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2018 NAFEX Annual Meeting Announced and Call For Presentations and Papers

Jerry Lehman, Meeting Chair, 7780 Persimmon St. Terre Haute, IN 47802

Plans for the 2018 annual North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX) meeting are advancing. This meeting and conference will begin Thursday, July 26, 2017 and continue through Saturday, July 28 with possible extension of tours on Sunday, July 29. The meeting facility is the conference center at the Danville Area Community College (DACC) in Danville Illinois which is 2.5 hours south of Chicago. Mark your calendars now and schedule your vacation such that you can attend this educational and fun meeting. Visit with old friends and make new acquaintances. The board meeting is being planned for the evening of Wednesday, July 25, 2018. The annual NAFEX banquet will be Friday evening.

Call for Presentations and Papers: We have 20 minute and longer (in increments of 10 minutes) time slots for as many as 60 speakers. In order to facilitate concurrent sessions, two rooms with overhead projectors have been reserved for Friday.

Many members are shy about making presentations, Don’t be! In a NAFEX survey a few years back, about half of those responding said they desire home grower, research and professionals’ reports. Your contribution as a speaker is solicited. To reserve a speaker slot contact Tom Knaust (tknaust@gmail.com) NAFEX Pres. and Program Chair or Jerry Lehman.
For family members who choose to not attend the technical sessions, we will plan other activities. The city of Danville has an old active downtown area with quaint small shops for your shopping pleasure.

Watch for more details which will be announced as plans develop.

Notes from Penn’s Acres: Perseverance

Most of the time, it seems the most perseverant plants are things like poison ivy, bindweed, and quackgrass. A few others come to mind, but rarely are they useful. Valuable plants, on the other hand, tend to be ephemeral, sometimes disappearing over a particularly cold winter, or a hot, dry summer.

My Red Haven peach tree, delivering a stunning crop of luscious fruit one year, fails to ripen more than one stunted peach the following year because the weather sinks to 18° the week the blossoms open; the bees shiver in their little beds instead of pollinating the fruit. Ever-perseverant, reliable Seckel pears crack and rot that same summer because of too much rain.

But the plants that win the prize for stamina and perseverance in my yard are my purple raspberries. Cold, heat, too much water, too little water, and Japanese beetles notwithstanding, my Royalty purple raspberries deliver the goods. And they are very good goods.

I originally planted the canes near our patio, imagining the pleasure of reaching through the fencing around the patio, plucking ripe berries at will. That has come to pass. But the canes grow so lustily and bear so heavily that they gradually lean over and cover the sidewalk so completely we have to walk in the grass.

So I moved the plants. They now grow happily in their new location, yielding fruit in their season. But they never gave up the old location, either, despite my careful, deep digging to get the whole set of roots. I moved them a second, and then a third time. Now I have purple raspberries in many locations, including in the original beds surrounding the patio.

Those plants epitomize stamina, and I expect to always have purple raspberries, no matter how hard I may try to change the situation.

I’m not sure I can make a clear parallel to the change of situations with Pomona. But I will try.

I began my tenure as editor-in-chief of Pomona with the summer issue of 1997. In those days, I prepared a camera-ready hard copy of the journal, and mailed the heavy box of papers to Chapin, Illinois. There, Heyworth Press photographed the pages and printed our beloved paper copies of the journal every quarter. As time passed and technology progressed, I eventually emailed them a PDF of the journal every three months.

Articles became harder and harder to get, as the NAFEX Facebook page became the new, faster round robin of information-sharing. Then came the difficult decision by the NAFEX board to tighten the financial belt and eliminate the hard copy of the journal—still a sore spot with many people. We lost a number of valuable members that way, people who were veritable founts of fruit-growing knowledge, but had no computer savvy.

The time has come to tighten the financial belts again at NAFEX. I was very kindly informed that my honorarium—which was established in 1997, and raised (by board decision, not by my request) by a small amount in about 2010—was no longer sustainable by NAFEX. Another person, who now edits The Nutshell, the newsletter of North American Nut Growers, will take over the job for less. I completely understand.

Am I sad? Yes. Will I miss editing Pomona? Absolutely. I will particularly miss some of the very special emails, letters, and phone calls I received from members. But I truly do understand, and I hope some new blood, new vision, and perhaps new formatting will result in renewed vigor for this important organization.

