

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS' NEWSLETTER

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President and Editor: **Dwight Bradley**, 22008 Voyles Blvd., Chugiak, AK 99567. Phone 688-1268.

Vice President: **Bob Boyer**, P.O. Box 9-1376, Anchorage, AK 99509. Phone 561-2885

Secretary and Treasurer: **Pam Neiswanger Warner**, 7000 Viburnum Dr., Anchorage, AK 99507. Phone 344-9749.

Board Member at Large: **Eric Simpson**, 162 Creekside Dr., Sequim, WA 98382

MAY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Our May meeting will be an orchard visit held at Lawrence Clark's orchard at 7 PM, Thursday, May 16, 1996. The address is 3200 Rabbitt Creek Road. To get there from Anchorage, take the Rabbit Creek exit off the New Seward Highway. Turn left at the end of the ramp and head toward the mountains on Rabbit Creek Road. The house and orchard are on the right about half a mile from the Seward Highway, not far past the crossing of Rabbit Creek. This is a great opportunity to see some impressive trees and visit with one of the most experienced and successful apple growers in Alaska. Don't pass it up!

This will be the last regular monthly meeting until the September apple tasting. If anyone would like to host the tasting, let me know. Otherwise, we will have it at Bradley's in Peters Creek. Look for an announcement in the summer Newsletter, in August.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO A COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS ON APPLE GROWING IN ALASKA

by Dwight Bradley

I often get asked by schools, horticultural groups, and the like to talk about apple growing in Alaska. Every time I do this, I'm reminded how nice it would be to have a **complete** collection of color slides on the subject. At the March 1996 monthly meeting, I suggested that we do something about this as a club.

The general idea is for members to submit their best pictures on a variety of aspects of apple growing. After picking out the best, we would make copies and return the originals. The club would have a complete annotated set of slides (say, 50 or so slides) that could be borrowed by members on a short-term basis.

At the March meeting, I laid out the skeleton of a talk on apple growing and showed a few dozen of my own slides. This is not really an outline, more a laundry list of topics and subtopics that might be covered. Obviously, the content of any slide presentation has to be flexible, to fit the

audience. You would not cover the same material for third graders as for Master Gardeners. Also, you need more slides for a one-hour talk than for twenty minutes. Most people at the March meeting agreed that we don't need to cover every detail, or every controversy, when speaking to non-expert audiences.

TOPICS:

1. Alaskan apple-growing facts. A good way to start a presentation on apples in Alaska. Number of apple trees, number of varieties, size and locations of large orchards, oldest trees in different parts of the state, most northerly apple trees. I'll draft a map of the state with apple-growing locations and other info plotted on it.
2. Apple basics. Origins of apple is Asia, seedling apples, the concept of grafting a scion onto a rootstock, standard versus dwarf trees, what is an apple variety and how are new ones developed.
3. Alaskan orchards and apple growers. For example, Lawrence Clark, the Dearborns, Dave Crusey, Clair Lammers, Dana and Nan Olsen, Bob Purvis, Joe Orsi.... Also, isolated large trees in the yards of people who don't care one way or the other about apples. Old black-and-white photos from Experiment Station reports might be useful.
4. Apple varieties. We need good shots of every popular variety. For example, Norland, Parkland, Yellow Transparent, Rescue, Chinese Golden Early, and maybe half a dozen more. Also, photos of less popular but potentially promising varieties. Photos might show impressive fruit-laden trees, or clear views of the shape and color of a particular variety.
5. Growing apple trees. Planting, staking, mulch, foliar feeding, pest control, watering systems, pruning, southern versus northern exposures, fertilizers, fencing, orchard spacing. Also, photos of the various stages during a single season: dormant, green tip, tight cluster, full bloom, etc.
6. Damaged trees. Diseases, winterkill, snow-and-ice breakage, sunscald, insects, moose, voles.

7. Grafting. Diagrams of what to do, pictures from grafting workshops, tools.

8. Rootstocks. Photos of dwarf, semidwarf, standard trees.

9. Harvest and uses. Picking apples. Making cider. Pies. Apple tasting party.

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE:

Keep the above laundry list in mind this summer when you are in the orchard with your camera. By September, please submit your best pictures for consideration. Write your name on each one, and attach a brief (1-3 sentence) summary of who, what, where, when, etc. After all the photos are in hand, we can worry about selecting the very best for the club's collection. You may submit color slides (best choice), color or b&w negatives (2nd choice), or color or b&w prints (3rd choice). If you are going to buy film especially for this purpose, please shoot color slide film, such as Fujichrome or Kodachrome. All originals will be returned.

I am looking into doing the photo processing myself using a Macintosh computer, a high-resolution scanner that can accept slides or negatives, another scanner that can scan color or black&white prints, and a digital camera hooked up to the computer. The cost per slide will be around 25 cents. By comparison, duplicates of color slides can be made commercially for \$1 apiece, and slides from color prints cost \$5.75 each!

An added benefit of doing this on the computer is that the slides could just as easily be printed as regular color photos (on a high-resolution color printer), with a caption at the bottom of each page. Or, several pictures could be printed with captions on large, poster-size sheets, to be displayed at garden shows or conferences, or the State Fair. There are lots of possibilities.

Some members have expressed an interest in getting their own set of slides. This can be arranged after we figure out how many slides there are, and the cost per slide.

SPRING ORCHARD REPORT

by Dwight Bradley

Owing to the lack of snow cover until January, the winter of 95-96 had the potential to be rough on tender plants. I heard one report that the ground in Anchorage froze down to 14 feet below the surface. Whether or not this is an exaggeration, there certainly were a lot more frozen water mains and sewer pipes than usual. From what I can tell so far (buds are just beginning to swell), our apple orchard did much better than in the previous, milder, very snowy winter, when we lost about one-third of our 50+ trees to sunscald. The only dead trees this year are Lodi, Vista Bella, and Carroll, all of which were badly weakened last year.

APRIL GRAFTING WORKSHOP A SUCCESS

About 25 people attended the annual grafting workshop at Dimond Greenhouses in Anchorage, on April 20. There was an ample supply of Ranteka apple rootstock, which we sold for \$2 apiece. Thanks to everyone who contributed scionwood, especially those who went to the trouble to mail it from afar. We owe Bob Boyer many thanks for his efforts to place our group orders.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

In my two years as editor of this Newsletter, this is the thinnest one yet. The fact is, I've received no contributions from club members, even after waiting a month beyond my target date for printing the Spring Newsletter.

Many of you have observations, or opinions, or experiences, that would be of interest to other members. Please send something for the Summer 1996 Newsletter, which I'll be putting together in July.

So that you can plan ahead, I try to get the newsletters out on January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10. If you have anything to contribute, please get it to me by about 5 days ahead of those deadlines.

Dwight Bradley

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES FOR 1996?

Check the expiration date on your address label — many members are behind in their dues. Membership is \$16 payable to the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers, c/o Pam Warner (address at top of page). Benefits of membership: subscription to the quarterly Newsletter; attendance at eight meetings each year including the April grafting workshop, the September apple tasting, and the May orchard visit; group purchases of nursery stock at incredible prices; exchange of hard-to-find scionwood; and opportunities to get together with other fruit-growing enthusiasts.

If your membership has lapsed, this will be the last Newsletter you receive.