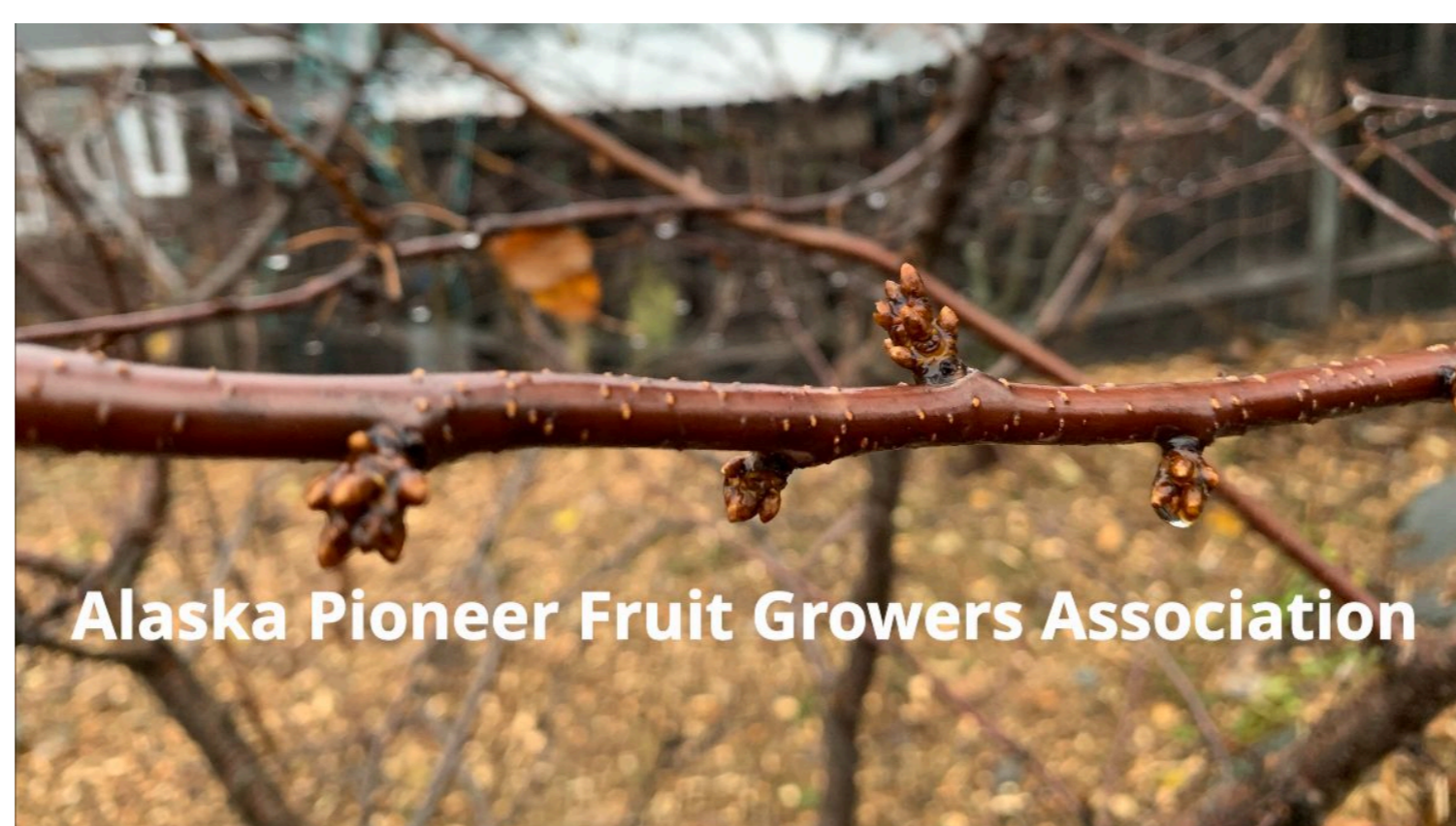


[View this email in your browser](#)



Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

Hello Fruit Growers!

