

President's Message

According to the 2009 Farmers Almanac spring temperatures in the Great Lakes region will be March - slightly above normal; April - near normal; May - slightly above normal; June - slightly below normal. Precipitation will be mostly near normal for these months. Good to know we'll not have hurricanes forming in Lake Michigan during bud break.

It was a terrific Harvest Festival again this year. We're batting over .800 on festival weather in the third millennia. Thanks again to organizers Michael Zost and Mike Modde and Coach Tim Hamilton. The impressively organized fruit display, apple tasting, cider press, orchard chat, fruit sales, etc., have become our annual shining moment. We received numerous compliments (and exclamations!) from the public and the CBG staff. The fruit display itself is in the awesome category. At the cider press we served well over 3,000 samples. Sale apples and cider were high quality and, as in the past, delivered to us by the grower/presser, Dowd's Orchard in Indiana. To avoid a sparse sale table on Sunday afternoon Mike Modde picked up X more bushels from Hafs Road Orchard in Wisconsin early Sunday morning. Also thanks to all the members and spouses that have made the festival happen year after year. See Jeff's festival financial report inside.

MidFEx Winter Meeting - Sunday January 18, 2009

The schedule:

12:00 Noon @ CBG Fairchild Room: Member Social; potluck brunch, bring fruit or a fruit dish. Coffee, juice and eggnog provided.

12:30: Business meeting. Informal agenda Page 2.

1:30 Close business meeting, clean up, prepare for public

2:00 – 3:00 "Backyard Orcharding in Chicagoland" (open to public)

"Backyard Orcharding in Chicagoland: A Gallery of Photos": is a member presented slide show open to the public as part of a Botanic Garden series. It will start promptly at 2:00 pm and last 1 hour (plus?). We've not yet had much public attendance at these January presentations but it's never kept us from putting on a good show for our winter-brave members.

Here's how it's going to work: Those of us with photos of our backyard efforts are going to sit down at our own kitchen tables on New Year's Day (between games) and sort, edit, assemble, etc. our fruit related photos, slides and jpegs.

We'll need 1 to 25 photos from each (of us) taken in any season of our modest or magnificent backyard orchards... close-ups, scenes, aerial shots, fruit, leaves, blossoms, pests, methods, devices, espaliered, shaping, pruning, training, tools, rain, shine, snow (a great backdrop), grafts, tree damage, critters, characters, picnics, field trips, fall festival, demonstrations, local commercial orchards, etc. That's the easy part. Then you'll need to convert them to digital and get them to me before January 18th. If they're already digital – great. Email them to hahnx5@aol.com or snail mail a CD/DVD/thumb drive to our MidFEx P.O. Box. Don't worry if your pictures are not 'perfect', the only criteria being informative, entertaining and more or less in focus. Cropping and exposure compensation of the digital files will be done as necessary.

You can have prints, slides or negatives scanned at Walgreens or camera stores for \$.20 to \$.50 per item and burned to a CD or DVD or copied onto your own thumb drive. Takes a

day or two. Alternatively, you can mail your prints, slides or negatives to me (phil) for scanning (MidFEx P.O. Box). I'd suggest the small free priority mail boxes from the post office (boxes are free, postage is not). To scan at home I'll need them in hand at least one weekend ahead. All originals will be returned at the meeting.

We'll use CBG's digital projector with my PC and Powerpoint. I'll edit and organize the slides in some logical fashion and on the 18th during the show, each photographer/member will briefly comment on his/her photos as they appear on screen. If you can't be at the show, we'd still like to see your photos.

See you there... *Phil*

Rootstock Research Findings By: Sherwin Dubren

(Edited from e-mail)

Cornell U. has a comprehensive list of all apple rootstocks at this site:

<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/breeders/appleroots/Factsheets/FSAccess.htm>

This site shows rootstock characteristics and sources for purchase. I am not sure about the different size classes. For example, I believe Mark and Bud 9 are both about 40% dwarfing. The main page shown as a link at the bottom of the rootstock list shows more sources of Geneva type rootstocks.

Here is a detailed evaluation of seven apple rootstocks:

<http://www.umass.edu/fruitadvisor/fruitnotes/FNarticle65-01.pdf>

An evaluation of peach rootstocks:

<http://www.umass.edu/fruitadvisor/fruitnotes/v62n2/a5.pdf>

Pear rootstocks:

<http://www.ncw.wsu.edu/treefruit/PNWPEARootstockResearch.htm>

Here is an article of the state of the art of cherry rootstocks:

<http://www.goodfruit.com/issues.php?article=573&issue=21>

An article on apple rootstock evaluations:

http://www.hrt.msu.edu/departement/Perry/Spacing_Fruit/misspacingPC.htm

This is a long list with loads of information. (Ed: more rootstock info on next page)

Pam's Deer Repellent

2 cups warm water

4 cloves garlic

1 tsp alum

1 egg

Dissolve the alum in the warm water.

