



# *Fruit News and Views*



## The Year of the Edible Landscape

Volume XXXVII Issue 6 June 2016

### Meetings Schedule

Location:

Orange County Fairgrounds  
Silo Building, 7:30 p.m.  
enter Main Gate

#### Thursday, June 16

Fullerton College Horticulture Professor Valerie Loew will discuss new courses, introduce recent CRFG scholarship recipients and give a talk on mimicking traditional, ornamental landscapes using perennial vegetables, making an average suburban homestead an edible oasis.

#### Thursday, July 21 and

#### Thursday, August 18

no meeting due to the OC Fair

### Upcoming Field Trips

We are excited to invite you to join not one, but two field trips scheduled in the near future! Please sign up at the June general meeting or send an email to our field trip coordinator, Laura Kemp, at [okayawhatever@socal.rr.com](mailto:okayawhatever@socal.rr.com). We will have sign up sheets and liability waivers at the June meeting. Also, we will be requiring that all attendees be current members of CRFG.

#### Saturday, June 25

Huntington Library and Gardens, together with the Los Angeles Chapter. The entrance fees will be waived and we will be treated to a self-guided tour of the newly installed gardens and beautiful grounds of the Huntington. We will meet there at 10:30 a.m.

#### Saturday, July 16

Long Beach VA: 9:00 a.m. tour of the VA gardens and 10:00 a.m. talk by Dr. Charles Portney on 35 years of growing blueberries in Southern California. Please remember to bring your own chair and a hat.

**Reminder:** There will be no newsletter in July. You will receive a postcard in the mail instead.

### Welcome!

We have had the pleasure of welcoming many visitors and guests to our general meetings recently, and would like to invite you to join the Orange County Chapter! The wealth of knowledge in this club is a joy and a treasure, do avail yourselves of it!

### Refreshments Table

We invite those whose last names begin with the letters A through H to bring something special and delicious for the hospitality table. Homemade items are especially anticipated and enjoyed. Thank you to everyone for the delicious treats. Your hospitality is much appreciated. Thank you!

### Fruit Tasting Table

Isabel will kindly cut and present any home grown fruit you'd like to share with the rest of the members. Also, if you know the variety, it would be very nice if you would label your fruit. This simple step saves lots of questions from those who love its taste! As always, we extend a big thank you to all who bring fruit to share!

### A Big Thank You!

Paul Frink would like to extend a very big thank you to all who stay late after the meetings and help to clean up and tidy our meeting room before we leave. Your help is heartfelt and most appreciated. THANK YOU!

### Club T-Shirts

I am waiting for them to be finished! I hope to have them in time for the meeting, but as of this writing, it doesn't appear that they will be. Sigh. Please have patience... If they appear before the Fair, I will have them waiting for you before your shift.

### Videographer needed

We will shortly be losing our videographer, Charlotte. If anyone is interested in filming our meetings,

please contact anyone on the board. Thank you.

### The OC Fair!

The Orange County Fair is upon us again!! This year the dates are July 15 to August 14, Wednesday through Sunday. On Mondays and Tuesdays the fair is dark, and we all get a breather!

This is the best chance all year to help and participate in your club. We need everyone to participate for at least one shift. If you can sign up for 5 shifts (or more) during the run of the fair, you will get a fair pass badge for admission, and a parking pass good for free parking anytime during the fair, and - a free ride in the shuttle! Bonus!

We still have our gazebo, and we can look forward to another year in the shade, enjoying gentle breezes as we gaze upon the beautiful Centennial Farm. Sign up is open on our website, and regular sign up sheets will be available at the June meeting. We have some new, gorgeous posters this year, donated by Shirley Meyer, and we are building a new display case for our fruit. There will be NO sampling of fruit at all this year! Do come and join in the fun, it will be very easy and gives you free admission and parking at the fair for the day. You get to spend a few hours people watching in the shade, what could be better?

### Festival of Fruit

Don't forget to sign up for the Festival of Fruit, August 26 - 28, 2016 in San Luis Obispo, CA.

[festivaloffruit.org](http://festivaloffruit.org)



## **An exotic favorite:**

### **Rose Apple**

Don Winterstein

Rose apple hasn't generated much adventure; she's too predictable. But she's been a delight her entire life. She came to my garden in the spring of 2001 as a foot-high seedling in a one-gallon pot purchased at our annual Green Scene plant sale. Planted in early May she first started putting on new growth in August. New growth on rose apple plants is a glossy maroon color that contrasts nicely with the deep green of mature leaves. It took until May of 2006 for the plant to put on her first flower buds, and by September of that year she held all of three fruits; most blossoms fell off without fruiting. Since then fruit production has steadily increased. By now the tree blooms and fruits prolifically over extended periods. Blossoms start in April and continue into June, harvesting begins in July.

