
The Grapevine

WINTER 2010 ♦ JOURNAL OF THE MIDWEST FRUIT EXPLORERS ♦ Vol. 34 No. 4

President's Message

The 2010 elections for public officials are behind us. If there is one thing that this election has taught me is that it is far too easy to complain about or blame someone else for the economy, crime, the homeless, unemployment, taxes, or any number of conflicts or wars. It is much more difficult to be aware of the "glass half full" let alone to appreciate it. I know I'm not alone when I say that the elections make me appreciate our freedoms a little bit more.

When I was in the ballot box casting my vote, I couldn't help think of all those people who didn't have the freedom to speak up for what they believed in by voting for who would represent them. I have similar thoughts when I'm gardening. When I pick fruit from the tree or vine, I can't help but think of those who don't have food on their plate or have to grow food for survival. Yes, we have problems with our politics, economy, society, education, priorities, etc, but we are the land of plenty. Where else could growing food be a hobby?

In our history, it was always the wealthy countries that could afford to send out explorers to find new trade routes, goods, food, people and territory. We are no different now. The fact that we can go to the corner grocery store and buy all that we want or can eat allows us the luxury of growing fruit for explorations sake. Because we are blessed (by whatever faith that you believe in or not), we can experiment with fruit to find the best tasting, or most interesting, or unique, and not just the most productive.

I guess where I'm going with all of this is that it is easy to take for granted the right to vote, just as it is easy to take for granted the food on your plate, or the trees in your orchard. We enjoy these luxuries because of those that have come before us, the sacrifices that our fellow countrymen have made, and the courage of those who have blazed the trail for us. So I would like to say that I am thankful for all the people that serve our country and keep it safe. I am thankful for the things that I don't have, because it reminds me that many others have less than me. I am thankful for all the farmers and laborers all over the world that make it possible for me to have an abundance of food throughout the winter. I would also like to thank the founding members of MidFEx and the officers that I have served with this past year: Michael Zost-Vice President, Chuck Heisinger-Secretary, and Jeff Postlewaite-Treasurer. MidFEx is an example of how full our glass really is, and it has been an honor and a pleasure serving as its President.

Dennis Wang

January Business Meeting - Soup Bowl Luncheon

It is time for our January Business meeting. Although we do have the serious business of elections, we will begin our meeting at 1pm with our annual Soup Bowl Luncheon. What better way to chase away the winter chill than with a

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Cider Pressing
Apple Cider Social, November 2010

Grapevine December 2010

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President's Message - Dennis Wang (Continued from page 1)

steaming bowl of homemade soup. This is a pot luck, so if soup isn't your specialty, then by all means feel free to bring something else besides your appetite. We could always use a desert to complete the meal.

The Officer positions that we will be voting on are defined in the By-laws as:

- President:** Principal executive officer of MidFEx, Chairman of Executive Committee, ex-officio member of all committees.
- Vice President:** Chairman of the Program Committee and performs duties and has powers of President in absence or inability of President. Advisor for: Picnic Committee, Harvest Festival Committee, Photographs and MidFEx History
- Secretary:** Takes the minutes of the meetings, chairs the Education and Publication Committee. Advisor for: Grapevine and other publications, Grafting and Propagating Committee, Lectures and Tours
- Treasurer:** Performs all duties of treasurer, chairs the Finance Committee and maintains the Membership List

The only officer that has formally agreed to be on the 2011 ballot is the Treasurer Jeff Postlewaite. If you are interested in serving as any of the officer positions, please contact the Immediate Past President Phil Hahn as he chairs the Nominating Committee: 708-333-2679 or email at hahnx5@aol.com

After the business meeting, we will show "Apple Pruning and Training", a slide-show created by Dr. David Bedford from University of MN. This slide-show was shown at the MAGA conference (see below right) last year and Dr. Bedford has kindly donated it to MidFEx.

I will also give a quick demonstration on growing pineapple a zone 11 plant here in zone 5b. We will also go over how to pick a good pineapple, and sample the pineapple used in the demo. This demonstration was given at the Harvest Festival for the public, as a way to showcase how easy fruit exploration can be.