Put one cup of water in blender with garlic.

Blend till garlic is uniformly pulverized.

Add remaining water and egg.

Blend till uniform.

Use immediately by brushing or spraying. Do not drink. Must be strained for spraying.

Pam lives in rural Illinois, has lots of deer and swears by it.

Choice Of Rootstocks Is Important By: Sherwin Dubren

Many of us buy and make trees giving only thoughts of size to our selection of rootstocks. There are many choices that may be important to people with specific needs and interests. The following are some web sites that give more information about what is currently available.

A good reference is Stella Otto's book, 'The Backyard Orchardist', which gives a good summary and comparison of the more common rootstocks available. Some of this material is quite technical, so skim over the details and look at their conclusions, if you are overwhelmed.

http://www.hrt.msu.edu/department/Perry/Rootstock_Reports/GalaVArt1.htm

Fire blight seems to be a big issue here. Some sources say that Bud 9 may be somewhat resistant to fire blight. However, this site doesn't think so:

<http://www.caf.wvu.edu/kearneysville/tables/fbrootsus.html>

For fire blight resistance, G(Geneva) 16 is rated as having a strong resistance to it. It is slightly smaller than a Bud 9, and may be a good alternative choice for some people. See this site:

<http://www.acnursery.com/rootstock.php>

This site looks at rootstock vigor. Although the Ottawa is rated rather low, I have an Ashmead Kernel we grafted onto Ottawa 3 and although it is not a very big tree, it gives plentiful apples.

http://www.hrt.msu.edu/department/Perry/Rootstock_Reports/AddendumGala.htm

For those members who have the room to grow standard size trees, check here:

<http://www.edibleforestnursery.com/AvailabilityRootstockIndex.htm>

Another good survey is:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/00-007.htm#o3>

For prices at Cummins Nursery and general info:

<http://www.cumminsnursery.com/rootstocks.htm>

Cummins also refers to some new (in 2006) rootstocks from Geneva.

For those who are concerned about 'replant disease', see this:

<http://www.goodfruit.com/issues.php?article=1753&issue=65>

(Continued on next page)

Letter from Longwood Avenue By: Al Cosnow

This year I had my first crops of a couple of fruits that are new to me. I am especially happy with the American persimmons. There were 2 varieties grafted onto seedling roots (seeds planted in 2003) and grafted in 2006 to scions from Claypoole's experimental orchard in central Illinois. Persimmons bloom on new wood, so they bear young. I left one limb of each of the rootstocks ungrafted, hoping that one of them would be a male, and sure enough, one was, so I did get pollinization. I knew how to tell the male blossoms from the female because **Phil Hahn** brought one branch of each from his trees to a June meeting once, and the differences are obvious. (Thank you for the lesson, Phil.) My trees bloomed the third week in June, on new growth. Jerry Lehman tells me that in central Illinois they bloom the first week in June.

As **Martha Davis** explained to me once, it isn't necessary for frost to hit the fruit in order for it to lose its astringency; frost is only a coincidence for the time of ripening. I picked my fruit when it was mostly orange and a little soft (well before frost) and let it ripen off the tree in my garage. I might add that the leaves had all fallen off the tree before that, and those little orange balls hanging from it at sunset are beautiful.

The other new (to me) fruit was from my hedge of "flowering" quince, *Chaenomeles*, which I planted for the red spring blooms, not really for the fruit. Since I had pruned it more or less as an ornamental hedge, there wasn't much production, but I did harvest about a dozen oval yellowish green 4-inch fruits in October, hard as a rock. I had no idea what to do with them, but **Ruth Melulis** was at my house, recognized them immediately, and told me what they did with them in Lithuania. I followed her suggestions, coring them, slicing them paper thin, and putting them in a large jar with a lot of sugar. Naturally a syrup formed, which I still haven't used, but after a few weeks I removed the slices and dehydrated them as Ruth described. Now I have these slices which are still very tart, but good in their own way. The flavor is unique, not at all like the usual fruiting quince from trees, *Cydonia*. Next year I will attempt to get a bigger crop and see what they're like stewed.

2008 was another year of sexually incompatible plum blooms---lots of flowers, very little fruit. Drives me crazy.

