

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2007

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President: Pat Mulligan, 210 Gloria, Palmer, AK 99645 ph 745-2043

Vice President: Dan Elliot, HC 31 Box 5196, Wasilla, AK 99654 ph 376-5196

Treasurer: Alice Brewer, 1201 W. 45th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99503 ph 563-6734

Web Master: Gary Masog, gary.masog@gci.net

Board Member at Large: Dwight Bradley, 22008 Voyles Blvd, Chugiak, AK 99567 ph 688-1268

Editor: Tami Schlies, P.O. Box 672255, Chugiak, AK 99567 ph 688-5711 Email gardenerak@yahoo.com

Membership information and dues payments contact Alice Brewer

Association News

May Orchard Maintenance Workshop

SATURDAY, May 5, 2007 at 1 PM
Bob Boyer's Greenhouse

We've all seen Bob's greenhouse. Now you can see what the winter can do to a half an acre of orchard. This event requires pulling, lifting, and probably a lot of picking up sticks. Bob is planning to fertilize the entire orchard per the recommendation of a soils analysis. He also has the dreaded cottonwood assaulting his orchard. He requests that we help turn back the invasion. Some will have to be pulled with his tractor. Sounds like good practice to me.

The basic requirement is a pair of leather gloves. If you like, throw a rake in the back too.

Bob would like an idea of how many will show up. Please call Pat if you will be there. 745-2043

Pat is also still looking for suggestions or volunteers for orchard tours this summer.

We had an amazing turnout for the grafting workshop in April. We sold out of apple trees and then some, gained a few new members, and all and all had a great time. It was a bit hectic, so if anyone has any suggestions for making it smoother next year, let one of the board members

know. Some ideas have already been tossed around.

For all you new members – welcome! If this is your first newsletter, I hope you find it informative and friendly. I would like to remind everyone that this is a member written publication; this means you! It is about your garden or orchard, your ideas, and your interests. We all learn so much from each other – even beginners can remind old timers of mistakes they may be making, or introduce someone set in their ways to a new way of thinking about growing fruit here in the High North. If you have an article you've either written or read (even a paragraph!) share it with Tami so she can pass it on to the rest of the club. Also welcome are recipes, book reviews, "want adds," and questions for other members. The editor is happy to provide editing services if you are worried about your writing skills. See the header above for her contact information, and we hope to hear from you soon.

On behalf of the club, I'd also like to extend a thank you to Dwight Bradley for yet again compiling the results of our annual apple tasting. He has been doing it for thirteen years, and the 2006 results are in this issue. Next time you see him, thank him personally for his time and effort. Many of us use these tasting results as an excuse to squeeze in another apple tree ...

From the Editor's Garden

A Haiku

*Dog tracks in the house
leading from the kitchen door.
Spring in Alaska*

That seems to be about all I have seen of spring at my house so far this year. The Siberian squill, crocuses, daffodils, and tulips are late coming up (they have shown their heads finally the week of April 23!) Though the beds are dry enough to plant peas, the biting wind keeps making me hesitate, telling myself to wait until the birch tree in back starts showing a little green tip. At least the greenhouse is keeping my green thumb from sulking too much.

The addition of a pair of piglets to the farm has also kept my mind off the chill weather, though "walking" them every day is quite a chore. They must be cane trained for my son's 4-H project to enter the auction at the fair, and a 25 pound piglet can run pretty fast! They have tilled up the soil in their yard, making me want to move them out and plant something

there, but I suppose they need somewhere to root around.

I am still waiting to see what last November did to my grafts from last year. I didn't get around to mulching my pots, and I wonder if the severe cold did them in. There are a few with buds that seem to be swelling, so I have hope for the rest.

Does anyone have an organic remedy for *preventing* imported current worms? I had a few on the bushes last year and hand picked them, but they managed to defoliate one plant. My chickens love the worms when they get big enough to bother with, but I would like to maybe prevent the worms from appearing this year.

And does anyone have a good way to manage gooseberries? Mine seem to want to flop over onto the ground, and then the stems end up breaking off at ground level. I am growing Jahn's Prairie, and wonder if perhaps I ought to switch cultivars, even though the berries on these are wonderful. Suggestions for pruning and / or staking would be fantastic.

Apple Allergies ...

