

ALASKA NAFEX NEWSLETTER

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A Publication of the Alaska Chapter, North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX)

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MEETING DATES

Jan. 14. Thurs. 7 p.m.
National Bank of Alaska 2nd floor lunchroom. Selection and care of cane, vine and small bush fruits and their use in landscaping. Debbie Brown, speaker.

Feb. 11 Thurs. 7 p.m. NBA lunchroom Plant genetics. Debbie Brown, Speaker.

Mar. 10 . Thurs. 7 p.m. NBA lunchroom All about rhubarb. Cathy Wright, speaker.

April 14. Thurs. 7 p.m. NBA lunchroom Grafting workshop. Speaker T.B.A.

Late April. (On a Saturday)
Pruning work party.

May 12. Thurs. 7 p.m. NBA lunchroom Planting and care of young fruit trees. Rich Raynor, speaker.

June 9. Thurs. 7 p.m. NBA lunchroom. Pie cherries: varieties, characteristics, culture. Erik Simpson, speaker.

If enough people are interested, an orchard tour in late August or Sept, 1988 is possible, as well as another spring fruit walk.

DON'T FOREGET TO PAY YOUR 1988 DUES OF \$7.00 TO ROBERT PURVIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, OR YOU WILL NO LONGER RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER!

**CHARLES ANWAY (1857 - 1949)
AN ALASKAN FRUIT EXPLORER**

By Robert E. Henderson

Charles H. Anway was born in Michigan on May 1, 1857. He spent 41 years in Colorado where his family moved shortly after his birth. He was attracted to the North by the Gold Rush, arriving in Skagway on July 2, 1898. After seeing the condition of the White Pass and the Chilkoot Trails, he decided to look over the Dalton Trail near Haines. He made friends with Jack Dalton and took one the Dalton's pack trains into Dawson, and then returned to Haines with the horses. He was not impressed with the Interior, so decided to prospect in the vicinity of Porcupine Creek near Haines. He eventually staked claims on Nugget Creek and spent the next 5 years working those claims.

On December 17, 1901, Charlie made an important decision- to stake out a homestead on a site 1 mile north of Haines. He immediately began

work on his cabin (still standing), although it was not until 1903 that he became a permanent resident.

Anway loved fresh fruit, but being a miner, was unable to get it most of the time. Thus, it was no coincidence that he decided to become a fruit farmer. He knew that wild strawberries grew in the vicinity, so why wouldn't cultivated ones, especially if crossed with the wild ones? He ordered some cultivated varieties and started crossing them with the wild berry. He then collected the seed and planted the seed to see what was produced. He must have had beginner's luck because after a few years he got the berry he wanted. It was large (1 1/2 - 3 inches in diameter), red, sweet, hardy, and produced lots of runners. This berry soon became known as the Haines or Anway berry. He entered a jar with just 3 berries covered with formaldehyde in the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909 and received a Diploma for "strawberries in glass". He also received a silver cup from Northwest Land Products Exposition in Seattle in 1916 for the "best individual display".

In the spring of 1908, Anway decided to order some apple trees, to see if he could grow an orchard. He received 25 trees including "Waxen", 'Yellow Transparent', 'Northern Spy', and Siberian crabapple (all of which are alive today), plus 'Duchess', 'Winter Banana' and one other, all of which died in recent years. The unidentified tree has been described as (1) the best eating apple in the orchard, (2) ripens after 'Yellow Transparent', and (3) had red streaks in the flesh. However, one party describes it as yellow with red stripes and another as a

red, red apple. I think it might have been 'Red Astrachan' which was one of the early survivors at the Sitka Experiment Station. One reference lists the apple as a 'King', but I do not have a description of this tree or its fruit. Perhaps some of my readers can help me out.

Anway later imported honey bees to pollinate his orchard. In the 4th Annual Skagway Valley Horticultural Society Fair in 1915, Anway won an award of a special prize for "an exhibit of the first mature apples grown in Alaska".

Other awards that Anway won on his apples were in the Southeastern Alaska County Fair in Juneau and include: in 1923, second prize in the apple division; in 1927, first prize for 'Duchess' apples; and in 1929, first prize for crabapples.

By 1930, Anway was getting too old to take care of his large strawberry patch, so decided to reduce the size of the berry patch and plant a cherry orchard in its place. He sent for 25 trees which included some sour pie cherries, and some sweet cherries including 'Bing', 'Royal Ann', 'Black Republican' and 'Lambert'. Almost all the trees survived and grew to 25-30 feet tall. They always bore a good crop of cherries which he sold in town and to the Army Post.

In the spring of 1955, when the trees were 25 years old, they came into full bloom. However, the weather turned cold and wet and every tree but one died. The lone survivor struggled along until 1959 when it finally died. The death of the orchard was due to a fungus that invades the tree during the bloom when the weather is wet. I understand that a spray is now available that could have prevented this loss.

Charlie Anway continued to live in his cabin until December of 1949 when he became very sick and was sent to Juneau. He died in Juneau on December 14, 1949, almost 92 years old. He was interred in Evergreen Cemetery in Juneau.