Choice Of Rootstocks Is Important (Cont.) By: Sherwin Dubren

A peek into the future rootstocks:

<http://approach.caloccia.net/Orchard/References/Rootstocks/05%20Geneva%20Rootstocks%20for%20Michigan.pdf>

Some results of testing the new Geneva rootstocks:

http://www.aclso.saa.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publications.htm?SEQ_NO_115=159238

The emphasis here is on apple rootstock, but there is plenty on the web about other fruits. Just Google for your favorites.

The club has selecting rootstocks for the next grafting workshop. If you have any suggestions or strong preferences for 2010, contact me or Jeff Postlewaite.

Cooking Column by Paul Thorn
Excerpted from the *Grapevine*, December 1998

Quick Apple Cake. Begin with 4 medium to large apples that have developed a unique flavor by aging. Peel and slice and set aside. Sift together in a mixing bowl: 1½ cups flour, 2 tsp baking powder, ½ tsp salt and 6 tblsp sugar. Add ½ cup cream or half and half with 1 well beaten egg. Mix all ingredients until well blended. Turn dough into a 9" cake pan. Arrange sliced apples on top of dough. To make the topping, mix ½ cups sugar, 1 tsp cinnamon and 2 tblsp melted butter. Mix until it forms a crumbing mixture and sprinkle it over the apples. Bake at 400° for 35 minutes.

Apple Crisp with Streusel. Begin with 6 tasty apples of generous sizes such as Jonagold, Mutsu or Golden Delicious, which are then sliced into ½" pieces. In a bowl, toss apple slices with 1¼ cup granulated sugar, 1 tsp lemon juice and ¼ tsp each of cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg. Preheat oven to 350° and grease a 2½ quart baking dish. To make streusel blend ½ cup flour, ¾ cup brown sugar, ½ tsp cinnamon, and a pinch of salt in a mixing bowl. With a pastry blender, cut 6 tblsp chilled butter into flour mixture until it resembles course meal. Add 1 cup rolled oats to flour mix and blend thoroughly. Spread ½ of streusel mix on the bottom of the baking dish and place apples on top of that. Spread remainder of streusel over apples. Cover the baking dish and bake 20 minutes until the apples begin to bubble. Remove the cover from the baking dish and bake the apples for another 40 minutes or until the streusel begins to brown and the apples are soft. Serve warm with ice cream.

HARVEST FRUIT FESTIVAL STATEMENT

10/18/08 – 10/19/08

Gross Receipts	6,395.50
Expenses:	
61 cases of apples	1,626.40
10 cases of cider apples	50.00
200 ½ gallons of apple cider	450.00
264 pints of apple and peach butter	580.45
4 Fruit & Nut Inventory books	65.28
11 Uncommon Fruit books	141.77
7 apple peelers	115.57
11 apple wedgers	35.86
558 ½ peck apple bags	90.01
Handouts (dwarfing, grafting, resources, etc.)	52.29
Bags, plates, crackers, tasting cups, etc.	223.31
Chicago Botanic Garden Commission	296.46
Total Expenses	3,727.40
Net Income	\$2,668.10

ORDER ROOTSTOCK NOW

The workshops are one of the principal educational benefits of being a fruit explorer. Each year we aim to have fewer "extra" rootstock available at the workshops so order 2 or 3 times as many trees as you think you have space for. This increases the probability of your success and is an inexpensive course to becoming an experienced grafter. Any surplus of successfully grafted trees make truly unique gifts. Even the unsuccessfully grafted trees are useful for learning about summer budding.

The rootstocks available for the grafting workshops this year are:

Apple:

M27: The most dwarfing apple rootstock - about 15% (usually 4 - 6 feet) of standard size tree at maturity. Requires permanent support of stake or trellis.

BUD 9: Develops into a tree about 30% - 35% of standard at maturity. Developed in Russia. Very hardy. Requires staking.

M26: Develops into a tree about 40% of standard at maturity. Somewhat susceptible to fireblight. Should be staked when young and on exposed sites.

Pear:

OHXF333: Compatible with European and Asian varieties. About 50% - 70% of standard pear tree size at maturity.

OHXF97: Compatible with European and Asian varieties. Vigorous, standard size rootstock. Oriana prefers this for Asian varieties.

Quince C: Perhaps the most dwarfing at about 30%. Good for espalier. Very precocious. Compatible with many European pears. All Asian and some European pears require an interstem. Details will be available at the workshops.

Plum:

Krymsk 1: About 50% dwarfing. Reported compatible with plums, apricots, peaches, and nectarines.