Over its lifetime rose apple has been completely trouble-free. Besides watering, the only care I've provided is pruning. Rose apple trees are adaptable to many modes of pruning, some creating very attractive ornamentals. A friend has one such growing prominently in his front yard. These trees are vigorous growers, so they must be pruned annually to maintain desired size and shape.

I prune mine to look like one of those old-time haystacks with a rounded top. Much of the new spring/summer growth extends upwards, making an unkempt array of branches sticking out from the top. Pruning thus means removing almost all this new growth every year. The remaining branches mostly slope downwards, some almost all the way to the ground. They combine to form a thick layer of dense foliage.

Pruning this way makes a tree that never increases in height but produces abundant fruit. The shape is not particularly attractive, but keeping the maximum height to about eight feet makes the fruits readily accessible for harvest.

Individual blossoms are quite showy, three to four inches wide and consisting of hundreds of light yellow filaments with a single pistil in the

middle. I started counting a flower's filaments once, but when I got to 100, the uncounted pile was at least twice as large as the counted pile, so I quit. The blossoms come in clusters with as few as one and as many as 15 per cluster. Many buds within a cluster may open at the same time, making an eye-catching splash of color.

My mode of pruning, however, suppresses much of the color, because many of the blossoms hide inside the dense foliage. Also, the bloom continues over many weeks, so at any one time there are only a few splotches of color.

No one would choose rose apple fruit to be an important constituent of a well-rounded diet, or even a standard dessert. Rose apples instead are a delightful novelty, one of those things that brings a special touch of joy to life. They're about golf-ball size and hollow, so that the seeds rattle when you shake them. Right off the tree they're crisp and sweet. The flavor, many have said, is what you would expect rose petals to taste like if you were to judge by their fragrance. So the "rose apple" name comes from the flavor, even though, aside from the flavor, the fruits have nothing to do with either roses or apples.

Unfortunately the fruits lose their crispness and much of their appeal within a day or two of harvesting. That's at room temperature.

But Eyal Givon, an Israeli who stopped by a few years ago to pick up a pitahaya I'd rooted for him, taught me something important. While walking through my garden he and his daughter came upon my rose apple tree and became immediately enamored of the fruits. So I picked all the ripe ones—a substantial quantity—and gave them to him, warning that they quickly lose their crispness.

A couple of weeks later he reported back that the rose apples were still crisp and good. All it took to preserve their quality was refrigeration!

One website says that mature rose apple trees in India typically produce five pounds of fruit in a season. I'd be surprised if my tree's annual production did not considerably exceed that—although I've never actually weighed the fruits.

The only adventure my rose apple tree has provided came about because of its proximity to a patch of peanuts. These were the Jumbo Virginia variety in a plot roughly 10 ft square. The peanut plants were healthy and vigorous except for those along a line extending from the rose apple tree all the way across the peanut patch. They were visibly weaker. After harvesting the peanuts I dug down to see what might have caused the poor growth. Lo, there was a shallow root from the rose apple tree extending the full distance across my peanut patch!

This was my first encounter with the harmful effect tree roots could have on neighboring plants.

Rose apple fruits themselves have never had pest-inflicted defects; they're flawless. For some reason neither mammal, bird, insect nor microbe finds them interesting. You can't say the same for any other fruit of my garden!

## **The Rose Apple**

### **Syzygium jambos**

Reprinted and revised from the CRFG Fruit Facts

Also known as the Plum rose or Malabar plum, it is a member of the Myrtaceae family and is distantly related to Eugenias, Guavas and the Jaboticaba. The rose apple is native to the East Indies and Malaya and is cultivated and naturalized in many parts of India, southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. It was introduced into Jamaica in 1762 and became well distributed in the West Indies, and at low elevations, from southern Mexico to Peru. Rose apples flourish in tropical or near-tropical climates, but the tree is hardy enough (to about 25° F) to be grown as an ornamental as far north in California as San Francisco. The rose apple is a decorative evergreen large shrub or small tree growing to about 20 feet with low spreading branches and pale-brown bark. It is wide spreading and often will be wider than its height. Rose apple flowers are large and showy, white to pale cream and sweetly scented. They are 2 - 4 inches wide and consist mostly of about 300

