

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

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President: **Erik Simpson**, 7225 Blackberry Street, Anchorage, AK 99502. Phone 243-3058

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

Secretary: **Pam Neiswanger Warner**, 7000 Viburnum Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507.

Treasurer: **Del Simpson**, 7225 Blackberry Street, Anchorage, AK 99502. Phone 243-3058

Editor: **Pam Neiswanger Warner**, 7000 Viburnum Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507.

Phone 344-9749

COME ONE! COME ALL!

September 19, 1991, 7:00 p.m.,
at the **Dimond Greenhouses**, 1050
West Dimond Boulevard, Anchorage.
The first meeting of the fall season and
our annual **Apple Tasting Event!** Jay
Dearborn will be our special guest and he
will be bringing several apple varieties
from the Valley for our tasting pleasure.
Everyone is encouraged to bring their
home-grown apples to share. We always
have new varieties show up, and we're all
looking forward to the successes of this
year's crop!

Last season we had some problems
with maintaining our meeting schedule,

but we are back on track now. Please
set aside the **third Thursday** of each
month, 7:00 p.m., for our meetings and
plan on attending--your participation is
crucial to the success of our organization.
We will be meeting at the **Dimond
Greenhouses** until further notice. So,
mark your calendars now for a year of
learning, fun, and fellowship!

GIFFARD--A PEAR FOR ALASKA

By Bob Purvis

Finding pear varieties suitable for
Alaska has proven far more difficult
than finding suitable apple varieties. My
perusal of U. P. Hedrick's The Pears of

New York in 1987 turned up only a few candidates, among them Beurre' Giffard, or simply "Giffard". This article was inspired by seeing the delighted reaction of two commercial pear growers, my wife, and several friends upon tasting a "Giffard" pear I brought back from Canada.

Nicolas Giffard, of Foussieres, France, discovered "Giffard" as a chance seedling near his home in 1825. The pear was named and introduced to the world in 1840. Hedrick states that while the trees are not extraordinary, they are at least up to the average pear in most characteristics; and they are well above average in both fruitfulness and hardiness. This article combines what I have read about "Giffard" with recent experience and observations.

In March 1988, I grafted a scion of "Giffard" from the Saanichton Plant Quarantine Station, Sidney, British Columbia, onto a one-year-old *Pyrus communis* rootstock. The young tree grew vigorously that summer. After enduring -34°F in the winter of 1988-89, it had a few inches of winterkill on the tips of both shoots. Although growing in the shade and neglected, the tree was still alive (barely) in April 1991 in west Anchorage. At the Agriculture Canada research station at Summerland, British Columbia, is a 10-14-year-old tree of "Giffard" in the pear variety block. After -18°F combined with strong winds,

the tree had no obvious winter injury and a good crop of fruit as of August 7, 1991.

Doctor Darrel Bienz, professor emeritus of horticulture at Washington State University, had some additional observations of the hardiness of "Giffard". He grew up on a ranch near Bear Lake, Idaho (elevation 6,300 feet). The growing season there was short, and the winters were severe. His parents had two pear trees, the only ones for miles around that could survive the winters and ripen fruit. Upon seeing and tasting a "Giffard" pear from Summerland, Darrel immediately recognized the fruit as identical to those he had grown up with. The growth habit and leaf shape were likewise the same, so it appears that both those trees were "Giffard". They survived the hot, dry summer of 1990 without irrigation, and likewise a record-breaking -44°F in late December 1990. This spring he successfully grafted two scions from the trees onto seedling pear. They took and are now growing well.

The shoots on "Giffard" tend to be vigorous and willowy. New growth is reddish-brown tinged with yellow, with a whitish "fuzz" on the bark near the ends. The leaves are narrow and relatively small, with no serrations on the margins; the color is green tinged with blue. A "Giffard" I grafted to an Old Home X Farmingdale 333 rootstock in April 1989 is now a 7-foot-high tree with a

nice scaffold of four branches, with wide crotch angles. Hedrick is silent on the subject of precocity, but the spreading growth habit and naturally wide crotch angles suggest that "Giffard" may fruit at a younger age than the typical pear. Harold B. Tukey, in his book The Pear and Its Culture (New York: Orange Judd Publishing Co., 1928), adds that "Giffard" is blight resistant. The flower buds produce showy, 1-1/4"-diameter blossoms, born singly on short spurs. Dr. Bienz's experience suggests that the cultivar may be partially self-fertile because both his parents' trees were identical, and there were no other pear trees for miles around.