This year the annual meeting will be held at 1pm in the **Spring Valley Nature Center in Schaumburg**, not to be confused with Springbrook Nature Center in Itasca where previous annual meetings have been held. Again, it's not a typo. We're going with a different location to mix things up. Directions below left:

Directions to Spring Valley Nature Center Schaumburg

The address is 1111 E. Schaumburg Road. If you are coming from the North, South or East, make your way to Woodfield mall near 53/290 and the I-90 Tollway. Take the Higgins Rd exit and head west (towards the mall). Make a left turn on Meacham Rd heading south. The next light after you pass the strip mall with Dominick's and Target on the right will be Schaumburg Rd. Make a right onto Schaumburg Rd heading west. The next light is National Parkway. Make your way to the left hand lane. The entrance to Spring Valley is less than 100 feet after National Parkway on the left. If you're coming from the West you can make your way to Woodfield and follow the above directions, or get onto Schaumburg road any time before Plum Grove Rd heading east. The next light will be National Parkway, and Spring Valley will be on the right just before the light.

Minnesota Apple Growers (MAGA) Conference Jan. 5 & 6 • La Crosse, WI

The Minnesota Apple Growers annual conference is Jan. 5&6, 2011 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. MidFEx members may attend without paying an individual conference fee. Your Grapevine serves as your MidFEx member card. A few members have attended the last few years and have been enriched by the experience.

Speakers this year include Arthur M. Agnello from Geneva, George Sundin from Michigan State, Jon Clements from University of Mass Amhurst, Dr. Bedford of the U. of MN. Apple program, Peter Werts from the IPM institute of North America, and Peter Hugunin from the MN Dept of Agriculture. Topics usually revolve around insect management, pruning, nutrient needs, marketing, etc. The marketing sessions aren't too cogent for most in our group but Dr. Bedford is worth the trip all by himself.

Besides the meeting itself, La Crosse is beautiful at this time of year with hundreds of eagles congregating around the open waters of the Mississippi river framed in 600 ft. snow covered bluffs. La Crosse is about a four hour drive from the Libertyville area and the Amtrak stops here once each way everyday.

Questions? Contact member Chris Andersen at 608-785-0032 or amvjca@aol.com.

The MidFEx

Grapevine

Its important for a group such as ours to keep in touch with each other by traditional means. Email may have some advantages: immediacy, paper free, attachments, links, etc., but there's a good chance that when it comes to dates, events, directions and soul...

you heard it through the Grapevine

...in your mailbox...four times a year...

Soups Anyone?

SWEET POTATO AND APPLE SOUP

- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 2 tbsp minced shallots
- 1 medium onion, roughly chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium apples, peeled, cored and cut into chunks
- 2 cups fat-free vegetable broth
- 1 cup nonfat milk

Preparation: Heat oil on medium in a large pot or Dutch oven. Sauté shallots, onions and carrots for 4-5 minutes. Sprinkle curry powder and stir until fragrant. Add sweet potatoes and apples followed by vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then turn heat to low, cover and simmer for 20 minutes, until potatoes are tender. Transfer soup to a blender or food processor and purée until smooth. Return to pot or Dutch oven. Stir in milk, then heat through. Serves 6

APPLE PUMPKIN CREAM SOUP

- 4 cups chicken stock
- 4 apples, peeled, cored, and diced
- 2 cups diced pumpkin (or squash)
- 1 small onion, diced
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon fresh grated nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 cup apple cider w/ ½ cup sour cream

Preparation: In a non-reactive pot, bring stock to a boil with primary ingredients. Simmer 30 minutes. Puree mixture. Return to pot. In a bowl, whisk together cider and sour cream until smooth. Stir into soup mixture and reheat gently. Salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle serving with chives and dollop of

FROM ROADSIDE TO WINE GLASS

Excerpted from an article by David Mercer, Associated Press



In this photo taken Oct. 28, 2010, University of Illinois wine-grape researcher **Bill Shoemaker** holds a young grape vine plant in the greenhouse at University of Illinois St. Charles Horticultural Center in St. Charles, Ill. This plant is a cross between two varieties, St. Pepin and Shiraz. Shoemaker is working there to cross wild grapes with wine-grape varieties to try and breed tougher grapes that are well-adapted to Midwestern cold and other regional conditions.

