



NW Fruit

February 2023

NWF Winter Field Day • Saturday March 11, 2023

Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation, aka NW Fruit.org

in cooperation with

Washington State University, Northwest Washington Research and Extension Center

16650 State Route 536, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Spring Care For Trees & Berries in Your Fruit Garden

- Activities**
- Registration begins at 9 am. All attendees get a hand stamp. Details p. 2.
 - Sales tables open 9:30 am to 2 pm for Scionwood, Rootstocks and Grafting.
 - Classes begin at 10 am — Classes will be conducted by retired WSU horticulturist **Gary Moulton** along with our many experienced volunteers.

Class Schedule 9:45 — Orientation

in the Auditorium

- 10 am — Grafting Techniques:** Scions, rootstocks, stoolbeds — learn how to bench graft new trees and top-work existing trees.
- 11 am — Principles of Pruning:** Young and old fruit trees and grapes.
- 12 pm — Organic Pest Control:** Techniques for your spring fruit garden.
- 12:45 — Lunchtime:** Please bring your lunch!
- 1 pm — Annual Membership Meeting**
(followed by Board Meeting to elect officers)

Outdoors 11 am — Cultivar Descriptions of the available scionwood varieties.

in the Pavillion

- 12:00 — Pruning & Caring for Blueberries**
- 1:20 — Orientation for garden tours:** Please dress warmly!

In the Garden 1:30 to 3 pm Hands on demonstrations in the orchard. Each demo will be repeated three times, at 1:30, 2pm and 2:30.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| • Pruning to rejuvenate older fruit trees | • Blueberry pruning |
| • Top grafting on existing fruit trees | • Espalier pruning |
| • Pruning currants & unusual fruits | • Grape pruning |
| • Tour of the demonstration orchard | • Kiwi pruning |

How To Find Your Membership Status

If the email by which you received this newsletter begins “Hello NW Fruit **Member**” then your membership is current through February 2023.

If the email begins “Hello NW Fruit **Friend**” then your membership is not current at present, or will expire before March 11. Membership expires on the anniversary of the last payment.

Please Note: You can pay for membership at the event, but by paying it [here now](#) the Registration line will move more quickly.

All purchases at the event require check or cash.

No credit cards. If you don't have checks, be sure to bring cash.

- Admission:
- Registration begins at 9 am. All attendees must first register and hand stamp.
 - **Free to NWF members.** Become a member by purchasing a \$25 yearly membership, \$40 family membership, at event or preferably now on our [website](#).
 - For this event, NWF will offer a \$15 One Day Guest Pass at the event. We encourage members to bring a friend, neighbor or relative — Treat them to a One Day Pass and introduce them to the NWF garden! *Cash or check, no credit cards.*

The proceeds fund our organization's garden and events.

Weather: Rain or shine – Dress for the weather. A large portion of the day's events take place in WSU Sakuma Auditorium or under shelter right outside the building. A bit of rain won't hinder our afternoon demo's in the garden. Big wind we'll see.

Sales Tables: 9:30 am to 2 pm — Rootstocks, Scionwood* & Grafting Supplies for Sale

Rootstocks \$5 • Scionwood* \$3 • Custom Graft \$4

- Grafting services are provided for educational purposes and thus are limited to two at a time. Wait in line again for another two.
- ★ Purchase our scionwood or bring your own. See How To Collect Scionwood on page 16.

Availability: At the field day the number of each rootstock and scionwood variety is limited but we hope to give everyone a chance to purchase a few of their favorites.

- Until noon we limit sales of these pieces to two of any variety.
- After noon, there will likely be more available to circle back around and make another purchase.
- If you'd like a greater quantity of rootstock, please buy them from a nursery. Possible sources are Cloud Mountain Farm Center, Raintree Nursery or One Green World Nursery.

Apple Rootstocks

All the listed rootstocks are very hardy and are certified virus free. All the apple rootstocks are compatible with all apple varieties and produce trees that live 75 years or much longer. We are offering the newer Geneva rootstocks which are proven to induce superior productivity in commercial orchards, but may have other issues for the backyard grower.

EMLA 27 Maintain at 5 to 8 foot height and width. Great choice for containers or growing in the ground. Induces early heavy bearing. Because it's a mini dwarf, start its first branches one to two feet above the ground. Benefits from staking. Thrives on a variety of soils. Long proven and reliable. From England's East Malling and Leigh Ashton stations.

