

# Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 10 Number 9

October 2004

## September Meeting

Saturday, October 2, 2004

510 E. Memory Lane, Santa Ana

### Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Setup Plants 'n Things

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. Snacks and Socializing

9:30 a.m. General Meeting

10:00 a.m. Enrichment Program

Members with last names starting with A-G, please bring a breakfast snack to share. Other members are also welcome to bring goodies.

Also, remember to bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle.

## Enrichment Workshop—Fall Cuttings

An OCMG tradition! Bring bulbs, plants, seeds, or cuttings. Cuttings should be at least 6 inches long, the more nodes the better, as they will be recut just before planting! An easy way to transport cuttings is to place several cuttings of the same type in a 1-gallon pot lined with a plastic bag and then add some water. We'll help identify unknowns.

**Board Meeting:** October 21 at 7:00 p.m.  
Home of Phil Loew.

## OCMG Training Class

Contact Helen Elich to help with the class. Call her before attending a class to be sure there is sufficient space.

2 Oct. Turf with John Domenici

9 Oct: Roses with Virginia Carlson

16 Oct: Fruits & Vegetables with Geri Cibellis

23 Oct: Botany with Juan Araya

30 Oct: IPM with Steve Williams

## Virginia Carlson on poisonous plants:

There are long lists of poisonous plants, but we need to know what part may be a problem, also, the quantity makes a difference in many cases

There are plants that are poisonous because they cause skin rashes such as poison oak, poison ivy, or the sap of some euphorbias. Some people are allergic to Chinese primrose, *P.obconica*. True rue also can give a severe skin rash on a hot day.

Many plants contain some alkaloids, those in coffee or cocoa may keep us awake, but those in opium poppy make us sleepy. Some other plants contain alkaloids that will attack the liver if used too frequently. An extract of yew is used to treat some forms of cancer.

Plants like foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) have medicinal value because they speed up heart rhythm when used in solution.

Often it is the fruits of plants that are harmful. The seeds of datura may be hallucinogenic but in excess are seriously poisonous. Brugmansia, or trumpet tree, is closely related.

By and large, shrubs with white berries are poisonous to mammals, but birds can eat them without a problem. Night jasmine, (*Cestrum nocturnum*) is an example. My rabbit died after eating some of the white berries.

Oleander and lily of the valley also have chemicals affecting heart muscles. Some seeds, such as those of apples, cherries and fava beans, produce cyanide if ingested, the amount varies.

There are the oxalate crystals in rhubarb leaves and Dieffenbachia and beet tops which penetrate the membranes inside of the mouth and throat and cause temporary problems with speaking.

Pokeweed is cooked as a green, but the berries or fruit destroy membranes and thus are classed as poisonous.

# Leaves from the President



I can't believe I am writing this for October's newsletter. Where does the time go? Throughout the summer I have been anxiously waiting for autumn to be able to plant again. Now that I have observed my new flower beds for several months and the annuals have died out, I am ready to add some new plants. I am going to try Roses again. Frances Lebow lent me her David Austin Rose book and I have salivated over his Roses all summer long. I started a list, and my list keeps growing. Mary Border also gave me names of tried and true Austin Roses so I am set. I have just the place for these roses, all I need to do is decide which ones.

I want to thank everyone who attended our last meeting. It required patience since our speaker was unable to make it and you had to listen to me. Thanks for not throwing tomatoes.

Keep this date open: February 5, 2005 *our regular meeting* date we will be going to a Bamboo collector's garden. This is a field trip not to be missed. More information will follow in future newsletters.

Happy Autumn Planting.  
--Sharon Neely

## Volunteer Opportunity

October 16-17: Green Scene II. We need volunteers to staff the plant clinic table at the Fullerton Arboretum. There will be a sign-up at the October meeting. This is a great way for our trainees to earn hours!

We still need someone to chair Program and Tours. This lucky person will have an easy time this year, as Sharon has already booked most of the programs! Contact Sharon Neely

## 📞 Contacts

Sharon Neely, *President*.....  
Cindy Polera Burch, *1st Vice Pres.*....  
Helen Elich, *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres.*...  
Phil Loew, *Treasurer*.....  
Fred Snyder, *Plant Clinic*.....  
Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*  
Submit articles by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month

Jackie Brooks, *Vol. Hours*.....

