

President's Message

MidFEx Summer Picnic Past

The July 2009 picnic at Ron Malcom's drew over 50 members and guests. The weather and chickens were perfect. Kudos on the fruit desserts....the principle purpose of MidFEx gatherings to some (all bakers note the cookbook call below). The orchard tour was inspiring and whispers of envy were detected. Everyone pitched in with the picnic set-up and clean-up as is usual with this terrific group. Major thanks to Ron for hosting and to Chris Holland for his legwork.

Anyone wishing to host a future MidFEx picnic or propose a new location please let an officer know. Plantings on the scale of Ron's are not a necessity for a picnic. Setup space, parking availability and good weather are the primary qualifications. Recent non-yard picnics have been at Royal Oak Farm Orchard near Harvard, the U of I Extension Test Facility in St. Charles and the Spring Brook Nature Center in Itasca.

The silent auction had more items and more winners this year. Its always satisfying to find a new home for good stuff... what could be 'greener' than the passing of precocious perennials to prospective pedestrians? One garden's escapee is another garden's trophee.

Fall Harvest Festival – Saturday & Sunday, October 17 & 18

This is our big public event of the year. Long-timers well know how much fun it is and newbies are indoctrinated with a jaw dropping experience. Some of you have probably already harvested some of your early fruit to refrigerate and save for display at the Chicago Botanic Garden Fall Fest. Michael Zost is again the chair and go-to guy for this major MidFEx commitment. Look for his notes inside. Chris Holland has volunteered as Mike's right hand man. Mike or Chris may contact you for specific help with the Friday setup or weekend time slots. If you already know when you'll be attending or when you're available to help, give Mike a call and leave a message with day and time of your availability.

Call for Recipes – The MidFEx Cookbook

Dennis Wang has volunteered to organize and develop a MidFEx Cookbook. At this point we don't know how formal it will be ... membership promo, for sale to public, hard copy, electronic version, photos, no photos, homey, classy, etc. Dennis will propose a strategy at a future meeting. It easily could be a small shiny-cover book to sell to the public at our workshops and Harvest Festival. The primary value is the sharing of member's favorite fruit and garden recipes with like-minders in a kitchen friendly format. So right NOW, jot down on the cover of THIS Grapevine (so you'll remember) a favorite title or two to write up and submit this winter. At this point we'll limit the entries to those that use fruit in some way, even as a minor ingredient. We're not just talking desserts. Don't hesitate to rename a recipe based on its history, its oddity or your sense of humor. Our persimmon pudding recipe came from Patti's grandmother, Cora. So we'll call it Cory's Persimmon Pudding. Cora lived 97 years...and no doubt it was the pudding.

Thinking Ahead – the January Business Meeting

At our January 10, 2010 annual business meeting we will be electing officers and naming committee chairs as necessary. Oriana K., as immediate past president, will be seeking nominations prior to the elections. Positions definitely open this time are: President, Vice President and Secretary. See the officer descriptions inside. This will be a social gathering as well as a business meeting. We'll call it our 'indoor' picnic ... a chance to pull that wonderful fruit out of the freezer/pantry/larder/cellar and sweeten it up. Fruitman cannot live on dessert alone so we'll provide bread, soup and beverage. No formal presentations are planned, as we've reserved Feb 7 at the CBG for a visiting lecturer. Details will be in the December Grapevine for both events. While we're eating we'll have an informal automated slide show of your 2009 photos... are you still taking pictures?

Are You STILL Taking Pictures?

In addition to informative landscapes and descriptive close-ups, how about some humorous shots; odd fruits, exotic fruits, buggy fruits, rotten fruits, fruit traps, bad bugs (close-up), decorated fruits and/or decorated fruit growers. We'll need lots of variety for the indoor picnic slide show so keep your (digital) camera handy and use it often. Don't wait for a sunny day. The best exposures are under an overcast sky and beautiful images can come from cold rained-on gardens. We only have a month-plus to potential frost. Over time we'll add to our beginning library of digital stills to use for presentations, publicity, historical reference, etc. Other ideas: Pull out your previous shots and retake the same one from the exact same position but in a different season. Start now to document a particular plant or tree from youth to maturity... sort of like extended time-lapse photography. It would be great to see (and to show new members) a progression from baby rootstock to fruit bearing and beyond. We also need some pics of your favorite tools...new, old, antique, homemade, small/big, garden sheds (exterior and interior) and tools in action. If you're contemplating moving an established fruit tree or fruit plant, take pictures of the whole process. Think long term...act short term. You'll be getting more pestering from me on this subject.

