

WESTERN CASCADE FRUIT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SPRING 1992

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The proposed dues increase to fifteen dollars per year was rescinded by a vote of the Board at its meeting on March 7. The objections to the increase included that at least one of the chapters wanted half of the increase to be allocated to the chapter for its own donations to fruit-culture related projects. Other members felt that in these times of financial instability many of our members on retirement incomes would be unfairly burdened. The five dollars increased allocation to fruit research will now be a member option, with a line on the membership form listing this choice.

Anticipated increases in the operating costs of the Society are also an issue and include Newsletter production and mailing expenses, honoraria for speakers, officers' telephone and "office" expenses, paying for a typist for transcription of meeting minutes, and Board meeting room rental. I expect that a dues increase to consider such expenses will be considered within the year.

We watch with great interest the progress in organizing the Friends of Western Washington Fruit Research. They plan to set up a new foundation to which contributors such as WCFS will send donations dedicated for fruit research at the Mount Vernon Research Station. WCFS members Chuck Parkman and Lyle Knudson have volunteered to serve as FWWFR directors.

FALL ORCHARD TOURS

The society will use the Fall Orchard Tours sponsored by the chapters as its Fall Orchard Tour. Chapters that would welcome other members to their tours should schedule their Orchard Tours early so the Summer Newsletter can publish their dates.

CORVALLIS ORCHARD TOUR

The slide show and talk at the Spring Meeting by Harry Lagerstedt about peaches and filberts and describing his orchard near Corvallis stimulated much enthusiasm. The suggestion for a tour to Corvallis in August to see his orchard, Dr. Stebbins experimental orchard, and the germ-plasm preservation facility elicited about twenty interested audience members. The drive from Seattle is about five hours. Two nights in Corvallis are anticipated. We might schedule events on arrival and departure days. **The dates will probably be in mid-August.** Phone (206) 364-0161 for more information and to express your interest.

SUMMER NEWSLETTER DATES

Please have your input to the editor for the Summer Newsletter by Monday, June 15. The newsletter will be mailed by July 3. Thank you very much.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

I want to thank those of you who have taken the time to help at our "Newsletter Parties" for the last three bulletins. Deep gratitude must be expressed to Dick and Marilyn Tilbury, Paul and Reda Vanderhoek, Gene and Nancy Lewis, Ed and Barbara Lewis, Paul Donaldson, Lyle Knudson, Lyn Schultz and Joe Gerber.

We are continuing some of the more "controversial" aspects of our recent newsletters with an article from "Science" magazine concerning the possible unreliability of much of the recent testing for carcinogens. Please feel free to respond to this article with letters to the editor.

Note that this bulletin contains some information that would "normally" apply to fruit culture later in the year. I have found that the Fall Newsletter is pretty much dedicated to Fall Fruit Show information, so I am giving you some information "early".

Please note a change in the primary font used in the bulletin. It is now a Microsoft "True-Type" sans-serif font called Arial. I hope that it will be easier to read than the previous font, which was like this, and is called Times-Roman.

Letters to the editor are welcome on any subject. What would you like to see in our newsletter? Chances are that you are not alone.

MAY BOARD MEETING

The next WCFS Board Meeting will be on Saturday, May 23, from 10am until noon at the Swasey Branch of the Tacoma Library, 7001 6th Avenue, Tacoma. To get there, take the Jackson St Exit off of highway 16 - the first exit east of the Narrows Bridge. Proceed south two blocks to 6th avenue and then east several blocks to the library. The agenda will focus on Fall Fruit Show plans; also the special tour to Corvallis to visit the Harry Lagerstedt's Peach and Filbert Orchard and other fruit-growing attractions in the area.

Board Meetings are always open to WCFS members (to all, according to the by-laws). Come with suggestions, ideas, comments, criticisms, kudos, etc. Since there is a small possibility that the time and place will be adjusted, phone Seattle on (206) 364-0161 for up-to-date information if you are not in the Board Meeting news loop.

HELP WANTED - TRANSCRIBER FOR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

We are seeking a volunteer who can use (or can learn to use) an IBM compatible computer to transcribe (now called "word-processing") tapes of Board meeting minutes. The Society will provide a donated IBM computer, monitor, daisy-wheel printer, modem and personal instructions by one of our secretaries. The volunteer can also use the equipment for their own work over the period that they serve as WCFS transcriber. The volunteer need not attend the Board Meetings, but would certainly be welcome. Phone Joe Zeppa in Seattle, at (206) 524-8943 for more information or to volunteer.