Shoemaker said he's focusing on one wild grape in particular — the *vitis aestivalis bicolor* — that grows wild over a wide range of the Midwest, and even east into the Adirondacks region of New York. The *vitis aestivalis* has high tannins and relatively low acids, he said, and thrives in the wild. "The fruit in it is very similar in some respects to the kind of grapes we use in wine making," Shoemaker said. Crossing grape varieties is relatively easy, Shoemaker said, just a matter of controlling the flow of pollen from one plant to another. But the results take time — lots of time. The first grapes show up on the vine in three years, after which it takes another year before the grower has a real crop to work with. That may well be followed by years more of crossing one of the new hybrids with still more varieties, looking for something that works just right. "If you have short-term success, you're just lucky," Shoemaker said. "It could be 15, 30 years."

Editor's note:

On two past occasions Bill has graciously allowed MidFEx to use the grounds of the St. Charles Horticultural Center for our annual picnic. Each time he has given us tours of the vineyard and orchards while describing the nature of the ongoing search for numerous improved fruit varieties suited to our climate.

Fruit for thought

"The smallest seed of faith is better than the largest fruit of happiness." Henry David Thoreau

"An apple is an excellent thing -- until you have tried a peach." George du Maurier

"Someone once threw me a small, brown, hairy kiwi fruit, and I threw a wastebasket over it until it was dead." Erma Bombeck



Gooseberry

Orchard Guide Program has a New Face

SherwinDubren

Because of several comments on difficulties using the orchard guide program at www.orchardguide.net, Randy Suvada has redesigned the entire interface to give the program a new look and make it easier to maneuver through it. The new format is more conventional to a windows interface, where items are located through drop down windows. Just move your cursor over an item, click the left button, and it will either go there, or display a series of sub menus which are called up by moving your cursor over to them and again left clicking. It is a more compact and visible design than before. Randy has also added some new features, as follows:

- You can now view the cultivars grown by individual registered participants. Just follow the list for 'Fruit Varieties', 'Member's List' and 'View a Member's List'.
- In an ongoing process, Randy has refined the data for various lists like rainfall and temperature in your specific area. There are several different models available for this data, and Randy is trying to get the most accurate sources. All these charts and data are tied together in helping to predict when certain pests will emerge in your area, so you can do the most effective treatment.
- There is a new feature for mobile phone access. Randy's program detects if it is communicating with a mobile phone and formats the program accordingly. This is useful for people out in the orchard to access certain data, like what tasks are scheduled.
- You can now sign in using your location code. This number is displayed at the bottom of your sign in screen.
- There is now a direct link from the midfex web site www.midfex.org to this program. Current thinking is to integrate this program even more to our midfex web page, especially if this program finds wide acceptance.
- An newly added feature to orchardguide.net is a pest alert email. orchardguide.net will send off an email to the user when a pest is due to arrive in one weeks time. Every morning at 1:00 AM the program goes through each user's past and forecasted weather, calculates degree-days, then compares with pest arrival values. If the pest is due to arrive in one weeks time, an email is sent to the user. The user can turn toggle this feature on/off.

Some information has started to come in from the recent survey about the program. The first question indicates that more than half of the responders don't know what the program does. Let me summarize the main aspects:

- 1) Once the MidFEx membership inputs enough information about what they are growing, and their experiences doing so, members can use this to help decide which varieties are suitable for growing in our general area and what specific problems they may encounter with them.
- 2) IPM data can help you decide when to treat your orchard at the most effective time to fight off certain pests. The program currently concentrates on the more common problems of Apple Scab, Plum Curculio, Codling Moth, and Scab.
- 3) There is a facility for you to plan certain orchard tasks. You can select your tasks from a built-in list, or add you own specific tasks.
- 4) Observations of current pest appearance can be seen.
- 5) A harvest report can be generated showing what you picked. This program is still evolving. Only a few members have entered growing experiences, so this needs to be improved for this to be a useful tool. Some survey answers indicated that they

need help entering data. We can help in various ways by either training people in how to enter data, or having people send us their 'raw' data and letting us enter it for them. Those in need of help should contact me or Randy. The survey indicates that members are interested in learning more about this program and intend to enter their data in the near future. Once we get a core response from members with their data, I think this program will take off as it becomes obvious how useful it really is.

In an effort to encourage people to get familiar with this program, in the coming weeks there will be an entry form presented on signing on to the program, where a member can enter their favorite fruit with a description of how they grow it. All members have a chance to view and vote for their favorite entry (one per member), and the entry with the most votes will receive two free rootstocks to be given out at the next grafting session. Look for this on orchardguide.net in the next few weeks.