Submitted by the Boyers

Hi Tami, Bob wanted me to forward this info to you. Perhaps you would be interested in including it in the newsletter. Marianne

From: apple-crop@virtualorchard.net [mailto:apple-crop@virtualorchard.net] **On Behalf Of** Jonathan B. Bishop

Subject: Apple-Crop: Spraying and food allergies

Hello all,

I just had an inquiry from a customer who is

planning to bring a child with a food allergy to our farm. She said "there have been several reported allergic reactions to nut allergic individuals after ingesting apples that have been sprayed (even after being washed)."

She couldn't name which product might have been responsible. I am not aware of these cases. Has anyone in this group heard of these incidents? Is anyone aware of ingredients or derivatives of compounds in any of the pesticides we use in the industry that could cause problems for people with food allergies?

Jonathan Bishop

From: apple-crop@virtualorchard.net [mailto:apple-crop@virtualorchard.net] **On Behalf Of** Miller, Stephen
Subject: RE: Apple-Crop: Spraying and food allergies

Jonathan:

I know pesticides are a convenient "target" for many problems or perceived problems, but your situation sounds like it may be an allergic reaction to apples, not pesticide(s). I know, how could anyone be allergic to an apple, but it's more common than you might think.

First, we receive here at the lab annually a report detailing the analysis of foods and other products from the EPA and associated federal labs. I can tell you that in all my years of looking at these reports the incident of any pesticides detected on foods collected from grocery stores and other outlets is less than 5% of products sampled. In those incidents where pesticide residues are found I have never seen one above the level allowed by law and in most cases the levels found are in the very low parts per million to parts per billion range. That's not to say that a pesticide in extremely low levels couldn't cause an allergic reaction, but I think it is highly unlikely.

Secondly, and more likely to be the causal factor in your case is the fact that apples and some other fruits, vegetables and nuts contain a protein named Mal d 1 which is known to cause an allergic reaction. We have a technician here at AFRS who is highly allergic to apples and can not eat them (He's an entomology tech who worked in Mass. and New England for many years - you may know whom I'm talking about).

Mal d 1 is similar to a protein found in birch pollen, a common cause for allergy. A substantial part of the population in Northern Europe suffers from birch pollen allergy, and most of them also show reactions toward certain plant derived foods, apple being one of them. In Sweden up to 90% of birch pollen allergic patients are sensitized to apples with symptoms like itching and swelling of lips, tongue and throat after ingestion. Work on Mal d 1 protein has been carried out in Europe and the UK. Some apple cultivars are apparently high in this protein

while others are low, as you might expect. Detailed information on Mal d 1 and other similar allergic proteins may be found in various scientific technical journals, mostly medical field journals, such as Allergy (year), J Allergy Clin Immunol, and others.

Hope this information is helpful.

PS: I'm a pomologist, not a food scientist or molecular biologist, so please don't ask for more fundamental details than I have provided. I just happen to know this piece of information !

Steve
Stephen S. Miller, Ph.D.
Research Horticulturist
Appalachian Fruit Research Station

From: Mosbah Kushad
To: 'Apple-Crop'
Subject: RE: Apple-Crop: Spraying and food allergies

Steve: Excellent summary.. In addition to Mal d 1 apples also contain Bet v 1 and Mal d 2, 3 and 4 allergens; fortunately they are not serious allergens. In a recent study, only a very small percentage of those that have birch pollen allergy showed any reaction to the apple fruit when it was peeled. Mosbah Kushad University of Illinois

From: apple-crop@virtualorchard.net [mailto:apple-crop@virtualorchard.net] **On Behalf Of** Jerry Frecon
Subject: Apple-Crop: Spraying and food allergies

Although any child or adult could be allergic to any food, such as apples Steve alluded to, other fruits, vegetables, and meats, there are eight foods that account for 90% of all food allergic reactions. These are: milk, egg, peanut, tree nut (walnut, cashew, etc.) fish, shellfish, soy and wheat. I am allergic to Vitis labrusca grape varieties and get characteristic swelling in my throat, arms, eyes, fingers and hives over my body. I think there could also be other things in an orchard like weeds that a very small percentage of people could be allergic to. Allergies should not be confused with intolerances. However I think both physicians and people find it easy to blame pesticides for all sorts of allergies or intolerances when as Steve describes they are there in such minuscule quantities it is hard to fathom that they could cause any reaction.