Pomona Spring 2018
And, like my perseverant purple raspberries, moving me gently out of the position of editor-in-chief will not keep me from continuing my NAFEX membership, though in quite a different capacity. Stamina and perseverance will continue.

But I may take a long rest before the next set of notes from Penn’s Acres. I’ll harvest my raspberries, and hopefully pears, apples, and a few more elusive peaches.

Thanks for a great twenty-one years. I love you all.

Jackie Kuehn

***Pome Fruits***

Little-Known, Great-Tasting Apple Varieties
Derek Mills
www.hockinghillsorchard.com
www.fourseasonscabinrental.com
and on Facebook as well
Contact me at derekcs2005@aol.com for further information or about scions.

   Here at our orchard, Hocking Hills Orchard, located at Four Seasons Cabins in the beautiful Hocking Hills of SE Ohio, we grow 1,200 varieties of apples. Of those, about 200 are true hard cider varieties and 200 are red-fleshed varieties. This orchard consists of a mix of mainly heirloom varieties with unusual and newer varieties in the mix.

   Typically we have let family and friends come pick apples by word of mouth advertising only. But this year, 2017, with an overabundance of produce, I opened it up the public as a U-Pic and we were surprised and pleased at the visitors coming to buy apples. Some came from as far away as South Carolina, Maryland, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

   Now, not all 1,200 varieties have fruited yet, but around 200 varieties had enough fruit this year so apples could be picked from them. Below are a few varieties that to me taste exceptionally delicious and are not well known to the public:
**Allington Pippin**

England - 1894, King of the Pippins x Cox's Orange Pippin. Large, pale greenish-yellow with a little red. Cream colored flesh mellowing to intense fruit drop or pineapple taste. Sharp and good for cooking as it holds its shape. Sometimes added to cider for extra flavor. Spur bearing.

![Allington Pippin](image)

**Ananas Reinette**

Netherlands - 1821. Russet freckles over gold skin. Crisp and juicy with intense sweet, sharp flavor, developing the pineapple flavor late in the season (its name means “pineapple russet”). Medium to small fruit. Spur bearing.

![Ananas Reinette](image)
**Benoni**

Massachusetts - 1830, mid season, medium-size fruit is yellow with red blush and patches of russet. Yellowish flesh is very tender, sweet, brisk with pineapple-like flavor.

![Benoni Apples](image1)

**Brownlee’s Russet**

England - 1848, Medium, late, crisp, juicy with a rich sweet sharp acid drop flavor. Greenish gold, flushed orange, with fine russetting. Spur bearing.

![Brownlee’s Russet Apples](image2)
Champagne Reinette

France - 1667. Light yellow reinette-type skin, medium-sized, slight pink blush and some russetting at the calyx. The skin is slightly greasy and tough, enclosing white flesh with a transparent light green hue. Flesh is a very juicy and highly flavored. On the tangy side but with plenty of sweetness, with hints of pineapple. Spur bearing.
**Coe’s Golden Drop**
UK - 1700's, late, medium yellow fruit with crimson blush and small patches of thin russet. Delicious fruit has greenish flesh that is firm, crisp, very juicy, brisk and vinous. Spur bearing.

**Cornish Aromatic**
Cornwall - 1500, small, late, excellent, dull scarlet, netted pattern on skin, russeted, very crisp and aromatic. keeps until about March, old Cornish apple, light but regular cropper.
**Court of Wick**
England - late 1700's, medium, late, crisp, with rich, sweet, yellow flesh. The ripe apples have a complex acid drop flavor. The skin is splashed red, with gold russetting. Thought to be a **Golden Pippin** seedling.

**Golden Nugget**
**Hawaii**

USA - 1945. Golden Delicious x Gravenstein. Gourmet dessert apple with a flavor and aroma like pineapple. Large, yellow fruit with light pinkish orange striping gives overall orange appearance. Exceptionally sweet flavor is largely influenced by *Gravenstein*. Spur bearing.

