

ALASKA NAFEX NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALASKA CHAPTER, NORTH AMERICAN FRUIT
EXPLORERS (NAFEX)

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MEETING DATES

May 10, NBA Lunchroom. Northern Lights and C Streets, 7:00 p.m. Julie Riley, Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service will speak about serviceberries, a bush fruit that is gaining favor over the more temperamental blueberry. Plus, Julie will explain the how, what, when and why of soil testing. Members who have soil test equipment which have been particularly effective are encouraged to bring these items to the meeting.

June 14, Exchange/sale of seedlings and rooted cuttings. Bring your surplus fruit plants or graftings for bargain and barter. NBA lunchroom. 7:00 p.m.

September 13, Victories and defeats of the past season; exchange of member experiences; discussions of how to save and store seeds for future production.

GRAFTING WORKSHOPS- A GREAT SUCCESS

NAFEX successfully conducted grafting workshops in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Homer on April 7, 12 and 22, respectively. In Fairbanks, about 15 people attended, and hardy pears were a very popular item. We sold \$150.00 in scions, rootstocks and grafted trees at the meeting.

In Anchorage, over 20 people attended the workshop, and apples and sweet cherries were most popular. We sold \$250.00 in scions, rootstocks and grafted trees.

In Homer, over a dozen people attended from the Homer Garden Club. Sweet cherries and plums were most popular. We sold over \$100.00 in grafted trees. We sold all of the wood we had ordered, making this year's grafting workshops an overwhelming success. -Erik Simpson

TIPS ON GARDENING AND JUMP-STARTING AT THE MARCH MEETING

Sue Adams-Green had the following advice for starting your garden this spring. Study your microenvironment, and make your plants compatible. For instance, acid lovers should be grown in acid soil, sweet soil varieties should be grown with other sweet soil varieties. Some fruits like lots of sunlight, others thrive in partial shade. To minimize weeds, try raised bed plantings.

Flowers, fruits and vegetables can be intermingled to have an aesthetic effect. Let the flowers get "front billing" and the fruit bushes, brambles and vegetables appear more ornamental.

Be aware of weather and the particular sensitivity of individual trees and plants; windbreaks may have to be devised; fruit trees can scald in hot spring sunshine, and the trunks can benefit with protective wrappings. Water out of the tap comes out at 35-40 degrees F, so use warm water. Soil in Anchorage yards tests at about 55 degrees F. Avoid further chills from cold water. Eighty degree water is acceptable. For some beds, heat tapes may be used to warm the soils.

To aid seed germination, Sue uses a lot of clear plastic. Churn and turn the garden soil as a

jumpstart technique before planting. For season-long aeration, Sue and husband Richard raise earthworms. They aid in composting, enrich the soil with castings and generally put nutrients back in the soil.

In hardening-off young fruit trees, place in planter with roller casters and store in garage or cooler area of the house in winter, rolling them outside for increasingly longer periods as the days grow warmer. -Erik Simpson

TREE CENSUS

Since this is the year of the census, why restrict the counting just to people? NAFEX member Ruth Edmondson answered her own question by planning a "Back to our Roots" census adventure for Sunday, May 20. Volunteers will make a block-by-block count of flowering fruit trees in the Anchorage Original Townsite and Elderberry Triangle as part of Arbor Day festivities.

Fruit trees, particularly apple trees, have a lengthy history in Anchorage, according to Ruth. One tree planted along Third Ave. decades ago was rescued from a construction site by the Walter Hickel family and now continues a productive life at their Turnagain residence. Bob Reeve, the famous bush pilot and aviation entrepreneur, planted some apple trees along Sixth Avenue in

front of his office. The Anchorage 5th Avenue Mall construction was built with their well-being in mind, and they are now a part of the development's landscaping. There are also reports that a sweet cherry tree is producing prolifically in the vicinity of Seventh and E streets.

The practical-minded Alaska NAFEX officer-at large lauds cold climate fruits as great landscaping plants and a bountiful hobby. According to Ruth, there are more cold-climate varieties than most Alaskans know about. "And one big advantage we enjoy is that we are north of the range for common enemies of fruit trees. Our biggest hazards are small boys and large moose!"

Fruit census volunteers will meet at 2 p.m. in the third floor Community Room of the Anchorage 5th Avenue Mall on Sunday, May 20 for orientation. The census project is a joint endeavor of NAFEX and local master gardeners. Anyone who wishes to enjoy the sight of flowering fruit trees is welcome to participate in this event of a city-wide Arbor Day. Call Ruth at 248-5353 after 6 p.m. for more information or to share your knowledge of our heritage fruit trees.

An inventory of proven cold climate trees could help NAFEX members determine best combinations of scionwood and

rootstocks. Additionally, cooperative tree owners could offer their trees for gathering scionwood for next spring's grafting workshop.

-Erik Simpson

THE YORKSHIRE GREENING APPLE

According to Lawrence Clark, a Yorkshire Greening apple has been growing in Anchorage for more than 20 years. It produces one of the largest apples of all the cold-hardy varieties growing in Alaska. Scionwood from this cultivar was offered in the grafting workshops this past April. Below is a description of this cultivar taken from a book by John Bultitude, "Apples. A Guide to the Identification of International Varieties". U of Washington Press, 1983.

Yorkshire Greening is assumed to have originated in Yorkshire, England. It was first recorded in 1803. It is a large green cooking apple primarily used in home gardens. The tree is somewhat weak, very spreading, a little weeping and produces spurs freely. The fruit color is deep green becoming greenish yellow; one quarter to three quarters flushed with brownish purple; bold, broad, broken dark red stripes; becomes greasy if stored. Fruit shape is flat-round, very irregular, often lop-sided,

distinctly flattened at the base and apex, distinctly ribbed and usually five-crowned. The flesh is creamy white, tinged green; firm, rather coarse-textured, somewhat dry and very acid. It is known by at least 14 other names including Yorkshire Goose Sauce Apple.

NATIONAL GOOSEBERRY TRIALS

Below is a summary of trials with gooseberries conducted by the National NAFEX organization. Alaska NAFEX member, Susan Brook is a contributing member of this group, and her evaluation for gooseberries grown in Gustavus is listed in column 3.

	S.E. WI	cent. NJ	S.E. AK	S. WI	WA coast	AR	E. cent. WY	E. MD	N. cent. PA	S. PA	N. cent. NJ	S. ME	N. MD	cent. KS
Grower #:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Zone:	5	7	2/3	3/4	5	6	4/5	6	5	6	5	5	7	6
CAN. 8279									144					
CAPTIVATOR									144	135				
CATHERINA							134							13?
COLLOSAL							134							
FREDONIA								113						13?
FRIEDL									144					
GERMAN								144					155	
GLENDALE												143		
GRN. GIANT								132						
GRN. MTN.	133													
HINN YELLOW							134	134	144					13?
JUMBO												143		
LEEPA RED							135	135	144					13?
MOUNTAIN		155												
O. CHAMPION					154									
PANKIN		133												
PIXWELL			134			133	134	154	333				144	
POORMAN	134		144			133				13?				14?
RED JACKET				134				123	144					
R WARRINGTON											135			
SCHULTZ														13?
SYLVIA									144			155		
WELCOME									144					
W. INDUSTRY				134										

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mildew-----flavor
 123
 L-----vigor

range: 1=bad, 5=excellent