However I know some are so scared of pesticides that the word may cause an anxiety attack. Of course insects can cause the same reaction to some people. In conclusion, I am also both allergic and intolerant to sulfur and sulfur containing medications, foods and pesticides. As a youngster, I remember how we used to use sulfur dusts to spray everything. I have been in some organic and non

organic farms today that use a great deal of sulfur and it is sometimes coated on the fruit and leaves. I cannot tolerate this environment or fruit that is coated with sulfur.

Jerry Frecon

ANNUAL TASTING OF ALASKA-GROWN APPLES

By Dwight Bradley

2006 Results

The annual apple tasting was held at Bradley's in Peters Creek on Sept. 23, 2007. About 30 people were there and 19 rated the apples. Fifty-five different apple varieties were tasted along with nineteen duplicates. Another dozen or so varieties were brought for display only, which weren't ripe enough to bother tasting. All in all, it was the usual crowded scene, with an amazing array of apples to taste.

Growers are identified by their initials:

- BB = Bob Boyer
- DB = Dwight Bradley
- DC = Dawn Cowan
- DD = Dawn & Fred Deiser
- DE = Dan Elliott
- KI = Kevin Irvin
- K = Kristiansen
- NM = Nancy Moore
- NN = Nicki & Bob Nielsen
- MP = Mary Patania
- DR = Dave Rankin
- TS = Tami Schies
- JY = Jim Yassick
- MDY = Mario De Young

APPLES GROWN OUTDOORS

| Variety | Grower | Sugar (Brix) | Mean score |
|--------------------|--------|--------------|------------|
| Zestar | DE | 13 | 7.77 |
| Prairie Magic | DE | 11.5 | 7.40 |
| Prairie Magic | TS | 12.5 | 7.25 |
| Novosibirski Sweet | TS | 14 | 6.78 |
| Sunrise | DR | 12 | 6.57 |
| Parkland | DB | 12.5 | 6.50 |
| September Ruby | DE | 12.5 | 6.50 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|------|------|------|
| Ginger Gold | DE | 17 | 6.40 |
| State Fair | GRM | 11.5 | 6.29 |
| Quinte BB | BB | 14 | 6.29 |
| Elliott's Mystery | DE | 12.5 | 6.22 |
| Noret | DB | 13.5 | 6.17 |
| Carrol | DE | 12 | 6.15 |
| Silken | TS | 12.5 | 6.11 |
| Simonet | DE | 13 | 6.08 |
| Centennial | DB | 13.5 | 6.00 |
| Unknown | NM | 14 | 6.00 |
| State Fair | MDY | 11 | 6.00 |
| Carroll | TS | 13.5 | 5.88 |
| Parkland | TS | 11.5 | 5.86 |
| Ranger | BB | 11.5 | 5.75 |
| 8th & M | JY | 11 | 5.67 |
| Norland | K | 11 | 5.67 |
| Oriole | DR | 12 | 5.67 |
| Drew Brook | TS | 11.5 | 5.63 |
| Prairie Sun | KI | 12.5 | 5.63 |
| Oriole | TS | 12 | 5.63 |
| Oriole | DE | 10.5 | 5.60 |
| Battleford | DD | 11 | 5.50 |
| Yellow Jay | DB | 10 | 5.44 |
| Summer Red | TS | 11 | 5.44 |
| Lee 21 | DE | 12 | 5.43 |
| Norquay Delight | BB | 11 | 5.43 |
| Rescue | TS | 14 | 5.38 |
| Russian unknown | DD | 12.5 | 5.33 |
| Norland | TS | 11.5 | 5.33 |
| Lee 21 | NM | 13 | 5.30 |
| Norkent | DE | | 5.29 |
| Liveland Raspberry | GRM | 12 | 5.25 |
| Norland | DB | 11 | 5.00 |
| Ginger Gold | JY | 12 | 5.00 |
| Mantet | NM | 12 | 5.00 |
| 1497 | GRM | 12 | 5.00 |
| Liveland Raspberry | DB | 11 | 4.92 |
| Beacon | NM | 12.5 | 4.92 |
| Yellow Transparent | DD | 11.5 | 4.90 |
| PF12 | DE | 11 | 4.90 |
| Prairie Sun | DB | 12 | 4.80 |
| Yellow Transparent | NN | 12.5 | 4.78 |
| Goodland | MW | 10 | 4.75 |
| Hazen | NM | 11 | 4.73 |
| H12 | JAP? | 11 | 4.63 |
| Lobo | NM | 11 | 4.63 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Unknown (little green) | DD | | 4.50 |
| Goodland | DC | 12 | 4.50 |
| Haralred | KI | 12 | 4.50 |
| Sweet 16? | JY | 10 | 4.29 |
| Oriole | JY | 11.5 | 4.20 |
| Unknown Russian | DD | 11.5 | 4.20 |
| Norland | JY | 11 | 4.00 |
| Golden Uralian | JY | 12.5 | 3.92 |
| Mantet | JY | 12 | 3.83 |
| Dawn Crab | TS | 13 | 3.63 |
| Yellow Transparent | DB | 12 | 3.50 |
| Wealthy | GRM | 9 | 3.00 |

