

President's Message by: Phil Hahn

The February teaser has come and gone. As a youngster I recall local ice-skating ponds usable well into late February. With the exception of spring '08, a few February days in the 50's (or even 60's) have become the norm. I wonder if last year's high bloom rate and fruit set was at least partially due to the consistent winter temperatures of '07/08. There does not appear to be any noticeable bud swell here in the south suburbs due to the short heat wave.

The January meeting/presentation was well attended – almost 40 members and at least 15 public attendees. The format of Backyard Orchardring for our January public offering may be one we want to repeat...so dust off your camera and start taking pictures! Suggestion: Select an individual fruiting plant and document it weekly all the way from spring dormancy to fall dormancy. Consider going digital if you have not yet done so. Excellent digital cameras are available for well under \$100 and you don't even need a computer to view, sort and print your work. The kiosks at your local drug store can do that.

Grafting Workshops

It's time to start cutting scion wood for the grafting workshops (March 22, Cantigny and March 29 Chicago Botanic). If you have some scion wood to offer but won't be at the first workshop – find a way to get it to a member that will be attending. We all like to see an extensive selection at both workshops. An 8 ½ x 11 poster for the workshops will be available on our web site for downloading. If you are able to print and post some in your community, please do so. Or...call another member to print some for you. You can also download and print one at a library, usually with the help of staff...or any nearby 12 year old. Make as many copies as you need, if possible, use color card stock.

June Yard Tours

Our June issue will identify a date (and rain date) for member yard tours. We still need more member hosts - the more the better. It's not expected that all visitors will visit every yard, so your geographic location is not an issue. Call me at 708-333-2679 or email at hahnx5@aol.com.

Summer Picnic – Sunday, July 19, 2009

The location is Ron Malcolm's 'estate' in Barrington. Ron literally has a 5-acre arboretum that includes his collection of conifer species as well as a large assortment of tree fruits and berries. It's been several years since we've had a picnic there and for newer members, its not to be missed. Ron Malcolm and Chris Holland are this year's picnic organizers.

Pruning Workshop(s)

We'll be having at least one pruning workshop this summer at the Itasca Nature Center. This Itasca orchard has mature apple trees that are always in need of pruning and provide an excellent learning/ practicum opportunity. Another pruning workshop venue may become available on second date. Watch the June Grapevine for dates and directions.

Phil

The Bad Guys

By: Al Cosnow

We all know where the Good Guys were this winter. Here's where the bad guys spend their winter:

CODLING MOTH As full-grown larvae (in "diapause", a winter resting phase) in cocoons under loose bark on trunk (woodpeckers can get them there) and the base of the tree, sometimes on the ground nearby. In mid-spring they become a true pupa, and after 2-4 weeks the adult moths emerge.

APPLE MAGGOT As pupae in top 2-3 inches of soil.

PLUM CURCULIO Under leaves, along fence rows, in brush piles, in rock walls, and other protected places.

It becomes apparent, then, that dormant oil spray can be helpful against codling moth, but not against apple maggot or curculio

Spray Guides Online By: Jeff Postlewaite

While investigating where someone could purchase the "Midwest Tree Fruit Spray Guide" I discovered that Purdue has made it available to read and print online at:
http://www.hort.purdue.edu/hort/ext/sfg/sfg_sprayguide.html

Also available at the same address are the "Midwest Small Fruit Pest Management Handbook" and the "Midwest Tree Fruit Pest Management Handbook".

Regardless of whether one uses chemical pest controls or not, these publications do a good job describing the life cycle of pests and diseases.

The commercial guides include calculations involving acres to help the large grower estimate the amount of mixed spray that will be needed to cover all their trees. Not so much a problem for us smaller growers who can mix a gallon or 2 and then mix some more if it's not enough.

There is some calculation necessary to convert from the pounds or pints per 100 gallons that the commercial guides use to teaspoons or tablespoons per gallon that we need. The Iowa Extension Midwest Commercial Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide has a handy table for making these calculations. See:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/PM1375.pdf>

Great Reading on Honey Bees By: Chris Andersen

There is much activity in that subject area including a national group called Native Pollinators in Agriculture Project.

