

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

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MEETING DATES

April 18. 7-9 p.m. Dimond Greenhouse, Anchorage grafting workshop.

LAST CHANCE TO PAY DUES AND RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER!

GRAFTING WORKSHOP IN FAIRBANKS?

There is a grafting workshop tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 27, 1991 in 301 O'Neill Bldg UAF starting at 1:30 p.m.. Eric Simpson and Bob Purvis are making plans to attend if we get enough interest. They will bring rootstocks and budwood for sale. If you would like to attend, call **Eric or Pat Holloway** immediately. We need at least 15 people to sign up or it will be cancelled.

MORE ON LONICERA

While doing graduate work at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, I remember the Lonicera caerulea variety edulis. What I remember about it is eating the berries. I enjoyed the taste and ate at least a handful on several occasions before I realized it was a Lonicera. Since I did not think they

were an edible genus, I stopped eating them. Since taste was not a problem, I assumed that they must be poisonous!

If my memory is correct, they looked like blueberries, were juicy and a little sweet. Though I did not realize it until last month's article, the berries did stay on the shrub and were edible for several weeks.

It was in 1981 that I happened upon them. They were well established at that time. They were rounded in form, twiggy, and about 2 1/2 feet tall. I don't remember the flowering to be as showy as the other ornamental honeysuckles, but the leaves did have a bluish cast to them.

I have been asked many times about the edibility of Lonicera fruit. I mention eating the fruit at the UAF Experiment Station without ill effect. But, also that I may have been lucky. Well, it seems that I may still be lucky!. To have had the chance to try the fruit, seed the shrub growing, and to have read last month's informative article!

Debbie Brown, Anchorage

CLAIR'S FRUIT TRIALS

Just a short note to let my fellow fruit growers know of some of the new rootstocks I will be testing this year. Prunus nigra, Prunus ussuriensis and

Prunus maritima (pure) will be used for various stone fruits. Last fall I received some 'Beautiful Arcade' seed from Canada. and they are being started at

this time. 'Beautiful Arcade' rootstocks are reported to promote early fruiting and a semi-dwarf apple tree-- time will tell.

The new pears I'll be trying are 1912-23 Uss., 34-680 Uss., 942-35B Uss., BF 6, Mishurn, Simon, Phillip, Gillford and Andrew. Also, about 40 new varieties of apples are being grafted at this time.

Come on you fellow members, write a short note to be published in our Newsletter! -Clair Lammers, Fairbanks

**SUPPORT HOUSE CONCURENT
RESOLUTION NO. 10 --
DECLARING JUNE 2 - 8 TO BE
ALASKA GARDEN WEEK.**

American Pomological Society

Devoted to

Fruit Variety Improvement

What is the American Pomological Society?

- * *The oldest fruit organization in North America, founded by Marshall Pinkney Wilder in 1848, to foster the science and practice of fruit growing and variety development.*

Here's What APS Does

- * *Publishes the Fruit Variety Journal quarterly. The Journal contains both refereed technical articles and a wide variety of more applied descriptive articles relating to fruit varieties (cultivars).*
- * *Publishes current information of fruit variety introductions and performance of existing varieties.*
- * *Publishes the Register of Fruit and Nut Varieties in cooperation with the American Society for Horticultural Science.*
- * *Awards the Wilder Medals and Certificates to individuals or organizations for distinguished service and contributions to the advancement of pomological science and for outstanding fruit varieties.*
- * *Presents the U.P. Hedrick Awards for best APS Journal papers submitted by horticulture students.*
- * *Present the Shepard Award for best scientific paper published in the APS Journal the previous year.*

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Enroll me as a member of the American Pomological Society for calendar year 19__.

Regular Membership _____ \$16.00* for 1 year _____ \$42.00* for 3 years

College Student (Dept. Head's Signature) _____ \$8.00* for 1 year

NAME (Please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

Enclose remittance and send to: **AMERICAN POMOLOGICAL SOCIETY**
R. M. Crassweller, Treasurer
103 Tyson Building
University Park, PA 16802 U.S.A.

