

President's Message

It looks like we've started the growing season with good temperatures, plenty of moisture and explosive growth. Petal fall here in the south suburbs was over by May 10th and the fruit is now set. If you have a heavy fruit set you'll need to psych yourself up for some thinning. Since I did not thin my apples sufficiently last year I'm paying the price with low blossom count and disappointing set now. A good rule of thumb is to thin to one fruit per six inches of branch. Thinning at marble size or smaller will signal a tree to condition itself for a good blossom the following year. Leaving too much set on a tree will give you greater numbers of fruit but not greater total weight. There are lots of variables here but the main thing is...just do it! Being emotionally attached to your little green beauties is a hazard of the hobby and best addressed with gritted teeth and sharp scissors.

Summer Picnic – Sunday, July 19

Our 2009 Picnic will be at Ron Malcom's place in Inverness, IL. It's been four years since we've met at Ron's and his extensive fruit plantings are now in full production. In addition to fruiting trees and plants Ron has a literal arboretum of conifers, hardwoods and shrubs on his five acres of parkland. All-in-all a great place for a picnic. As usual it will be a potluck affair with beverages, condiments, entrees and tableware supplied by MidFEx. There's plenty of shade so we won't set up the canopy unless rain threatens. Table and chair setup will be at 11:00 am and the picnic will start at noon. Bring a salad, side dish or desert to share. See inside for directions and info.

Home Orchard Tours

Touring a MidFEx member's orchard (three trees qualify as an orchard) allows us to see the scope and scale of our friends' efforts, present us with possibilities and fuel the imagination. Few new members start with the intent of extensive plantings...we just want some good fresh fruit. Hopefully, you'll see a backyard that aligns with your own expectations as well as be delighted by some real show places. This year you have the opportunity to see a wide range between modest and grand at 5 locations on 5 dates in 4 geographic zones. Don't feel like you have to visit them all. Ideally, each of us will be able to visit at least one garden/orchard within a short drive.

Since these are not day-long open houses it's important to adhere to the 1 to 1½ hour time frames. At some yards you may be invited to linger longer due to the more extensive plantings, otherwise be mindful of your wrist watch. Lastly, consider your own yard as a setting for a future tour. The best part about hosting a tour...things tend to get real tidy just before the guests arrive. See Page 2 for locations/dates.

Photograph Your Orchard !!

The 2009 January MidFEx presentation at the Botanic Garden attracted a large crowd of members and nonmembers. Since the slide show format worked so well, we'd like to do the same type of member narrated show again. Sooooooooooooo...take more pictures! Consider buying a digital camera if you don't already have one. For well under \$100 you can get a pocket-able camera with plenty of features to help you take great photos under any lighting conditions. Best part is...no wasted film. Digital cameras are great for garden record keeping too. For example: On the first day of every month, or say, every Sunday, you walk around your yard-orchard-garden, camera in hand and take pictures of growing things. Most cameras come with a memory card that can hold 1000 or more photos and each photo is automatically dated. My super simple Kodak even allows me to add an audio description to each photo. You may never choose to print any of your photos, but you can save them to a computer or CD and view them at any time in the future. Today's TVs allow you to connect your camera or computer to your big screen and view your photos as a slide show.

Consider this the second of many reminders to take more photos of your garden. I'm sure you'll get some great ones we can use in a future MidFEx show...or in the Grapevine.

Phil

Member Orchard Tour List and Dates

All tours begin at 1:30 pm (except as noted) and last 1 to 1 ½ hours.

Date	Member/ Address/Directions
Saturday June 13, 1:30 pm	Ron Malcom: 137 S Barrington Road, Inverness. East side of Barrington Road between Bradwell Road and Abbey Woods Lane.
Saturday June 20, 1:30 pm	Rod Beary: 2226 Roth Road, Oswego. East side of Roth Road less than ¼ mile south of Wolf Road. White 2-story on rise.
Sunday June 28, 1:30 pm	Tim Hamilton: 36500 N. Field View Drive, Gurnee. Near I-94 and West Grand. From I-94 go west on West Grand past North Hunt Club Rd. Turn north on North Brookside Dr., go 0.2 mi. to North Field View. Turn left onto North Field View Dr., go 0.3 mi to Tim's drive on left. (N. Field View ends in a cul-de-sac beyond Tim's property.)
Sunday July 19, 4 pm (after picnic)	Usha Murarka: 19 Westlake Drive, Barrington, IL Very near West Palatine Rd. and Algonquin Rd. (Rte 62). Directly across from the West Palatine Rd. intersection turn south on Westlake. Usha's is the first house on left.
Sunday Sept 13, 1:30 pm	Arnold and Sherwin Dubren: 7227 Foster St, Morton Grove. SW corner of Harlem and Foster. Foster is one block south of Golf Road (Rte 58) on Harlem.