<http://www.agpollinators.org>

They seem to be focused on industrial scale pollination but it trickles down to hobbyist if the information is good. They are having a conference later this month near Washington DC and the program speakers range from government to academia.

http://www.agpollinators.org/forum_program.html

Grafting Workshops

The 2009 MidFEx grafting workshops will be held on the following Sundays: March 22 and March 29. The lecture and demonstration (starts promptly at 1:00 PM) will be followed by a practice session; individual help with grafting will also be offered. For information and reservations, please contact Jeff Postlewaite. Volunteers are also still needed to help at the sessions, especially at Cantigny in the morning!

Remember: Due to limited space, only individuals actually grafting fruit trees will be allowed in the grafting area. Friends, spouses and children are welcome, but should bring a good book or explore the grounds during the sessions.

Rootstocks will be priced at \$4.00 each at the sessions. **Please remember our procedure:** 1 free piece of scion wood is allowed for each rootstock purchased. At the end of the last grafting session at Chicago Botanic Garden, the remaining scion wood will be available to MidFEx members for free; nonmembers will be charged \$0.50 for each additional piece of scion.

March 22, 2009: MidFEx grafting session at Cantigny Greenhouse. Morning for setup members only: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Afternoon sessions for beginning grafters and non-members: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (lecture begins at 1:00; you MUST attend the lecture from the beginning if you are new to grafting). Reach the greenhouse by going west from Wheaton on Roosevelt Road (Illinois 38). Turn south on Shaffner about 300 yards (the only road south between the stop lights on County Farm Road and Winfield Road). Look for sign on west side. Parking is free if you enter at the Shaffner gate. If you use any other entrance, you will have to pay a fee and will have a long walk.

Alternative Cantigny directions: To reach Roosevelt Road from Route 88 (East West Tollway) take the Winfield Rd exit. Turn north on Winfield Rd. After a while and a number of lights you will pass the main entrance to Cantigny on your right. The next light is Roosevelt Rd (Illinois 38). Turn right or east on Roosevelt Rd. The next road on your right is Schaffner Rd. Turn south on Schaffner Rd. Continue as above.

March 29, 2009: MidFEx grafting session at the Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe. Exit either Edens Expressway (94) or Tri-State Tollway (294) onto Lake Cook Road and head east. The CBG entrance is on the south side of Lake Cook Road, just east of the Edens (41). Park, then go to the Education Building. Morning session is for set up and for grafting-experienced members only: 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. See President's message for more details. Afternoon sessions for beginning grafters and non-members: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (lecture begins at 1:00; you MUST attend the lecture from the beginning if you are new to grafting). **Non-Chicago Botanic Garden members: parking is now \$20/car.**

Grafting supplies will be sold at both workshops. We WILL have Osmia bees available at the workshops this year.

GRAFTING WORKSHOP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance is needed for the grafting workshops for the following tasks:

Bagging rootstock. The rootstock is shipped from vendors in bulk. We individually wrap the rootstocks on the mornings of the workshops. A perk for volunteers is early selection of their pre-ordered rootstock.

Staffing workshop. We need members at the workshops to distribute rootstock, scion wood, and grafting supplies. We also need members with grafting experience to review grafts of novice grafters.

If you can assist with any of the above tasks please call Jeff Postlewaite (708 596-7139 or Jeff@FrugalFarm.com) to let him know how and when you can help.

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 year's 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.

Grafting Workshops Update By: Jeff Postlewaite

We will have the following rootstocks available at the workshops this year:

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.
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.
	Quince C	Perhaps the most dwarfing at about 30%. Good for espalier. 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.

Note: The workshop order form in the December Grapevine listed OHXF513 pear. We will have OHXF333 pear as a substitute. They are comparably dwarfing. We will also have OHXF97 rootstock available for the first time. Oriana believes OHXF97 may be a better rootstock for Asian pear. Though OHXF97 is more vigorous than OHXF333 (or OHXF513), Asian pears begin bearing fruit when the tree is young thus effectively stunting the tree size. Anyone that has already ordered pear rootstock will have the option to select any of the available rootstocks.

Workshop attendees are reminded to bring a sharp thin bladed knife with a 2-3 inch blade for grafting. We will have grafting knives for sale to those that don't have a knife or find that theirs is not up to the task.

Advanced Grafting Techniques Demo By: Oriana Kruszewski

For members who already have grafting experience: At the 2nd grafting workshop (11:00 am March 29th - Chicago Botanic Garden), members are encouraged to bring in their grafting problems or failures; our experienced members can comment as to what may have gone wrong. We also will give a demonstration on other grafting techniques (including that for those needing to repair their trees damaged by rabbits), like "Bridge Graft" to save damaged trunk and "Step Graft" onto short or unmatch size rootstock and top-working. Topics will only concentrate on grafting specially targeted for those (members only) who have gone thru the grafting workshop before.

