



Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation

June, 2014

Lee Reich to Speak August 9th

Author Lee Reich will be speaking on “Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden” and leading a subsequent tour of the espalier in the WWFRF demonstration fruit garden, Saturday, August 9, 2014, from 11 am until 2:30 pm at the Washington State University Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center (WSU Mount Vernon NWREC), 16650 State Route 536, Mount Vernon, Washington.

Lee will introduce some fruits, such as pawpaw, medlar, Nanking Cherry, and persimmon that are not well known, but have delectable flavors and are easy to grow. These uncommon fruits are cold hardy, laugh off pests, and require little, in some cases, no, pruning. And if that’s not enough: some of these fruits—hardy kiwi, juneberry, and cornelian cherry, for example—are borne on ornamental plants, perfect for “luscious landscaping.” Lee will and the audience will discuss which of these unusual fruits have proven to work best for our area. Lee’s presentation will be followed by a book signing and then he will then discuss espalier during a tour of the WWFRF Fruit Garden.

Lee Reich, PhD is an avid farmdener (more than a garden, less than a farm) who turned from plant and soil research with the USDA and Cornell University to writing, lecturing, and consulting. His books include *A NORTHEAST GARDENER’S YEAR*, *THE PRUNING BOOK*, *WEEDLESS GARDENING*, *UNCOMMON FRUITS FOR EVERY GARDEN*,

LANDSCAPING WITH FRUIT, and *GROW FRUIT NATURALLY*. His writing has appeared in such publications as *Fine Gardening* and *Horticulture*, and his gardening column for Associated Press appears bimonthly from coast to coast. His farmden is a test site for innovative techniques in soil care, pruning, and growing fruits and vegetables, and has been featured in *Martha Stewart Living* and *The New York Times*.



See Lee Reich's article on page 5 of this newsletter.

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WWFRF Financial Report: January – May, 2014

By Mike Ewanciw, WWFRF Treasurer, Board Member

Beginning Balance	\$ 42423.28
Revenue	\$ 4893.98
Expense	\$ 4825.96
Net Income	\$ 68.02
Ending Balance (5/31/2014)	\$ 42491.30

<u>Revenue</u>	
Membership Dues	2975.98
Field Days	1760.00
Fruit Booth	158.00
Total Income	4893.98

<u>Expenses</u>	
Newsletter Expenses	432.24
Field Day Expenses	2221.35
NW Flower & Garden	218.08
Fruit Garden Expenses	653.29
Insurance	1301.00
Total Expenses	4825.96

<u>Net Income</u>
\$ 68.02



Fun in the Fruit Garden

Fruit Garden volunteer Larry Crum is experimenting with fruit thinning to see if he can control the size of the huge Wolf River apple by leaving several fruits in a cluster.

Fruit Garden volunteers have many learning opportunities in the Garden. Join the volunteers Thursday mornings at 9:00 am in the Garden for fun, friends, learning, and the opportunity to serve your community.

If you would like to volunteer in the Fruit Garden contact Tom Wake at thomas.wake@att.net

Split Plum Tree Revisited

by Kim Siebert

When we had the big snow in January, 2012, my Methley plum tree had a heavy load of snow on it and one of the branches split down to the ground. I thought that the branch was a total loss, but one day I discovered that my electrician husband had repaired the tree with rope and electrical tape. That summer the tree had a luscious crop, even on the branch which had been on the ground.



We realized that we needed to put tubing on the rope where it was touching the tree but procrastination set in and we didn't get around to doing it until this spring when the tree had nearly grown around the rope. Here are some shots of the damage and the new support, along with a photo of the tree, which is doing very well. The ladder is left out by the tree because I have been thinning. Methley tends to have a very heavy set.



The electrical tape is still on the trunk and I have no idea if it helps anything or not.



On our website you can see this article with the photos in color. They may not show up so well in black and white.