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

The annual spring meeting of WCFS, held at the Snohomish County Extension Center was well attended. The meeting began with President Paul Donaldson stressing the "non-profit" philosophy of our organization and the focus of our income going toward fruit research. Paul noted the recent tragic cuts in Washington State University funding for the Mt. Vernon Research Station and other facilities.

WCFS Secretary, Dick Tilbury, noted that the IRS has granted tax-exempt status to all WCFS chapters.

Fall fruit show expenses were around \$2,000, against an income of \$3,500. Your Board of Directors recently approved donations of \$1500 for fruit research at Mt. Vernon, and \$500 for Oregon State University.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

For many years, the Western Cascade Fruit Society has had the option to recognize outstanding contributors to the organization with "Life" memberships. Many of the pioneers in our organization have already been honored. At our 1992 Spring Meeting, Paul Donaldson was nominated and the husbandwife team of Dick and Marilyn Tilbury were nominated. This honor was bestowed on them by a unanimous voice vote from the floor.

We are very proud of these people and their selfless donation of time and energy to the betterment of fruit growing west of the Cascades.

WE HAVE THE ANSWER

What is the most neglected cultural aspect of dwarf fruit tree culture in Western Washington?

Competition with sod/other garden neighbors. All too often one plants a dwarf tree and allows the sod to grow up around it (neatly mowed of course) or plants invasive neighbors in the root area. This competition is acceptable for the older "standard" rootstocks, but the newer dwarf varieties have fibrous roots that stay close to the surface. Allowing a minimum of an eighteen inch circle clear of any competition around each dwarf tree will help make certain that they will receive the water and nutrients you apply.

What is the most damaging neglected apple disease in Western Washington?

Apple anthracnose wins hands down. It's like dandruff or bad breath. Nobody mentions it. This fungus disease has been recognized since the turn of the century as a killer of small trees and a maimer of large trees in moist Western Washington. Look for sunken bark during times of fast growth. The canker is usually elongated and boat shaped. Last season's canker will have "banjo strings" longitudinally through the sunken area. Control (not full protection) is obtained by the proper application of a copper spray at leaf fall. This disease is not going to go away, and is a primary reason for the failure of small trees planted within older orchards. The older trees can have the disease and may only show it through a few shoots dying back. The younger trees are easily girdled and die. Some apple varieties are much much more susceptible than others.

Dave Battey - Snoqualmie

ARE YOUR WCFS DUES DUE?

Check the upper right-hand corner of your WCFS Newsletter mailing label. If you find a big mean green reminder label on your bulletin or if the month and year on the mailing label are past, you are in danger of being dropped from our mailing list. If the date is up to three months in the future, you have one more newsletter coming. Please remit dues to Charles Parkman, P. O. Box 128, Carlsborg, WA 98324 or to your chapter treasurer.

CHAPTER STATUS REPORTS

PIPER ORCHARD CHAPTER

1992 officers are: President, Ron Schaevitz; Vice-president, Ed Lewis; Secretary-Treasurer, Paul Donaldson. Board members are Dave Nabinger, Ed Lewis, Sally Musseter, Joe Gerber, Gil Schieber, and Ozzie Moe. Sally Musseter reports that as a University of Washington

faculty member she has been appointed to the UofW advisory committee for the Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH). She may be a logical liaison between WCFS and CUH.

PENINSULA (Kitsap) FRUIT CLUB

1992 officers are: President, Ray Mathisen; Vice-president, Pat Rothenberg; Treasurer, Carol O'Connor; Secretary, Paul Page.

SEATTLE CHAPTER (Seattle Tree Fruit Society)

Met April 11 at the Research Center in Puyallup where Dr. Ralph Byther lectured on canker diseases of fruit trees. We were shown two test plots of newer varieties that have been inoculated with European apple canker and anthracnose. It was observed that some varieties were more susceptible. Dr. Byther will be writing a report of his research soon.