Phil

Harvest Festival Volunteers Needed

The MidFEx Fall Harvest Festival is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday 17-18 October 2009 from 9 AM to 4:30 PM at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, IL.

The fest serves multiple purposes for the club: it is our primary fund raising event and a chance for members to display their own locally grown fruits and nuts. More importantly it is an opportunity to engage and inform the public and encourage them to also 'grow their own'. From each Harvest Festival we gain numerous members to grow MidFEx as well.

The MidFEx Harvest Festival has worked so well in the past due to the efforts of so many members who volunteer to set up and staff the show. We need your support again this year. If you know you'll be coming please contact either **Mike Zost** (chair) at 847-541-1846 or **Chris Holland** at 630-310-4076 to let them know which day, and which part of the day, you plan to attend. If possible, also consider helping with the Friday setup. If you've never been to a setup, it's a lot of fun and there's plenty to do. Setting up for a show at CBG consists of dozens of small tasks must be completed before the lights go out Friday evening. The more helpers that can be there, even for an hour or two, the earlier Mike and Chris can get some supper.

Membership Dues Changing

Jeff Postlewaite

Members attending the picnic voted to change the dues structure. The current flat rate of \$10 per year will be replaced with a scaled rate. The dues structure for new and renewing members will be \$15 for one year, \$25 for 2 years, or \$30 for 3 years. A member renewing for 3 years at one time will pay the same under the new dues structure as they would have under the old dues structure.

The new dues will take effect January 1, 2010.

Harvest Festival Dates and Times

Friday October 16th
1pm to 4pm

This is the set up time. We'll receive 60+ bushels of apples from Doud's with cider and they need to be off loaded and moved to the cooler.

All of the clubs displays need to be set up along with the cider press and display tables.

Members can bring fruits and nuts. This is the time to set up the display and label the fruit with the variety and your name.

Saturday and Sunday October 17-18
9am to 5pm

This will be the sale. We typically need a minimum of 7 people around at all times. Two to sell apples, two for the cider press operation, one to prepare "butter" samples, one cashier, and one floater in the display area to talk to the public.

Sunday afternoon tear down starts around 4 and usually takes about an hour.

Please help our club and volunteer to work a morning or afternoon shift, or both on Saturday and Sunday. We really need your help this year!

Fruit Needed for Harvest Festival

Bring your apples, pears, plums, pawpaws, persimmons, berries, nuts, etc. that you have grown for display at the Harvest Fest. The items you bring may be offered for sampling mid to late Sunday afternoon. Pick your early ripening fruit pre-prime and refrigerate at 40° F if possible. The fruit needs to be in good condition and should be labeled with your name and the city or location of where the fruit was grown. Ideally, bring the fruit to Burnstein Hall (same place as usual, newer name) Chicago Botanic Garden not later than 3:00 PM on Friday, October 16 for the set up; Contact **Mike Zost** (chair) at 847-541-1846 or **Chris Holland** at 630-310-4076 to confirm the timing. Please consider sticking around to help and enjoy the organized chaos.

Harvest Festival, October 2008



MidFEx Officers' Responsibilities

Serving as a MidFEX officer is not difficult, but it does take some time. As an officer there is always the option to delegate bits and pieces of the necessary legwork to others. The president must focus his/her MidFEX thoughts several months ahead of our more-or-less fixed calendar and adjust or add to it based on inputs from members and personal interests. Acting officers always have former officers and long-time members to consult with on any matter. Be part of the January 10th meeting as a contributor, voter, nominee, etc. by being present. It's the best time to address/discuss new ideas and comment on the past years events, projects and calendar. Cold weather and hot soup guaranteed.

From our Midwest Fruit Explorers Bylaws, officer responsibilities read as follows:

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: the Picnic Committee, the Harvest Festival Committee and MidFEx Photographs

and MidFEx History

SECRETARY – Takes the minutes of the meetings, chairs the Education and Publication Committee. Advisor for: the *Grapevine* and other publications, the Grafting and Propagating Committee and Lectures and Tours.

TREASURER – Performs all duties of treasurer, chairs the Finance Committee, and maintains the Membership List.

Cheddar and Apple Melt Recipe

2 slices Whole wheat bread

1 Apple, peeled and thinly sliced

2 ounces Cheddar cheese, grated

Pepper to taste

Lightly toast the bread. Place the slices on a cookie sheet, and cover each slice with half of the apple slices. Top with grated cheese and pepper if desired, dividing the cheese between the two apple-covered slices of bread. Broil for a few minutes until the cheese is bubbling and browned. Remove and enjoy.