**Lucombe’s Pine**

A late dessert apple, raised by Lucombe's Nursery of Exeter in Devon around 1800. Golden skinned with russet spots, it has firm and juicy flesh and a strong flavor of pineapples. Light crops that store until Christmas. Spur bearing and recommended for espaliers.
**Pine Golden Pippin**

England - mid 1800's, small to medium fruit are russeted over greenish yellow. The fruits are sweet, crisp and juicy, often said to be reminiscent of pineapple.

![Image of Pine Golden Pippin](image)

**Pitmasston Pine Apple**

England - 1785, medium fruits are a golden color with firm, juicy flesh. The flavor is variously referred to as honeyed, nutty, musky, sweet and rich. Golden Pippin x cross. Spur bearing.

![Image of Pitmasston Pine Apple](image)
Ten Antique Apples I Have Grown and Loved
Carl Nollen
Runnells, Iowa
nollenca@hotmail.com

Lee Calhoun, in his 2007 article reprinted in the current Winter 2018 Pomona laments “people who are interested in antique apples are no longer in NAFEX or are silent….No one….should ever be criticized for collecting and writing about antique apples.”

I have a special liking for “soft” apples which I prefer to call “mellow.” Because they are “soft,” rather than firm and crisp, you won’t see them at farmers’ markets and certainly never in the grocery store.

Here are ten antique apple varieties I have grown for over 40 years and recommend:

**Ashmead Kernel.** A small, greenish yellow apple with the most intense flavor of any. It will pucker your mouth. Not attractive, but it tastes so good!

**Chenango Strawberry.** A beautiful shiny early August apple with light yellow background and rosy stripes. My semi-dwarf tree died last year and I have already planted a new tree. I miss it!

**Duchess of Oldenburg.** Medium to large light yellow with light red striping ready late July. The first of all my early varieties. All early apples are “mellow.”

**Kandil Sinap.** A tall skinny tree with small, skinny apples. Beautiful light yellow skin with rosy blushes and a “porcelain” finish. Will not win any taste tests, but the tree is prolific and an ideal variety for a small space.

**Mother.** A very late tree - noticeably later than all the others to leaf out and bloom. But it catches up. A smallish, mellow apple with orangey flesh. I really like this one!

**Opalescent.** A large, deep red, late apple that has some brown rot problems.

**Oriole.** An early August apple which tree needs plenty of room and as much sun as possible. The one apple I will plant this spring in a better place to replace the present.

**Snow.** This famous apple with its snow-white flesh and distinctive spicy flavor is not like any other apple variety. A mellow apple that is a poor keeper.

**Swaar.** The word is Dutch for “heavy.” A very late apple that hangs on after frost. If you didn’t get them picked on time, be rewarded with a beautiful sight of a bare tree with big golden globes hanging on. My tree is now in too much shade and I must replace.

**Zabergau Reinette.** Large, rough-skinned, russeted, golden brown apple. Many grow as large as a small grapefruit. One of my most reliable trees. I have given away many bagsful of these apples.

All my trees are unsprayed. The above apples do well with my organic “neglect.”

I also do not prune my trees to the ideal that a bird must be able to freely fly through it.

My orchard is not an apple factory! I want it to look like a part of the landscape.

I have some antique varieties that have not done well and some modern varieties that I really like. One standard tree I have is a mystery variety. My truck driver coworkers liked it better than any I brought to work. I am going to buy Mr. Bussey’s new set of books on apple varieties and see if I can find it there. Not that I needed that impetus to buy his magnum opus!

We had a very hot, dry July. I have noticed that apple trees do well enough in Iowa’s extreme climate, including drought. Many of my trees are biennial bearers. I don’t have an answer to this. Some of them are too close together. This is a problem common to those of us who have with limited space, who still try to grow everything we would like.

It seems that semi-dwarf varieties have a shorter life span than standard. Some of them have died or seem to be on their way out. Has anyone else noticed this? If this sub-zero weather we are having now in early January lets up, my chain saw will get a workout and my neighbor will get a lot of apple wood for

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**Pomona**  
**Spring 2018**
his grill!

I have a couple pieces of advice to beginners: give your trees plenty of room. If you want early apples, plant some of these varieties I have named. They are all good eating apples. **Wealthy** and **Yellow Transparent** may be more common, but they are so inferior!

A sweet pleasure of life is going out into your orchard and picking your dessert off the tree.

