, he handed the seeds over to Dr. John McLoughlin, Chief Agent of the Hudson Bay Company. Dr. McLoughlin gave the seeds to his gardener to plant. His first tree produced only one apple, but the seeds of that single fruit bore future generations of hardier stock.

As these early apple planters learned, the trees from natural apple seeds produce daughter trees that are often hugely different than the parent tree. Seed planting produces unpredictable results, which is why grafting has become the way of growing apples that keep the characteristics of the parent tree. Most of the currently popular apples in North America have an ancestry that can be traced back to a single tree—characteristics maintained by grafting.

According to one story, the McIntosh comes from a single seedling found by John McIntosh in Eastern Ontario, Canada nearly 200 years ago. That parent tree died in 1908. Red Delicious apples, the second-most popular North American variety, are the result of the chance discovery of a single wild tree in 1872 in Iowa. Golden Delicious apples originated from a tree in West Virginia, discovered accidentally in 1890. The Rome Beauty, likewise, derives from an Ohio tree discovered and cultivated by a boy! One Gold variety comes from a single seed washed ashore in Virginia in 1969.

Other popular apple varieties have resulted from purposeful selective breeding involving natural types. In 1966, Empire apples resulted from a cross between McIntosh and Red Delicious apples. Gala apples resulted from a New Zealand cross involving Orange Reds and Golden Delicious. The Fuji apple, a Rains-Genet and Red Delicious hybrid, has recently replaced the Granny Smith apple as the third-most popular U.S. variety.

But grafting can also produce “sameness.” Commercially that “sameness” might be important, but mouth-watering taste may be sacrificed in favor of color, prolonged shelf life, disease resistance and resilience to bruising when being transported. For home gardeners, where trees are usually grown more for taste than profit, seedling growing can be fun. Give it a try! Besides, your seedling may become the next Red Delicious!

Next month—Apple History, Part 3—Apples to California and the Central Coast!

All-American Apple Pie



1 recipe of your favorite double pie crust
 6 to 8 firm, tart apples, such as Rhode Island Greening, Gravenstein or Granny Smith (about 3 pounds)
 1/3 c. granulated sugar
 1/3 c. brown sugar
 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
 3 tbs. flour
 3 tbs. butter cut in small bits

1. Prepare the pie dough, divide half and roll out each half no more than 1/4" thick. Line a 9-inch pie pan with one. Keep lined pan and top crust chilled.

2. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Peel and core the apples and slice them about ¼” thick. Blend sugars, cinnamon, nutmeg, and flour, then pour over apples and toss until well mixed. Fill the pie with the apple slices, mounding them somewhat in the center. Dot the apples with butter. Cover loosely with the top crust, using a little water to seal the crusts together. Crimp the edges. Using a fork or the tip of a knife, make several vents in the top crust.

3. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 1 hour or until golden brown. Check apples for doneness by inserting a sharp knife in a slit. Apples should be tender, but not be mushy. Serve while still warm with some ice cream!

January Elections and Grafting Meeting



A group of 63 people braved the pouring rain on Saturday, January 9 to attend our annual elections and grafting meeting that was held in the Crops Science Classroom at Cal Poly. Following are the minutes from that meeting from our secretary, Rhonda Underwood.

The meeting was called to order at 1:45 pm by Art DeKleine. He welcomed everyone and thanked those that brought refreshments. Guests were introduced. We were reminded that Art and Doris Henzgen are keeping a guest book and guests were encouraged to sign the book before leaving.

Joe Sabol said that members arrived at 10:00 am to take advantage of the tree sale, and then thanked Dan Ray for a great job selling the trees.

Lark Carter conducted the election of officers and board members. All nominees were accepted; Lark then introduced the officers and board members for 2005 to the group.

Joe presented Art and Roger gifts of appreciation for their contributions as co-chairs. Art brought boxes of chocolate for Lennette, Roger and Joe. Roger then thanked Joe for his support during his term as co-chair.

Joe discussed the planting of a multiple grafted apple tree with a commemorative plaque in honor of Ralph Vorhies.

