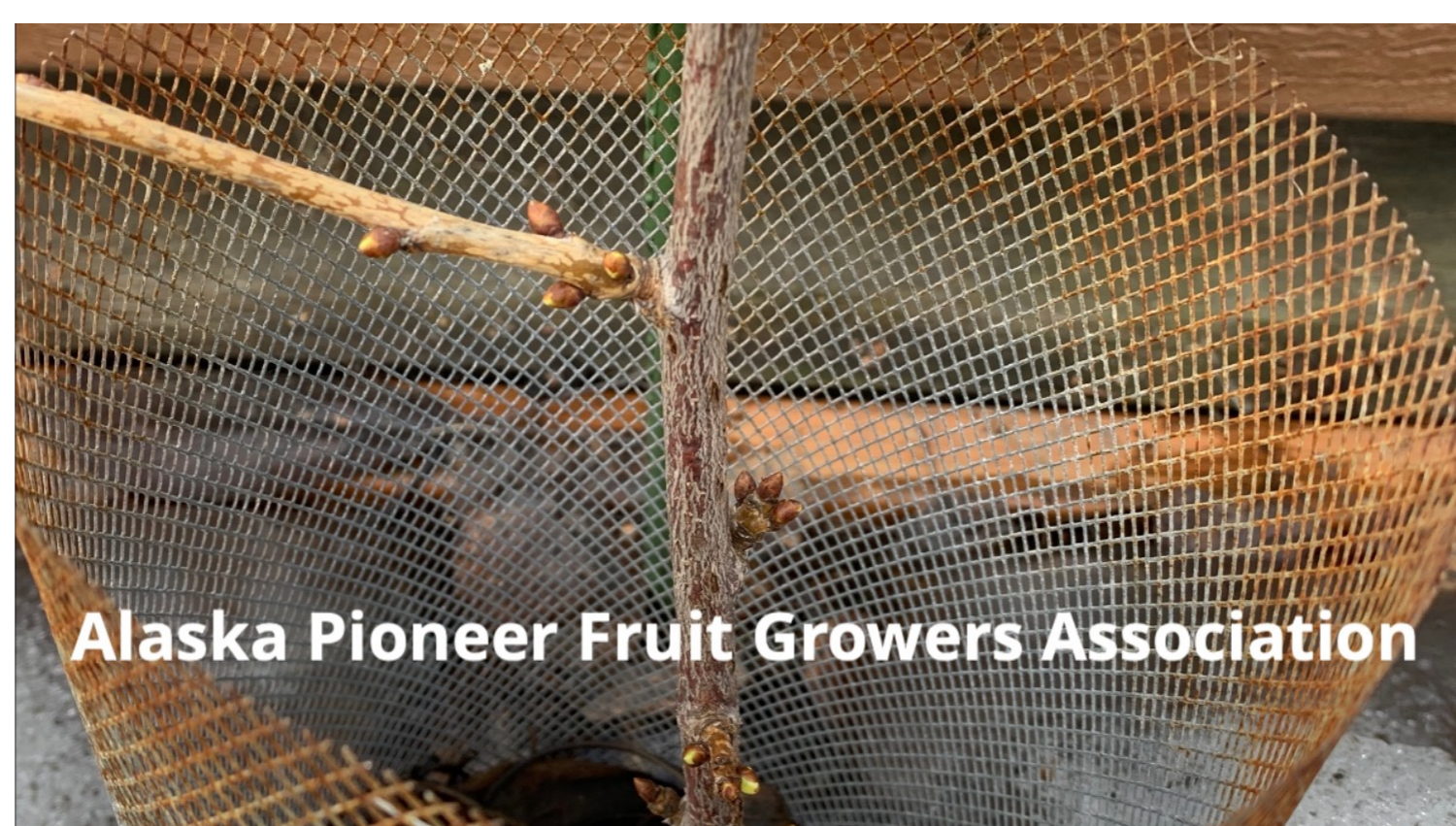


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Hello Fruit Growers!

We are well on our way to seeing the grass again in a couple of weeks here in Southcentral Alaska! The picture above is of a Gold cherry that I grafted onto an Evans Rootstock. This sweet cherry variety is very hardy and surprisingly precocious. It flowered the first year after it was grafted and was left in a pot above ground over the winter! We planted it last August and it was buried under snow from November 11, until just before the photo (above) was taken on April 1. As you can see, it emerged with green tips on some of buds and is ready for business. The chill unit requirement must be quite low to have been met prior to being packed in snow all winter.