TAHOMA CHAPTER

New officers are: President, Al Sater (206) 848-4233; Secretary, Bob Minich (206) 845-5167; Treasurer, Adam Connally (206) 840-4233. The chapter meets the first Wednesday of each month at the United Methodist Church, 1919 Pioneer, Puyallup, WA. This chapter is currently serving members with addresses from Puyallup, Tacoma, Graham, Maple Valley, Spanaway, Sumner, Roy, Eatonville, Orting, Yelm, and Randle.

ARTICLE IN 'SCIENCE' THROWS LIGHT ON DIET AND CANCER

Dr. Robert Bordeau has shared with us an article from the January 1992 magazine "Science", concerning the impact of diet on cancer in both humans and rodents. At issue is whether or not the American public has been forced to over-react to fears of cancer causing agents in the environment by erroneous test results. If so, this would certainly effect the availability of useful pesticides that have been "banned" by such testing.

The article states that new evidence is mounting that is being ignored by Congress and the Environmental Protection Agency. Starting with the common knowledge that cigarette smoking, alcohol and some ordinary foods are associated with "almost all excess cancer", the author notes that excessive amounts of fats are known causative agents for specific cancers among the Western populations that derive 40-50% of their calories from fats. On the other hand, Japanese, with only 15% of their calories from fat have little incidence of Western cancers but may suffer elevated incidence of stomach cancer from ingesting too much salt.

The author, Philip H. Abelson, notes that the effect of diet on the length of life and incidence of cancer in rodents has long been known. Inbred strains of rodents fed as much as they wish to eat are found to have shorter lives and more tumors than those on a restricted diet. Tumors in rodents fed as much as they want usually exceed those on a restricted diet by a factor of three or more. The bottom line is that excess fat and calories promote cancer in both humans and rodents.

Most carcinogen testing requires that rodents be fed as much food as they wish. The food is laced with the agent being tested for cancerous effects. According to the author, the results of such tests are "clouded" by the fact that the excess food, by itself, is a known carcinogen such that in each test, two possible carcinogens are being administered, the food and the agent under test.

Another issue is the use of highly inbred strains of rodents for cancer tests. It has been assumed that, over time, highly reproducible results are obtainable by use of the same "strain". However, new evidence points to genetic drift in supposedly stable inbred strains. One type of

rat strain, Sprague-Dewey, once normally weighed 700 grams each. They now average about 1000 grams. Same with male 'Fischer 344' rats who have increased about 25% in weight. An increase in body weight, by itself, increases the incidence of tumors. Some of the special test strains are now obviously obese. Mr. Abelson notes that the lifetime expectations of one of these fatter rat strains (B6C3F1 males) developing some form of neoplasm has risen from 10 to 80 percent.

He further argues that inbred strains of rodents often develop spontaneous tumors in organs where cancer is not typical in humans. One test rodent type has an incidence of liver tumors of between 17.8% to 46.9%, yet the human death rate from liver cancer is .005%. Should this rats liver tumors "count" against an agent being tested?

These concerns raise questions about the validity of the mass of Federal regulations that use inbred strains of rodents that are fed as much as they like in carcinogen experiments. The article finishes with this quote. "Sooner or later Congress must recognize a new flood of scientific information that renders suspect the Delaney clause and procedures for determining carcinogenicity of substances."

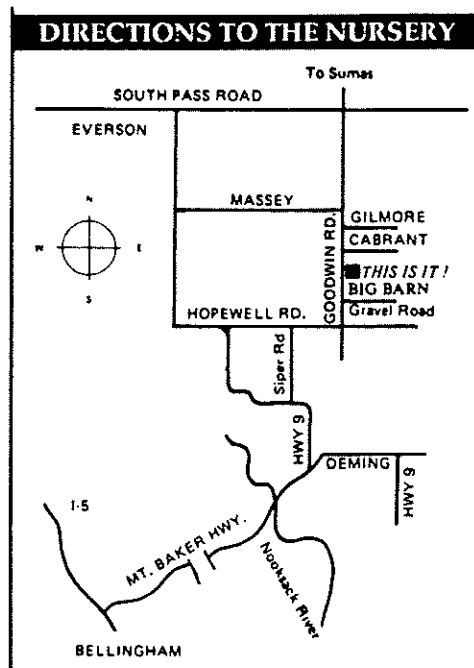
CHECK YOUR LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR WCFS DUES ARE DUE

TOUR OF CLOUD MOUNTAIN FARM

WCFS members are invited to join the Seattle chapter's field trip to Tom and Cheryl Thornton's Cloud Mountain Farm on Saturday, May 30, 1992, starting at 10am. You may wish to bring a sack lunch.