Roger introduced the guest pruner, professor Dan Lassanske, who discussed and demonstrated techniques for pruning ornamentally. He stressed the importance of having good tools, discussed examples of the types of tools that are best for pruning (hand pruner, lopper, pruning saw), and emphasized the importance of keeping the tools sharp. We also learned how to hold the tools

correctly and how to make the proper cuts. He discussed topics such as heading back, directional pruning, thinning out, drop crotch pruning, and Dan's Dominant Branch Concept. He talked about single leaders vs. double leaders, and told us how to identify water sprouts and suckers. He also gave us tips for buying and pruning new trees, and distributed handouts, which contained much useful information for pruning our trees at home. Throughout the discussion he provided answers to many questions from attendees. The meeting closed at 3:20 pm. (Rhonda also said the meeting was "a blast! It was entertaining AND informative, which is the best combination. I think the professor that gave the pruning lecture was about as enthusiastic as Joe S. if you can believe it. It seemed like everyone there had a great time.")



Thanks to Paul Moyer for the photos of the January meeting and guest speaker.

Dan Lassanske's Fruit Tree Pruning Tips

- I. **Our Goal:** To have a nice looking tree that bears fruit.
- II. **Pruning Concepts:**
 1. Heading Back—Reduces the height and width of the tree. Prune to a bud.
 2. Directional Pruning—Prune back to a bud that will grow in the desired direction--generally, to an outside facing bud.
 3. Thinning Out—The removal of unwanted growth, i.e. excess new growth, the 3D's (dead, diseased, or damaged growth), crossing branches, water sprouts, and suckers.
 4. Drop Crotch Pruning—Reduces the height and width of the tree. Prune to a smaller branch.
- III. **Holding the Hand Pruner or Lopper Correctly:** Put the blade next to the part you want to save. Stubs don't grow!
- IV. **Making the Perfect Cut:** Cut 1/4"-1/2" above a bud at a 45 degree angle. The cut should parallel the direction in which the bud is growing. When removing a branch, make a close cut. Put the blade next to the part you want to save.
- V. **Dan's Dominant Branch Concept:**
 1. Head back every branch every year.
 2. The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing!

New Officers for the Central Coast Chapter for 2005

The following were elected to their positions at the January 9, 2005 meeting:

Co-Chairs: Art DeKleine and Bob Tullock; **Program Chair:** Joe Sabol; **Assistant,** Carol Scott; **Secretary:** Rhonda Underwood; **Treasurer:** Dick Pottratz; **Web Master:** Art DeKleine; **Assistants,** Pet and Marvin Daniels

and John and Choung Crow; **Raffle Directors:** Marvin Daniels and Larry Hollis; **Historian/Archivists:** Sandra Pirghaibi and Marie Moyer; **Photographer:** Paul Moyer; **Refreshments:** Coffee, Jaleah Brynn assisted by Dorothy and Wally Seelos; **Friendship Chair:** Doris Henzgen; **Newsletter Editor:** Lennette Horton; **Newsletter Mailing:** Art and Doris Henzgen and Anne Furtick; **Community Orchard Coordinators:** Joe Sabol, Pet and Marvin Daniels; **Apple Grafting Coordinators:** Joe Sabol, Marvin Daniels, and Patti Schober; **Board of Directors:** In addition to the Co-chairs, Secretary, and Treasurer named above, Roger Eberhardt, Chuck and Susan Atlee, Art and Doris Henzgen, Joe Sabol, Lark Carter, Robert and Carol Scott, Bill and Anne Furtick, Marvin and Pet Daniels, and Jenny Weaver.

Ask An Expert

Member Jaleah Brynn suggested we have a column in the newsletter where our chapter members could get questions about their local growing problems answered. I think it is a terrific idea! Is there anyone out there who would volunteer to answer a question each month and get the information to me so it can be included in this newsletter? Following is my idea for the format.

Question: “I purchased a few Neem trees and they are not doing well though I put the largest and most expensive in an upper deck storage room. I wonder if anyone else has tried to raise this tree in this climate.” *Jaleah Brynn*

Answer: I'm not the expert, Jaleah, but I was curious about Neem trees, so I turned to my favorite expert resource—the internet. I learned that one of Neem's most important attributes is its effectiveness as a natural pesticide and that it is also good at repelling pests that affect people, like mosquitoes, fleas, ticks and head lice. A plant native to India, there it is called “the village pharmacy”, where it has been used in varying forms to treat a multitude of health problems for thousands of years—especially colds and flu. Modern research is confirming the traditional uses. While none of it specifically focuses on human beings with colds or flu, universities from Bangalore to Baltimore are reporting exciting results in treating the viruses that cause disorders ranging from genital herpes to dengue fever.