OCMG Website: <http://www.ocmastergardeners.org>

## Gardening Events

**Fullerton Arboretum.** Pre-register for all classes by calling 714/278-3579 ext. 0.

**October 2::** California Native Landscaping  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Oak Hall Classroom.  
\$20/person.

Learn how to introduce California Native plants into your own garden. Geoff Smith, Horticulture Instructor at Fullerton College..

**October 9, Local Birds of Orange County**  
with Dave Brandt. 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in Oak Hall Classroom. \$7/person/Members free. Learn how to feed and enjoy birds of Orange County and to establish the proper environment in your backyard.

October 23: **Worm Composting.** 10:00 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. at the bleachers. \$7/free to members & residents of Brea, Buena Park, Fullerton, Orange and Santa Ana. Learn how to introduce and maintain worms in your home composting system. Patrick McNelly, Principal Staff Analyst, O.C. Sanitation District

## Fruit Facts

### PAWPAW – *Asimina triloba* – Annonaceae

**Var. ‘Hybrid’ donated by:** CRFG/ Thompson and planted in 1982 (r.f.-09)

**Var. ‘Sunflower’ donated by:** CRFG and planted in 1998 (r.f.-09)

**Var. ‘Wells’ donated by:** CRFG and planted in 1998 (r.f.-09)

Common names: Indiana Banana, Hoosier Banana, and Poor Man’s Banana

The pawpaw is the largest tree fruit native to the United States. The pawpaw is a small deciduous tree that grows to 10-25 feet high and about 10-15 feet wide. Pawpaws grow wild in rich soils, where they grow as understory bushes in hardwood forests in Indiana and northern and eastern states.

The pawpaw trees often exist in clumps or thickets that grow from suckers or from seedlings developing from fruits that dropped to the ground. In sunny locations the trees assume a pyramidal form, losing their leaves during the fall season.

The flowers are 2 inches across, with dark purple petals. The outer petals are nearly round with spreading inner small sepals. The flowers are protogynous, self-incompatible and require cross-pollination, although some trees may be self-compatible.



The appearance of the flower with its dark, meat-colored petal and the fetid aroma may attract flies and beetles to perform its pollination.

Fruits are yellowish at first, finally brown, 3-7 inches long, and 1-2 inches thick. The fruit is shaped like a short banana, having sweet flesh and large seeds. The fruit falls to the ground when ripe. They may be borne singly or in clusters, which resemble the “hands” of a banana plant.

The pulp of the fruit resembles egg custard in consistency and appearance. It has the same creamy feeling in the mouth and unites the taste of eggs, cream, sugar and spice. It is a natural custard. The shelf-life of a tree-ripened fruit, at room temperature, is 2 to 3 days, and refrigerated, the fruit can be held up to 3 weeks.



Within the fruit there are two rows of 10 to 15 large, brown, bean-shaped seeds that may be up to 1 inch long. The seeds contain alkaloids in their endosperm, and if chewed, they would induce vomiting. If swallowed whole, seeds may pass through the digestive tract intact.

The pawpaw plant can be propagated from seed and from chip-budding vegetative propagation. Seeds should be removed from the fruit and cleaned, then placed in a plastic bag with some damp sphagnum, and should not be allowed to dry out. The seeds should be stored in the freezer for 60 to 100 days before planting. Seeds should be planted about 1 inch deep into tall pots because of the pawpaw’s long taproot.

The “Hybrid” pawpaw fruit’s weight is about 150 grams. It has white-to-butter-colored pulp, and the skin is green. It has few seeds. It ripens in the late summer. The “Sunflower” pawpaw fruit’s weight is about 225 grams. It has butter-colored flesh, and the skin is yellowish. It has few seeds. It ripens in the late spring. The “Wells” pawpaw fruit’s weight is about 350 grams. It has orange-color flesh, and the skin is green. It has 10 – 15 seeds. It ripens in the middle of summer.

—*Alfredo Chiri*, OC Calif. Rare Fruit Growers liaison to the Fullerton Arboretum