PLEASE SEND YOUR DONATION ALONG WITH THIS FORM

Enclosed is my gift of:

☐ \$5000 ☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 \$_____ (Make check payable to WWFRF)

To make a donation by credit card go to: NWFFruit.org and click on support.

Please designate my monetary gift toward: ☐ Where it is needed most!
☐ Fruit Display Garden
☐ Fruit Variety Trials
☐ Sampling and Field Days

I would like to volunteer! ☐ In the Fruit Garden
☐ To help with Summer Fruit Festival
☐ On sampling and field days
☐ By doing work that can be done from my home

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email address _____ Phone # _____

Please make my gift: ☐ In Honor of: ☐ In Memory of:

(Name of person) _____

Address of person or person's family (So we can notify them) _____

Thank you.

Please send to: **WWFRF**

**C/O Christy Nieto
2609 Cedarwood Ave
Bellingham, WA 98225**

Your gift is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.
Please consult your tax accountant for details.

**Credit cards accepted through PayPal! Just go to our
website and click on *support-donate* to make a donation.**

Board Meeting July 19, 2014 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am before the espalier event. All members welcome. Check website to confirm that the meeting will be held in the Gazebo.



**Espalier Workshop in the
Fruit Garden**

Saturday, July 19th
11:00 - 3:00

\$10 for non-members (free to WWFRF members)
Preregistration required: contact Kristan Johnson
at fruitgarden@olympus.net

Bring your pruners! Learn how to help espalier specialist Kristan Johnson prune and shape over 1,000 feet of espaliers in this 6 acre Fruit Garden! This will get you started and better prepared for Lee Reich's Espalier Fruit Garden tour on Aug 9th.

Fruits may need thinning for growth, flavor

LEE REICH

Published: Jun 25, 2013



In this Sunday, June 16, 2013 photo, a person hand-thins apple fruits on a tree in New Paltz, New York. Now is the time to start looking over your trees and "thinning," that is, removing, excess fruitlets. Focus your energy on larger fruits, such as apples, pears, and peaches, because thinning would be too tedious -- and fortunately, has little effect -- on small fruits such as cherries and small plums. (AP Photo/Lee Reich)

Fruit trees that were so full of blossoms this spring that they looked like giant snowballs foretell a heavy crop of fruit later this year.

Too heavy.

Too much, perhaps, for the branches to support. And surely so heavy that next year's harvest could be paltry.

Some fruit trees are prone to a feast-and-famine cycle - a heavy crop one year and a light crop the next. My Macoun apple tree is one of the worst in this regard among the score or so apple varieties that I grow.

Fortunately, this tendency toward "biennial bearing" can be reined in.

BLAME IT ON HORMONES

Hormones produced in fruit seeds are to blame for biennial bearing. The hormones suppress flower-bud formation, which begins in fruit trees the year before the flowers actually unfold. So a heavy crop one year - and, hence, a lot of seeds - quells flower-bud formation that year, and flowering and fruiting the next year. In a year with few fruits, hormone levels stay low, so many flower buds are initiated and in the next year trees are a riot of blooms.

The way to thwart this feast-and-famine tendency is to reduce the number of fruits in a tree's "feast" year.

Pruning is one way to do it - cutting off some stems that would have flowered and gone on to bear fruit. The time for pruning most fruit trees is past, though; it was back in late winter and early spring, before growth began again.

Pruning, of course, has effects beyond those on biennial bearing, and each kind of fruit tree has its own pruning needs. Still, as you prune to open a tree up to light and air, and to control its size, you are also removing potential fruits and seeds. And shortening branches puts remaining fruits closer to the trunk, where they are less likely to break a limb.

But pruning alone is generally not enough to get a fruit tree out of a bad habit. Now is the time to start looking over your trees and "thinning" - that is, removing - excess fruitlets. Focus your energy on larger fruits, such as apples, pears and peaches, because thinning would be too tedious - and has little effect - on small fruits such as cherries and small plums.