Now, about growing a Neem tree—I don't know if this is much encouragement, but the article I read states: “Even novice gardeners can grow Neem because it clearly indicates when it needs water and fertilizer. Leaves start to droop as the soil dries out; quickly revive after watering. Well-fertilized Neem trees sport bright-red new growth; when growth slows, they need more nutrients.” However, over-watering is also an issue—about the only disease that will bother them is root rot caused by too much water or poor drainage. The article goes on to mention that the trees are like goldfish, they will grow into the size of pot you put them into, and the bigger the pot the better. They should be potted in premium potting soil and fertilized weekly with fish emulsion at half the recommended rate, or fertilized monthly during the growing season with a balanced organic fertilizer. They are also daylight sensitive and if you want them to bloom and produce fruit year-round, they will need supplemental light—even a nearby lamp will do. Hope this helps, Jaleah!

Dr. Howard Brown

Dr. Howard Brown, a long time member of the Central Coast Chapter of CRFG, passed away on January 13, 2005. Dr. Brown attended Cal Poly as a student and later returned to teach in the Ornamental Horticulture Department. He served as the head of that department for 22 years and then became the Dean of the School of Agriculture for five years. Dr. Brown lined up and hosted our tour of the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, was a very gifted grafter, and loved to propagate, promote

and improve on the famous Murray Smith Tomato. He was our guest speaker at the December 2003 holiday potluck meeting. A memorial service was held for Howard at the Cal Poly Leaning Tree Arboretum and many of our local chapter members were in attendance. Howard touched many lives and will be missed by all of us who knew him.

Newsletter Fees Are Due!

Is **your** chapter newsletter fee current—please check the treasurer’s list below to see if you need to update. As our treasurer, Dick Pottratz explained, **everyone** is on an annual fee basis beginning each January. Fees are **\$6** a year--or, for **\$25** you will get the newsletter from our chapter for **five** years and save **\$5!** Make Dick’s life easier—and assure yourself of not missing any news or information about our chapter or about growing fruit here on the Central Coast! Send your check to **CRFG Treasurer**, 2430 Leona Avenue, SLO, CA 93401. *March will be the last month you will receive a newsletter if your dues are not current.*

Alberts	Evelyn
Ananda	Shachi
Ancil	Dennis J.
Aubuchon	Gary
Bailey	Debbie
Barta	Alan & Liane
Beach	Don & Judy
Berdoulay	Paul
Blake	Michael I.
Blakely	David
Blayney	Tammy
Britton	Glenn A.
Byrd	Tom
Cardoza	Mary
Cooper	Monica
Cunningham	Evelyn E.
Darway	Chris A.
DeVries	Dorothy
Ensminger	Jeff
Epstein	Gary
Fickes	James T.
Fisher	Richard & Sassi
Francis	Hunter
Frey	Norma
Frisch	Harold
Furtick	Bill & Anne
Galbraith	Brian & Cathy
Green	Charlotte
Griffin	Mella
Gurney	David

Hauss	Linda
Henderson	Kay
Hoh	Mei
Jamison	Mary
Keck	Stanton
Kedrick	Carie
King	James & Lisa
Kramme	Jim
Lee	Alexandra
Longacre	Kathy
Matakovich	Mary
McCormick	Joel
McIlvaine	Whitney
Metz	Mike & Joan
Meyer	Father Albert
Miller	Jan
Morgret	Keri
Moshe	Kendra
Mulder	Henry
Nishida	Ronald
Odenbrett	Rev. Stephen
Paranjpe	Dattatraya P.
Parvin	Russee J.
Price	Cheryl
Risley	Peter
Robbins	Gabrielle
Rose	Eric L.
Rosenthal	Rachel
Ruskey	Jay
Russ	Harold & Marie

Santoyo	Larry
Schuldt	Carol
Seeley	Linda
Seelos	Wally & Dorothy
Servedio	Frank
Shaw	George F.
Shimamoto	Mrs. Elsie
Simmons	Pete
Skinner	Mark
Smith	Bailey
Smith	Teresa
Snow	Darrell & Gloria
Sunderland	Robert & Zoë
Sutton	Patricia
Toy	Harry
Villanueva	Fidel
Vorle	Rich & Laura
Wadman	Hugh
Wagner	Richard
Warren	Kenneth

