

The Grapevine

June 2016 • The Journal of the Midwest Fruit Explorers • Vol. 40 No. 2

Presidents Message

President's Letter, May 2016 by *Chuck Heisinger*

Special Delivery

The postman delivered big-time this week, dropping off a 3-hour DVD of the 2016 Kurle lecture, produced in HD by the superb video technicians and facilities at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Professor Mosbah Kushad, our speaker, has long been a favorite of MidFEx audiences, and this year's presentation was no exception-- a tour de force, covering many aspects of fruit production, and Kushad fielding all kinds of interesting questions from the audience. We'll plan to duplicate the DVDs and offer them up for sale later this year, perhaps as soon as the picnic.

A busy Spring

Between the Kurle Lecture, two grafting workshops, a pruning workshop, and attendance at several garden fairs, we have been hopping from one event to the next since our last Grapevine. At Cantigny I counted 33 volunteers helping out in all phases of preparation for the workshops—bagging rootstock, sorting scion wood, setting up displays, handling sales. At Chicago Botanic Garden, we had a wonderful lecture on alternative grafting solutions presented by Oriana. See pictures of her step grafts in this issue.

Special thanks to Rob, Annie, Deb, and Bill for representing us at Cantigny's open house and the DuPage fair and to Craig Evankoe for instructing at both grafting workshops.

Last month, I asked several members to help me with a grafting workshop at the Evanston Y, where we brought scion wood down from the Y's camp in Fremont, Michigan for campers to graft onto Bud 9s for their back yards. It was great to see several 12-something year olds learning this craft, proving that the wicked, second notch-cut on a whip and tongue graft need not be an exercise in bloodletting. Thanks to Michael, Vanessa, Patricia and Tim for your help.

Bud-grafting

We are planning a workshop and bud-grafting practicum July 31st, 1pm. We found a nursery space at the Benedictine Monastery in Rogers Park for 85 rootstocks that did not sell at the grafting workshops. There is a combination of OHxF 333 (pear), Krymsk 1 and Marianna 2624 (stone fruit). We'll see how we do come spring of 2017 when the grafts will either show evidence of growth or opportunities for further grafting (nothing seems to go to waste as second chances abound.)

Summer Picnic

We have a wonderful opportunity to see what Tim Hamilton has been up to in his back-acres at Gurnee on July 16, when we hold the 2016 MidFEx summer picnic. Tim has been working with Jim Ozzello to propagate his unique pear varieties. Tim is also working with bees. Details on the picnic are provided later in this issue. We could use volunteers to help with transportation to and from Tim's place with our picnic supplies. Please contact Tim or myself (president@midfex.org) if you can help us out.

Seeking Orchard Walking Hosts :

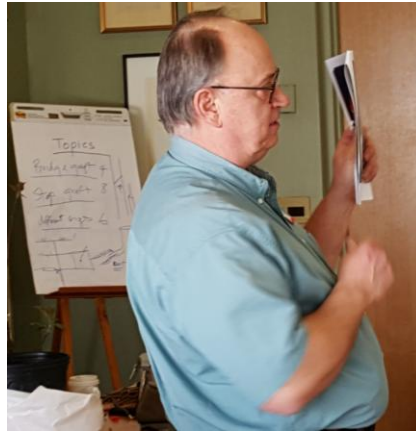
We are looking for volunteers to host several orchard tours for members to see what others are doing. This could be a Saturday, or preferably a Sunday, for an hour or two generally sometime after noon. Please email either Chuck Heisinger, Jeff Postlewaite or Patrick Driscoll if you are willing to host an event between now and the Fall.

Orchard Tours are MidFEx's version of a garden walk. A member opens up their garden/orchard for the rest of the club to come and see what they are growing, ask questions, and learn about how someone else grows what they grow in the space that they have. The host gets to show off their labor of love to a captivated audience that appreciates and admires the effort that goes into this "hobby". Orchard tour start time and duration are up to the host.