Orchard walk at the Dubren's, September 13th

SweeTango© Has Arrived!

Michael Zost

The apple industry has again a reason to shout out to consumers about the taste of apples by announcing the release of its latest variety the SweeTango©. Yes, there is only one "T" in the name of this sweet-tart delight. Some of us have heard of this apple as the MN 1914 which is a new apple from the University of Minnesota's apple breeding program. They are known for developing the varieties of Fireside, Haralson, Honeygold, and most recently Honeycrisp and Zestar!

They took two of their top apples, the Honeycrisp (the mom) and the Zestar! (the dad) and created a marriage sure to succeed. I had the pleasure of tasting this apple about 2-3 years ago at Wood Orchard in Door County, Wisconsin. It was in limited production then, and they were sampling it to get some honest feedback. They hadn't named it yet when I tasted it and all I could say was, "WOW, what apple is this?" It has the juicy sweetness and crunch of Honeycrisp with a slight tartness and fall spices of Zestar! to create a depth and complexity that will outshine all other commercially produced apples especially for fresh eating. It will definitely be classed as a premium apple and not be available for nationwide consumption until 2011 or 2012. Since it is patented, the home grower will have very limited access to this treat for now.

SweeTango© has a deep rich red color over a yellow breaking background. It has a balanced flavor with vibrant acidity and a long satisfying finish on the palate. It will be available for harvest in late August and early September making it available a week or so earlier than Honeycrisp. This should help satisfy those who enjoy premium apples a little sooner in the season.

To better control the release of SweeTango©, it is being planted only by premier family growers from Nova Scotia and Quebec in Canada, to New York, Michigan, Washington State, Wisconsin, and of course Minnesota. The only orchard in Wisconsin that will have SweeTango© to grow and sell is Wood Orchard in Door County, Wisconsin. Should you have more interest in this awesome new entry into the apple family, go to www.sweetango.com or www.apples.umn.edu. Should you be fortunate to sink your teeth into a SweeTango©, be sure to relish it and share your experience with others in the MidFex family.

Al Cosnow's Famous Flaky Pie Crust

This recipe makes plenty enough for top and bottom crust.

2 1/3 cups unsifted all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp salt
2 to 3 Tbsp confectioner's sugar (I use all 3)
1/4 lb partially frozen unsalted butter, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
1/4 lb partially frozen unsalted margarine, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
1/4 cup ice water, or more as needed

In a food processor, blend the dry ingredients.

Add the fats, and pulse until the dough looks like coarse crumbs. Don't overdo it; the dough must be crumbly, not pasty.

Start the processor, immediately add the water, and stop as soon as it is added. Don't allow the dough to form a mass. Feel the dough; when a little is squeezed between the fingers, it should stick together, but the dough as a whole should still appear crumbly. This is a judgment call; you may or may not need to add more water as before.

Dump the dough onto a floured surface, and with floured hands form it into two mounds or discs (one for a bottom crust and one for the top).

Wrap the mounds in plastic wrap and refrigerate them. The dough must rest and chill for at least an hour before it is ready to be rolled out.

The dough is fine refrigerated for at least a week, and can be kept frozen for a long time.

Note: When rolling pie dough, it is a good idea to have the board and rolling pin chilled in advance to keep the dough cold as you work with it.

Note: People kept telling me that lard gives a more flaky texture, so I finally tried it, using margarine as before, but substituting 1/4 lb lard for the butter. It did indeed give a flakier texture, but sort of bland, and I missed the buttery taste, so now I've gone back to half butter, half margarine.

Note: If you buy crusts, buy the Pillsbury (in the refrigerated section). It is much better than the frozen Pet brand crust.

Grilled Chicken and Apple Sandwiches

1-2 (depending on size) cooked skinless chicken breast (cubed or shredded)
1/3 cup Mayonnaise
1-1/2 cups Grated Swiss cheese
2 stalks Celery, chopped
1-2 Apples, finely chopped
Whole wheat bread
Softened butter

In a small bowl, combine chicken, mayonnaise, Swiss cheese, lemon juice, celery and apple. This can be used as is as a salad or a filling for the sandwich. If make sandwiches, spread outside of sandwiches with butter. Grill the sandwiches, in a nonstick skillet, covered, over medium heat, turning once or in a dual sided indoor grill until cheese begins to melt and bread is toasted.