conspicuous stamens to 1-1/3 inches long. There are usually 4 or 5 flowers together in terminal clusters. The flowers are a rich source of nectar for honeybees. The fruits are 1 - 2 inches wide, almost round or a little longer than wide. When ripe they may be greenish or dull-yellow flushed with pink. The skin is smooth and thin, and the firm flesh yellowish, sweet and rose scented. The texture is crisp, almost crunchy when the fruit is ripe and freshly picked. They contains one to four medium hard, round seeds, which rattle around inside the fruit. The seed as well as the roots are regarded as poisonous. The rose apple needs a warm, sunny location that is not subject to significant frosts. It should also be kept in mind that the tree will occupy considerable space. The tree is moderately resistant to winds and tolerates cool, coastal conditions. A deep, loamy, well-drained soil is best for the rose apple, but it also flourishes on sand and limestone with very little organic matter. In India it grows along streams. It is a favorite dooryard tree in the Peruvian part of the Amazon, where the trees are planted high enough to avoid the frequent floods. The tree will tolerate semi-arid conditions, but prolonged dry spells are detrimental. It should have frequent irrigation when the weather is warm, and kept on the dry side when it's cold. Pruning of rose apples is not usually necessary. In some countries it is pruned drastically to promote dense growth and used as hedgerows around coffee plantations. The rose apple will take several degrees of frost but does best when planted in a protected spot on the south side of a wall or building. Most rose apple trees are grown from seed. The seeds are polyembryonic and produce one to three sprouts, but seedlings are not uniform and there is considerable variation in fruit quality. The poorer fruits are dry and tasteless. Various vegetative propagation methods have been satisfactory. Treated semi-hardwood cuttings were moderately successful, while air-layering and veneer grafting of spring-flush scions have been successful to a greater degree. Fruiting takes about four years. The rose apple has very few serious diseases and insect problems. Rose apples bruise quite

easily and are highly perishable. They must be freshly picked to be crisp. The fruit is eaten fresh, and is also used in jellies and jams or preserved in combination with other fruits of more pronounced flavor. It is also cooked with sugar to make a dessert. When cooked with custards or puddings, they impart a rose flavor. The flowers can also be candied.

### Grafting DVD

“THE TECHNIQUES OF GRAFTING” is a professionally produced DVD and is available at our meetings for \$10. You can also order one on our website or by sending Denny \$12.

### Facebook

If you are a member of Facebook, and have a moment, check out our page at:

[www.facebook.com/ocfruit](http://www.facebook.com/ocfruit)

Rob often updates our page with pictures from events and instructional videos. It is worthwhile checking in regularly.

### Rain Amounts

as of May 31, 2016

Richard	92637	9.7"
Ines	92861	9.78"
Julie	92646	8.48"
Martha	90808	7.3"
Jim	90803	6.9"
Kittie	92709	8.18"
Isabel	92704	8.0"
Don	92821	10.5"
Pamela	92676	18.06"
Charlotte	92808	6.9"

If you'd like to join in with the weather gang, please contact the editor at: [eacoolvt@msn.com](mailto:eacoolvt@msn.com)

### Library

Frank is looking for some volunteers to transfer old CRFG meetings on VHS tapes to DVDs. If you have a VHS to DVD recorder and can transfer some, please contact Frank at 949) 354-4447. Thank you!

### Newsletter Digital Version

The newsletter constitutes considerable expense every month with the cost of paper, printing, stamps, mailing seals and labels. If you can help us defray some costs and have it delivered straight to your

inbox, please see Elke at one of the meetings, or email the editor at [eacoolvt@msn.com](mailto:eacoolvt@msn.com). The board has recommended that in the future as memberships are renewed, the newsletter will be sent to you via email. If you wish to continue receiving a green paper copy, you will have the opportunity to choose to do so on your renewal form. There may be an additional charge. Thank you to all who have already replied and switched to digital. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

### Fruit Ripening this Month

loganberry, boysenberry, Lane Late navel, Meyer lemon, Valencia orange, Surinam cherry, pakistan mulberry, avocados: Gem, Nabal, Hass, Lamb, Sir Prize, Tal, Sharwil, Dewitt, Pinkerton, Herd, Magoon, and JB; black sapote, kei apple, miracle fruit, grumichama, Marquis grapes, Red Ceylon, Midpride and Double Jewel peach, rhubarb, limequat, Australian Finger Lime, apricot, white fig, yellow long neck fig, green fig.

### Upcoming Fun Events

June 12: Orange Park Acres Women's League Home Tour, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., \$40, [opawomen.org](http://opawomen.org)

June 25: Tour of Huntington Library and Gardens with the LA Chapter. 10:30 a.m.

July 16: 9 a.m. tour of the Long Beach VA and 10:00 a.m. talk by Dr. Portney on blueberries.

July 15 to August 14: The Orange County Fair! This year's theme is "Get Your Fair Face On!"



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