APPLES GROWN IN GREENHOUSE

Together, Bob Boyer and Kevin Irvin submitted enough greenhouse-grown apples to warrant separate ratings. By my tally there were nine greenhouse entries but I might have missed a few more. The winners were Silken and Cox Orange Pippin, both grown by Kevin. Several of Bob's entries were enormous, including Shizuka (22 ounces, 14.5 inch circumference!), with Honeycrisp and Molly's Delicious barely smaller. The tasting scores were similar to those of the better outdoor apples.

| Variety | Grower | Sugar (-Brix) | Mean score |
|---------------------|--------|---------------|------------|
| Silken | KI | 12 | 8.14 |
| Cox Orange Pippin | KI | 13.5 | 7.00 |
| Boyer Cortland | BB | 11.5 | 6.83 |
| Shizuka | BB | 15 | 6.70 |
| Molly's Delicious | BB | 12.5 | 6.56 |
| Sweet 16 | KI | 10.5 | 6.25 |
| Stark Ultra Spire | KI | 11 | 5.71 |
| Honeycrisp | BB | 10 | 5.67 |
| North Pole Columnar | KI | 10 | 5.57 |

THIRTEEN-YEAR RESULTS

The next table ranks the Alaskan-grown varieties that have been tasted over the past thirteen years, since I've had the job of keeping track. The main goal is to identify the best eating varieties. The rankings are somewhat subjective, based on number of first-place, second-place, third-place, and top-ten finishes. This is pretty easy for me to keep track of: I just update the list from last year and see if any changes in rank are indicated. The ranking system favors apples that have been with us for all 13 years, and especially those (like Norland or Parkland) that are grown by lots of people and therefore have more than one entry in each annual tasting. If there are four Norlands being tasted and they score 5, 6, 7, and 8, the "8" is what would count in the long-term ranking—an obvious flaw. What about Mantet, Red Duchess, and Viking, each of which has finished first? The problem with these three, and to a lesser extent State Fair, is that there are many off years when they rank near the bottom of a list of 30 to 50 varieties, generally because they are still unripe at the tasting. It should be remembered that this is a ranking of *eating quality during the last week of September*. The tastings are held at this time of year to maximize the number of apples in their prime: any earlier and not enough will be ripe (especially the more interesting kinds); any later and winter will have set in. Chinese Golden Early, Geneva Early, Norland and Parkland would all be favored by an earlier tasting. This year I've added a "Comments" column that helps explain some of my reasoning for the rankings.

And the new leader is
Zestar, which has moved into first, bumping Oriole down to number 2.

| Variety (in order of rank) | Years 1st | Years 2nd | Years 3rd | Years in top 10 | Comments |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|---|
| Zestar | 4 | | | 4 | A new variety with four straight first-place finishes |
| Oriole | 2 | 1 | 4 | 9 | Bumped from #1 by Zestar |
| Carroll | 1 | 2 | | 5 | Moving up the list with several recent great years |
| Ginger Gold | 2 | | | 6 | Great when it ripens; poor in a cool year |
| September Ruby | 1 | 1 | | 6 | Great when it ripens; poor in a cool year |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|----|---|
| Parkland | 2 | 2 | 11 | Absolutely reliable |
| State Fair | 2 | 1 | 7 | Great when it ripens: poor in a cool year |
| Norland | 2 | 1 | 6 | Absolutely reliable |
| Mantet | 1 | | 3 | A great apple in a good year but seldom even in top ten |
| Prairie Magic | 1 | | 4 | Moving up the list with several recent great years |
| Viking | 1 | | 2 | One great year: many mediocre ones |
| Red Duchess | 1 | | 1 | One great year: many mediocre ones |
| Golden Sentinel | | 1 | 4 | |
| 15th Street Mystery | | 1 | 4 | |
| Roda Mantel | 1 | | 2 | |
| Geneva Early | 1 | | 2 | |
| Breaky | 1 | | 1 | |
| 8 th & M mystery | | 1 | 2 | |
| Novosibirski Sweet | | 1 | 2 | |
| Vista Bella | | 1 | 1 | |
| Sunrise | | | 4 | |
| Rescue | | | 3 | |
| Simonet | | | 3 | |
| Lodi | | | 2 | |
| Harris | | | 2 | |
| Elliott Mystery | | | 2 | |
| Karmijn de Sonnaville | | | 2 | |
| Summerred | | | 2 | |
| Karl Franke mystery | | | 1 | |
| Golden Transparent | | | 1 | |
| Canada Red | | | 1 | |
| Arvid Miller mystery | | | 1 | |
| Whitney | | | 1 | |
| Joyce | | | 1 | |
| Red Mantet | | | 1 | |
| Pristine | | | 1 | |
| Patrick #3 | | | 1 | |
| Jersey Mac | | | 1 | |
| Harolds | | | 1 | |
| Goodland | | | 1 | |
| Lowland Raspberry | | | 1 | |
| Sweet Sixteen | | | 1 | |
| Stark Ultraspire | | | 1 | |
| Garland | | | 1 | |
| Quinte | | | 1 | |
| Antonovka | | | 1 | |