It is hard to believe it is November already. It has been blustery in Southcentral Alaska, with a warm air flow out of the South. Those on the wrong side of the mountains have experienced record amounts of rain. This past weekend the 3-day rain total records were shattered by Girdwood with over 14” of rain and over 20” of rain at the Portage Visitors Center. The good news is that the winds have blown off most of the remaining leaves on the fruit trees.

If you enjoyed last winter, then buckle up for a repeat. There is a good chance that we are entering into a second winter with a La Niña weather pattern. Caused by the movement of cooler waters in the central Pacific, the change in water temperature displaces the jet stream’s normal flow over Alaska, generating a colder winter with more snow. Generally, this weather pattern lasts from December until April. For a more detailed explanation on [La Niña](#), just click the link.

Often, La Niña winters are a bit colder, but with more consistently cool temperatures and good snow cover. The lack of major Chinooks or warming events during a La Niña winter keeps the plants dormant and snow cover provides insulation to the ground. This is beneficial to our fruit trees and plants . . . at least until the weather pattern ends in the spring.

Next spring’s flower buds have already formed on the trees. If you are new to fruit growing, I encourage you to go out and carefully look at your trees while they are dormant. Can you tell which buds are fruit buds? Generally, fruit buds will be larger than vegetative buds. I enjoy finding and looking at the potential flower buds, although I know weather events can still conspire against them.

At the top is a photo of the fruit spurs on an Evans (Bali) cherry. Below is a photo of a branch of Altiaski Sweet crabapple. From left to right, you will see second year wood with three flower buds, followed by this year’s growth with only vegetative buds. Do you see the ring or collar that separates this past year’s growth from the previous year’s growth? In March, if I wanted to harvest scion wood on this branch for grafting, I would take this past year’s growth to the right of the growth ring.



If you aren’t ready to imagine the future growing season yet, then maybe you need to talk about the growing season we just finished! On Thursday, November 11, at 7:00 pm, please join us for our annual membership meeting. We will meet on Zoom, and after we conclude our required business, there will be a chance to briefly share your wisdom and experience from the past growing season. For me, I always enjoy hearing from the more experienced growers. It is always helpful to hear what they observed and learned.

But, before that, we have some business to attend to. We need to approve new terms for some board members, present a couple of small reports, and approve some minor amendments to the bylaws. Our growing membership of around 270 members is a sign of the interest in growing fruit and the importance of the club in helping folks do that. We ask little of our members except for once a year in November, and that is to show up (Zoom in) for the annual meeting. If we don’t meet the minimum numbers for quorums, then the housekeeping chores that keep the club humming along don’t get done.

In preparation for the Annual Membership Meeting, the following are links to the proposed [agenda](#), our last membership meeting [minutes](#), the proposed [amendments to the bylaws](#), and the complete [Zoom invitation](#). I will also email a reminder notice with the [Zoom link](#) next Thursday morning. Please put this meeting onto your calendar and maybe set an alarm.

We will hold a Board of Directors planning meeting the following week on Thursday, October 18 at 7:00 pm to select this year’s officers and to decide who will do what. To that end, I have attached the [Zoom link](#), a proposed [agenda](#), [minutes](#) from the last board meeting, and a [list of duties](#) for members of the board to consider undertaking. All board meetings are open to the membership.

In early September, I sent the membership an article on the European plum “Northern Blue” by APFGA Co-Founder Bob Purvis. The response was very positive and I received a number of requests to ask Bob to submit an article on apricots. Bob chairs the Apricot Interest Group for the [North American Fruit Explorers](#) (NAFEX). Since a number of members have begun experimenting with trying to grow apricots, this seemed like a great idea. Bob graciously found time to meet my request. You can click the link for his excellent article, [Apricots for Alaska – Problems and Possibilities](#).

Finally, last February your Board of Directors decided to purchase Daniel Busey’s Seven Volume “[Illustrated History of Apples in the United States and Canada](#)” to donate to the UAA/APU Consortium Library. Although, not directly relevant to many cultivars that are grown in Alaska, this collection is a major research tool which may have importance in tracing an apple’s lineage as the price of DNA testing declines in the future. We thought it was important to secure this resource before it went out of print. Should you wish to view these texts, you can click the link for the Consortium Library [catalog and call number information](#).

All the best,

Mark Wolbers
President, APFGA