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Oriana Kruszewski and Craig Evankoe



Grafting Workshop 2016



Grafting Workshop April 2016



Rootstocks Awaiting Marriage to Scions



Bagging Rootstock



Al playing with the bees



Chuck's Rootstock Repository (see calendar)

2016 Summer Picnic **Date:** Saturday, July 16th

Time: Setup - 10 am, Lunch – 12 Noon **Location:** 36500 N Field View Drive, Gurnee, IL 60031

Tim's Cell 224-423-2813 Summer Picnic:

The Summer Picnic is a time for MidFexers to come together, feast, talk fruit and go on a tour of the host's orchard. It also serves as our 3rd Quarter business meeting. The meal will be served at noon and the club will provide the main entrée, beverage and dinnerware. The side dishes and desserts are pot luck, so it is time for you to show off your cooking and/or baking skills and bring something to share.

Our host this year for the summer picnic is Tim Hamilton. Tim has been a member since 2003. Tim lives on 8/10ths of an acre in Gurnee. The first thing he did when he moved to Gurnee in 1997 was to plant an apple tree. Then he attended a grafting session and his passion for fruit trees grew exponentially. Thanks to Al he also has beehives. Tim will take us on a tour.

To make it a bit more comfortable we will have a tent. Volunteers should arrive around 10 am to set up. Lunch will be served at noon. The business meeting will start at 1.

Directions: Google map is accurate or From the south Take 94 towards Wisconsin then Exit on Grand Ave 132 WEST Head west approximately 1.5 miles then at the light turn right onto Brookside Drive; Drive 0.2 miles to the third left Field View Drive then turn left on Field View and drive all the way to the end to the cul-de-sac; My house is the greenish house ¾ way around. Hamilton Yard

I am looking forward to hosting this year's picnic at my home orchard. Located in Gurnee just 8 miles west of Lake Michigan on 0.8 acres. We have been here for 19 years. The majority of the lot is on the 100 year flood plain, so fortunately, the back half of the yard is undisturbed soil. Trees vary in age from newly grafted to 19 years old. The total number of trees is roughly 90. Here is what you will see:

Tart Cherries: Montmorency and North Star

Sweet Cherries: Heartland and Jumbileum

Peaches: Red Haven, Fury 007, Fury unknown, and sunglow nectarine that sure looks like a peach to me!

Plums: Purple unknown, Stanley, Green Gage*, Cambridge Gage*

Apples: Akane, Cortland, Liberty, Lodi, Mutsu, northern spy, Pristine, Snow Sweet (on the wrong root stock) Williams Pride, Winesap and Zestar. There are a dozen or more other varieties.

Pears: Rescue, Seckel, Jung's Hardy, Collette and hopefully 10 more newly grafted.

Apricots: This has been my goal lately to get apricots that produce fruit. In trial include Gold Cot, Alfred, sweet heart and Montrose. None are fruiting.

Quince: two struggling quince not fruiting.

Berries: Three varieties of raspberries, one black raspberry, two black berry and 6 struggling blue berries.

My challenges in my yard have been

- Learning how to prune. (my peaches are good examples)
- Hardiness of quince rootstock and trees
- Crown rot on M27 trees
- Hardiness or whatever on Gold Rush
- Deer
- Controlling my desire to have more trees!

You will also get the chance to meet my wife Wendy, our two labs otter and diesel and 5 bee hives.

There will be a silent auction at the picnic. Please bring donations.... proceeds benefit the club.

MidFEx Picnic Bud Grafting

The budding demonstration at the MidFEx picnic has fostered an informal budwood exchange between members. Most tree fruit can be successfully budded in summer but budding is particularly useful for propagating stone fruit (plums, apricots, peaches, cherries) that need warmer temperatures to callous and hence are difficult to graft when dormant. Also, if your spring graft failed to take and the rootstock is growing vigorously, summer budding can be a second chance to make a tree this year.

To assure the most viable budwood:

- Collect the most mature wood from this year's growth – at least 3/16th or ¼ inch thick.
- Remove the soft top growth and leaves but leave the petioles (leaf stems).
- Either label each piece or label a zip loc type bag with the variety name.
- Wrap the budwood in a dampened paper towel, seal in the plastic bag, and refrigerate.
- The budwood is fragile and has a short shelf life so collect it as close to the time of distribution as possible and keep it as cool as possible during transport. A small insulated beverage cooler bag with an ice pack works well for an extended period – like the picnic.