* Rates effective through 0/01

GROWING INDOOR CITRUS

Growing citrus trees indoors holds a special appeal to northern gardeners. There is an exotic attraction to a tree ripened lemon shining in your living room when it is dark and -40 degrees outside. Citrus plants are ornamental, with fragrant flowers, shiny evergreen leaves, and bright colored fruit which can hang on the plant for months.

Citrus trees have been held in high esteem throughout history due to their beauty, healthful properties, and relative rarity in the western hemisphere. Citrus has shown the stubborn inability to prosper in most of Europe and the temperate world.

Climate is the prime factor in the growing of citrus fruit. Citrus requires a long, hot growing season, and minimal winter freezing. Even in the prime U.S. citrus growing areas of California and Florida, the ability to grow different varieties of citrus, and the characteristics of the ripened fruit, vary dramatically. Florida's hot, humid climate produces fruit which is larger, longer, lighter in color, thinner in rind, juicier, sweeter, and more prone to disease. California's cool nights and arid climate produces fruit with more acid (better flavor), flatter, thicker rind, meatier, and more color. As a general rule, CA produces fruit for fresh consumption, and FL for juice. Oranges will not turn orange unless it reaches a low of at least 45 degrees F. FL's juice oranges are often green, which would be unacceptable in today's fresh fruit market.

In selecting citrus as a houseplant, the hardiness of the plant is less important than the number of heat units required for the fruit to mature. Following, is a list of common citrus, and the relative amount of heat required for ripening. Grapefruit require the greatest amount of heat, and kumquats the least.

Grapefruit	(long, hot season)
Orange	
Lime	(hot)
Mandarin	
Lemon	(medium)
Kumquat	

The hardest part of growing indoor citrus is in not allowing yourself to buy an edible orange or grapefruit tree. These two fruits both require more heat than is typically found in a home. Three top picks for indoor growing are the calamondin orange (an ornamental orange which is really a mandarin x kumquat cross), the Improved Meyer lemon (which isn't really a lemon but looks and tastes just like one), and kumquats (which aren't citrus at all, but in the fortunella family). Kumquats are somewhat the opposite of citrus with a sweet rind and sour flesh. They are eaten whole.

Citrus fruits have been interbred for centuries, and even experts don't know the genetic make up of many varieties. In his book Oranges, John Mc Phee relates the story of two USDA

scientists working on a persian lime breeding project. The scientists planted numerous persian lime seeds in the hopes of obtaining a virus free strain. From these seeds grew trees of sweet oranges, sour oranges, grapefruits, tangelos, lemons, and two persian limes. The scientists were surprised that persian limes were produced at all.

Propagating citrus from sexually produced seeds results in very mixed results, and generally the seedlings take about seven years to produce fruit. Citrus also produces asexual seeds, however, known as nucellar. Nucellar seedlings are essentially clones of the parent. Some citrus varieties, especially those grown for rootstocks, produce up to 95% nucellar seedlings. Unfortunately, these take just as long to produce fruit as the sexual seeds.

The most common way to propagate citrus is through budding. Citrus may also be propagated by grafting, layering, and through cuttings. Many, although not all, citrus varieties are graft compatible, allowing for several types of fruit on a common rootstock.

Following are some guidelines for growing citrus indoors. A plant light is needed if you want ripe fruit (just remember how hard it is to keep flowering plants going indoors). Alternatively, citrus leaves can be excellent in recipes. Lime leaves are just as flavorful as the fruit and are essential for Thai cooking. Lemon and orange leaves make excellent flavorings and teas.

Indoor citrus cultural needs:

1. Selection of an appropriate variety. Recommended varieties not previously mentioned include: Dancy tangerine, Otahite orange (which is the same as a Rangpur lime, and actually a sour tangerine), Ponderosa lemon, and Bearss lime. The Ponderosa lemon produces grapefruit size fruit, but generally will only set 1 to 2 fruit per plant. Citrus takes from 8 to 14 months for fruit to mature.
2. Humidity is needed or no fruit will set. This requirement can be met by using a humidifier, by placing the pot over a tray of pebbles covered with water, or by daily spraying.
3. At least 12 hours of supplemental light needed in the winter. The plant does well outdoors in the summer.
4. Citrus likes soil high in humus (requires a lot of water), but needs good drainage.
5. The plant likes a hot daytime temperature with a 20 degree temperature reduction at night. This fluctuation can be achieved by placing the plant near a cold window and keeping a 75 watt incandescent grow lamp on it during the day. Incandescent lights are a combination of inefficient light producers and inefficient space heaters. By turning both the light off and the home heat down at night, the plants' micro environment can easily descend

from 75 to 50 degrees.