Members are also welcome to show their favor grafting technique... this will be a "Show and Tell" session.

Berry Cobbler Recipe By: Phil Hahn

9 inch square pan

Bake at 350 degrees until dough topping looks/tests done (20 to 30 minutes)

In this version the fresh or frozen fruit is cooked, thickened and sweetened in a saucepan. This allows adjustments to thickening and sweetening for various fruits or frozen fruit. The baking is actually just for the biscuit topping. No worries that fruit and dough will reach doneness at different times.

Mix in a 2 quart saucepan:

1 ¼ cup sugar

3 TBS cornstarch

Stir in:

4 cups fruit

1/8 cup water or juice

Stir constantly over medium heat until mixture thickens and boils. Boil and stir 1 minute. Adjust sugar, water and starch for sweetness and thickness.

Dough:

3 Tbs butter

1 Cup flour

2 Tbs sugar

1 ½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

½ cup milk or buttermilk

Cut shortening into dry ingredients. Gently stir in milk (stir only until flour is mostly moist) - do not overwork dough. Pour fruit mixture into 9x9 baking pan or equivalent. Drop dough by spoonfuls onto hot mixture. Other rolled, dropped or purchased biscuit dough can be used. Dust with granulated sugar. Bake at 350 till biscuits looks done.

Sweet fruits (like blueberry) may take less sugar and slightly less cornstarch.

Gooseberry Hint: to remove the stems and blossom-end "hairs", freeze the berries loose in a zip lock bag filled to half capacity. When rock hard frozen...manipulate, squeeze, rub, drop, throw, etc. the bag while the fruit is hard. Most of the stems and hairs will separate from the fruit. Use a ¼" screen to sift out the stems or pour the fruit into a large bowl (1/2 full about) and use a running water bath to float off the frass.

Summary of Financial Status 01/01/08-12/31/08
By: Jeff Postlewaite

Summary of Income:

Harvest Festival	6,395.50
Grafting Workshops	1,910.00
Memberships	1,480.00
Misc Sales (picnic auction, sales to members)	81.00
Interest	23.00
Total Income:	\$9,889.65

Summary of Expenses:

Harvest Festival	4,343.54
Grafting Workshops	2,325.83
Grapevine	1,685.83
Picnic	704.73
Insurance	379.00
Meeting Expenses (speakers, refreshments, etc.)	709.95
Other Correspondence	233.05
Illinois NFP filing fees	5.00
Bank Charges	20.85
Web Site / Internet	39.57
Video Expenses	51.42
Total Expenses:	\$10,498.77

The Back Saver Grip By: Fred Bairstow

For those of you who appreciate a good hand tool to till the soil, let me tell you about the Back Saver Grip. The grip attaches to turning forks and shovels alike, midway between the top and the bottom of the tool with four bolts; thus distributing the load weight closer to where you lift. The grip's benefits can only be realized by using one for an hour or two, turning the chore into a pleasant workout. I own several grips, all purchased at Ace Hardware, who stores them in their warehouse with the retrieval number ACE SKU 7198682. The manufacturer's catalog number is 10001CS.

MidFEx Annual Business Meeting Minutes - Chicago Botanic Garden January 18, 2009 Submitted By: Chuck Heisinger (Sec'y)

The annual business meeting was called to order by President Phil Hahn at 1:52 p.m. The secretary estimated that 24 people were in attendance.

Minutes from the 2008 annual business meeting were distributed to those in attendance. Said minutes were approved as recorded.

Treasurer's report:

2008	
Revenue:	\$9,889
Expenses:	<u>\$10,499</u>
Income:	\$ (610)
End of Year Balance:	\$13,245

(Continued on next page)

MidFEx Annual Business Meeting Minutes (Continued)

Jeff Postlewaite, our treasurer, explained that books are kept on a cash basis, so that inventory fluctuations may produce uneven annual income levels. He said that two 2007 issues of the Grapevine were paid in 2008.

There was a discussion about investing cash in a certificate of deposit. Jeff will investigate. The treasurer's report will be published in next Grapevine.

On a separate matter, Jeff said that a new Fruit, Berry and Nut Inventory may be published shortly, in time for the grafting workshops.