Budwood Collection Guidelines by: Jeff Postlewaite

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 callus and hence are difficult to graft when dormant.

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 ziploc 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.

Chuck Heisinger has created an excellent video of Al Cosnow's summer budding techniques that is linked to our web page (www.MidFEx.org). The MidFEx forum is a good place to request budwood from other members.

When Caesar's Roman legions invaded Britain they introduced apples to those isles. Another Roman, Cato, who lived and wrote in the third century B.C., speaks of seven apple varieties, while Pliny, in the first century A.D., names 36 varieties. In the centuries that followed, apple orchards were planted all over Europe. – from "Apple Kitchen Cook Book" by Demetria Taylor

Winter Injury in Northern Illinois Grapes By: Bill Shoemaker

Reprinted with permission: *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News*: Vol. 15, No. 3, April 17, 2009
<http://www.ipm.uiuc.edu/ifvn/volume15/frveg1503.html>

(A Publication of University of Illinois Extension and the College of Agricultural,
Consumer, and Environmental Sciences)

(Editor's note: photographs in the original article have been removed)

The winter of 08-09 will probably be remembered in northern Illinois as a persistently cold one that helped us sort out which grape varieties should be planted here. On January 16 and the following couple of nights, temperatures bottomed out at levels that were colder than the previous 5-10 winters. In northeastern Illinois, most rural sites were below minus 20°F, and some were colder than minus 30°F. Actual temperatures in vineyards may have differed from nearby weather stations in the rolling hills of northwestern Illinois, as cold air settled in low areas.

Fortunately, the vines were conditioned to be in full dormancy by the gradual development of cold temperatures. Dormant plants will respond to slowly lowering temperatures by descending into full dormancy. Each variety has its limitations though. It is not unusual for tender hybrids to be hardier than European grapes but to be injured by temperatures in the -15 to -20°F range. The popular cultivars Chambourcin and Chardonnay are examples of such hybrids. Hardier hybrids may be able to withstand much colder temperatures. The varieties coming from Minnesota's breeding program or the private breeder Elmer Swenson of Eau Claire, WI, may be able to withstand temperatures that drop to -35 to -40°F. Even some French hybrids, such as Marechal Foch, can take temperatures colder than -30°F if conditioned properly. Unfortunately, many vineyards in northern Illinois may not have been conditioned properly last winter. This isn't necessarily due to poor management. Last season was a very challenging season. We were generally low on heat units across northern Illinois because of prevailing cloudy, wet conditions. The frequent rainfall led to high disease pressure. Also, an unusually challenging infestation of Japanese beetles led to vegetative canopies being ravaged. All of this led to low levels of photosynthesis and reduced energy available to the vine for storage into winter. This could have been exacerbated in some vineyards by excessive crop loads, and by the fact that the previous growing season had similar conditions. Being aware of the relative strength of vines and their limitations will be a key to growing grapes in the northern part of Illinois. Brad Taylor of SIU and I are collecting dormant cane material from different vineyards in Illinois to determine the bud survival rates in those varieties. More information on this will come later.

Growers were busily pruning vineyards in late March and early April, and many have now finished, and the process of pruning should reveal winter damage. Many canes hanging from cordons may have a gray, desiccated appearance. They may feel soft and light, and when cutting through while pruning, they will show no green color in the cambium layer just below the thin bark. These are canes that have died back. Some dieback is normal at the tips of canes where wood is thin. Where the wood is pencil-sized in thickness it should survive if the variety's minimum cold tolerance is not exceeded. If canes of good thickness are not showing good green color in the cambium layer, the vine has suffered dieback, either due to excessive cold or lack of energy, or both.