BUD 9 Maintain at 6 to 10 foot height and width. Great choice for containers or growing in the ground. Induces early heavy bearing. Used commercially for trees grown on trellises. It requires permanent staking. Thrives on a variety of soils. Long proven and reliable. Very winter hardy. Often used as an interstem with EMLA 111 to make a very well rooted but very dwarfed tree.

GENEVA 41 Maintain at 7 to 10 foot height. A newer rootstock from the Cornell New York Geneva research program. The rootstock is prized for its productiveness and resistance to replant diseases. However, it has some drawbacks: It's brittle in the graft union, the wood and the roots and must be staked. Most nursery owners say it ranks among the highest in losses but growers contend that can be overcome by early trellising, careful digging and gentle handling.

EMLA 26 Maintain at 10 to 15 foot height. Makes a dwarf tree that is well anchored, reliable and productive. Note, if not maintained it can grow more than 15' tall in our area, but it is easily managed

from the ground and produces bushels of apples. It doesn't sucker and grows well on a variety of soils and usually doesn't require staking. It is reported not to perform well when replanted where an apple tree was planted before.

EMLA 7 Maintain at 13 to 18 foot height. Makes a semi dwarf tree that is well anchored, reliable and productive.

GENEVA 30 A newer rootstock from New York. Maintain at 10 to 15 foot height. It is very productive, tolerant of replant disease and resistant to root rot. It has some suckering and may need staking on some sites. Its latent buds can make it harder to successfully bench graft. All the Geneva rootstocks were developed for commercial orchards that use virus free scionwood. Most of the scions of varieties we offer are not virus free. While Geneva 30 is not among the worst Geneva selections for dying from scion induced viruses there are reports of that problem.

EMLA 111 Maintain at 16 to 20 feet in height. It has a great fibrous root system, excellent anchorage and does well on wetter soils. It makes a precocious, productive tree. The best candidate for the understock of an interstem tree. We can graft an EMLA 27 piece about six inches long on the EMLA 111 which can later be grafted to your chosen variety. This makes a dwarf tree maybe 10 feet tall, that can start bearing sooner, with the supportive roots of a much larger tree.

ANTONOVKA Makes a very winter hardy, stately full-size apple tree that will grow 25 feet tall or more in height.

Cherry Rootstock

MAZZARD Makes a full size cherry tree. Can be kept smaller with pruning.

Plum, Apricot, Peach and Almond Rootstock

These plum rootstocks are compatible with plum, apricot and almonds but not with cherries. Peaches don't graft well and are recommended for summer bud-grafting.

KRYMSK 1 This newer rootstock from Gennady Eremin in Russia has proven reliable for stone fruit growers in the U.S. It can be maintained at 10 to 15 feet in height and is widely compatible with plums and apricots and with some peaches. It does well on a variety of soils and produces some suckers.

MARIANA 2624 An older rootstock, widely compatible with plums, apricots and most almonds, but not peaches. Makes an excellent tree in our area, best choice in wet soils. Usually more vigorous than the Krymsk 1, making a tree maintainable at 12 to 16 feet in height. Produces root suckers that need to be cut back each year.

Pear & Quince Rootstock

OLD HOME X FARMINGDALE 87 Trees can be maintained at 15 to 20 feet tall or even smaller with pruning. This is a rootstock developed in Oregon. It is compatible with European and Asian Pears. Also with Shipova and with medlars. It seems to be very productive and early bearing. It thrives on a variety of soils and does very well in our region.

PROVENCE QUINCE BA29C Trees can be maintained at 10 to 15 feet tall. Great choice for grafting Quinces. Some pears, including Comice are compatible so Comice could be used as an interstem. We don't know about the compatibility of most of our pear offerings so we recommend choosing the Old Home x Farmingdale pear rootstock for pears.

Cornelian Cherry, early bloomer



Grafting Supplies for Sale on March 11

Grafting Knives • Grafting Bands • Parafilm Rolls

Weekly Work Parties – Find Schedule at NWfruit.org

Thursdays 9 to 12

Saturdays 9 to 12, check [website](http://NWfruit.org) for dates

2023 season is just getting started, with Saturday workdays to begin soon. We will continue the extra work day opportunity for aspiring volunteers who can't come on Thursdays. Dress for the weather and bring a pair of hand pruners. Come help with seasonal pruning and fruit thinning in beautiful springtime! Park in the parking lots on the North end of the Garden. These workdays are great opportunities to learn about growing fruit, meet friends, and to contribute to caring for the Fruit Garden.

Note: NFW Membership is required for volunteering in the Fruit Garden.

Please contact Tom Wake or Colleen Sanders for details, at info@nwfruit.org.