Contact Sherwin at: sherwindu@att.net
or Randy at suvada3@yahoo.com

SERVES 'EM RIGHT SQUIRREL FRICCASSE

Those of us that stayed after the cider pressing at the Apple Cider Social got to sample this tasty dish prepared by Al Cosnow. "Tastes like chicken ..."
We'll have to get Al to give us a lesson in cleaning squirrel.

- 2 bushy-tail bandits, cleaned and disjointed
 - 2/3 cup unsifted flour
 - 6 Tablesp butter or margarine
 - 2 teasp salt
 - 1/2 teasp pepper
 - 1/2 teasp rosemary (optional, but recommended)
 - 2 medium-sized yellow onions, peeled and minced
 - 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
 - 1/2 cup julienne strips of lean ham
 - 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
 - 1/2 cup milk or light cream
 - 2 Tblsp flour blended with 2 cups milk or light cream
- Dredge squirrel pieces in a mixture of flour, salt, and pepper, then brown in a heavy saucepan in butter or margarine over moderately high heat. Add all but last ingredient, cover, and simmer until tender, about 1 hour. Blend in flour and milk paste and heat, stirring, until thickened. Taste for salt and pepper and adjust as needed.
- Serve over noodles or spaetzle.
- 2 to 3 servings and it serves 'em right!

MidFex Harvest Festival 2010

Michael Zost

Congratulations to all MidFex members who participated in this year's successful Harvest Festival the weekend of October 16th and 17th at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. We had a moderate turnout of volunteers on Saturday and better turnout on Sunday, which really made the event go more smoothly and builds a wonderful sense of friendship and community. The great weather provided brisk sales of cider, apples, and all of our fruit butters. We added two new fruit butters to our usual stalwart apple and peach butter. The Plum Butter was a blind test and sold out early on Saturday. The Apricot Butter also did very well and sold out on Sunday afternoon. All butters are Amish made so our efforts go to support hardworking families in Indiana and Ohio. Proceeds were up this year from last year. We sold out of cider early Sunday afternoon and had fewer cases of apples left over at the end, all due to better sales, good weather, and more conservative ordering.

All visitors really enjoyed our mix of apples this year. It is always a treat for me to see eyes light up and the smile come across a face with the taste of one of our incredible samples of apples, pears, fruit butters, or fresh hand pressed cider. We had a number of visitors so inspired, that they signed up as new members. And to see how busy our senior fruit growers were answering questions and sharing insight is always exciting and rewarding as we spread the word that you too can grow fruit where ever you live.

Stephanie Lindemann of the Chicago Botanic Gardens, arranged to have our Gene Yale and Allen Cosnow provide a special tasting to the President's Circle Donors early Sunday morning. This was great exposure for MidFex and reminds the Chicago Botanic Gardens what a valuable asset we are to them and their members. Stephanie is a big advocate for MidFex and has really gone out of her way for MidFex and to make our Harvest Festival and my job easier.

As always, a big thanks to Ron Malcom, Al Cosnow, Gene Yale, Arnold and Sherwin Dubren, and Oriana Kruszewski for sharing your fruit for our displays, for your expertise and knowledge you share with visitors and being at the Festival all three days. To our volunteers: Mike Modde, Craig Evankoe, Chuck High, Della Bezanis, Patricia Holdrege, Ruth Melulis, Rick Jaeger, Marion House and Janet and Harlan, Jennifer Guy, Brad Platt, Franz Richters, Bill Scheffler, Bob and Annie Walter, Dennis Wang, and Amy Waxler and her husband; thank you so much for your time, help, and commitment to the Harvest Fest and MidFex. Because of you we could offer samples of fruit, fruit butters, cider, and books both sale days. With al this helped we were able to set up Friday and tear down Sunday smoothly and efficiently. We really have terrific people in MidFex and I had a great time with all of you. A double-special thanks goes out to Robin Guy who was always at the garden before me pulling cases of apples, labeling bags, filling bags and serving as cashier. I couldn't have done it without you. Thanks to Craig Evanoke for suggesting the single cashier idea. Thank you to Dennis Wang who did something new by offering a cooking with fruit demonstration along side Al Cosnow's always famous dehydrator demonstration. We look forward to it for next year. I look forward to make next year even better.