TAKE MATTERS IN HAND

The sooner you begin thinning, the greater the benefit next year, especially with apple trees. I use my thumbnail or

a pointy pair of flower shears. If you have a lot of trees, you might opt for more labor-saving methods, such as blasts of water from a hose or batting the flowers with a piece of hose slid over the end of a broomstick. Many commercial orchardists thin their fruits with chemical sprays.

No need to complete all the fruit thinning in one session. Ideally, do it in two waves. The first is after fruits begin to form. The second is right after June drop.

After carrying extra fruitlets to get it through spring frosts and other early-season calamities, a tree gives a sigh of relief that danger has past, and decides it's OK to shed some fruits. Once that happens, look over your trees and put a few inches of space between each developing fruit, selectively saving those that are largest and most free of blemishes.

FURTHER REWARDS

Fruit thinning has other benefits, too. It reduces pests, such as codling moth - the "worm" in an apple - because Ms. Codling prefers to lay eggs in apples that are touching each other.

Fruit thinning also lets the tree pump more energy, which translates into bigger size and better flavor, into those fruits that remain.

If you grow Asian pears and want to grow good-tasting ones, be especially bold with fruit thinning. These trees tend to bear heavily, and without bold thinning, the fruits are almost tasteless. Put a few inches between one fruit and the next, and their taste will be ambrosial.

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Peaches in Puget Sound – One Homeowner's Experience

By Darlene Granberg



I grew up sharing the experience of canning peaches every summer with my mom, so upon adulthood, I had to plant my own peach tree in my yard. I have now tried growing peaches in two areas in Western Washington, Pierce and Snohomish County, and had success – for a few years. I planted “Frost” peaches in both locations because I understood them to be the most resistant to the dreaded peach leaf curl, which is a pervasive problem in Western Washington. However, in both locations, the trees have been challenging and short lived.

My first tree was planted as a new homeowner with no knowledge or research on fruit trees. The first was plagued by “Darlene’s pruning skills” followed by the Winter of 2000. That ended in the demise that tree. I suspect the pruning skills were the greater problem as to look at the tree it truly looked a bit butchered. Thankfully, my pruning skills have improved somewhat thanks to demonstrations at WWFRF and other good resources.

My newest tree in Snohomish County has done quite well until recently. I have even managed to can a considerable sized crop off the one tree on several occasions. It has survived since 2004 in the warmest microclimate in the yard,

south exposure with reflected heat from the house, in the only spot in the yard that truly gets sun all day long. It has produced fruit every year but one. This year; however, it has shown signs of peach leaf curl and severe disease/winter damage (adequate diagnostician I am not). My peach tree leafed out wonderfully and started to set fruit. However, a few weeks ago I went to inspect the tree and found two large splits in the trunk. In recent days the leaves have begun to droop, and the fruit that had begun to set has dropped. I suspect a date with a chainsaw is in the tree's future.

After considerable time reading the Pacific Northwest Disease Management Handbook, I have been unable to determine what plagues the tree – if it might indeed be more than winter damage, a very large fruit set a year ago that I failed to thin (that obviously impacted the strength of the tree), or disease. The splits, however, are in an area of suffered for the overly heavy fruit set of a year ago and gets a direct hit from winter and summer sun. They appeared an area I was concerned about previously, so I was not surprised when the damage appeared.

What I have determined is that there are lot of diseases that can impact a peach tree in Western Washington (Bacterial blight, *Pseudomonas syringae*, Cytospora Canker, Peach Leaf Curl to name a few) and that if I truly want to grow peaches successfully, it takes a bit of learning, dedication, and a real desire to grow peaches. Lessons learned: disease resistant varieties learn to prune, and thin the fruit! And, oh yes, plant another peach tree!

Editor's note: Does anyone know what is affecting Darlene's tree? Email me at kimsiebert@gmail.com and I will put it in the next newsletter.