Scionwood

APPLE

Akane
Alkmene
Almata
Arkansas Black
Ashmead's Kernel
Belle de Boskoop, Red
Ben Davis
Beni Shogun
Blushing Delight Columnar
Bramley's Seedling
Brown Russet
Centennial Crab
Chehalis
Cherry Cox
Daliest Elstar
Dayton
Egremont Russet
Esopus Spitzenburg
Fred Gravenstein
Golden Russet
Hatsuaki
Hewes Virginia Crab
Honeycrisp
Hudson's Golden Gem
Jonagold, DeCoster
Karmijn de Sonnaville
Kingston Black (Cider)
Melrose
Michelin (Cider)
Newtown Pippin
NY 75414
Pink Pearl
Pristine
Shay
Spartan
Tangy Green Columnar
Tompkin's King
Wealthy
William's Pride
Wolf River
Wynooche

EUROPEAN PEARS

Bosc
Bella de Giugno
Comice
Conference
Gin Perry
Harrow Delight
Johantorp
Orcas
Pound
Rescue
Starkrimson
Theilsberne Perry
Ubileen
White Doyenne

ASIAN PEAR

Atago
Chojuro
Hamese
Ichiban Nashi
Kosui
Mishirasu
Shinseiki
Shinsui
Yoinashi

CHERRY

Angela
Bing
Carmen Jewel
Cherry
Danube
English Morello
Hartland
Kristin
Lapins
Montmorency
Rainier
Scarletta
Schneider
Surefire

ALMONDS

Halls Hardy
Reliable

EUROPEAN PLUMS

Coe's Golden Drop
Early Laxton
Ersinger Prune
Geneva Mirabelle
Imperial Epineuse
Kuban Comet
Mirabelle de Metz
Mt. Royal
Persian Green
Prune d Ente 707
Seneca
Victoria

JAPANESE PLUMS

Early Golden
Beauty
Hollywood
Methley
Shiro

PLUERRY (Plum x Cherry)

Sweet Treat Pluerry
Candy Heart Pluerry

QUINCE

Aromatnaya
Ekmek
Havran
Karp's

OTHERS FRUITS

Dutch Medlar
Seedless Medlar
Shipova (Pear x Mt. Ash)



Quince blossom

From Newsletter fan mail a felicitous poem from many-year NWF volunteer Carole Jacobson, who writes: “Larry Crum succeeded in achieving an apple graft on a pear tree. The following is my reaction to it. I included my pruning buddy, the other Carol.”

Carol and Carole, we are a pair
That steward the trees that bare the pear.
So first there was Tom with smiles
For miles
Who gleefully allowed us to to see
Two apples growing in a pear tree! ✱
We wondered and pondered:
Was this fruit porn being born?
Or a metaphor for change hereafter?
All created by a talented fruit grafter.
It is not a lie
As we announce with a sigh
The latest apple of our eye:
Please tarry for Larry
A talented chap
Who deserves an honorary lap —
Call Sweden!
We have a new Eden
With two apples growing in a pear tree.



Why the map?: Forwarded from a couple of garden devotees, comes verse on grafting from Roman historian Virgil which same Larry Crum sent to some volunteers just recently. Visit NW-fruit.org [here](#) to read from John Dryden’s c. 1700 translation of Virgil. Cisalpine (northern Italy) is where Virgil was born c. 70 BC in the farming village of Andes, near Mantua.

✱ **Don’t Plan Your Orchard**

relying on grafting apples on to pear trees. Larry used Winter Banana apple scionwood which is somewhat compatible on pear. We don’t know about its long term viability. Ask our grafting experts about it on March 11.

• Advice from Sam

Gallia Cisalpina:
1595 map by
Abraham Ortelius,
Antwerp
[Wikipedia Commons](#)



Fruit Garden Report • Fall/Winter



The Fruit Garden begins a new season and we welcome our volunteers back to help maintain the plants and address the many challenges of growing healthy fruit in our region. The Garden is in much better shape than in the past couple of years. Thanks to our intrepid volunteers many more trees and shrubs received attention. Having work groups and work leaders has been very beneficial, with the work leader checking and reporting to Garden Manager Tom Wake and the Fruit Garden Committee.

The Fall Apple/Pear Harvest Day went well with a good turnout of member volunteers and new members. This year we pre-picked fruit from the upper level of trees so it was available for members to sample and take home. It worked well to have our Apple Cider Pressing Day on the following Thursday. Thanks to our volunteers, especially some of the new volunteers who really helped out with processing many boxes of apples!

