



Redwood Empire Chapter Newsletter

April 2006

Condo Mangos?

By Mike Lee

I remember my surprise when I got a copy of Edible Landscaping mail order catalog from Virginia. In addition, to the usual temperate fruits it had a neat selection of small sized grafted tropical fruit trees as well. Before I knew it, I had a little 5 gal Mallika mango on its way. Other sources called it one of many condo mangos; varieties that were semi-dwarf, fruiting in pots at a height of 6-8 ft. tall.

When it arrived, there it was. All 18 in. of it. About 8 leaves. And flowering! What a fluke! I had seen other tropicals that had outer canopy tips grafted to rootstocks flower shortly after grafting. I just pinched them off, and stuck the pot out on our deck with the other sun-loving plants. It seemed the hotter it was, the faster that little tree grew. By, fall it had grown another 2 feet. Into the greenhouse it went where it kept on growing even with night-time temperatures in the 30's.

Now the 4 ft. tall tree has been flowering for the last 2 months. This time I'm going to call its bluff. I will usually pinch off flowers on such a little tree. But it's been flowering in such earnestness, that I'll see if it sets a fruit. In that unlikely event, I'll jerry-rig some kind of golden mango holder-upper. And if it ripens, I'll take a day off work and eat it.

Events Calendar

May 6 Saturday 1-3:30PM
Nor Cal Growers, Tour of Vince Scholten's Banana and Tropicals Nursery
2100 Pleasant Hill Rd., Sebastopol

June 17 Saturday 1-3:30PM
Garden Tour at Carlo Bottini's home
4870 Bridle Trail, Santa Rosa

July 23 Sunday 9-3:00PM
Redwood Empire Chapter Plant Sale
Midgley's Country Flea Market
2200 Gravenstein Hwy South, Sebastopol

August 12 Saturday 10-12:00
Summer Scion Exchange at Phil Pieri's home
5997 Orchard Station Rd., Petaluma

Garden Tour at the Bottini's

Come join us for a tour of Carlo and Mary Bottini's place on June 17, from 1-3:30PM. You'll see a very diverse selection of established temperate trees, berries, avocados, citrus, and herbs all on 1 acre.

How to get there: In Santa Rosa, go east on Hwy 12 towards Sonoma. Right on Mission Blvd. Left on Montgomery Dr. Right on Jackson Dr. Left on Bridle Trail. At the end of the cul de sac is 4870 Bridle Trail. Bottini's tel: 539-0124



That Little Mallika Mango

Tour of Nor Cal Growers

Thought you could never grow edible bananas in Sonoma County? Think again. On Saturday, May 6 from 1PM - 3:30PM our next event will be at new chapter member Vince Scholten's Nor Cal Growers. Vince has grown bananas outdoors and propagates more than 50 varieties of bananas. There will be 1 gal and 5 gal banana plants for sale as well as cannas and other ornamentals. Vince will share his passion and experiences with growing bananas. Don't miss out on this exciting event!

How to get there: In Sebastopol, go West on Bodega Ave. Left on Watertrough Rd. Right on Pleasant Hill Rd. At the Nor Cal Growers sign, 2100 Pleasant Hill Rd turn right down gravel driveway. Park down by greenhouses.

Report on the Redwood Empire Chapter's annual business meeting, March 18, 2006:

(Chapter Dues due May 6.)

About a dozen fruit-folk gathered at the Luther Burbank cottage and orchard in Sebastopol for the annual business meeting. Beginning at noon, the first order of business was to enjoy a great potluck lunch with everything from fruit salad to chicken to home-made bread. After three or four helpings, we got down to business.

Chapter Chair David Ulmer called for reports from the various officers and committees. The main discussion revolved around two items: (1) whether to charge chapter dues and (2) the proposed Chapter Bylaws.

It was decided that our chapter would charge chapter dues partly as a way to raise funds, but mostly as a way to determine who is to be considered an active member. This is necessary because the state organization needs to know how many active members we have for purposes of paying for insurance, which also covers chapter events and officers. We decided on dues of \$5 per calendar year, prorated to \$3 if one joins after June.

Chapter members will be able to participate in Chapter activities, receive discounts on some items that we sell and on admission to the scion exchange, and will receive the Chapter Newsletter. →



Lunch at the Annual Business Meeting

READERS - stretch your writing skills and share your hard-won knowledge with the rest of us for the next Newsletter. Send articles or brief squibs to: mkurland@contops.org

We also went through the proposed Bylaws paragraph-by-paragraph, making several amendments. After some discussion, the Bylaws were unanimously adopted as amended.

There was also some discussion as to whether only dues-paying "active members" of the Redwood Empire Chapter should be allowed to participate in the list serve. It was decided that, since it costs us nothing and is a way to share information with many people, we would not limit the list serve to active members.

Mike Lee discussed some upcoming events... See elsewhere in this newsletter.

We also elected officers and accepted volunteers for various committees. The "new" officers are:

Chapter Chair: reelected David Ulmer

Secretary: reelected Gary Goodenough

Treasurer: reelected: Mike Roa

Events Coordinator: reelected: Mike Lee

Biomanager: David Ulmer, but he will "farm out" the care of some of the trees.

Newsletter: Michael Kurland & Linda Robertson, with the understanding that members will provide the actual articles.

Publicity: Keith Borglum

Phil Pieri will continue to coordinate our work at the Burbank Farm and Sonoma State University

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00.

On Sunday, March 19, Mike Roa, Phil Pieri, Keith Borglum, and Gene Dubik met at David Ulmer's house to graft trees for future sale. About 30 trees were grafted. David will care for some and Keith took home some of the newly grafted trees and some that were grafted last fall or spring.