Prices are \$3.00 each for orders received by January 31st. Rootstock ordered after January 31st or at the grafting workshops will be \$4.00 and selection may be limited. All the rootstock is bare root. Warning – the past few years we have sold out of some rootstock varieties at the workshops. If you want to be sure to get some then place your order now.

Ordered items may be picked up at the grafting workshops. Scion wood contributed by members also will be available at the workshops.

2009 GRAFTING WORKSHOP REQUEST FORM			
NAME: _____		PHONE: _____	
QUANTITY	ITEM	PRICE EACH	TOTAL
GRAND TOTAL			
Please bring the order with payment to the January meeting or mail to: Jeff Postlewaite Midwest Fruit Explorers P.O. Box 93 Markham, IL 60428-0093 Questions? (708) 596-7139 Jeff@FrugalFarm.com 			

Protect Your Young Trees by: Jeff Postlewaite

With winter upon us and snow covering much of their usual diet, rabbits will be seeking something to eat to hold them over the next few months. I know from personal experience how depressing it can be to examine your apple trees in early spring and find that rabbits have been dining on them. This damage can lead to significant setback or even death of a tree. Deep, drifting snow can multiply this damage by giving rabbits access to the top of young trees. Several years ago after a particularly snowy winter I visited a MidFExer's yard and every one of her 4-5 year old fruit trees had been stripped to their 6 ft height of all bark and small branches. Very painful.

The best prevention is to barricade your young trees from hungry rabbits. This can be done individually with purchased tree protectors (expandable plastic tubes), plastic corrugated drain pipe split up one side, or homemade wire cages. The wire cages can be made of hardware cloth or chicken wire. The cages should be at least 18" tall -- 24" would be even better -- and should be a few inches away from the trunk. A 24" length of hardware cloth or chicken wire will make a 7.5" wide columnar cage. If a solid barrier is used like tree protectors or drain pipe they should be removed in late spring.

If you have several trees in a small area it may be easier to build a barrier around the whole group -- this is what I did. I pounded 2.5' lengths of inexpensive electrical conduit into the ground around the circumference of my trees -- 10' apart -- and then stretched chicken wire around the poles. I attached the chicken wire to the poles with short pieces of wire or plastic cable ties. For appearance, in the spring I remove and roll up the chicken wire for next winter but leave the conduit poles in place. If you use this approach make sure you visit after a snowfall to look for rabbit tracks inside your fenced area -- you may have unknowingly fenced a rabbit IN.

After heavy snows you will need to walk around your barriers to pack the snow down and keep the rabbits from scaling your defenses.



Chicago Flower and Garden Show Help Needed!

Please contact Oriana (847-673-9175) if you are able to organize or staff the MidFEx booth for the Flower show this year. We will not be allowed to sell produce this year, so the set up and staffing should be fairly easy.

SCION WOOD DONORS NEEDED

MidFEx is dependent on its members to provide the wide variety of scion wood available at our grafting workshops. Success of the graft is largely the result of the care given to the harvesting and storage of the scion wood. Please observe the following guidelines when contributing scion wood:

- 1 Cut scion wood only from trees that are free from disease and that have fruited.
- 2 Cut the wood while it is still fully dormant before the buds start to swell, preferably not more than 2 - 3 weeks before the workshops.
- 3 Cut only last years new growth that is about the thickness of a pencil or slightly less. Water spouts make excellent scion wood.
- 4 Scion wood should be cut into 4 - 8 inch lengths with at least 3 buds per stick.
- 5 Label the bundle (or ideally each stick) with the variety name.
- 6 Roll the bundle of scion wood in plastic (i.e.: Saran Wrap) and after the first couple of rolls insert a strip of damp paper toweling then finish rolling the bundle in plastic. The paper toweling should not be wet but just damp. The paper towel must not be in direct contact with the scion wood. Too little moisture and the scion wood dries out. Too much moisture and the scion wood molds.
- 7 Refrigerate. Ideally, apples and bananas should not be refrigerated with the scion wood. They give off ethylene gas that may induce the buds to open.

Information and Directions to the January Members' Meeting at the Chicago Botanic Garden

The Chicago Botanic Garden is easy to find and easy to reach approximately 20 miles north of Chicago. The Garden is located at 1000 Lake Cook Road in Glencoe, Illinois. Admission is free, but parking is \$15 per car (including tax). Parking fees are not included for special events. Parking is free for members of the Chicago Botanic Garden.

From Chicago

Follow the Kennedy Expressway (I-90/94) west to Edens Expressway (I-94) and U.S. Route 41. Exit at Lake Cook Road and travel 1/2 mile east to the Garden.