At the last meeting in the Fall of the Fruit Garden Committee we decided to hold an educational event in December using the large meeting room of WSU's building. Sam Benowitz put together a great presentation on growing plums in our region. With Gary Moulton as guest speaker they led a lively discussion after. Hazel made coffee and, together with lots of Christmas cookies, we had a fun morning.

< *Harvest Tradition, the sturdy old cider press in good use again this year • Photo from Bob Ness*

At the December event there was a meeting of volunteers interested in forming a Vole Work Group. Suggestions were considered and the group agreed to try various means to reduce the mole/vole population in the Garden. Mowing on a more frequent schedule, especially under the trees, is to be a main effort this year. This group will continue to meet and report on results of their efforts.

We had numerous Saturday work days this past year and this resulted in bringing in new volunteers. Many thanks to Bill Pierce for teaching Saturday pruning classes and to Hal Torrance for videotaping them. We have many great photos and videos Hal has taken throughout the year. Hopefully we will be able to move them to the new website when it is completed.

Winter Field Day is coming up next month, March 11th. For the first time since 2019, in addition to our membership, the general public is invited and we are all looking forward to the big day. All members, old and new, are welcome.

See you in the Garden.

Colleen Sanders
Fruit Garden Committee Chair

NWF Publicity

In anticipation of Winter Field Day 2023 and for on-going event plans our Publicity Committee is building a mailing list for news publications, schools and other regional gardening groups and nurseries. We've generated early poster-flyers and press releases to send them.

You can help by sending contact detail or your gardening group to info@nwfruit.org. Use subject title **"For Publicity Committee."**
And, Thanks!

Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation (NW Fruit)

Membership Form

Please check one box ONLY: ☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

DATE: _____

Name _____

Email address _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please check all applicable lines to designate type of membership and/or extra donation:

_____ \$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 at Name)

_____ \$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 _____ GENERAL FUND _____ FRUIT GARDEN

I would like to volunteer to help as follows (please check all applicable lines):

_____ FIELD WORK IN THE WWFRF FRUIT DISPLAY GARDEN (Thursdays/Saturdays, 9am to noon)

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

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

NW Fruit (WWFRF)
C/O Kim Siebert
7904 56th DR NE
Marysville, WA 98270

Benefits of Membership

Annual membership costs **\$25/year for Individuals** and **\$40/year per Family** (Parents with their minor children). Other categories of memberships are also available, including Donors, Sustainers, Commercial, etc. Visit nwfruit.org to download the membership form OR use the membership form found in this newsletter.

- FIELD DAYS/ OPEN HOUSES and WORKSHOPS are **free to members**. Membership ensures your inclusion in various emails about events and other news.
- Invitation to special events, such as Volunteer Appreciation Day, Committee Planning, plus all members are welcome to attend Board meetings.
- Opportunities to recognize and learn about disease and pests that are new within the last two years, as weather conditions change in Skagit Valley
- The Apple & Pear Sample-the-Harvest Day
- The Winter Field Day/Open House - lectures, demonstrations and sale of scion wood and rootstocks for apples and other fruit trees
- Several workshop days are offered each year, sometimes with fruit sampling, depending on the season -- also free to members.

Happy customer on Apple & Pear Day, October 8, 2022 • photo from Scott Terrell





*Planting day with students from Skagit Valley College
Photo from Hal Torrence*

Visit the Hedgerow

With the support of the Fruit Garden Committee and the Board of Directors of WWFRF we are participating in a joint WSU/WWFRF project to both demonstrate and promote the use of hedgerows and native pollinator friendly plants. The 10x100' hedgerow plot sits on WSU property (just beyond the Fruit Garden's figs and persimmons) and is to be maintained by some of our Fruit Garden volunteers and additionally by students from Skagit Valley College (SVC) and WSU Mount Vernon. Dr. Bob Gillespie, the entomologist who advised us when we selected and planted a native pollinator border in the Fruit Garden, also supported and advised in planting the hedgerow. His students at SVC helped us plant the 50+ trees and shrubs in early December and have since done soil tests on the hedgerow. The students were somewhat familiar with the Fruit Garden and talked with Tom about volunteering in 2023.

WSU's Dr. Lisa Wasko DeVetter has been a great supporter and plans on having her university students do research projects this year on native pollinators and beneficial insects as they become attracted to the hedgerow. The hedgerow is a demonstration plot for the public and also for farmers in the Skagit Valley to see the benefits of using a hedgerow of native pollinator friendly plants. We will collaborate with WSU to create signage and provide information on the hedgerow and the plants chosen.