This season may have been a watershed for determining variety suitability in Illinois, particularly in the north. Growers should record the extent of damage they experienced in each variety they grow and assess the reason for the damage. If management led to vines that were in less than optimal condition, then corrective measures should be taken. Vine health is critical to the long-term investment in a vineyard. If management was optimal or at least suitable, and vines had sufficient energy going into the fall, growers should consider the possibility that the variety is not appropriate for their site. There is no area of Illinois where suitable wine grape varieties cannot be grown. However, every area of Illinois can serve as a site for making poor variety choices. Mother Nature will be the judge.

Growers with damaged vines will need to make decisions about the future for those varieties. If the varieties are suitable, the growers will need to rehabilitate vines. Next issue will have some discussion on bringing vines back into optimal health.

Horticulture Field Day, Thursday, June 11, 2009

<http://www.specialtygrowers.org/releases/Norton%20field%20day%20flyer-reg.doc>

Royal Oaks Farm Orchard, 15908 Hebron Rd, Harvard, Illinois, 60098 (815/648-4141)

Three generations of the Bianchini and Norton family operate Royal Oak Farm, a fun & entertainment operation on a beautiful 160 acre setting. Presently there are more than 12,000 apple trees including 24 varieties of apples. About 600 new trees will be added this year in a replacement program. Other products for sale include raspberries, gourds, squash, and pumpkins. Royal Oak Farm utilizes three apple tree growing systems, central leader at 10"-12' centers on M7/M11/Mark rootstocks, vertical axe at 8' centers on M26/Bud9/M9 and tall spindle at 4' centers on Bud9/M9. They are in the process of converting the vertical axe to tall spindle by inter-planting new Bud9 trees between the 4-5 year old trees and re-training the vertical axe to tall spindle. This spring they plan to begin propagating some of their own trees on G11 and G16 rootstocks. All of their new trees are being replanted where old trees once existed and they are making use of nematode fighting crop covers to overcome replant disease. They have been in the crop cover program for 2 seasons and will also be utilizing a crop cover program for pumpkins this spring. Royal Oak Farm has used IPM practices for over 10 years and began a bio-intensive IPM program in 2006. Their bio-intensive IPM program utilizes such products as codling moth virus, a weed-badger for in row weed control as well as cover crops.

Tentative Agenda

8:00 A.M.

Registration

8:30 A.M.

Welcome

8:45–11:30 A.M.

Field Tours (Walking-Wagon Tours)

Speakers during the field tours:

Royal Oak Farm Orchard: **Bianchini's and Norton's**

University of Illinois:

Mohammad Babadoost, Rick Weinzierl, Mosbah

Kushad, Chris Doll, Elizabeth Wahle, Maurice Ogutu,

and Dan Anderson

Southern Illinois Univ: **Bradley Taylor and Alan Walters**

12:00 – 2:00 p.m. Lunch and Lunch-Time Presentations

Exhibitor Introductions- **Don Naylor**

President's Comments- **Steve Bock**

Sustainable Agriculture in the Orchard- **Dan Anderson**

Sponsored by: The Illinois State Horticultural Society, the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University and the Illinois Specialty Growers Association.

Registration: Pre-registration donation is \$25 per person. \$30 at the door. Pre-registrations accepted by phone at 309/530-7678 (cell), 309/828-8929, at ilsthortsoc@yahoo.com, then pay upon arrival. Advance reservations are appreciated. Please pre-register by June 9. On-site registration begins at 8:00 a.m. Children are free.

Directions: Take Illinois Rte 47 to Hebron., one block north of IL 173, take the first turn west onto Bigelow (which becomes Hebron Rd); or from Wisconsin take Rte 120 to IL Rte 47 and turn west onto Bigelow (which becomes Hebron Rd), for 4 miles.

More Information: To pre-register, additional information, or hotels, contact: Don H. Naylor, Executive Secretary, 15962 Old Orchard Road, Bloomington, IL 61704, 309/530-7678, email: ilsthortsoc@yahoo.com. For additional information on presentations, contact Mohammad Babadoost phone: 217/333-1523 or email: babadoos@uiuc.edu.