I believe he was one of the earliest Alaska commercial horticulturists. His achievements were outstanding. Much of the work at the Sitka Experiment Station was attempts to duplicate what Anway had already accomplished. The Station never succeeded in producing a strawberry as superior as the Anway berry, although many years later they did develop a good berry. Anway was fortunate in having better climate for his apples and cherries, thus having much greater success. When Anway first started thinking about growing apples, he wrote to the United States Department of Agriculture for information. They informed him that only small fruits would grow in Alaska. This started Charlie Anway experimenting; thus in 1908 he became a true North American Fruit Explorer (NAFEX).

NEW EARLY PEAR AVAILABLE

Northwoods Nursery recently advertised a European pear, from Italy, which they call 'Peter's Sugar Pear'. Its most noteworthy characteristic is an extremely early ripening date: July 1 in Portland, OR. Any other pear tree can cross pollinate it. The fruit is small, sweet, and children love it, according to the ad.

Northwoods is selling 4-5 foot trees (rootstock not mentioned) for \$17.50 each plus \$4.50 shipping and handling. Their address is Northwoods Nursery, 28696 S Cramer Rd.

Mollalla, OR 97038. Ph. (503)651-3737. This pear might be worth testing in southeastern and southcentral, Alaska. -R. Purvis

ROOTSTOCK AVAILABILITY NOTES

The new semi-dwarf, sweet cherry rootstock, GM-61-1 is now available from Rocky Meadow Orchard and Nursery, owned by NAFEX member, Ed Fackler. In talking with him about 5-6 weeks ago, I learned that he has them available as 'liners', meaning that they are too small to graft, but could be budded onto after a summer's growth.

GM-61-1, which originated in Belgium, produces a tree 50% the size of the same variety grown on Mazzard cherry rootstocks. It induces early fruiting, tolerates poor drainage, and withstands colder temperatures better than Mazzard. For this reason, it may well be worth trial by NAFEX members in southeast, Alaska or places such as Homer or the warmer parts of Anchorage.

Budding has oftentimes given disappointing results when practiced in Alaska, possibly because the bud union does not heal over perfectly before the onset of cold temperatures. Anyone doing this might be better to store budded trees in a more sheltered location in the winter. The alternative is to graft the trees the following spring, although cherries are trickier to graft than apples or pears.

Cost of the liners is \$1.40 each. Fackler's address is Rt. 1 Box 104; New Salisbury, IN 47161; Ph: 812-347-2213.

Bear Creek Nursery lists in their catalog the rootstocks 'Antonovka' and 'Borowinka' for apples, Ussurian, Pyrus communis, and 'OH ('Old Home') x F.333 for

pears, 'Manchurian' and 'Myrobalan' for plums and 'Mahaleb' and 'Montmorency' seedlings for pie cherries. Prices are \$5.00 to \$8.00 for bundles of 10, except for the OH pear stock which is \$20 for 10.

-R. Purvis

**PLACE YOUR TREE FRUIT ORDER
NOW**

NAFEX member Dan Whitney of Cowiche, WA recently sent me his list of apple trees for sale in 1988. The cost of trees picked up at Cowiche is \$5.50. There will be an additional charge of \$2.00 per tree for each tree shipped to Alaska. Most of the trees on the list are early-ripening enough for trial in southcentral and southeastern, Alaska. Those that are not, are marked with an "L" for late-ripening or "L?" if the ripening season is unknown.

Anyone wanting to order trees should contact me as soon as possible either by phone or mail furnishing the variety wanted, first and second choice of rootstock, and quantity. Please enclose a check, payable to Robert Purvis, with your order. I will send Dan one large order in February.

We will try to get 2 large boxes- one the Anchorage, and one to Fairbanks. The trees will be spring-dug while fully dormant, and shipped in March. Keep your trees in a cool place (a snowbank is good) until you can pot or plant them.

-R. Purvis

NOTES FROM OUR MEMBERS

Fruit explorers pruned Tom Marshall's 'Oriole' apple tree in May, 1985. This past summer it had 197 apples on it, the most it has ever had. Its previous record

crop was approximately 40-50 apples. Tom also harvested 9 'Chinese Golden Early' apples from a branch he had grafted onto the 'Oriole' in 1985. The 'Chinese Golden Early' branch probably provided a close source of pollen for cross pollination of the 'Oriole'.

Washburn's Nursery, Box 823, Palmer, AK 99645 will have ample quantities of fruit trees available for the 1988 season (retail). They are not a mail order firm but require pick up at their nursery. Write to them for a catalog.

Prairie pears from Canada, the cultivars 'David' and 'John', growing near Palmer, have flowered and produced fruit, but they never ripen completely before winter.

-PSH

**ALASKA NAFEX MEMBERSHIP
STILL RISING**

As of December 28, 1987, the Alaska Chapter of NAFEX had 81 families or individuals with dues paid for 1987. Including spouses, the number of active individual members is now 87.

**INPUT WANTED FOR THE
NEWSLETTER**

Please help me put together a stimulating and informative newsletter. I need short notes on your fruit growing experiences: what are you testing; need any help with a fruit-growing problem; got a good recipe to share? You don't have to be an accomplished writer- just write me a letter and tell me what's happening, so I can share it with other members!

-P. Holloway
