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Hello Fruit Growers!

First of all, I want to thank Paul Lariviere for a wonderful tour of the orchard at the Government Hill Commons on July 31. We had a great turnout on what was a beautiful day and I think we all learned a lot. I am always impressed by the many ways Paul manipulates the micro climate for his fruit. This includes the sides of buildings, to wind breaks, and everything in between. Paul is keenly aware that what plants need is warmth. The more heat units, the more things you can grow. And he's growing a lot!

I also appreciate everyone responding and putting in their request for rootstock for next spring. If you still need to submit your [rootstock request](#), just click the link. For those of our 250 members new to APFGA, we order rootstock that we know will prosper in our unique growing environment and then graft the varieties of trees that we want. We show people how to do this at the grafting workshop in April when our rootstock arrives. So, if you have a vision for some fruit trees in your yard or a small orchard, this is how you can make it a reality.

My newsletter discussion on apricot rootstocks, prompted by the observations and suggestions of Bob Purvis, led to some emails from our members. Debbie Hinchey has ten seedlings from a 20-year-old Manchurian Apricot near Valley of the Moon Park in Anchorage. She is willing to sell them for use as rootstock. Just [email Debbie](#) if interested. And Judith James in Homer, cut down a 6-year-old Adirondack Gold Apricot that flowered but never fruited. It is sending up vigorous shoots if anyone wants to dig one up. You can [email Judith](#) if you are interested.

Here in Southcentral Alaska, raspberries and saskatoons are coming on and blueberries are starting to color. The black currants have turned fittingly black, and the haskaps are being picked and are continuing to ripen. To announce this moment in August we were treated to a record rainfall of over 2" this week. The rains always seem to arrive just in time to cause cracking problems for the sweet cherries and some of the pie cherries like Carmine Jewel. Our Carmine Jewel blossomed late. That, combined with the cool summer, has delayed ripening and although red, they haven't begun turning dark yet. Consequently, only a few have cracked so far, but the rains are just getting started! If you grow cherries, keep an eye on them during periods of wet weather. Harvest the cracked cherries immediately or lose them to mold and insects.

Every year as I pick our red, yellow and purple raspberries my routine is to sort out the best formed berries for fresh eating and put the seconds into the freezer right away before they mold. At the end of the season, I simply take my collection of frozen raspberries out of the freezer and put them in a colander and let them thaw and juice. I put the juice into 8oz water bottles which I freeze and can later add to a quart of defrosted apple cider for a raspberry-apple drink. The raspberry seconds can also be processed for jam/jelly or fruit leather if desired. But, what I do is chicken feed. Click the link if you want to see how the pros [harvest and process raspberries!](#)

I also wanted to remind everyone that August in Alaska is a good time of the year to submit leaf samples for analysis if you have any concerns. Leaf tissue analysis shows what nutrients the plant is actually able to uptake and can illuminate any nutrient or micro-nutrient deficiencies. Click the link for more information on [Leaf Tissue Analysis](#).

Generally, I recommend that one do a soil test in conjunction with a leaf tissue test. This way you can compare the results between what is in your soil with what your plants are metabolizing. Sometimes the soil test can show that a nutrient is available, but the leaf tissue test shows a deficiency. This can be from an imbalance of nutrients in the soil. But without the soil test, you might think you need to add more of something rather than addressing the real underlying problem. You can find a list of testing labs on the [APFGA website](#). Click on the "Research" tab and scroll down and click on "Educational Videos and Publications." Go down the page a bit and you will see a section on "Soil Testing and Care."

Now for some news. I received an email on July 28 from the Eagle River Mile 5.2 Nursery that their delayed shipment of Canadian plants had finally arrived. If you are looking for Romance series cherries, haskaps, currants, or tree fruit, you might stop by to see what goodies were in the truck. I also received a bounty notice on European Bird Cherry and Canada Red Chokecherry from the Alaska DNR Community Forestry Program. Unfortunately, it only applies to those living in the Anchorage municipal area. However, it offers \$100 to MOA homeowners to remove and replace a Prunus Padus, or Prunus Virginiana should they have them in their yard. Click the link for more information on the [\\$100 replacement offer](#).

Finally, on Saturday, August 21, Dan and Nancy Moore have graciously invited the club to their Fire Apple Orchard in Big Lake for lunch and a tour. The event starts at noon with a barbecue. They will supply drinks and brats. Please bring side dishes and desserts. The tour will start after lunch. You are welcome to come early and wander around. There are many different varieties of grafted trees in their nursery for those looking for something different with some varieties coming from the Clair Lammers orchard in Fairbanks. Their address is: 4214 S. Andrea Dr., Wasilla. Phone: 907-373-6317. Click the links for an old fashion [map](#) and APFGA [Orchard Tour Guidelines](#).

If you have never visited Fire Apple Orchard, you owe it to yourself to come check it out. Hope to see you there!

Best wishes,

Mark Wolbers
President, APFGA