Carmel Apple Pizza Recipe

1 Tube refrigerated sugar cookie dough
8 oz Cream cheese
1/2 cup Peanut butter
1/2 cup Packed brown sugar
2 tbsp Milk
4 cups Sliced, peeled tart apples (about 3 large)
1 can Lemon-lime soda
1 tsp Ground cinnamon
1/2 cup Caramel ice cream topping
1/3 cup Chopped pecans

Press cookie dough into greased 14 inch pizza pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Cool. Run large knife under cookie and loosen from pan

In mixing bowl beat peanut butter, cream cheese, brown sugar and milk until smooth. Spread over cooled crust.

In bowl, combine apple slices and soda. Drain well. Toss apples with cinnamon and arrange over cream cheese. Drizzle with caramel topping and pecans. Cut into wedges.

Sign Up for the Forum Now Sherwin Dubren

Some members of Midfex are getting lots of use out of the forum with questions, comments, etc. It's easy to post your items to the forum by sending an email to:

midfex@lists.ibiblio.org

I have had some sign up problems with certain members due to the verification of memberships. We do not allow non-Midfex people to join our forum, so I have to be sure of memberships before allowing people in. This is especially difficult for new members. They should understand that I cannot approve their applications for forum membership until I can verify with out treasurer that they have signed up. Existing members do not have this problem, as I have an updated list of all members to check against. Even so, it can be awkward because the requests for sign up coming from Ibiblio (the forum service provider) do not give the name of the requester, only their email address. There may be a delay in membership approval until this can all be verified. If I can recognize the email address, I will immediately approve the request. The other problems that come up are when people change their email addresses without notifying us. I keep the master list of email addresses, so direct such changes to me at sherwindu@comcast.net.

Don't forget that you can post pictures on our forum if you create a web reference and embed that in the message. Photobucket is one such provider of free photo references. For those who want to join, do the following:

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 system 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.

Any further questions can be addressed to my email: sherwindu@comcast.net

Escaloped Apples Recipe

3 lbs. Granny smith cooking apples
 1 cup Sugar
 1/2 teaspoon Salt
 1/4 teaspoon Cinnamon
 1/3 cup Flour+ 1 tablespoon Flour
 2 tablespoons melted butter

Peel and core apples. Cut into large cubes about 1/2-3/4 inches. Mix all dry ingredients. Pour over apples and mix well. Drizzle melted butter over apples. COVER and bake 40 minutes. Remove cover and mix gently, using rubber spatula. Bake another 20 minutes UNCOVERED. Baked at 350 degrees in a greased 2 quart casserole. If baked too long covered you will have applesauce.

Crockpot Apple Recipe

2 cups water
 16 peeled and sliced apples
 Optional: Sugar and Red Hot cinnamon candies to taste

Fill the crockpot with apples, add water and cook on low overnight, or all day.

Your membership may be expiring! Check your Grapevine address label for your membership expiration date. If it says "9/30/2009" 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.

Apple Storage Hints - Sorting

Always handle apples carefully, to avoid bruising them. Apples with even small bruises must never be stored with "keepers." Only perfect apples should be used for long-term storage. Even minor imperfections speed spoilage. Check each apple for cut skin, soft spots, or bruises. Sort the best culls into a box to be eaten right away. If there are too many, make apple pie filling out of the excess. Use culls with extensive blemishes for cider. Or cut out any really gross parts and make applesauce.

Apple Storage Hints – Storage

To avoid premature rotting, prevent contact between apples stored for the winter. Wrap individually with paper to prevent contact between apples, so just one rotten apple won't spoil the whole bunch. Placed wrapped apples in boxes. Boxed apples need to be kept in a cool, dark spot where they won't freeze. Apples freeze at a temperature between 27.8° and 29.4°F, and frozen fruit deteriorates rapidly. Freezing ruptures all of an apple's cells, turning it into one large bruise overnight.

Mark your Calendar 2009 and 2010 Dates to Remember. See inside for more details. (Volunteers needed for all events!)

2009	
October 17-18, 2009	Fall Harvest Festival at Chicago Botanic Garden
November 12, 2009	Grapevine submissions due for December issue
2010	
January 10, 2010 (Sun)	1:00 pm Annual Business meeting and Soup Bowl luncheon; location: TBD
February 7, 2010 (Sun)	2:00 pm Kurle Memorial Lecture, Chicago Botanic Garden, Speaker TBD
March 14, 2010 (Sun)	Grafting workshop, Cantigny Gardens, Wheaton
March 21, 2010 (Sun)	Grafting Workshop, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe
June meeting	TBD
July picnic	TBD

MidFEx Officers and Contacts 2009

President: Phil Hahn Secretary: Chuck Heisinger	Vice-President: Position Open 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, Sherwin Dubren 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: 11/12/09. 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
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First Class