Excerpted from
Plums on the Prairies

by Rick Sawatzky

http://www.usask.ca/agriculture/plantsci/dom_fruit/articles/plums.pdf

"*Prunus tomentosa*, Nanking cherry, is widely grown in the prairie provinces.

Nanking cherry as well as eastern and western sandcherries are listed with the plums because they are more closely related botanically to the plums than to true cherries. Nanking cherry plants have serrated leaves which are more fuzzy than other species in this group and light pink flowers. They have

ornamental value when planted as specimens or when planted closely and trimmed to form a hedge. The fruit is round, bright red, between 15 and 20 mm in diameter, low in acid, mild flavoured and good eaten fresh. The fruit is held tightly on short stems and is hidden under leaves where there is a light to medium size crop. Since *Prunus tomentosa* is not self-fruitful, two or more genotypes are needed for cross-pollination and good fruit set.

Nanking cherries are propagated by seed. Since there were at least two collections made from their native range in China some Nanking cherry seedlings are much hardier than others. Seedling derived from those collected at the northern limit of the species (i.e. the Northern Limit strain) are the hardiest."

Cherry Dessert Cake

2 cups pitted Nanking cherries
3/4 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 cake mix (yellow or chocolate)

In medium sauce pan combine cherries and 3/4 cup water. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer 2 minutes. Add sugar, butter, lemon juice. Mix cornstarch in 1/4 cup cold water and add slowly, stirring constantly until mix thickens. Pour into a 9x9x2-inch baking dish.

Prepare cake mix as directed on package for high altitude. Spoon over cherry mixture and bake at 350 degrees for approximately 40 minutes. Serve warm with whipped cream.

Nanking Cherry Wine

- 3 lbs ripe Nanking cherries
- 1½ lbs granulated sugar
- 1 11-oz can Welch's frozen grape (Concord) concentrate
- 6 pts water
- 1 crushed Campden tablet
- 1 tsp pectic enzyme
- ½ tsp acid blend
- 1 tsp yeast nutrient
- Burgundy wine yeast

Bring water to boil and dissolve sugar in it, stirring until completely clear. Meanwhile, wash and destem the cherries and tie them into a nylon straining bag. With hands, crush the cherries in primary fermentation vessel. Add acid blend and yeast nutrient and pour boiling sugar-water over fruit. Stir briefly to aid in dissolving additives, cover primary, and allow to cool to 70-75 degrees F. Add crushed Campden tablet, stir, recover, and set aside 12 hours. Add thawed can of grape concentrate and pectic enzyme, stir well, recover and set aside additional 12 hours. Add yeast, recover and allow to ferment seven days, squeezing bag twice daily. Squeeze well to extract juice, discard pulp, and transfer to dark secondary fermentation vessel or clear one wrapped with brown paper. Top up if necessary and fit fermentation trap. Rack after 30 days, top up and refit airlock. Repeat after 30 additional days and again two months later. Stabilize, sweeten to taste (if desired) and set aside 2-3 weeks. Bottle, store in a dark place and taste after six months to a year. Improves with additional aging. [Author's own recipe]

From Jack B. Keller, Jr.

<http://winemaking.jackkeller.net/request136.asp>