

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS' NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER 16 MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT: APPLE TASTING AT DIMOND GREENHOUSES

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, Nov. 16, 1995 at 7 PM at Dimond Greenhouses, Anchorage. We will have an apple tasting of 12 Indiana-grown varieties from Applesource, including a number of rare but superb-tasting late fall and winter apples such as Ashmead's Kernel, Newtown Pippin, King David, and Melrose. Also, we will get whatever Fred Meyer's, Safeway, Carrs, and Sagaya have to offer that looks edible. We should be able to handle about 25 people.

ORCHARD REPORT

by Joe Orsi
Auke Bay

My micro-orchard in Auke Bay, north of Juneau, was initially planted in 1991 and consists of about 30 summer apple varieties and several varieties of sour cherries, sweet cherries, and plums. The maritime climate in Auke Bay is mild by Alaskan standards, with high and low temperatures moderated by the ocean. We receive about ten feet of snow and seven feet of rain annually, and our highs rarely exceed 70°F and lows rarely drop below 10°F. The frost-free growing season is from about the middle of April to the middle of October. Most fruit trees in our vicinity, including the indigenous crab, *Malus fusca*, bloom from about mid-May to mid-June.

This is the second year I have had a "harvest" but it is still not too much to crow about. This year our damp June adversely affected trees with a later bloom time. After thinning, my summer apple produced about 60 commercial-sized fruits, my cherries produced just enough for a taste, and I'm still waiting for the plums to flower.

Of the apples that produced for me this year, Liveland Raspberry and Red Astrachan were my favorite for fresh eating. My favorite from last year, Discovery, did not produce this year, although I still feel this is the best variety of dessert apple I have tasted in southeast Alaska. Other varieties which produced for me this year were: Centennial, Duchess of Oldenburg (great for pies), New Summer Scarlet, Rescue, Summer Rambo, and Yellow Transparent. I would not recommend New Summer Scarlet for anyone in my region because the flesh of this apple tastes extremely bitter, even fully ripened. The apples of this variety are medium-sized, yellow, and smell great — but they kind of bite you back.

This year I lost four trees to bacterial canker, characterized by the bark turning an orange color and flaking away from the tree. In previous years I have seen this develop on the trunk or near the branch collars where limbs have broken. Canker is supposedly caused by wet soil and is remedied by excising infected sections. I have seen it develop on many apple varieties with most of the rootstocks that I have tried (i.e. Antonovka, MARK, EMLA 7, Ranetka), with the exception of *Malus borowinka*. To protect my trees from sunscald, last fall and this spring I painted most of the trunks with white latex (full and half strength) because they were growing out of their spiral tree guards. I also put a roll of hardware cloth circling most trunks to discourage rodent and porcupine damage. To further confuse the situation, I accidentally sprayed all of my trees in early spring with a surfactant oil rather than my ultra-fine dormant oil! After I recovered from my near heart attack, I observed over the course of the early summer that I had lethal canker developing on the painted trunks of two of my sweet cherries and two of my apples. In addition, three other apple trees have near-girdled as a result of the canker. All of the infected trees were painted with full-strength

latex in the fall and damage was apparent on the trunks underneath the paint. I believe this treatment and the dormant oil mishap contributed to my canker problem. I did not have any control trees, so I guess all I can recommend is to use caution when painting your fruit tree trunks. If you do paint them, preferably use half-strength latex in the spring as I did not see damage with this treatment. One final recommendation...read labels carefully before eagerly loading up your brand new backpack sprayer!

ORCHARD REPORT

by Clair Lammers
Fairbanks

Pick dates of my various fruits. (Apples unless otherwise stated. * = new variety)

Variety	Date Picked
Mesabi cherry	7/30
Pin cherry	7/30
Nanking cherry	7/30
Elderberry	8/4
Ground cherry	8/17
(<i>P. fruitcosa</i>)	
Chinese Golden	8/19
Early	
Dawn	8/21
*Sylvia	8/23
Parkland	8/26
Ptitson #5 plum	8/28
Heyer 12	8/28
*Ptitson #9 plum	8/28
Westland	8/28
Manchurian	8/31
Yellow plum	
*Patterson	8/31
Norland	8/31
Dolgo	8/31
Norda	8/31
Noret	8/31
*Brookgold plum	8/31
*Brookred plum	9/3
*Heyer 6	9/3
*Golden Uralian	9/3
Rosthern 15	9/4
Northland	9/4
Assiniboine plum	9/5
Sapa C.P.	9/5
Hiawatha C.P.	9/5
Arbor Dale	9/5
Centennial	9/5
*Al Ma Sweet	9/5
*Carrol	9/5
*Red Star	9/5
*Norson	9/6
*Heyer 20	9/6
Amur Red	9/7

MacDonald	9/7
*Bedford	9/7
Sunnybrook	9/7
Trail x Shafer	9/8
*PF 21	9/8
Dandy plum	9/8
Valiant grape	9/8
Trailman	9/8
Martha x Dolgo	9/8
Kandil Kitaika	9/8
September Ruby	9/9
*Gold Egg	9/9
Red Siberian	9/9
*Renoun Crab	9/10
*Anoros	9/10
*Jubilee pear	9/12
*Alexis	9/12
*Mac (Gore St.)	9/12
*Creamy Kitaika	9/16
Diebel	9/16
Opata C.P.	9/16
Manor C.P.	9/16
*Tyrrustrup	9/16
Kerr	9/21
Rosthern 18	9/21
Edith Smith	9/21

FRUIT TREE THOUGHTS

by Bob Boyer
Anchorage

The following are blossoming dates (B) and fruit pick dates (P) for trees in ground or buckets.