Bud Grafting

Chuck Heisinger has created an excellent video of Al Cosnow's summer budding techniques—including how to collect and prepare budwood. A link to the video is on the "Create Your Own Fruit Trees" page at www.MidFEx.org. The MidFEx forum is a good place to request budwood from other members.

Bud Grafting Workshop **Sunday July 31st, 1pm** **Location is the Benedictine Monastery in Rogers Park, 1/2 block south of Howard , and that the community gardens are on the north side of the main building at the end of the driveway.**

More Member Notes

We called you, our members, several times this spring, hesitating in respect for your privacy, but confident that our information was newsworthy, possibly affecting plans that you may have made. Our goal is to use these calls sparingly, when the Grapevine or other means don't meet the short deadline. If you are not disposed to receiving these calls, you can elect to opt-out while on the call. Our experience to date, however, is that only a handful of members have chosen to do so.

GERMINATING APRICOT AND PEACH SEEDS

by Al Cosnow

The editors have asked me to write about this. I am no expert on the subject, and it isn't as though I do it all the time, but I have had a fair amount of experience and have also learned from my failures.

A basic principle to bear in mind is that these seeds will not germinate unless they have had a period of chill---not necessarily freezing, but chill. In nature seeds fall on the ground with the ripe fruit, remain there all winter, and germinate in the spring. I do know that I find volunteer peach and apricot trees coming up every year, often a fair distance from the tree by being carried and dropped by squirrels. There is a peach tree at the edge of my compost pile now and even a couple in the lawn, which I will have to remove, and an apricot coming up under a shrub. How long a winter was required I don't know; maybe the chill of November would have been enough, or maybe it required the additional chill of later in the winter or early spring to turn the trick. Maybe too, it varies with the individual variety.

So if you want to germinate these seeds, it is simple enough to just plant them in the ground promptly as soon they are available---don't let them dry out---and wait for them to come up in the spring. This is a bit chancy, though. I think it is more reliable to plant them in pots, leave the pots somewhere safe, even an unheated garage (freezing is OK but not necessary), then transplant them in the spring when you see which ones grew.

They can also undergo their chill requirement in the refrigerator in a plastic bag to keep them moist, then be planted in the spring. But I have sometimes, not every time, had them start growing roots right in the bag in late March or early April. This poses a problem. It is, of course, much too early for them to go outdoors, but they can't wait there in the refrigerator either, trying to grow leaves in the cold and dark.. I had this happen one year when I had a special strain of apricots to grow from seed, and I had to pot them up indoors in a hurry. They quickly got too tall to keep under the lights that I had for my African violets and bonsai, so I had them on window sills all over--hardly the best growing conditions---and my cats were chewing on the leaves. Too much of a good thing. If I can avoid it, I don't do it this way anymore.

But our founder, Bob Kurle, explained a trick. Evidently the inhibition to immediate germination that requires the chill to nullify it is contained in the brown "skin" of the almond-like kernel inside the hard pit. He told me to crack the pit as soon as I took it out of the fruit, and soak the kernel in water for a day. This makes the skin easy to peel off with a sharp knife. Now it looks like a blanched almond. And when it is planted right then in the summer, it germinates promptly, making nice growth until fall. Doing this gives a year head start to the new tree. That's now my favorite approach to growing a peach or apricot tree from seed.

Now some details.

1. Apricot seeds are easy to crack with an ordinary nutcracker, and the kernel comes out undamaged the great majority of the time. Peach seeds are less easy; I have ruined plenty of kernels struggling with those hard, hard peach pits in a vise or with my black walnut cracker. And I don't know why it is, but not infrequently with peaches the kernel inside is shriveled and worthless.
2. The time of soaking varies. Sometimes a day, even 12 hours, is enough, but sometimes several days are necessary. I check at frequent intervals with my sharp knife. It is important, though, not to damage the kernel as you work. Too rough handling or too long a soak will cause the two halves (cotyledons) to come apart; those seeds you may as well discard.