Gene Yale overseeing the fruit display
Harvest Fest - Chicago Botanic Garden

HARVEST FESTIVAL STATEMENT

10/16/10 – 10/17/10

Gross Receipts	5,966.95
Expenses:	
78 cases of apples	1,669.00
139 pounds of pears	135.50
8 cases of cider apples	40.00
130 ½ gallons of apple cider	292.50
84 9oz jars apricot & plum butter	293.16
180 16 oz jars apple & peach butter	360.00
3 Landscaping With Fruit books	40.71
4 Uncommon Fruit books	50.44
2 Pawpaw cookbooks	23.80
3 apple peelers	49.53
5 apple wedgers	17.55
648 ½ peck apple bags	101.99
Handouts (dwarfg, graftg, resourc, etc.)	79.45
Bags, plates, crackers, taste cups, etc.	175.49
Chicago Botanic Garden commission	263.78
Total Expenses	3,329.12
Net Income	\$2,374.05

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.

MARK: Develops into a tree about 30% of standard at maturity. Developed at Michigan State. 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 recommends this root for Asian varieties.

Quince C: Perhaps the most dwarfing at about 30%. Good for espalier. Very precocious. Compatible with many European pears. List of compatible varieties will be available at the workshops.

Plum:

Krymsk 1: About 50% dwarfing. Reported compatible with plums, apricots, peaches, and nectarines. Stone fruit is more successfully grafted when it is warmer. We offer it here for those who will take them home and graft or bud later. Beginning grafters are more likely to have success grafting apple and pear.

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.

2011 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

SCION WOOD COLLECTION GUIDELINES

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:

- Cut scion wood only from trees that are free from disease and that have fruited.
- 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.
- Cut only last years new growth that is the thickness of a pencil or slightly less. Water sprouts make excellent scion wood.
- Scion wood should be cut into 4 - 8 inch lengths with at least 3 buds per stick.
- Label the bundle (or ideally each stick) with the variety name.
- 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.
- 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.



Winter rabbit damage to apple tree.

Desktop Publishing:

Own a computer? Have a sense of graphic order?

Answer yes and you qualify to learn to assemble this newsletter on screen right before your very own eyes. Should you choose to accept, you will receive via email, four times per year, the relatively complete text files for an eight page issue of the Grapevine Newsletter. Call Phil at 708-333-2679 for further information. Receive free training that is guaranteed to put you on the wonderful-friends-list of numerous small non-profit volunteer organizations.

Your membership may be expiring! **Check your Grapevine address label for your membership expiration date. If it says "12/31/10" or earlier, then it is time to renew.**

MidFEx Membership Application

New Member

Renewing Member

Name (please print)			
Address	City	State	Zip
Telephone	E-Mail		

Amount Enclosed: \$15 (1 Year) \$25 (2 Years) \$30 (3 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)

MidFEx Calendar

January 5-6, 2011	Minnesota Apple Growers Conference, LaCrosse, WI
Sunday, January 9, 2011	1:00 pm Annual Business Meeting and Soup Bowl Pot Luck, Spring Valley Nature Center, Schaumburg
Sunday, March 27, 2011	Grafting Workshop, Cantigny Greenhouse, Wheaton
Sunday, April 3, 2011	Grafting Workshop, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe
Spring, 2011	Pruning Workshop, TBD
Sunday, July 17, 2011	Summer Picnic, TBD
Summer, 2011	Orchard Tours, TBD
October 15-16, 2011	Fall Harvest Fest, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe

2010 MidFEx Officers and Contacts

President: Dennis Wang Secretary: Chuck Heisinger	Vice-President: Michael Zost Treasurer/Membership: Jeff Postlewaite
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@comcast.net)	MidFEx Web Site: http://www.midfex.org Send anything of interest (links, photographs, fruit info, etc.) to Brad Platt for consideration for web site posting. Email Brad at: midfexweb@buildabettersite.com
Grapevine articles wanted! Deadline for articles to Robin Guy for next Grapevine: 2/12/11. Please e-mail articles to Robin and type "GRAPEVINE" in the subject header. Gathering Editor: Robin Guy (editor@midfex.org)	Membership: Use enclosed application, see web site, email membership@midfex.org , or write: MidFEx Membership P.O. Box 93 Markham, IL 60428-0093

Grapevine

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

First Class