Nanking cherry, B May 5, P Sept. 26. 1 gallon.

Cavalier cherry, B May 22. No fruit.

Chokecherry, B May 22, didn't pick; put Cygon 2 on tree.

White Nanking cherry, B May 22, no fruit.

Sam cherry, B May 27 May, picked one tree (2 cherries) on Aug. 6 Aug; other tree (6 cherries) on July 19.

Noran apple, B June 3, no fruit.

Sunrise apple, no fruit

Earlymont cherry, B June, P Aug. 6, one cherry.

Giant Robinson strawberry, picked first fruit July 15, some 2.75" across. Very good.

Serviceberry, P Aug. 27, good.

Red and gold raspberries, picked first crop Aug. 2; as of Oct. 6, still no frost and still picking fruit. Green berries still on canes.

Black and red currants, picked 5 qts.

Meteor x Montmorency cherry, P Oct. 6. Red fruit, not edible. May be rootstock.

Sam cherry is bright red. Book says dark blue cherry. Hunter at Bear Creek says that farther north cherries tend to be lighter in color

than normal. Other cherry trees I have in buckets or ground are: Bairds pie cherry : No fruit yet. Thane cherry: Eric Simpson says it's a wild cherry called Thane in Haynes and in Juneau called Telegraph Hill where found growing. Cavalier cherry: No fruit.

I had no apples on trees at studio. No blossoms except Noran, and two blossoms on Sunrise. All fell off. I talked to three other people whose apple trees had been producing but this year had no blossoms. I think the problem was trees didn't shut down last fall and too much sap in spurs when frozen. I had a long talk with Hunter at Bear Creek. He said trees must go through cycles. I have some thoughts on this but too late to try this year. I expect to have same problem this year with all this rain. So next year about 2 or 3rd week of August will put Visqueen around bases of to deter water from roots. Then after first frost or when trees defoliate water trees well before ground freezes up. Hunter also said looking at photographs and slides from Bob Purvis he noted that Alaskan growers had green grass or what-have-you growing around trees base. He said must get bare ground to warm soil in early spring, which will start the tree going through cycles earlier and thus shutting down earlier. I had thought of putting 1" rocks around base of trees, painting black to further warm soil. Hunter thought would work. Glacial rock would also give off nutrients. I didn't do it but I think important to foliar feed weekly from bud break to fall with seaweed and fish fertilizer, adding a little sugar (holds on better).

I have also inquired about pollen for fruit trees, and if anyone is interested call me. And also am checking on various sources of garlic oil and garlic products to deter insects and moose.

Hunter and I talked about saskatoons and he said he really likes the Timm x Success variety. This is bush type and sweet and produces fruit on 4x4' bushes. Good color.