2016 Horticulture Field Day

Thursday June 9 2016 8:00 AM - 3:00 AM

Valley Orchard, 811 East State Street, Cherry Valley, IL

Learn and discuss a diverse range of topics related to orchard production : University of Illinois Extension Specialists and Educators

UIUC: Horticulture - Dr. Mosbah Kushad

Entomology - Dr. Rick Weinzierl

Plant Pathology - Dr. Mohammad Babadoost

Weed Sciences - Dr. Elizabeth Wahle

The Danish V Trellis

The following article by **Mark Lee** appeared in **Pomona, Spring 2008**. It is reprinted with permission of Mark Lee. I have used this method since reading Mark's article in 2008. [Patrick Driscoll]

I grow fruit as a hobby in my backyard. Two years ago I started thinking about ways to better manage my raspberry patch. Back then, what I knew about training raspberries I had learned by observing what had worked for my neighbors, and by visiting U-Pick farms. Based on that experience, I had previously selected the T-trellis training method for raspberries, as shown in Figure 1.1. I think this is the most wide spread approach for organizing the canes.

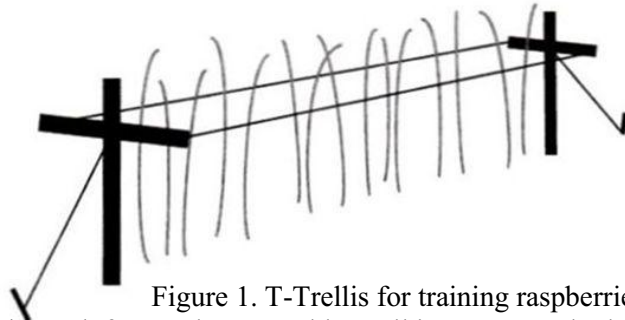


Figure 1. T-Trellis for training raspberries

The T-trellis was working ok for me, but I wouldn't call it a great method. I was having problems keeping the canes productive. The canes didn't like to be bunched together in a block. The most productive canes were always forming outside the perimeter i had set up. This may be the most popular way to train raspberries, but I was starting to think about alternative training methods. there had to be a better way,

I googled my way around the web in search of a better trellis system. Most people were promoting the T-trellis. Then I found one site that had a number of different trellis systems with lots of good pictures. I thought I printed out the instructions and filed them away, but now I can't find them. Sorry I can't give credit to that website, and I really want to because this method is working much

better for me. The training method I selected is a variation on a V-trellis as shown in Figure 2. I think this method was credited to someone in Denmark, but I don't have my notes to say for sure.