From the north

Head south on U.S. Route 41 or I-294. Exit at Lake Cook Road and travel east to the Garden.

From the west

From I-90, take I-294 toward Wisconsin. Exit at Lake Cook Road and travel east four miles to the Garden.

From the south

Take I-294 north, exit at Lake Cook Road and travel east four miles to the Garden.

From Indiana

Take I-90 or I-80/94 to I-94 northbound through Chicago, and then follow the directions from the city (see above).

Volunteers Wanted

We are looking volunteers to run for office at the January meeting. Please contact Phil if you are interested or can recommend a candidate.

Easy Baked Low-Fat Apple-Cinnamon French Toast

This baked apple-cinnamon French toast can be prepared in advance and then simply popped in the oven for a leisurely weekend morning.

Makes 12 servings; Prep time: 25 min; total time: 9.5 hrs (including 8 hrs refrigeration time)

3 cups nonfat milk
2 cups pasteurized liquid egg whites, such as Egg Beaters
3 tablespoons honey
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1-pound loaf sliced whole-wheat bread
1 cup chopped dried apples (3 ounces)
1/2 cup raisins
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar

1. Whisk milk, egg whites, honey, vanilla and salt in a large bowl.
2. Trim crusts off 8 bread slices and set aside. Cut the crusts and the remaining bread into 1-inch pieces. Toss with dried apples, raisins, cinnamon and nutmeg in another large bowl.
3. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Transfer the bread mixture to the pan. Lay the reserved crustless slices evenly on top, trimming to fit. Whisk the milk mixture one more time, then pour evenly over the bread. Press the bread down with the back of a wooden spoon, making sure it's evenly moist. Cover with parchment paper, then foil, and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F.
5. Bake the casserole, covered, for 40 minutes. Uncover and continue baking until puffed, set and lightly browned, about 20 minutes more. Let stand for 10 minutes; dust with confectioners' sugar and serve.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: Per serving: 183 calories; 1 g fat (0 g sat, 1 g mono); 1 mg cholesterol; 33 g carbohydrate; 10 g protein; 4 g fiber; 344 mg sodium; 312 mg potassium.

MAKE AHEAD TIP: Prepare through Step 3 and refrigerate for up to 1 day.

Your membership may be expiring! Check your Grapevine address label for your membership expiration date. If it says "12/31/2008" or earlier, then it is time to renew. Mail the form below.

-----cut here-----

MidFEx Membership Renewal

Mr. or Ms. _____

Name (please print)

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail _____

Date _____

Amount Enclosed: \$10 (1 Year) \$20 (2 Years)

Mail to: MidFEx Membership

P.O. Box 93

Markham, IL 60428-0093

The above information (name, address and phone only) will appear in our Members' Only Directory (June issue) and is never sold or rented to outside interests.

Mark your Calendar 2009 Dates to Remember. See inside for more details. (Volunteers needed for all events!)

2009	
January 1, 2009	Renew your Membership (check your mailing label for last issue date)
January 18, 2009 (Sun)	12:00 Business Meeting; 2:00 pm Lecture - Fairchild Room, Chicago Botanic Garden
February 12, 2009	Grapevine submissions due for March issue
March 22, 2009 (Sun)	Grafting workshop, Cantigny Gardens, Wheaton
March 29, 2009 (Sun)	Grafting Workshop, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe
June meeting	TBD
July picnic	TBD
October TBD, 2009	Fall Harvest Festival 2009 at Chicago Botanic Garden

MidFEx Officers and Contacts 2008-09

President: Phil Hahn	Vice-President: Debby Williams
Secretary: Chuck Heisinger	Treasurer: Jeff Postlewaite
Communications: Sherwin Dubren	Membership Chair: Jeff Postlewaite
Editor: Robin Guy (rguy@ameritech.net)	MidFEx Web Site: http://www.midfex.org
Additional Contributors (Editor: thank you all!): Al Cosnow, Phil Hahn, Jeff Postlewaite.	Send anything of interest to Brad Platt for consideration for the web site; call Brad or e-mail at midfexweb@buildabettersite.com
Grapevine articles wanted! Deadline for articles to Robin Guy for next Grapevine: 2/12/09. Please e-mail articles to Robin's address above; in the subject, mention "Grapevine".	For membership information, see website or write: Jeff Postlewaite MidFEx Membership P.O. Box 93 Markham, IL 60428-0093

Grapevine

Midwest Fruit Explorers
P.O. Box 93, Markham, IL 60428-0093

First Class