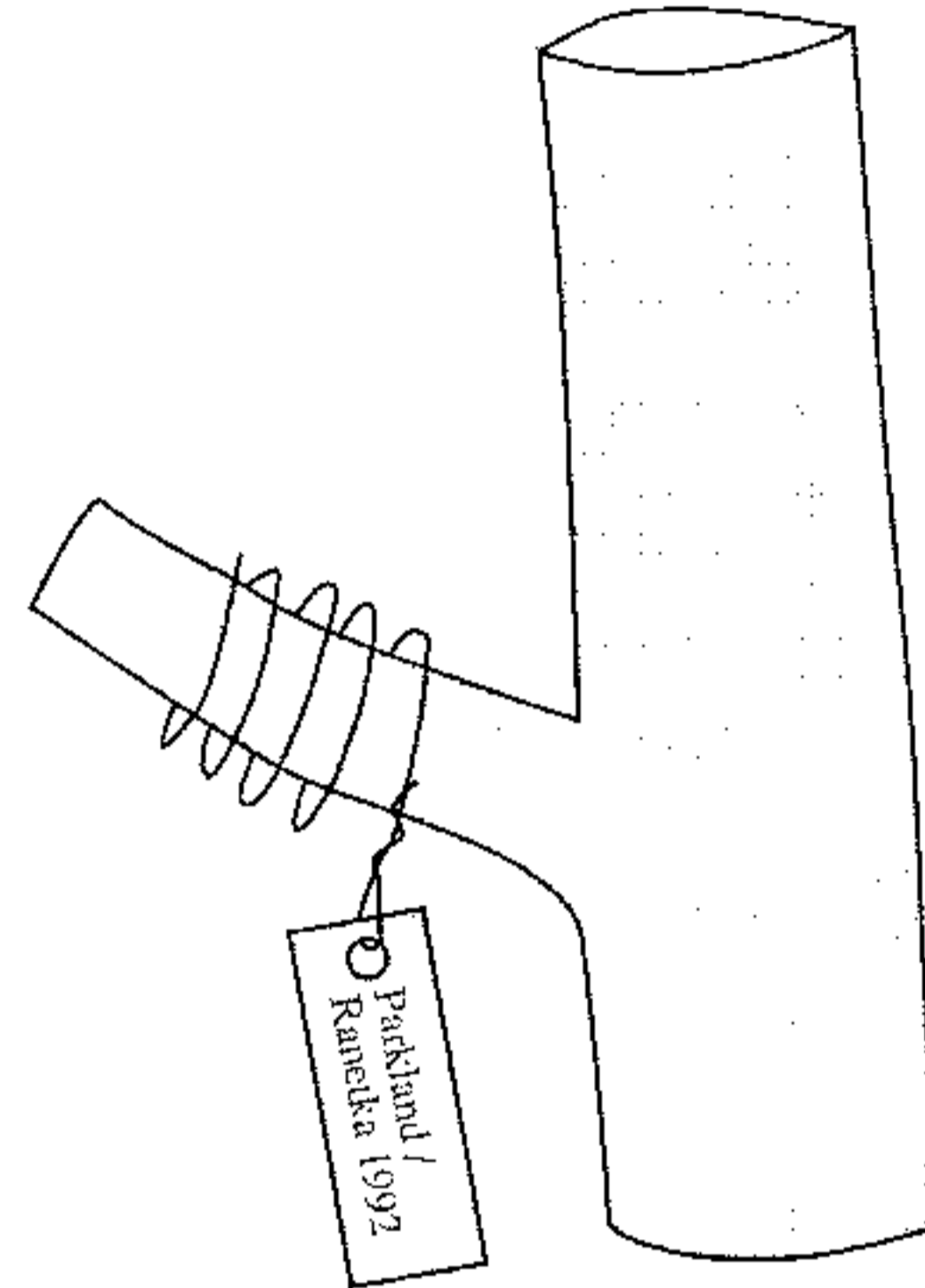
I have been grafting trees with interstems to dwarf tree — both apples and cherries. I had about 50% take on both apple and cherry grafting interstem on rootstock and chip budding (Jones method) interstem I received cherry scion wood this year that was budded out so took dwarf or semidwarf varieties of scions. Rubbed off buds, grafted to Mazzard and bud-grafted the interstem. Had 8 of 11 take. I also grafted apples on Ranetka using interstems and chip budding varieties at same time — about 50% take. I will report later as to

vigor etc., of this method. You might like to try.

TREE TAG WIRES THAT WON'T GIRDLE

by Dwight Bradley
Peters Creek

While I was in Maine in October, I stopped in on George Stilphen to check on his collection of Maine apple varieties. George has a clever way of wiring tags to trees that seems to solve the girdling problem (see sketch). As the tree grows and the trunk and branches thicken, the spiral of wire (about 2mm or 1/16" thick) simply expands.



ORCHARD REPORT

-by Michael J. O'Brien
Nikiski

This report covers the production of fruit for this past season in my Nikiski orchard.

I have six Meteor cherry trees which produced one cherry each. These trees are seven years old.

Concerning apples, I had one-quarter to one-fifth the fruit as last year, approximately seventy five to one hundred pounds. The fruit was generally larger due to less fruit on the trees and an abundance of rain. With the number of bearing trees and the trees we continue to add each year, it was a real disappointment on the production. For the past two years we've had ample fruit which we've been able to sell at the Farmer's Market. But we did have enough for our annual apple tasting party (Sept. 16) and our family's needs. We have two hives of honey bees but the temperatures being too cold, along with the rain and the winds, the bees couldn't fly enough to adequately pollinize.

On the bright side, we had an excellent growth year for the trees. The rain that kept the bees hived gave us a benefit in the growth of the trees. Growers being of a positive nature, we can only anticipate our next harvest to be very bountiful.

A BETTER MOUSE TRAP??

(Reprinted from the Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of NAFEX, 1988)

by Cathy Wright

Alaska Plant Materials Center, Palmer

Many of you have complained about rodent damage last winter. I have told several people about a safe way to bait for rodents. It may not be a better mouse trap, but it is a better mouse bait container for nursery fields or those hard-to-reach places. I learned of this simple solution to replenish rodent baits, even under two feet of snow, in Alberta. These "T-shaped" bait containers have been used successfully at the Plant Materials Center for the past three years.

One-and-a-half-inch PVC pipe and a "T" is joined to make a larger "T". It is inverted and attached to a stake, 1"x2", or other support to be free-standing in your field or container area. The total length of the cross bar of the T is 18" to 24". The length of the "stem" of the "T" depends upon the depth of snowfall your area receives, mulch used, or height of bench you are using it behind. A cap should be made of PVC or a can which fits the pipe to keep it dry.

The "T" is staked in the field or area with the cross bar resting on the surface. Bait can then be replenished as necessary during the winter when plants are covered with snow or under a mulch you do not want to disturb. The bait is kept away from other domestic animals which may be around the nursery or greenhouse.