Pawpaw Pie

1 cup milk
1 cup sugar
1 egg
¼ tsp salt
1 ½ cups pawpaw puree
Unbaked pie shell
Whipped cream

Set oven to temperature recommended in your pie shell recipe.
Mix ingredients together in a saucepan; stir while cooking over medium heat until thickened.
Pour into pie shell and bake until the crust is golden brown.
Cool till just warm, top with whipped cream and serve.

2009 NAFEX ANNUAL MEETING

More information at: <http://nafex.org/meeting.htm>

The 2009 Annual NAFEX meeting will take place in Grand Junction, Colorado, August 27-29, 2009. There is additional information on the website. While the entire program has not yet been finalized, thus far it includes:

- Bruce Talbott: Bruce owns one of the largest orchards in the area which has been there for generations. His orchard is called Talbott Farms and grows apples, over 25 varieties of peaches, pears, and produces juices in addition to selling fruit.
- Bob Helmer: He has both an orchard and a large outlet store we will visit where he sells his peaches, apples, value added products, etc. He has agreed to bring us a large supply of complementary fruit for the scientific program. He is known as an unusual person and an excellent speaker.
- Parker Carlson: He is an organic grower and runs an award-winning winery we will visit called Carlson Vineyards where they sell wines, apparel, and collectibles.
- Tom Cameron: He is known as the local driving force behind a growers organization and agri-tourism effort. His orchard is called Rancho Durazno and runs a CSA called Cameron Place.
- Dr. Curtis Swift is an Area Extension Agent for the Tri-River Area, who also agreed to help us organize tours. Dr. Swift will speak about use of mycorrhizal fungi and phosphorus.
- Dr. Ramesh Pokharel: Extension Specialist – Nematologist and Fruit Pathologist at Colorado State University's Western Co. Research Center at the Agricultural Experiment Station.

MidFEx 2009 Summer Picnic – Sunday, July 19th – Noon !

2009 Picnic Committee: Ron Malcom (847) 381-8543, Chris Holland (630) 310-4076

Since setup will be minimal at Ron's, helpers need only arrive an hour or so before the noon target. If rain threatens, come a bit earlier to set up the canopy. Others arrive in time to set out your potluck dishes and silent auction items. We'll have a (very) short business meeting after the noon meal and before Ron's tour. At 3:30 pm we'll clean up so those who wish to tour Usha's yard can head that way by 4:00.

See you there and ... come hungry!

Ron Malcom's address is 137 S. Barrington Rd., Inverness, IL 60010

His driveway is about ½ mile north of Palatine Rd. on the east side of the road.

Silent Auction at the Picnic... Need Items

By Brad Platt

We will again have a Silent Auction at this year's picnic. It will add to the fun, with all the sales revenue from your donated items going to the club.

We need your help and donations. Please bring your gardening related items to the picnic. Examples include fruit trees and non-fruiting plants, along with books and gardening-related tools. Please make sure that plants in containers are well rooted. So, if you grafted 4 trees and they all took, but only have room for 2, please donate your extras. They will find good homes, and the money will help our treasury.

Upper Midwest Plants for Native Bees Submitted by Michael Zost

(by:Eric Mader and Matthew Shepherd, The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation)

Pollinators are a diverse and fascinating group of animals. In addition to their beauty, pollinators provide an important link in our environment by moving pollen between flowers and ensuring growth of seeds and fruits. The work of pollinators touches our lives every day through the food we eat. Even our seasons are marked by their work: the bloom of springtime meadows, summer berry picking, pumpkins in the fall.

Native bees are the most important group of pollinators. Like all wildlife, they are affected by changes in our landscapes. The good news is that there are straightforward things that you can do to help: providing patches of flowers is something that we all can do to improve our environment for these important insects. Native plants are undoubtedly the best source of food for bees, but there are also some garden plants that are great for pollinators.

Here is a list of flowers that these vital creatures need and make the landscape around us – from small urban backyards to large natural areas better for bees.