The hedgerow plants were purchased from a generous donation by way of the Rick and Peg Young Foundation. Additional perennial plants will be added this spring, some of which will be contributed by our neighbor, Native Plant Society. Lastly, without the support and assistance of our volunteer, Bob Ness, the hedgerow project would still be on the drawing board. Thank you to everyone who helped and encouraged this project.

Colleen Sanders, Fruit Garden Committee Chair

Vole Management in Orchards • Literature Search

by Bob Baines, NWFruit President

Scale Update: For the past two years the hottest topic regarding pest management in our NWFruit Garden has been Oystershell scale. We have worked with WSU staff to coordinate applications to reduce pest population in summer to kill insect “crawlers” and during the dormant season to attempt to kill overwintering females and the eggs they are protecting under their “armored” shells. It seems that the insect population has been reduced and we’ve seen some meaningful regrowth on some of the infested trees. We will have a better idea of where we stand once we enter the growing season.

The current problem topping our pest list is the **vole**. Though not a new problem for us, in the past year we have had several trees in the orchard and in our nursery succumb to gnawing by these little rodents, and many of our volunteers are clamoring for a counterattack.



Girdled tree in foreground, Brenda Lucas, Bugwood.org



Meadow Vole, L.L. Master, Mammal Images Library of the American Society of Mammalogists

Although I’ve been reading about vole management for several years I am sorry to report from recent review, there is no simple response to eliminate the problem. My goal in this article is to provide you with information you can read to prepare for a discussion on management actions we can use to help protect the trees in the Fruit Garden. Many strategies are mentioned; some are identified as helpful while others are found to be useless, damaging to the environment, or even illegal. My preference for sources always begins with Cooperative Extension publications (especially local ones) but often I find that information provided on gardener blog sites and pest management company websites is also interesting and occasionally useful. Here’s my list, links verified on 2/13/23.

[Meadow Vole and Pine Vole](#) - 2 page pdf download
from Cornell University Library eCommons

[How to Get Rid of Voles in Your Garden](#) - by Janet Loughrey, Garden Writer & Photographer
from GardenDesign.co, Website

[Orchard Wildlife - Integrated Management of Voles in Orchards](#) - 5 page pdf download
from PennState Extension

[Tips for Repelling Moles & Voles](#)

from imustgarden.com, a website for pest management products

[Pesky Winter Critters](#) - 3 page pdf download, and source of the above images

from New Hampshire Extension

[Vole Populations, Tree Fruit Orchards, and Living Mulches](#) - 36 page pdf download

from WSU, report submitted by Applied Mammal Research Institute,
Summerland B.C., by Dr. Thomas P. Sullivan, April 2006

[Mulching Options for Northwest Organic and Conventional Orchards](#)

from American Society for Horticultural Science - Not specifically about voles but
has lots of info and links re mulches

[Vole Problems, Management Options, and Research Needs in the United States](#) - 16 pages

from Wildlife Damage Management at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska/Lincoln

[Wood Chips as a Soil Amendment](#) - a 90 minute YouTube video

Presented by Clay Antieau at a City of Seattle pesticide recertification training
webinar on 2/10/21. At some point in the presentation or possibly in the Q & A, he
states that voles are discouraged by arborist chips or other mulches that have hard
coarse edges. Too scratchy for them. The video is very interesting.

After looking at most of the information listed here, I don't feel much closer to knowing what to do
to protect the trees in our Fruit Garden and nursery. Two actions seem obvious to me. Both would
need to be fine tuned and adjusted to maximize success. First, installing some sort of tree guard,
plastic or hardware cloth around the base on new trees. Second would be an aggressive mowing
and trimming program to cut vegetation in tree rows and tree rings very short, perhaps one inch. At
this point we don't have the labor or equipment to fully implement these programs, but it is worthy
of discussion. So let's have that discussion; and good luck with your voles.

Bob



*In NWF Nursery:
Vole or rabbit? >
Mulch scraped to view.
Photo from Hall Torrance*



*In the Fruit Garden:
< Tiny voles underground,
can destroy roots.
Photo from Bill Davis*

Find Your Bliss!

NW Fruit volunteers engage in interest groups to manage specific projects. Some administrative tasks could benefit from modernization. Your skills are welcome. We use the Work Group model to keep track of seasonal projects, and to coordinate with Garden Manager Tom Wake and Garden Committee Chair Colleen Sanders. These work groups offer experience accordingly:

In the Garden

- Blueberries, Cherries, Kiwi, Gravenstein apples, Haskaps, Peaches, Persimmons & more
- Pollinator friendly plantings
- Espalier training
- Construction projects, Irrigation, Organic Growing

Or Administrative Support

Website & Media Updates
Volunteer Coordinating
Membership/Mailing
Communications
Event Planning
Publicity

Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation (NW Fruit)

Donor Form

To make a donation by credit card go to: NWfruit.org and click on Support.