Cloud Mountain Farm is located on the west slope of Sumas Mountain, overlooking the Nooksack River valley near Everson. The Thorntons have twenty acres of nursery stock and trellised apple orchards. Watch for the Belgian fence of apple trees fronting the farm.

Take the Mt. Baker exit from I-5 north of Bellingham and go east to Deming. Follow Highway 9 north to Hopewell Road. The address is Cloud Mountain Farm, 6906 Goodwin Road, Everson, Washington - 98247. Phone (206) 966-5859. See map below:



Cloud Mountain Farm
6906 Goodwin Road
Everson, WA 98247
(206) 966-5859



APPLE ERMINE MOTH

Be on the alert for these exotic moth larvae that are possibly emerging in your apple trees as they leaf out. Look for a rust colored leaf that has been "mined". A light webbing may enclose the tiny caterpillars, or they may be feeding on a fresh green leaf nearby. You can remove them by hand or spot spray with B.T.. Eric LaGasa, Chief Entomologist, WSDA, advises that the moths are widely distributed now in both Eastern and Western Washington and the Willamette Valley.

Edward M. Lewis, Bellevue

WHEN TO PICK PEARS

Robert A. Norton, Jacky King, Gary A. Moulton
Washington State University

A frequent question every year as fall approaches is "when should I pick my pears?" Most people know that if you let pears ripen on the tree, they are likely to break down at the core and be soft and mushy when eaten or canned.

Commercial growers use a pressure tester to determine proper pear maturity for harvest. By determining the pressure necessary to puncture the flesh, they can determine when pears are ripe enough to pick, but not overripe. What do you do if you do not have such an instrument?

In most years we can determine within a week or two, when individual pear varieties should be getting close to proper maturity. The following table should cover Western Washington fairly well. Choose the earlier date for Southwest Washington and the later date for more northerly or colder areas.

PEAR	ESTIMATED PICKING DATE		
Clapp Favorite	August 20	to	September 1
Bennett	August 22	to	September 3
Bartlett	August 25	to	September 5
Aurora	August 19	to	September 9
Rescue	August 25	to	September 10
Orcas	August 28	to	September 15
Sirrine	September 4	to	September 12
Flemish Beauty	September 10	to	September 26
Comice	September 19	to	October 9
Seckel	September 25	to	October 9
Highland	September 25	to	October 12
Anjou	September 25	to	October 15
Bosc	September 25	to	October 15
El Dorado	October 1	to	October 21

The next step in determining picking readiness is ease of fruit removal. If you notice several pears dropping from the tree, you may already be too late, but it's a pretty sure sign they should all be picked.

Better yet, every few days as you approach the harvest period shown above, give the pears the "lift test." Putting your index finger on the stem, lift the pear from its hanging position to a horizontal or flat position, perhaps with a slight twist. If the fruit snaps off cleanly between the

stem and the twig, the pears are ready to strip from the tree. If you have to wrench off the fruit, either breaking the twig or the fruit stem, the fruit is probably not ready. Note that on larger trees, fruit growing in the top often ripens earlier than fruit in the shaded interior.

Certain late ripening pears such as Anjou, Bosc and Comice may not ripen properly if just picked off the tree and allowed to ripen naturally. These varieties, especially Anjou, need 3 to 4 weeks of storage at 32 - 45 degrees F. This can be done in the refrigerator or possibly in a cool root cellar. Some kind of wrapping to reduce shriveling is a good idea.

How about Asian pears? These are easy since they ripen on the tree. Simply sample them from time to time as they ripen from greenish to various shades of yellow or orange. When they taste good, pick 'em. You don't have to pick them all at once, but if they are left on the tree too long, they may develop a winey taste that you may not like.

CHECK YOUR LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR WCFS DUES ARE DUE

HISTORY CORNER

THE ORIGIN OF THE MONSTER BERRIES OF PUGET SOUND

Last time we learned that the local "wild" blackberries, the Evergreen Cutleaf and Himalayan, that are rapidly taking over the Pacific Northwest, were imported by Euro-Americans. This time we will learn more about their "roots".

