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Hello Fruit Growers!

It occurred to me today that an APFGA member's effort to grow fruit results in much more than just good eating. Growing your own fruit can really improve your family's diet. Daily, one can eat blueberries, haskaps, (Aurora in photo above) or cherries, and have apple, cherry or raspberry juice to drink throughout the year. Grow the right varieties and you can have fresh apples to snack on well into February and dried, frozen or canned apples all year. I'm not sure we would consume as much fruit if it were not so readily available at home.

This is not to say that there isn't great fruit produced commercially. What the farmers in America produce is pretty awesome. But what a luxury to still have our own fresh Simonet and Prairie Magic apples from the fall in the refrigerator. The Prairie Magic apples are holding up well, while the Simonet apples are now approaching the end of their storage potential. The apples would store even longer if they had ripened in a fall with a bit of sun and not just rain!

To help everyone grow more and better fruit, our third winter program (Thursday, February 9, at 7:00 pm Alaska time) will feature Jim & Bernis Ingvaldson from [Honeyberry USA](#). As you might suspect, the program will be all about honeyberries! To participate and have your questions answered, just click the link at 7:00 pm to [join the Zoom program](#). If needed, here is also the link to the complete [Zoom invite](#).

The recording of our January program on winemaking with Bob Thaden is [on our website](#) if you missed it. I have already put into practice some of the tips he offered. It never occurred to me to back-sweeten a wine right before I was going to serve it! I have almost finished the book he recommended by Jon Iverson titled, [Home Winemaking Step by Step](#). Although oriented towards working with grapes, the principals also apply to fruit wines and are well explained.

If you have ever wanted to grow some fruit indoors during the winter, member Wigi Tozzi has put together a wonderful article on [grafting citrus](#) along with a [list of resources](#). Citrus is not out of the question, especially with the availability of inexpensive lighting systems that many members already own. My wife and I have a lemon on Flying Dragon rootstock purchased last summer that looks pretty sad, and a Calamansi orange that seems bullet-proof even without supplemental light. The fragrance is delightful when they are in bloom! Anyways, thank you Wigi for sharing your knowledge. If you have any questions on citrus, please [email Wigi](#).

The University of Minnesota, in conjunction with other upper Midwest extension services, has issued an invitation to join them for a variety of spring webinars on apple and high tunnel berry production. The sessions are directed towards commercial growers just getting into apples or considering high tunnel berry production in the upper Midwest. Although not always directly applicable to Alaska, I am sure there will be lots of information and ideas that can be used or considered. To see the session descriptions and to register for the free webinars, just click the link for the [2023 Cold Climate Fruit Webinar Series](#).

Cora 'Killian' Felt over at the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation wanted to reach out to APFGA members in the interior. She runs the agriculture side of things there, as well as the Golden Heart Program. Her job is to service all of the interior growers from Delta to Nenana, North Pole, Ester, and anyone else in the interior. Her goal is to help service the community by getting more agriculture grown in interior Alaska. Please email her at cfelt@investfairbanks.com with any comments or questions, whether looking for plants, thinking about starting up a farm/business, or finding connections, etc. You can also call her at 907-799-4415.

Member Randy Arduser, who operates the Clark Orchard (Anchorage) along with his wife Sonja, sent me a link to a pruning video by [Orin Martin](#), Manager of the Chadwick Garden at UC Santa Cruz. I enjoyed the video so much that I watched three more by Mr. Martin! Although dormant pruning of our fruit trees doesn't occur until late March or early April, I thought I would pass along the links. The first video explains the basics of pruning and is titled, [Winter Pruning](#). The second, titled [Pruning Deciduous Fruit Trees](#), does a great job of explaining the reasoning behind pruning young trees to establish shape and scaffolds. Whether or not you are new to pruning, I think you will appreciate these videos. The videos are a good primer for next month's annual pruning workshop at Boyer's Greenhouse (Anchorage) to be held on Saturday, March 18, at 1:30 pm. There, members can get some pruning instruction and put it to use pruning the fruit trees in the greenhouse.

There will be an APFGA Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, February 16, at 7:00 pm. You are welcome to click the link at the appropriate date and time to [join the meeting](#) on Zoom. Here are the links to the [minutes](#) from the last meeting and the [proposed agenda](#).

Finally, should you have an annual APFGA membership, please remember to renew it for 2023. You can do this quickly online on the [APFGA website](#). The membership cycle is from January to December. If you would like to avoid the hassle of renewing annually, you might consider a lifetime membership.

Hope to see you on Zoom for our February program on Honeyberries!

All the best,

Mark Wolbers
President, APFGA

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