Enclosed is my gift of: ☐ \$5000 ☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 \$ _____

Please designate ☐ Where it is needed most! ☐ Fruit Garden
my monetary gift toward: ☐ WSU sponsored research ☐ Field Days and other events

I would like to volunteer! ☐ In the Display Garden ☐ On Field Days and events
☐ By doing work that can be done from my home

Name _____ Email address _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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)

WWFRF
C/O Kim Siebert
7904 56th DR NE
Marysville, WA 98270

**Please make check payable to WWFRF
and mail your donation
along with this form to:**

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

Thank you!

Plum Loco Report

Our two hour Plum Class in December was a success with about fifty people in attendance. Gary Moulton and Sam Benowitz discussed the best plum varieties for our region and plum pruning and growing techniques. Gary grew up working for a commercial Asian plum grower in California and explained that while Santa Rosa and other varieties did best down there, we needed different cultivars here. He recommended **Beauty** for its rich Santa Rosa like flavor. He and Sam agreed that **Methley** is the most reliable, productive and easiest to succeed with. Sam added that **Early Golden** is also among the best Asian plums to grow. **Shiro** is very productive and reliable although it has a very mild flavor.

Although they agreed the Asian plums were the easiest to grow, they also recommended a number of European cultivars. Several prune plums were favored including Italian prune, **Ersinger German** prune and **Prune d' Ente 707** from France. Also **Mt. Royal**. Gage Plums to grow include Reine Claude Doree and Purple Gage. Several **Mirabelle type** plums were recommended and heavily productive Damson types like Blues Jam and Pozegaca.

Other highly touted plums for our region that were discussed were **Seneca**, **Victoria** and Schoolhouse as well as the Russian variety **Kuban Comet**. The highly ornamental red leafed plum **Hollywood** was touted for both its ornamental value and its tasty prolific fruit.

It was explained that Apricots and many plum Apricot crosses do not grow or develop their sugars in our region however the **Pluerry**, which is a cross of the Asian plum and a cherry, thrive in our region.

From Cider Making Day, October 2022 • photo from Bob Ness



A Salute to Kim - As newsletter editor I am often paging through the trove of NWF newsletters 2008 to present. (You can too, at NWFFruit.org [here](#).) When I bumped into this informative 2009 article from Kim, I felt the need to give it a rerun in this issue. Cute that Kim and Sam both evidently get giddy talking about plums! I've marked in bold the references in both these plum articles to cultivars which we intend to make available on 3/11/23. Laura W. Wilson

Plum Crazy

By Kim Siebert

I have a fond memory from when I was a girl of sitting up in an Italian prune tree at my grandparent's home stuffing myself on Italian prunes. Now I have 10 plum trees so that my grandchildren will be able to have the same pleasure. Even 10 trees hardly seems like enough when I think of the varieties that I don't have... Blues Jam, Persian Green, Emerald Beauty ... the list goes on and on. Plums are remarkable in having a wide range of tastes and colors over a long season, making them my favorite tree fruit. If you have never tasted tree ripened plums, which you can't buy in the grocery store, then you don't know what a treat they can be.



The greengage plum is one of the more difficult to grow, taking longer to fruit, not fruiting well every year; it is easily split by rain or fog. But the taste is reputed to be the very best, worth the extra trouble.

There are a number of Greengage plums such as Bavay Gage, Cambridge Gage and Golden Transparent Gage. Japanese plums are very juicy early plums. **Methley** and **Beauty**, both early ripening Japanese plums, are very reliable, self fruitful varieties, but they ripen their huge crops at about the same time, so I am planning to graft a branch of my Methley to **Shiro**, a yellow Japanese plum which ripens later, making it easier to use all the plums. The **Mirabelle** family has small plums with a delectable flavor, famous as a culinary plum, but great for fresh eating, too. I tried a Mirabelle de Nancy last year. It was about the size of a large cherry with a tiny pit and the flavor seemed more complex and interesting than many plums, a unique and delicious taste. The prunes are versatile plums which can be used fresh, dried or cooked. Some have unusual shapes, such as the pointed Longjohn. Others are especially good for cooking, such as the Damson type Blues Jam.