WWFRF Board Meeting

February 8, 2014 10:00pm – 12:00pm

Held at 500 Westlake in Seattle

Board members present: Sue Williams, Kristan Johnson, Bob Baines, Kim Siebert, Sam Benowitz, Darlene Granberg, Mike Ewanciw, John Valentine, Ira Collins

On speakerphone: Jay Scott

Treasurer's Report – Kristan motioned that we give an annual honorarium of \$300 or less to Bill Davis for his fruit sales and other activities on behalf of WWFRF, to be formalized in a signed document, seconded by Bob. Passed unanimously. Bill spends considerable time and money for transportation for these activities.

We will have to pay \$750 extra for the rental of the facility at NWREC for the Winter Field Day this year because Carol will no longer be associated with us and we have no other NWREC person at this time to take her place at the field day.

We will discuss the 2014 budget and special projects at the May Board Meeting.

Membership - The February newsletter was mailed to 195 members. Our last event, the Apple and Pear Day, was more successful than years past due to Wide publicity, thanks to Darlene, bill and Mike. Check out our Facebook page; Darlene has done a phenomenal job creating traffic and sharing the event with other organizations.

Several Board Members and perhaps other active members will speak briefly before the talks at the Winter Field Day to tell about what they do and how volunteers can be involved with helping in specific tasks. Bob will go first and introduce the subject and pitch for helpers for Bill Davis' jobs, since Bill will be at the grafting booth.

Marketing and Promotions - Kathy and Kim at the NWREC office can help with promotion – there is a magazine

put out by WSU that we can have our events listed in. Darlene is to contact them with our event information.

We may try Face book page advertising which sends out to people who have liked your page. You set your budget. There is a minimum per "boost" and it keeps going until the money runs out.

Tom has been contacted by a local professor of agriculture about student participation in the Garden. Tom would like to step down as Garden Manager so we need to start moving one or two new people into the position.

We need to have a better explanation of the Student Membership on the website. Possibly we could have \$100 group memberships from colleges for their agriculture students as another option in addition to the \$15 student membership. This membership would include only one paper copy of the newsletter, but they could print more from the website copy. First we will talk with Christy about how such memberships might be administrated to see if it would work out.

In outreach to the colleges we will use the publicity points from the November, 2013 meeting.

We need to get an inventory list of what plant material is in the Garden for the website from De Arbogast, and post on the website that when a person volunteers in the Garden they have access to these varieties.

We need to get the publicity points up on the website.

Winter Field Day - Perhaps Harry Burton will Stay with Jay Scott. We need to confirm the Cider scionwood for the Winter Field Day. We need to send copies of our email regarding things to do with NWREC to Dan Gorton. We also need to contact him about getting the sawdust for the roostocks.

Mason Bees will be in a classroom – Sue will be in charge of the extra room.

Everyone to bring pot luck for lunch.

Sam will introduce Preston Andrews as he is familiar with his work.

WWFRF General Membership Meeting

March 1, 2014

Held at the Winter Field Day

Board members present: Sue Williams, JoeAnne Hilgart, Bob Baines, Kristan Johnson, Jay Scott, Kim Siebert, Mike Ewanciw, Hazel Sittner, Ira Collins, Christy Nieto, Sam Benowitz, John Valentine, Darlene Grandberg

Goals: - Sue – Sue read our official goals and mentioned the list that we created at the November, 2013 meeting of what we have to offer. The following is the list.

1. We have a Fruit Garden which gives unique opportunities for hands on experience in pruning, grafting and pest control.
2. We have a large collection of fruit with many unique varieties in our Fruit Garden.
3. We have weekly work parties for learning.
4. We have education vetted by WSU.
5. We have a premier espalier.

We have opportunities to sample many varieties of fruit.

Board Members – Mignonne Bivin has agreed to serve on the WWFRF board of directors.

Bob Bains, Kim Siebert, Sue Williams, Sam Benowitz, Jay Scott and Mignonne Bivin were nominated by Sam

Benowitz and seconded by Tom Wake to be board members. Passed unanimously.