The Evergreen Cutleaf blackberry, (*Rubus laciniatus*) retains its leaves all winter, ripens from July to November, and loses berry size if there is not enough moisture available during the growing season. From my personal observation it is slowly being replaced by the more aggressive Himalayan berry. The Evergreen came to us in a rather exotic and indirect way. This berry was taken from Europe to the islands of the South Pacific, where it still grows very well in the wild.

Early on it was known as the Oregon Cutleaf because a Frenchman introduced it in to Oregon from the South Pacific around 1875. We have noted before in this column that Washington owes much of her early cultivated fruit to pioneer nurseries in Oregon. The Oregon Cutleaf was quickly propagated and disbursed among the coastal states where it escaped cultivation due to the large number of birds and animals that love its fruit and spread the seed in their droppings.

Later it was recognized that this berry was a form of the common European bramble, *Rubus fruticosus*, considered a native of Europe.

The Himalayan berry, the round leafed monster that spreads so quickly, has an even more interesting origin.

In the 1880's, Luther Burbank, the "Plant Wizard" of California, received some blackberry seeds from India from "high up in the Himalayan mountains." These were part of a seed exchange program, where he would exchange seeds from his "improved" varieties for exotic varieties to use in his research.

According to Burbank, "It would appear that transplantation to an altogether new soil and climate had the same stimulating effect on this blackberry that we have seen manifested in the case of the Japanese plum and sundry other plants. There appeared among seedlings of the second generation an individual that was a very marked improvement over its parents."

Luther Burbank's literature states that this "exceptional seedling" was cultivated and propagated, and its qualities proved so unique that it was introduced in 1885 via a special circular to nurseries, being christened the "Himalayan Giant."

After a decade of probation, the Himalayan took its place as the pre-eminent blackberry on the Pacific Coast and even elsewhere in the United States and the world. For several years the blackberry could not be propagated fast enough to meet the demands of the public.

Promotional literature for the berry raptured, "A single cane may grow twenty feet — even fifty feet, in one season and obtain the base cane diameter of almost 1 1/2 inches. Aggregate cane growth of a single plant in a single season may exceed 1,000 feet — one fifth of a mile.

As for fruit production, the Himalayan far surpasses any blackberry ever known. A single bush may bear 200 pounds per season. If not pruned, the vines of the Himalayan will grow to a length of 100 feet or more, just like grapevines. They seem to be strongly disease resistant and can survive the harsh cold of the northern United States."

This propaganda is a little overblown. The Himalayan berry does grow like a weed here in the mild moist climate of the Pacific Northwest, but it does not thrive in the harsh winters of the continental United States.

In a serious understatement, a California horticultural book from 1914 states that the Himalayan is "somewhat difficult to manage".

However, just like its main competitor, the Evergreen Cutleaf, the Himalayan blackberry has been found to be literally the same as a European variety, *Rubus procerus*. This certainly makes some sense, since the British would be likely to take European berries with them to India.

So we've done it to ourselves. Look what the Himalayan has done in just 107 years, and the Evergreen in 117 years. Unlike most edible plants imported from Europe, the two monster berries had an indirect route to Puget Sound, which has lent an exotic aura to them. Like many other introduced plants, they quickly become pests.

Dave Battey - Snoqualmie

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WESTERN CASCADE FRUIT SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

(Please indicate whether you wish standard WCFS membership or affiliation with a chapter. Yearly dues for standard or chapter memberships are \$10, except as noted)

NAME(S) NEW RENEWAL

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, AND ZIP

PHONE **PLEASE CHOOSE ONE CATEGORY BELOW**

STANDARD \$10() NORTH OLYMPIC \$10() PENINSULA/KITSAP \$10()
PIPER \$10() SEATTLE TREE FRUIT \$18() TAHOMA \$10() S. PUGET SOUND \$10()
ENCLOSED FIND \$5 EXTRA FOR WESTERN WASHINGTON FRUIT RESEARCH
 Check to receive "opportunity descriptions" for society participation.

Make checks payable to WESTERN CASCADE FRUIT SOCIETY and mail to:
WCFS Treasurer, P. O. Box 128, Carlsborg, WA 98324.
YOU MAY PAY YOUR CHAPTER TREASURER FOR BOTH CHAPTER & SOCIETY DUES