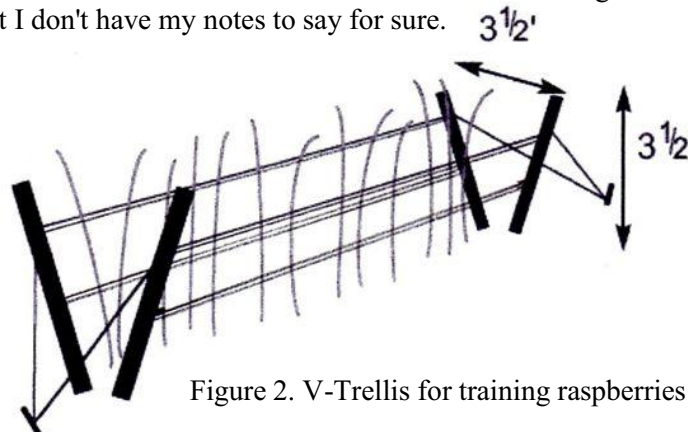


Figure 2. V-Trellis for training raspberries

First, let me tell why I like this method from a mechanical engineering point of view. One of the problems I had with the T-trellis was with the "T" supports. They are typically made of wood. I have limited equipment in my shop, and I am not that clever when it comes to making wooden structures that can stay strong after exposure to the weather and the soil. My previous attempts with the T-trellis always seemed wobbly and looked unprofessional. Wood didn't seem like the best material for the damp northwest. So I decided to build my V-trellis using steel fence posts and berry wire. It is really simple to construct and the materials were cheaper than I expected. The posts are 2"-3' wide, maybe a quarter inch thick, are painted green, and should last for years. I got my supplies at the local big-box hardware store. To construct the trellis, all i had to do was pound the posts in the ground as shown, then string up the wire, My trellis looks slightly different than the one in figure 2. I use 2 rows of berry wire. The top row of wire is as shown, and the bottom row is halfway up the post. Each row of wire has a run on the outside and run on the inside that hold the canes in place. I also have three "V"s in my patch spaced about 6 feet apart. I also like the V-trellis system from a horticultural viewpoint. In the winter, the canes that will produce berries in the summer are held in a "V" pattern between the two sets of berry wire. The berries are formed on the perimeter of the patch, and this makes harvesting easy. In the center of the "V", the canes get lots of sunlight. This encourages new canes to pop up in the center of the patch. I still get new canes spreading from the patch, but now i also get new growth were i want it. I don't have to dig up the new canes outside the perimeter of the patch each

year and put them back in the middle to keep the patch productive, At the end of harvest, I cut out the old canes that are done producing, and tie the new canes in the "V" shape. This starts the cycle over again. I place leaves and other garden bits into the center of the "V" in the winter that will slowly breakdown and provide organic matter that the raspberries thrive in. Last year we had the biggest harvest ever. This spring the canes are looking strong and healthy, I am really happy with this modified "V" trellis. I hope someone else finds this technique useful.

The Intoxicating Allure of Quince | Oct. 20, 2015

By Amy DeWall Dadmun, Special to the Journal Sentinel

Jim Ozzello with his quince trees. He was told it was impossible to grow quince in Wisconsin.

Picking a plump, light green quince from one of his trees, Jim Ozzello rubs his hand over the skin to wipe the soft fuzz from the fruit. The downy white fluff is reminiscent of peach fuzz, but when removed, the bright fruit's true color is revealed. The green will gradually turn a golden yellow when ripe. This can take up to a few weeks, Ozzello said, as they are hard and not tasty when picked from the tree.

Ozzello, 85, is a retired Foreign Service officer who grew up in Bay View and graduated from Marquette University. He spent time stationed in Paris, Düsseldorf and at the U.S. embassy in Mexico City, where he worked under former Wisconsin governor Patrick Lucey. Later, while working as an economics professor in Madrid, he was first exposed to quince. He enjoyed quince so much, he decided to try to grow it himself when he returned to Wisconsin. A University of Wisconsin fruit expert told him it was impossible to grow quince here due to the climate, but Ozzello was not dissuaded. He acquired quince rootstock from Oregon, where it's grown more commonly, and proved the expert wrong with beautiful quince trees thriving in his backyard near Lake Michigan.

He's now been growing quince for 20 years, introducing it to other growers in the area, including Bill Stone of Brightonwoods Orchard. He's supplied quince to restaurants in Milwaukee and Chicago and sold it at farmers markets. When I visited Ozzello and his wife, Dorothy, at their Wind Point home in late September, the quince were just getting ready to be harvested. Several quince trees dot their backyard hillside, along with squash, pear trees, blueberry and blackberry bushes, tomatoes, peppers and a few grapevines winding over an arbor.

Remarkably, Ozzello's quince looked nearly blemish-free. He uses neither fertilizer nor pesticide, and said "the insects don't seem to have the taste for the fruit," though they do enjoy the leaves. Having grown several types over the years, Ozzello said, "It's a peculiarity that the quinces don't taste much different from each other — the varieties all seem about the same." They all look about the same, too. The couple makes quince preserves, membrillo, or quince paste (a candied concoction), as well as other quince dishes. They often use recipes from the book "Simply Quince" (Mayreni Publishing, 2009), by Barbara Ghazarian. Picking a plump, light green quince from one of his trees, Jim Ozzello rubs his hand over the skin to wipe the soft fuzz from the fruit. The downy white fluff is reminiscent of peach fuzz, but when removed, the bright fruit's true color is revealed. The green will gradually turn a golden yellow when ripe. This can take up to a few weeks, Ozzello said, as they are hard and not tasty when picked from the tree.