6. Fertilize lightly. Be careful when using commercial fertilizers as citrus is sensitive to salt build up. Citrus requires the three main nutrients, phosphorus, potassium, and especially nitrogen. The plants are prone to iron and zinc deficiencies. Iron can be provided by placing a couple of nails in the soil.

7. Citrus attracts every insect known to houseplants, probably because exact cultural requirements are difficult to meet. Scale might be the worst pest. You can use your thumbnail or rubbing alcohol to remove temporarily, but nothing seems to work permanently.

In Anchorage, citrus trees may be purchased from Alaska Greenhouse. A 5 inch pot, with a plant in bloom, costs about \$15.

MORE INTERESTING BUT COMPLETELY USELESS TRIVIA (Submitted by Susan Brook, Gustavus)

The number and weight of seeds per 100 grams of fruit

Fruit	Mean number of seeds per 100g fruit	Mean weight of seeds per 100 g fruit
Gooseberries	600	1.22
Black Currants	4450	4.66
Bilberries	13200	2.31
Raspberries	4190	4.74
Blackberries	3180	6.75
Red currants	970	4.13

From: Jam Manufacture. George H. Rausch. 1950. Leonard Hill Ltd., London. pgs 127-128.

Reference: T. Macara. 1921. The composition of fruits as used for jam manufacture in Great Britain. Analyst. Jan. Vol. LVI

Variety Evaluation Sheet

Pale ink is more vivid than the clearest memory. This is why all gardeners should keep accurate gardening notes. The reasons for your successes could be pinpointed (to duplicate them in the future), as well as your failures (in order to avoid them).



Here at Territorial, your success in the garden is everything. It is *our* evaluation as to how well we are doing our job. (It would seem that most seed companies' guide to their success is their balance sheet.)

Often, when our gardening friends call or write us for help, they haven't taken the time to jot down events, dates and general observations during the growing season. This puts us into the role of Sherlock Holmes, a position which is difficult at best! This year, take a step toward being a better gardener. Photocopy this page and take some notes!

Seed Company: _____ Vegetable Class: _____

Variety Name: _____ Variety most similar to: _____

Date Transplanted: _____ Date Direct-Seeded: _____ Harvest Date: _____

Characteristics:

Color: _____ Size: _____

Shape: _____ Firmness: _____

Flavor: _____

Diseases or Insect Problems: _____

General Comments: _____

Would you grow this variety again? No Yes Retest next year? No Yes

PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS
VARIETY EVALUATION RECORD

All fruit growers should keep accurate gardening notes. The reasons for your success could be written down (to duplicate them in the future), as well as your failures (in order to avoid them).

Your success in growing edible fruit is everything. It is our evaluation as to how well we are doing our job.

Take the time to jot down the variety information, events, dates and general observations during the growing season. This year, take a step toward being a better gardener. Photocopy this page and take some notes!

Cultivar: _____ Parentage: _____

Date Purchases: _____ Location: _____

Date Transplanted: _____ Date Acquired: _____ Source: _____

CHARACTERISTICS:

Fruit Type: _____ Vigor: _____

Skin Color: _____ Size: _____

Shape: _____ Hardiness: _____

Flavor: _____ Maturity Date: _____

Texture: _____ Storage Life: _____

Soil or Plant Problems/Treatment: _____

Variety Description: _____

Yearly Harvest Dates: _____

Observations: _____

How would you rate the fruit on a scale of 1 to 10?: _____

Would you grow this variety again? [] No [] Yes

Retest next year? [] No [] Yes

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