Most varieties of plums do very well in the Pacific Northwest. They don't have a major pest here, as they do in the east with the plum curculio. Pruned to a vase shape on size reducing roostocks such as **Marianna** or **Krymsk 1**, plums can be kept at a height of 10-12 feet. Most varieties need yearly pruning once they are established to keep the size down or you may end up with a tall tree with the fruit out of reach even on semi-dwarfing roostocks. Some varieties are naturally short, such as Bavay Gage. Plums can be pruned in the summer to help control size. Be sure to attend our demonstrations on summer pruning at one of our Field Days. European plums can also be trained as a central leader (like a Christmas tree). Some plums set heavily, and the flavor will be improved by thinning.

Weather can affect the taste of many fruits, including plums. Some develop their best flavor at warmer temperatures, others need cooler weather for the best taste. At Ayers Creek Farm in Gaston, Oregon, which has daily highs that are about 8 degrees higher than at Mount Vernon during the summer, Rosy Gage is insipidly sweet, but at Mount Vernon it develops excellent flavor. On the other hand, if you live in the Puget Sound Region with less heat units the very late varieties such as **Coe's Golden Drop** probably will not develop full flavor every year. Wherever you live in the Pacific Northwest, there are plums that will do well for you.

How To Start a Stoolbed

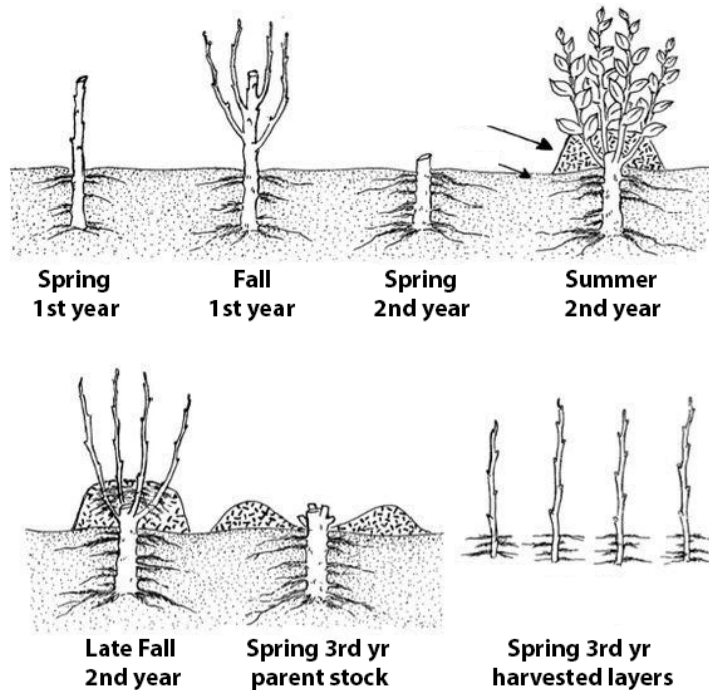
Plant your rootstock.

Grow for a year.

Cut back in winter.

Hill up sawdust as rootstocks grow.

Pull back sawdust and cut off new rootstocks.



Grow Your Own Rootstocks

The rootstock is the primary factor in the ultimate size of a prospective apple tree. The rootstock allows you to graft scions for trees with a planned size range.

Plant a number of well-labeled rootstocks one foot apart in a six inch deep trench where they will grow for a few years. After a year of growth, in winter, cut each rootstock to the ground.

Subsequently, suckers will start growing from the base. When the suckers have grown a bit, you use sawdust or dirt to hill up around each sucker, leaving its terminal bud to keep growing. As it grows, more sawdust will be hilled up allowing roots to form in the sawdust. This process is known as stooling or stoolbedding.

Eventually, in winter, the newly rooted suckers will be cut from their base to be new, separate rootstock. Your new rootstock can then be used for grafting scionwood for a whole new tree.

When you visit the garden, ask about our stoolbed and observe how to grow your own rootstock.

Collecting Scionwood

Say you have a tree that you'd like to copy, you can do it by grafting on to a rootstock. Collect the scionwood in the winter while it is dormant. Select only new, one year growth that will be at the end of branches. Cut each growth stalk into about 10" to 12" lengths for useable scionwood. Try for pencil size wood to match the diameter of typical rootstocks.

Label the scionwood so you know the variety. It is good practise to seal both ends with parafin or other tree seal. Place in a plastic bag with a wet, wrung out, paper towel in the bag and seal it.