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Your membership may be expiring! Check your address label or the email message that delivered your Grapevine for your membership expiration date. If it says **6/30/2016** or earlier then it is time to renew

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Tim's Purple Plum Torte

This is ideal with purple Italian plums; if they are unavailable any plum will work.

Tim's Purple Plum Torte

This is ideal with purple Italian plums; if they are unavailable any plum will work.

- 1 cup (125 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder (the aluminum free kind, if you can find it)
- Large pinch of salt
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar plus 1 to 2 tablespoon (depending on plums)
- 1/2 cup (115 grams or 8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened
- 2 large eggs
- 12 smallish purple Italian plums, halved and pitted
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Heat oven to 350° F.

Sift or whisk together flour, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl.

In a larger bowl, cream butter and 1 cup sugar together with an electric mixer until fluffy and light in color. Add the eggs, one at a time and scraping down the bowl, then the dry ingredients, mixing until just combined.

Spoon batter into an ungreased 9-inch springform pan (but if you're worried, you can always lightly coat it first with butter or nonstick spray) and smooth the top. Arrange the plums, skin side up, all over the batter, covering it. Sprinkle the top with lemon juice, then cinnamon, then remaining sugar.

Bake until cake is golden and a toothpick inserted into a center part of the cake comes out free of batter (but of course not plum juice), about 45 to 50 minutes. Cool on rack.

Once cool, if you can stand it, and I highly recommend trying, leave it covered at room temperature overnight as this cake is even better on the second day, when those plum juices further release into the cake around it, becoming not just "cake with plum", but cakeplumugyum (official terminology there).

MidFEx Calendar

Th June 9, 2016 8 am	Horticulture Field Day - Valley Orchard, 811 East State Street, Cherry Valley, IL 61016
Th-Su July 28-31, 2016	NAFEX Annual Meeting 2016 Camp Swatara Bethel, Pa. 19507
Sa July 16, 2016 12 pm	Summer Picnic: Hosted by Tim & Wendy Hamilton, (10 am setup, 12 noon lunch) Gurnee 60031
Su July 31 1 pm	Bud Grafting Workshop Community Gardens; St. Scholastica, 7430 N. Ridge Blvd. Chicago, 60645
August 12, 2016	Deadline for articles to Robin Guy for next issue of Grapevine.
Sa-Su October 15–16, 2016	Fall Harvest Festival at Chicago Botanic Gardens, Glencoe (Fri 14 th set up)
Su October 30th 10 am	Apple Cider Social , Al's home (Using manual plus motorized fruit press, bring lots of apples !)

MidFEx Officers and Contacts

President: Chuck Heisinger • Secretary: Vanessa Smith Vice-President: Patrick Driscoll • Treasurer: Jeff Postlewaite	Membership: Use enclosed application, see website, email membership@midfex.org Or write: MidFEx Membership, P.O. Box 93, Markham, IL 60428-0093
Grapevine articles wanted! Deadline for articles to Robin Guy for next issue: August 12, 2015. Please e-mail articles to Robin and type "GRAPEVINE" in the header. Gathering editor: Robin Guy (editor@midfex.org) Layout editor: Patrick Driscoll	MidFEx Online Forum: Members are invited to join the MidFEx forum. Get advice and share your fruit growing experiences with other members. Subscribe to the forum at: http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/midfex Forum Administrator: Sherwin Dubren (sherwindu@att.net)
Orchard Guide: Local on-line fruit growing resource developed by a MidFEx member. You enter in the varieties of fruit trees that you are growing. The site estimates when pests will appear based on local weather reports so you can exercise spraying or integrated pest management (IPM) more efficiently. Post feedback on your growing experiences with specific varieties, and read feedback from others about which varieties do well here and which struggle. Access on MidFEx home page when signed in.	MidFEx Web Site: http://www.midfex.org Send anything of interest (links, photographs, fruit info, etc.) to webadmin@midfex.org for consideration for web site posting. Member Area first time login: username is your last name (exactly as on your address label) plus a '-' plus your 5 character zip code. Example "Doe-60010". password is your username as described above plus a '-' plus your membership expiration date expressed as 6 numeric characters. Example "Doe-60010-063012"