Committee Reports:

Picnic Committee: Phil said that we need a new committee head. Ron and Al volunteered their orchards for picnic. Phil said that the committee head would make final decision. Oriana mentioned doing something west or south of Chicago. She suggested Franz and Jeff's locations. Ron said that he would do the hauling again (tables, chairs, etc.) (Meeting postscript: Ron agreed to chair the 2009 Summer picnic—Thanks Ron!)

Fall Festival Committee: Phil said that we need member to chair the festival. (Meeting postscript: Michael Zost volunteered to chair the 2009 Fall Festival with Chris Holland assisting—Thanks guys!)

Open house day: Phil said that the club is looking for three "open houses" to host orchard tours. Gene and Ron volunteered their orchards.

Pruning Day Organization: Phil said that one year we had gone to Itasca, which was a good location. Gene added that Itasca was big enough to separate into smaller groups. A question was raised about having enough expert pruners. The benefits of group discussion of pruning strategy was stressed by another member. Sherwin said that Wagner farm may need some pruning at some point.

Osmia bees: Robin has brought bees in past for the group to sell. They are native and live in tubes that we set up for them. We need more sources for bees. She will order some this year and bring to the workshop in spring. Robin said that she wants to get them now before they get out of hibernation. Robin said that her bee source in Washington State had died. Sherwin mentioned that several Internet sources exist, however prices are high for small quantities.

MOTION: "Be it resolved that Midfex buys bees for the spring grafting workshops." Approved. Robin will handle the order.

Old Business:

Grafting workshop timing: Gene said that need to do later in year, probably 3rd or 4th week on April. Jeff said that last year, he grafted trees and put the trees outside IMMEDIATELY. He said that they were not totally protected from elements and that they survived! Oriana said that we need to coordinate the workshop with arrival of rootstock. She said that earlier grafting is helpful, also. Al asked that we refer this discussion to committee, which he will chair.

Scionwood: Ten "mother trees" were planted last year at Rod Beary's. We will need to harvest this year and in the future.

Flower show: The show takes a commitment from at least one person. Oriana has done the show in the past. She is not available this year, but would mentor someone else. March 16 is approximate date of this year's show. The show lasts nine days. The location is Navy Pier. A new show management firm has been hired this year and they are hard to deal with, according to Oriana.

(Continued on Page 9)

Midwest Fruit Explorers membership application form

Name: _____
(please print)

Address: _____
street address

city, state, zip

Telephone:

()

E-mail address:

Send: \$10.00 for 1 year
 \$20.00 for 2 years

Make checks payable to: Midwest Fruit Explorers

Please fill out and return application with payment 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.

Note: MidFEx memberships are no longer January-December only. They are now issued quarterly. Check you mailing label for your last membership date.

MidFEx Annual Business Meeting Minutes (Continued)

New Business:

A member mentioned an effort to find urban space (from Neighbor Space) for a community orchard in NW Chicago. They are looking for rootstock for this spring and need experienced people to get things going.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles Heisinger
Secretary

Additional post-meeting information:

Michael Zost volunteered to be coffee chair.

Stephanie Lindemann (CBG) counted 49 people present for the public presentation; 12-15 of which appeared to be visitors.

Your membership may be expiring! Check your Grapevine address label for your membership expiration date. If it says "3/31/2009" 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

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Mark your Calendar, 2009 Dates to Remember. See inside for more details. (Volunteers needed for all events!)	
2009 dates:	
March 22 (Sun)	Grafting workshop, Cantigny Gardens, Wheaton; 8:30 – 1:00 Set up; 1:00 lecture
March 29 (Sun)	Grafting Workshop, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe
May 12	Grapevine submissions due for June issue
June Yard Tour	TBD (See President's Message)
July 19 (Sun)	July picnic at Ron Malcolm's in Barrington (See President's Message)
October TBD, 2009	Fall Harvest Festival 2009 at Chicago Botanic Garden
MidFEx Officers and Contacts 2009-10	
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!): Chris Andersen, Fred Bairstow, Al Cosnow, Phil Hahn, Chuck Heisinger, Oriana Kruszewski and Jeff Postlewaite.	Send anything of interest to Brad Platt for consideration for the web site; call Brad or e-mail at midfexweb@buildabetersite.com
Grapevine articles wanted! Deadline for articles to Robin Guy for next Grapevine: 5/12/09. Please e-mail articles to Robin's address above.	For membership information, see website 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