Native Plants

Aster – Aster
Beebalm – Monarda
Blazing star – Liatris
Cup plant – Silphium
Wild Indigo – Baptisia
Fireweed – Chamerion
Goldenrod – Solidago
Giant hyssop – Agastache
Ironweed – Vemonia
Joe Pye weed – Eupatorium
Leadplant – Amorpha
Lobelia – Lobelia

Lupine – Lupinus
Milkweed – Asclepias
New Jersey tea – Ceanothus
Obedient plant – Physostegia
Penstemon – Penstemon
Prairie clover – Dalea
Purple coneflower – Echinacea
Rattlesnake master – Eryngium
Spiderwort – Tradescantia
Steeplebush – Spiraea
Sunflower – Helianthus
Willow – Salix

Garden Plants

Basil – Ocimum
Borage – Borago
Catmint – Nepeta
Cosmos – Cosmos
Lavender – Lavandula
Oregano/Marjoram – Origanum
Rosemary – Rosmarinus
Russian sage – Perovskia
Spearmint – Mentha
Squill – Scilla

Pruning Workshop – Sunday August 9th – 1:30 pm

The Spring Brook Nature Center has invited us back to help them prune a mature somewhat neglected apple tree orchard that is part of a rather impressive arboretum.

It will be interesting to see the results of our last pruning efforts there some years ago.

If you have some mature trees that you can't figure out how to prune this is an excellent opportunity to hear the discussion amongst experienced MidFExers about pruning theory and techniques. And a great way to get some practical pruning experience before putting saw or pruners to your own trees.

Bring your favorite pruning equipment and bug spray.

Spring Brook Nature Center is located in Itasca on the south side of Irving Park Rd. just east of I290. There is no exit from I290 to Irving Park Rd. The simplest directions from I290 are:

Exit I290 at Thorndale Rd.

Take Thorndale Rd WEST to Rohlwing Rd.

Take Rohlwing Rd. south to Irving Park Rd.

Take Irving Park Rd. east to Springbrook Nature Center

Join the MidFEx Forum by: Sherwin Dubren

If you have internet access with an email account and have not yet joined our Midfex Forum, you are missing out on an opportunity to post questions about your orchard and hear what other members have to say about theirs. Some of the recent topics discussed on the forum are:

Plum recommendations
Sticker and Spreader Spray Materials
Backpack Sprayers
Mason Bees
Dwarfing Peaches

It's easy to join our Midfex Forum and it's free with your membership. Here's how you do it:

Go to the following web site:

<http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/midfex>

When you open up that web site, you will see a form with various options. You want to go to the section that says "Subscribing to Midfex". Fill in the information, your email address, name, and password you would like to use (the system will assign you one if you don't). Click on the submit button.

I will then receive your request as forum manager. Once I approve your subscription (automatic for Midfex members), you will be notified of acceptance with an email. You will then be able to enter the message list area using your email address and password, send and receive forum messages.

Also, if any Midfex member has changed their email address or added a new one, please notify me at: midfex@comcast.net

Note: Your email address is kept confidential and you will not receive any advertising or spam because of your link to Midfex. Another added benefit of having your email shared with us is the periodic Electronic Bulletin I send out giving additional announcements between your issues of the Grapevine. I also throw in several web references to fruit growing topics found on the web.

Your membership may be expiring! Check your Grapevine address label for your membership expiration date. If it says "6/30/2009" or earlier, then it is time to renew. Mail the form below.

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

MidFEx Membership Application

New Member Renewing Member

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 dates:

June 13th (Sat), 1:30 pm	Orchard Tour, Ron Malcom's in Barrington
June 20th (Sat), 1:30 pm	Orchard Tour, Rod Beary's in Oswego
June 28th (Sun), 1:30 pm	Orchard Tour, Tim Hamilton's in Gurnee
July 19 (Sun), setup 11 am, picnic noon	Summer picnic at Ron Malcolm's in Inverness (Barrington)
July 19th (Sun), 4 pm	Orchard Tour, Usha Murarka's in Barrington
August 9th (Sun), 1:30 pm	Pruning Workshop, Spring Brook Nature Center, Itasca
August 12	Grapevine submissions due for September issue
September 13th (Sun), 1:30 pm	Orchard Tour, Arnold and Sherwin Dubren's in Morton Grove
October 17-18, 2009	Fall Harvest Festival at Chicago Botanic Garden

MidFEx Officers and Contacts 2009-10

President: Phil Hahn	Vice-President: Position Open
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!): Phil Hahn, Jeff Postlewaite, Bill Shoemaker and Michael Zost.	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: 8/12/09. Please e-mail articles to Robin's address above and type "GRAPEVINE" in the subject header.	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