Hazel Sittner was appointed to the board in September, 2012, her term will end in 2015.

Volunteers – Member Carrie Stevens said that the information about how to volunteer needs to be improved in the newsletter and on the website. She will work with Kim Siebert to improve these areas. We need a general volunteer coordinator, but no one has volunteered for the job so far.

End of General Membership Meeting

Begin Board Meeting

Board members present: Sue Williams, Bob Baines, Kristan Johnson, Jay Scott, Kim Siebert, Mike Ewanciw, Ira Collins, Christy Nieto, John Valentine, Darlene Granberg, Mignonne Bivin, Sam Benowitz

The following slate for officers was nominated by Bob, seconded by Kristan:

Coordinating Secretary: Ira Collins

Recording/corresponding Secretary: Kim Siebert

Treasurer: Mike Ewanciw

Passed unanimously.

Sue Williams will be retiring from the President's position. She is willing to hold the position for a month or so while we find a new president. No one at the meeting volunteered to be president. We will need to find a president and vice-president soon.

Budget – Mike has sent out the budget for 2014 for review.

Cherry Day Event is Canceled for 2014

Due to ongoing SWD research the Cherry Day Event is canceled. We do have two other exciting events to attend this summer: Espalier workshop and Lee Reich speaking event.

A Fruit Garden Moment



Hazel Sittner sharing Florence Simm's Haskap canapé

Tasting my first *Blue Honeysuckles* yesterday at the Fruit Garden was well worth the years of waiting for the bushes to mature. Similar in growth and appearance to blueberries, the cylindrical blue fruits of these honeysuckles ripen extremely early, even before strawberries.

It was a very unique opportunity to be able to stroll the garden and compare both the Japanese Haskap (*Lonicera caerulea* var. *emphyllocalyx*) and Russian honeyberry (*L. caerulea* var. *kamtchatica* and var. *edulis*). I liked the Haskaps I tasted, but the "Honeyberries" are still very young, and we'll need to do

a real comparison of the different varieties of each in a couple of years.

We topped it off during the Thursday work party's mid-morning break by savoring Florence Simm's Haskap jam topped canapés! *Kristan Johnson*

Fruit Garden Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 5, 2014

Attendees: Kristan Johnson (chair), Tom Wake, Jay Scott, Hazel Sittner, De Arbogast, Sam Benowitz (phone), Sue Williams, Dan Gorton, and James Wisswaesser.

The Fruit Garden Committee discussed revising the system we use for selecting new trees (to replace the many peaches and cherries that have recently died). We are updating our plant inventory and developing new criteria for selecting new additions. Although this will be a flexible set of filters, it currently lists the following: New to the Fruit Garden, Good Keeping qualities, High Value to membership, Ease of Maintenance, Disease Resistance, Size at maturity, and Positive Test Results from our trials at Mt. Vernon. Sam Benowitz is donating 2 trees this year: a Suij Pear on OHF (an excellent keeper) and a Pound apple (which dates back to Roman Times).

We reviewed the Fruit Garden Management Plan and discussed various weed suppression strategies, particularly focusing on the blueberries (as we are preparing to net them soon, making it much more difficult to deal with the weeds). Our plan is to develop and test different weed suppression strategies including: Carpet Mulch System using a layer of heavy paper/cardboard, layer of mulch then material such as grass clippings or wood chips, Synthetic Weed Barriers, Nontoxic Chemicals, Mechanical Weeds-eaters, etc.

We are still looking for volunteers to help us complete developing the signage for the remaining information Kiosks located within the Fruit Garden. If you are interested, please contact me at Fruitgarden@olympus.net

A trellis training experiment undertaken by a past volunteer has become challenging to differentiate from the original existing Tatura training system. It was decided to re-prune all of the trellised trees in that area to help identify the new vertical training system, and to continue evaluating the results of the trial.