If you aren't ready to graft, store it in the refrigerator. Make sure fruit is not in the refrigerator because fruit gives off ethylene gas, which makes the scionwood come out of dormancy. Your scionwood can be kept dormant for up to a few months until you are ready to graft.

Founder's Corner • About Our Scionwood

By Sam Benowitz

Opportunity Calls

The March 11th field day offers rare access to a hundred cultivars of many fruits, for \$3 a scion. It could cost \$50 a tree to buy these varieties from a nursery. Furthermore, many of the varieties are not available at nurseries or if they are, they may be sold out. We present scionwood from fruit cultivars that have proven superior for our area, based on 30 years of variety trials at the WSU Mount Vernon station. At the field day, ask about this and any other questions as we all gather to learn and teach about home fruit growing.

Morning Limits

At the field day our numbers of rootstocks of each variety are limited and we want to give everyone a chance to purchase a few of their favorites. Until noon we limit sales of rootstock and scionwood to two of any variety. After noon, there will likely be more available to circle back around and make another purchase. If you'd like a greater quantity of rootstock, please buy them from a nursery. Possible sources are Cloud Mountain Nursery, Raintree Nursery or One Green World Nursery.

Likewise with grafting, if you want us to custom graft for you, please be patient and give us a couple of rootstocks and scions at a time. That way, everyone can get a chance.

Read Up Ahead of Time

Catalogs will be available to look through at the field day, however we encourage you to look up information about the scionwood cultivars listed in this newsletter to have a better idea of which cultivars you want. Here is some overall information:

Apples: At the Fruit Garden we maintain many of the best disease resistant cultivars, ideal for organic growers. These include scionwood of cider apples, columnar apples and crab apples. Consider grafting a semi standard apple rootstock like EMLA 111 with an interstem of the very dwarfing Bud 9 to make a well rooted precocious dwarf tree.

Pears: The pears span the ripening season from Bella di Guigno, which ripens in July, to Johantorp and Pound, which are picked when hard in the fall and will keep through springtime. Look for varieties used to make a pear cider called "perry". Try a Shipova, which is a delicious cross of pear and Mountain Ash.

Medlars are an ancient fruit related to a pear. Graft them low on pear rootstock. Some advise planting the grafted tree low, to encourage rooting from the medlar scion.

Plums: Our scionwoods include the best prune plums from around the world — Ersinger German prune and Prune d'Ente from France and the American Mt. Royal. Two outstanding early ripening Asian and Asian plum crosses are Methley and Early Golden. The Russian Kuban Comet is reliable and very productive. while the freestone Mirabelle types are also highly prized.

Others: This year we will have Cherry rootstock but only the full size Mazzard. We have scions of outstanding sweet quinces from Turkey. Graft them on Quince rootstock. Try the Peach x Almond crosses that thrive here. Graft them on plum rootstock. Look for the Pluery's that are Asian plum crossed with cherry. Graft them on on plum rootstock.



*Shipova pear, seedless fruit with a rose-like aroma.
Photo from Sam Benowitz*

Further Notes About Winter Field Day Activities:

The varieties of scionwood we offer have been visually inspected to be free of diseases. They are to the best of our knowledge true to name. However we make no guarantees about their pedigree, moreover the rootstock or scionwood cannot be guaranteed to grow. Also, we cannot guarantee that every variety of scionwood and rootstock listed here will be available at the field day, though we make a big effort!

- Grafting can be dangerous and people who choose to do it, do so at their own risk.
- There are a hundred varieties of scionwood to choose from. An excellent way to learn about each variety is to look up varieties on the internet. Two places to look for descriptions are at raintreenursery.com and onegreenworld.com.

Upcoming Events

- Winter Field Day -- 9am to 3pm, March 11, 2023 at WWREC, 16650 State Route 536. Free admission with up-to-date membership.
- 9 to Noon Workdays — Fun and educational Thursday Work Days every week. Plus soon to restart, Saturday work days, for aspiring volunteers who can't come on Thursdays. Learn more about all that's going on, and new ideas being proposed, by joining us. For more information contact Garden Manager Tom Wake or Garden Committee Chair Colleen Sanders, info@NWfruit.org
- Annual Membership Meeting - March 11, 2023
- Several workshop days are offered each year, sometimes with fruit sampling, depending on the season. Free to members.
- Apple and Pear Sample the Harvest Day second Saturday in October. This event centers around the harvest with educational classes on related garden techniques and information. Members and paying visitors are allowed to keep a portion of the harvested fruit. Details in September Newsletter.

***NW Fruit Thanks
Raintree Nursery***

Morton, WA

800-391-8892 • raintreenursery.com

For continuing support