At Bear Lake, the purported "Giffards" ripened between September 15 and 30. At Harrow, Ontario, "Giffard" is normally harvested August 6, versus August 30 for Clapp Favorite. At the Summerland station, there were pears here and there on the tree that separated easily from the spur and were excellent eating as of August 7, 1991. Clapp Favorite was not then ripe. Tukey states that "Giffard" ripens "several weeks before Clapp Favorite." Not far from Summerland, locally-grown "Yellow Transparent" apples were being sold commercially August 7. All available evidence suggests that "Giffard" should be ready to harvest in Anchorage by about September 10-20 on the average; in other words, a week after "Yellow Transparent" apples.

"Giffard" pears average 3" long and 2-3/8" in diameter and are broad, acute-pyriform in shape (not round). Fruit color when ripe is a dull yellowish-green overlaid with a dotted dull red to fiery orange-red blush on the sunward side. The flesh is high quality; juicy, sweet, aromatic, with a hint of wine in the flavor. Texture is crisp, tender, and fine-grained; the pears I ate had no grit cells. The fruit appears to be more bruise-resistant than Clapp Favorite, and the cores are very small. Fruit scientist Norman F. Childers, in his book The Pear, recommends "Giffard" as well-suited for fresh market roadside sales in eastern Canada. Furthermore, the fruit is reported to be excellent canned, unlike many other summer pears. The flesh begins to soften rather rapidly once the fruit is fully ripe, but if picked slightly immature, the fruit will keep better (at least one month) in refrigeration than most summer pears.

In terms of availability, "Giffard" is sold on semi-dwarfing rootstocks (OH X F.333) by the Sonoma Antique Apple Nursery (4395 Westside Road, Healdsburg, CA 95448) and by Southmeadow Fruit Gardens (Lakeside, MI 49116), which dwarfs its "Giffards" on Angers Quince. The latter also offers "Giffard" on seedling rootstocks. Whitney's Orchard and Nursery (please make contact through me) has eight healthy trees of "Giffard" on seedling pear (*Pyrus communis*) available for

1992.* Next to "Summercrisp", it now appears that of all European pears, "Giffard" may be one of the best adapted to Alaskan growing conditions south of the Alaska Range. As such, it is worthy of trial. People interested in trying "Giffard" should contact me at my home address (NW 248 Sunrise Drive, Pullman, WA 99163) or call (509) 334-2540 evenings and weekends.

*See Whitney's Orchard and Nursery list of available trees elsewhere in this newsletter.

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS- AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Those of us attempting to organize and manage our Alaska NAFEX Chapter are actively seeking participation from you—the members. Please consider how you can help shoulder the load and share in the rewards we all gain from an active participation in our organization. Opportunities abound—from small commitments to large. Can you make coffee or provide simple refreshments for meetings, help assemble the newsletter for mailing to the members, submit an article or recipe to the newsletter this month (or this year), help organize meetings, help arrange for meeting programs, or commit to a Board position for the year? Do you know someone

who might be interested in membership—and have you encouraged them to join? We've got such a strong and varied base of talent to call upon. Will you answer the call? We're always looking for backs to pat—we'd like it to be yours!

Do you eagerly await the mailman's arrival with your favorite fruit-growing newsletter, periodical, or magazine? Do you have a favorite book you consult for tips and techniques (elementary to advanced) of fruit production in the Great Land? Please drop your editor a postcard or note with subscription and/or publication information if you think other members would enjoy your favorites, and we will publish the information in upcoming editions of our newsletter. Thanks!