De Arbogast has been given permission to trial a permanent "netting" system to protect the blueberries from birds and rabbits. The purpose is to be much more effective and greatly reduce the labor and maintenance requirements on the volunteers. If you are handy and you want to help with this project, contact arbogast@fidalgo.net.

We want to thank Darlene Granberg for her efforts to help us recruit new Fruit Garden Thursday morning work-party volunteers!

Have you renewed your membership yet? WWFRF membership is valid for 12 months from the date your check is received. Your membership expiration date is printed above your name on the mailing label indicating the month and year that your membership expires. Renew your membership before it expires by completing the Membership Form and mailing it in. You can also renew online. (see credit cards on page 6)

WWFRF would like to thank our commercial members.

Bee Diverse - www.beediverse.com

BeezNeez - www.beezneezapiary.com

Northwoods/One Green World - www.onegreenworld.com

Raintree nursery - www.raintreenursery.com

Skagit Farmers Supply - www.skagitfarmers.com



Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation Membership Form

Please check one box ONLY: ☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ 9-DIGIT ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: (_____) _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

- ☐ I would prefer to receive email newsletters instead of by regular mail when WWFRF is prepared to send them.
- ☐ I allow notice of membership meetings to be given to me by email.

Please check all applicable lines to designate type of membership, extra donation, and/or individual or family open house/field day:

_____ \$15 FOR **INDIVIDUAL One-Day** OPEN HOUSE/FIELD DAY **ONLY**

_____ \$25 FOR ANNUAL **INDIVIDUAL** MEMBERSHIP (*One person only*)

_____ \$40 FOR ANNUAL **FAMILY** MEMBERSHIP (*Parents with their minor children*)

_____ \$ _____ FOR **GIFT** MEMBERSHIP FOR: (Please note for Whom Above)

_____ \$60 FOR ANNUAL **SUSTAINING** MEMBERSHIP (*Individual or family membership with higher level of financial support*)

_____ \$125 FOR ANNUAL **COMMERCIAL (List Only)** MEMBERSHIP (*Includes 3 people, and also includes business name on our website*)

_____ \$200 FOR ANNUAL **COMMERCIAL (Full)** MEMBERSHIP
(*Includes 3 people, and also includes a link from our website to the commercial members' website*)

_____ AN **EXTRA DONATION** of \$ _____ for WWFRF

_____ \$30 FOR **FAMILY One-Day** OPEN HOUSE/FIELD DAY **ONLY** (*Parents with their minor children*)

SIGN ME UP TO HELP WWFRF AS CHECKED BELOW (please check all applicable lines):

_____ FIELD WORK IN THE **WWFRF FRUIT DISPLAY GARDEN**

(usually held every Thursday from 9am-12noon; March-Nov.)

_____ A **FIELD DAY** such as our Winter Field Day, Cherry Day, or the Apple and Pear Day

_____ **NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW** in Seattle (usually held in late February every year)

_____ **FRUITBOOTH EVENTS** (Throughout the year)

_____ **SELLING APPLES AT VARIOUS FALL FRUIT SHOWS** (Seattle & Port Townsend)

_____ **BY DOING WORK I CAN DO IN MY OWN HOME USING MY COMPUTER OR TELEPHONE**

_____ **SERVING AS A BOARD MEMBER** (4 meetings a year)

Please make your check payable to: WWFRF and MAIL your completed membership form and check to:

**WWFRF
C/O Christy Nieto
2609 Cedarwood Ave
Bellingham, WA 98225**

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Please check your label to see if your membership needs renewing.



In This Issue

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Experiences Growing Peaches in the PNW!
Fruit Thinning!

**Check out our website at: Nwfruit.org,
where you can see the color version of this newsletter**

Mission: WWFRF exists to advance fruit horticultural programs for our unique Western Washington maritime climate through advocacy, research, education, and demonstration for the benefit of the general public and the small farmer.
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