Eat Your Cover Crops

by Keith Borglum

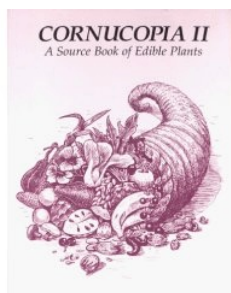
Lots of us use fava beans as a cover crop between rows of trees in the winter/spring. Some people then let them seed, and do the arduous work of double-peeling the beans in order to eat them. Most people just plow them under for green manure. (If you do, make sure to cut them and let them die/dry first). Others just cut them, use them for mulch, and interplant crops.

Something I learned is that the leaves are delicious, as are the flowers and immature beans. Use the leaves any way you would spinach. Use the flowers in salads or as garnish, as they are nicely spicy. I like the immature pods just steamed, buttered & spiced. Favas are a lot easier to grow than spinach, provide more edible leaf material per plant, and seem more slug-resistant.

I haven't been brave enough to taste Hairy Vetch cover crops yet. I guess I just don't like the name.

Book Review: Cornucopia II, A Source Book of Edible Plants

By Mike Lee



Cornucopia II, A Source Book of Edible Plants
by Stephen Facciola
Paperback: 713 pages
Publisher: Kampong Publications; 2nd edition
ISBN: 0962808725

When I run across any plant or variety that I want to know more about, this is the book I pull off the shelf. Unbelievably ambitious in its scope, it lists and describes notable, edible plants species from all over the world. More than 3,000 of them! Many of these species were chosen with detailed cultivar descriptions. These include fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, herbs, and even mushrooms.

The first time I heard about this book was when I saw an excerpt in a San Diego nursery with variety descriptions of cherimoyas. They described the fruit differences, hardiness, pollination requirements, fruiting season in California, and origin if known. And each listing ended with codes for nurseries that sold that variety.

Interested in growing purple passion fruit, but didn't know what variety you'd want to try? Cornucopia has 11 listed varieties from the most common Black Knight and Frederick to the rarer Frosty and Crackerjack. It details which are hardier and which would be more suitable for growing in pots. And where you can buy each one.

And while I'm always on the lookout for references for tropical species, this book has an even greater wealth of information on temperate species. So you'll find it a valuable reference to study up on as you make your must-have list for the next scion exchange. A bit pricey at \$40 for a paper-back, it's a bargain since it's the size of telephone book and all of 713 pages!

Three days on the Big Island

by Phil Pieri

Aloha The big island of Hawaii is the place to go if you want to view and taste tropical fruit. They grow just about every kind of tropical fruit known, unfortunately most of it is grown in private gardens and not commercially. But if you make a few enquiries you can usually get an invite to visit a small farm or two.

My wife and I landed at the Hilo airport at 6 AM on a Tuesday. We found the rent car booth and got our car. From there we found our hotel, →



Grafting Clinic at David Ulmer's

With participants coming as far as Laytonville, new members came for grafting practice at David Ulmer's house. Quite a few older members came to help out and enjoy the sunny February day. A good selection of scions were brought back from Boonville's exchange, including quite a few citrus varieties!

Thanks to David, Mike Roa, Phil Pieri, and Louis Hunt for teaching

dropped our bags and were off to see and taste as much fruit as we could in three days.

Our first visit was about 10 miles inland from Hilo, which sits on the East Coast of the island, To the University of Hawaii's demonstration farm. This farm is operated jointly by the university and the state of Hawaii department of Agriculture.

We came in unannounced drove up to the office and asked if we could check it out. They were very nice and said we could go anywhere we wanted, just don't block the roads. So off to the orchards we went to taste every thing that had fruit, which included about 6 kinds of citrus, 3 varieties of guava, and a carambola. None of the bananas were fruiting at this time. While we were standing around tasting fruit, a professor who had been teaching a class there started a conversation, when learned we were CRFG members from the mainland he called a young lady over, a student from the mainland and a CRFG member of the orange county chapter.

Everyone is so friendly and helpful. Next we were up the highway about two miles to the Mauna Loa macadamia nut factory and orchards. The processing plant is about five miles off the highway, and the road in is lined on both sides with macadamia orchards.

They shake the trees with mechanical shakers then sweep the nuts into windrows between the rows of trees with regular street sweepers. Then they come along with scoopers and scoop them into hopper wagons and off to the processing plant. Very efficient. On up the highway, →

which by this time had turned into a narrow two lane country road, to a private farm that we were invited to visit. Now at this point you must understand that the windward or East Side of the island of Hawaii gets a lot of rain, probably over 100 inches a year, and it had been raining all day.

We were about to drive what the locals said was a four-wheel drive road, during a rain, and we had to forge creeks. But what the heck it was a rental car. So on we go, at one point I think the water was over the hood, and I didn't dare slow down. We finally made it to the farm and were rewarded with some exotic fruit, and a tour of the farm. Which we cut short because the further we went the bigger the mosquitoes got.

Wednesday was Farmers market day in Hilo; one of the best farm markets anywhere. I bought and tried to eat one of every kind of fruit that was for sale. I think my favorite was a toss up between jack fruit and mamy sapote. The afternoon was spent visiting the volcano at the top of the mountain, and that, by the way was the only time in three days we saw the sun. The last day was spent seeing some of the tourist sites tasting more fruit and visiting one of my wife's school mates. →

They own a small farm with 500 macadamia trees off which they sell the nuts and numerous other fruit trees for the house. By now it was 6 O'clock Thursday night and our flight out was waiting. ALOHA



Mike Roa & His Grafting Group

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