NURSERY LIST, 1991

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	APPLE VARIETY	ROOT-STOCK	HEIGHT (in feet)	# OF TREES	# OF MISSES	APPLE VARIETY	RTSTK	HEIGHT (in ft)	#trees	#misses
						Summerred	RAN	3'	1	
3	Advance	ANT	2'	1	1	Trailman	RAN	3.5, 3, 2.5, 3, 3	5	2
4	Chinese Golden	ANT	2.5'	1		Vista Bella	RAN	1.5, 1, 1, 1	4	0
5	Early	RAN	1, 1, 1.5, 1.3	4	0	Westland	RAN	1.5, 1.5, 1, 1.5	4	1
6	Dawn	RAN	3' (mother tree)	1		Yellow Jay	RAN	3'	1	
7	Gala	EMLA7	3'	1					142	
8	Heuer #12	RAN	2.5, 3, 3, 2, 2, 3	6		PEAR	ROOT-	HEIGHT (in ft)	# OF	# OF
9	Julfred	RAN	2, 1	2		VARIETY	STOCK		TREES	MISSES
10	"	ANT	2.5, 1	2	0	Giffard	PC	2, 1.75, 2, 1.75	8	4
11	Mantet	ANT	1'	1		"	"	1.75, 2.2, 2, 2.5		
12	"	"	1, 1.5, 1.5, 1, 1.5	5		Hudar	PC	3, 3	2	
13	Noran	EMLA7	5'	1		Nova	PC	3, 3, 3, 3, 3	5	
14	Noroue	RAN	1.5, 1.5, 1.5, 2, 2	6	0	Summercrisp	USS	2.5, 2.5, 2, 1.5	13	2
15	"	"	1.75'			"	"	2, 2.5, 2, 4, 2.8		
16	"	ANT	1.5, 1.5, 2, 3	3	0	"	"	3, 2, 3, 2.5		
17	"	EMLA7	1.3'	1		Ure	USS	2.5, 1.3, 1.5	9	0
18	Norda	RAN	2.5, 1	2		"	"	1.5, 2.8, 2.5		
19	"	EMLA7	3'	1		"	"	1.5, 1.5, 2.5		
20	Noret	ANT			2	APRICOT			37	
21	"	RAN	3, 1.5, 2, 2, 1, 2	6	5	VARIETY				
22	"	EMLA7	0.2'	1		Harcot	MANCH		4	
23	Norhey	RAN	1.5, 1.5, 1.8, 1.8	2	3	Harglow	MANCH		4	
24	Norland	ANT	2, 1.5, 1, 1.5, 2	5	1	Sunrise	MANCH		1	
	"	"	2.5, 1.5, 2.5, 3.5	4		Westcot	MANCH		7	
26	"	"	3.5, 4	2					15	
27	"	RAN	3, 0, 1	2		CHERRY				
28	"	PRU	2.5'	1		VARIETY				
29	"	EMLA7	2.5'	1		Homer Bing	GM-61	1.3'	1	3
30	Norson	ANT	1.5, 1.3, 1.3, 1.3	4	0	Lapins (swt)	GM-61			1
31	"	RAN	1.5, 2, 2, 1.5, 2, 3	5	3	Salm (swt)	GM-61	2'	1	3
32	NY 394	RAN	2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2	4	0	Del Nord (tart)	"	1'	1	3
33	Oriole	RAN	1, 1.5, 1.5, 3, 2	7	3	Mesabi (tart)	"	1.8, 3	2	2
34	"	"	1.5, 2						5	
35	"	PRU	3, 1.8	2		PLUM				
36	Parkland	RAN	1, 2, 2, 2.5, 2.5	8	0	VARIETY				
37	"	"	1.5, 2, 3, 3			Alderman	PA			1
38	"	ANT	1.5, 1, 1, 1.5, 0.6	5	0	Assiniboine	PA	1, plus 1.5-3'	10	
39	"	PRU	1.5'	1		Brookgold	PA	3, 2, 3, 2.5	aphid	3
40	Parsons Arom.	EMLA7	3, 3, 2.5, 1.5, 2	4		Brookred	PA	3, 2.5	2	1
41	Patterson	ANT	1, 3, 2, 1, 1, 3	5	0	Bounty	PA	2' aphid	1	2
42	Patterson	RAN	2.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3	11	0	Norther	PA	2.5' aphid, 3	2	1
43	"	"	2, 2, 2, 2, 2.5, 1.5			Opal	Murob	3, 3, 2.5	3	3
44	"	EMLA7	2.5'	1		Pembina	PA	3'	1	6
45	Rescue	RAN	2, 2.5, 1.3, 1.5	4	2	Ptitsin #5	PA	1.5' aphid, 1.5	1	
46	"	BAC	1.5'	1		Ptitsin #9	PA	3, 2, 3, 4, 4, 2	6	2
47	Rods Mantet	ANT	3'	1		Superior	PA		2'	1
48	State Fair	RAN	2, 0.75, 2	2	0	Toka	PA			
									30	
50										
51										
52										
53										
54										