Speaking of chill requirements, here is the link if you missed my March presentation, "[From Bud to Fruit](#)" on bud hardiness and growing degree days. In my presentation, I mentioned the importance of pruning for light penetration. If you would like to learn more about this, I encourage you to read the recent Michigan State University publication titled "[Light Concepts for Apple Orchards](#)" by Anna Wallis.

I am sad to report that Michael Phillips, author of "The Holistic Orchard" and "The Apple Grower" died unexpectedly last month of a heart attack while in his orchard. Michael was an early proponent of organic methods for growing fruit and the related concepts of soil health, importance of native pollinators, and understory plantings with beneficial plants. He was an effective advocate and educator for home orchardists.

For Earth Day this year (Friday, April 22), the Anchorage Museum is hosting a gardening fair at the Seed Lab from 4-8 pm. The Seed Lab is across the street from the Museum at 111 W 6th Ave (corner of 6th and A street in the building covered with murals) and they would love to have some volunteers to represent APFGA and answer basic questions about growing fruit trees. Click the link if you are [willing to volunteer](#).



After watching APFGA Past President Dan Elliot teach his March 27th workshop on pruning at the Mid-Valley Greenhouses (photo above), I ran into another APFGA Past President, Kevin Irwin. I was reminded about the importance of the club having a presence at events like the Museum's Earth Day gardening fair. It was only after talking with Kevin at a spring gardening fair at the old Sears Mall about 15 years ago, that I learned about, and joined APFGA. That's either an inspirational reason to volunteer for the museum event or a cautionary tale! (hmmmm?)

If you missed the pruning workshops last month, bring your pruners and join me for one of two outdoor workshops on Saturday, April 16. The first will be in the morning at the [Boyer's Orchard](#) at 11:00 am. The second, will be in the afternoon at the [Government Hill Commons](#) orchard at 2:00 pm. The Friends of Boyer's Orchard have successfully gained their Federal non-profit status, and will be charging for the pruning event as they begin the task of raising money to purchase the property. You can email [Yael Hickok](#) for more information on the event and ways to support their efforts. The workshop at the Government Hill Commons is free.

If you would like to learn more about the reasons I stress the use of thinning cuts versus heading cuts in pruning, please see the article "[Managing Tree Height and Apical Dominance](#)" also by Anna Wallis. She gives a concise explanation of how the plant hormone auxin works and how thinning and heading cuts impact canopy development.

For folks in Anchorage, Solid Waste Service's [Curbside Composting Program](#) is open for registration! The program runs May through October for residents in SWS service territory in Anchorage. Call (907)343-6250 today to register or to find out if you are a SWS customer. Food scrap drop off sites will be available at the Central Transfer Station and the Anchorage Regional Landfill. However, free finished compost will not be available this year.

Our first public grafting workshop since the start of the pandemic will be on Saturday, April 23 in the All-Purpose Room at Begich Middle School in East Anchorage. A more detailed email with the final cost of the rootstock will be sent the week of the workshop. The schedule will be as follows:

11 am – Volunteers arrive and set up
 11:30 am – Open for members
 (bring scion wood, pick up rootstock, get grafting instruction)
 1:00 pm – Open to the public
 2:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Cleanup and out of the building

We can use up to two more grafting instructors. If you are willing, please email [Doug Damberg](#).

For those who did not pre-order rootstock last fall, we have a limited amount of baccata apple rootstock for sale. Consequently, we will be limiting on-site sales to 2 apple rootstock per person. If you would like more, you will need to wait until the end of the workshop to see what is still available.

We do have a small quantity of plum, apricot and pear rootstock for sale that wasn't pre-sold that members can reserve at this time for pick-up at the grafting workshop. [Email me](#) if you are interested in purchasing any of the following:

Prunus Americana (plum) - 8 left
 Manchurian Apricot – 18 left
 Harbin Pear – 12 left

They will be sold on a "first to email" basis.

And lastly, your APFGA Board of Directors will be meeting by Zoom on Thursday, April 14, 2022, at 7:00 pm. Members are invited to sit in on the meeting. You can watch us doing business by clicking the [meeting link](#), or you can click the following link for the [full invitation](#). In addition, here are the links to the [proposed agenda](#), and [March 24 minutes](#).

All the best,

Mark Wolbers
 President, APFGA