COLLECTION AND PREPARATION OF SCION WOOD FOR CRFG SCION EXCHANGE ON FEBRUARY 12

By Joe Sabol

1. Select only dormant scion wood that is from healthy trees.
2. Select straight wood from near the ends of the branch that have well developed buds from last year's growth. Suckers, water sprouts and shoots with great length between buds should be avoided.
3. Wood diameter should be about pencil sized and not over ½ inch in diameter.
4. Cut lengths to about 8 to 10 inches. Cut the bottom end flat and the top end may be cut at an angle. This helps us all to determine which end is the terminal end.
5. Collect the wood just before the scion exchange.
6. Bundle up the wood and label it as best you can. Some people put a label on each piece of wood! Very nice! Keep varieties separate.
7. Place the bundle in a zip lock bag with a wet paper towel, only one variety per bag. Label this zip lock bag on the outside. Sharpie pens work well. Tribune plastic sleeves work very well.
8. Place the bag in your refrigerator. Do not freeze it.
9. Bring all your scion wood to the Scion Exchange and fill out the form that will be provided for each variety. **Please do not bring patented varieties to share.**
10. Bring extra plastic bags, masking tape, and Sharpie pens to the meeting so you can identify all the wood you collect!

Announcements

Welcome New Members: John Ricci, Daniel Ray, and Kristie Wells.

Rootstock Ordered: Joe Sabol says: "We are back in the rootstock business!!! I just placed an order for 2,550 rootstocks with the Lawyer Nursery in Montana...2400 apple roots...will arrive too late for our Feb. meeting, as usual. 100 Nemaguard roots...some will be for sale at the Feb. Meeting. 50 Pear roots...some will be for sale at our Feb. meeting."

High School Grafting Program: Stand-by for more information on this wonderful community effort by our local group! The project is spearheaded by Marv Daniels, Joe Sabol, and Patti Schober. If you have never participated in this event, plan to join-in this year—no experience is necessary! (I'd never grafted a tree in my life, and even I was able to assist at Nipomo High School. It was so much fun! Marv, Joe, and Patti make the experience wonderful—they do the prep work and you get the glory!) Schedules will be printed in March.

Web Site: Check our site at: www.crfg-central.org to see what our web-master, Art DeKleine and his assistants, John and Choung Crowe and Pet and Marv Daniels are doing to keep us all informed.

Join the Parent Organization: Many of our chapter members are also members of the Parent association and, for those of you who aren't, perhaps you **should** consider joining. With parent organization membership you receive a wonderful color magazine, *The Fruit Gardener*, filled with great articles on fruit growing, news, many chapter activities and contacts. Dues are **\$30 annually or 3 years for \$87** as of January 2004. Applications are available from **Joe Sabol**.

Help Needed! If **you** have any great ideas for articles for this newsletter, or if you would like to write an article related to growing "rare" fruit, please contact me at handynana@hortons.us or write me at 265 Rim Rock Rd., Nipomo, CA 93444. I've already got promises for articles from Carol Scott, David Maislen, and Patty Schober—won't you join them in writing about your own growing experiences?

Calendar of Meetings - 2005

February 12: Annual Scion Exchange and Grafting Party at Cal Poly Crop Science Building.

This is always a fun meeting—**another one with many guests attending**. Collect, label, and store your favorite scion wood to share with others. (See Joe Sabol's instructions for scion wood in this edition.) This is a "rain or shine" meeting. Rootstock, grafting knives, and Buddy tape will be for sale. We will have a "guest grafter", **Mr. Walter Thoma**, a CRFG member from Porterville, to teach us some new grafting skills! **Refreshments: S through Z please. Directions:** From Highway 101, take the Santa Rosa Exit and go north towards Morro Bay. Turn right on Highland Avenue (it has a signal and is the next major intersection after you pass Foothill Blvd.) and you will enter the Cal Poly Campus. Make a left turn at Mt. Bishop Road and park immediately. (There is no longer a stop sign at this intersection.) No campus parking permit is necessary on Saturday!

March 12: The Mushroom Farm in Arroyo Grande—Hosted by Mr. Art Lopez. Bring a pick-up or small trailer and, at the end of the tour, it will be loaded with **FREE** mushroom compost! Directions will follow.

April 9: Earth-Wise, Inc. This is a company devoted to promoting healthy soils through the use of compost and compost teas. Ted Peterson, owner, will be our speaker. He designs and builds tea "brewers" for a wide variety of applications. His customers include Morro Bay Wastewater, Wild Horse Winery and the City of San Luis Obispo. Jerie Garbutt, our own CRFG member, is responsible for lining up Ted Peterson for this meeting to be held at **Camp Sticky Monkey in Los Osos**, which is at **60 Costa Azul**. Directions will follow. **Refreshments: A through G please.**