***Orchards***

**Apple Tasting at Hocking Hills Orchard**

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[www.hockinghillsorchard.com](http://www.hockinghillsorchard.com)  
[www.fourseasonscabinrental.com](http://www.fourseasonscabinrental.com)  
[www.travelingchapel.com](http://www.travelingchapel.com)

although horribly out of date!  
for a great vacation stay in a cabin in the woods!  
getting married in the Hocking Hills!

Hocking Hills Orchard is located at our Four Seasons Cabins in the beautiful Hocking Hills of SE Ohio. We currently grow over 1,200 varieties of apples, 100 or so varieties of pears, a 100 or so varieties of grapes and a smattering of other mixed fruits. I say “we” but my wife would say to not include her in my insanity of grafting, growing, pruning and harvesting fruit from so many trees and vines <grin>!

Out of the 1,200 apple varieties I grow, about 200 are red-fleshed ones and 200 are hard cider ones. I have written a few articles on red fleshed apples which are some of my favorite ones to grow but this will be about the results of our apple tasting event at our place this past September:

Typically the last Sunday in September we have an apple tasting event at our place. I keep it to around 40 varieties, give or take a couple, because I have learned over the years that much more than 40 varieties will cause someone’s eyes to glaze over! I ask people to rate the apples 1 to 5, with 1 being so delicious you could eat it all the time and 5 being so awful you would tear the tree out of the ground if you grew it or at the very least never eat it again.

Most of the apples are heirloom or unusual varieties. And if there is a new variety that is bearing fruit for the first time and I get at least a half dozen or so apples that ripen, I include those in the tasting.

For years we went to one of our local state parks and had our apple tasting as part of an event for the park. People would sample apples and of course we had fruit for sale! The last couple of years I decided to have the event at our orchard: why drag all those apples to a park? It is like in the movie *Field of Dreams* where the line goes, “if you build it, they will come.”

It has always been advertised by word of mouth until this year when I decided to make an event on Facebook. Wow! What a reach that platform has! We went to Grand Teton National Park the first week in September and I did not check Facebook for a few days and when I did there were almost 600 people going to or interested in my apple tasting!

Now, normally this would be a great thing but this was being held beside our house at the beginning of the orchard, and that many people would not be a good thing. So I limited it to the first 60 that said they were coming. Next year I am thinking about having it in a different location that can accommodate hundreds of people—just not outside my kitchen window.

From previous apple tastings, I know there are certain varieties that always score high:
Alaska
Cornish Aromatic
Esopus Spitzenberg
Golden Sweet
Mutsu
Westfield Seek-No-Further and others.

But this year there was one that really surprised me with the high scores it received and that was Winter Sweet Paradise. This variety was first mentioned growing in Pennsylvania around 1842. It ripens mid to late September and is a medium to large apple with a red blush. Flesh is white, tender, juicy and sweet. Some of the comments were “best tasting apple I have ever had” and “delicious”.

Some other different ones we had at our apple tasting this year included Frostbite, Snowsweet, Hawaii, Pitmaston Pine Apple and a few Baker’s Delicious.

Frostbite I really liked; it does have an unusual flavor, but that is why it appeals to me. Frostbite is described by the University of Minnesota where it was developed as: “this apple packs a punch. It’s almost tangy, very sweet, and juicy. Biting into a Frostbite™ is almost like biting into a piece of sugarcane. Savoring its juice tastes almost like molasses melting in your mouth.”
SnowSweet is very sweet, and is another variety developed by the University of Minnesota. Released 1970, it is a Sharon x Connell Red cross. As its name implies, SnowSweet has bright white flesh, which is slow to oxidize when cut. It is sweet, with low acidity.
Hawaii was a huge hit couple of years ago and continued that this year. Hawaii was released in 1945 and is a Golden Delicious x Gravenstein cross. Gourmet dessert apple with a flavor and aroma like pineapple. Large, yellow fruit with light pinkish orange striping gives overall orange appearance. Exceptionally sweet flavor is largely influenced by Gravenstein.
Pitmaston Pine Apple was very popular this year. We had a carload of people come to pick apples and they brought family with them that was visiting from the UK. When I told them they had good timing because this variety was ripening, they were thrilled to find a taste of England in Ohio. This variety was first mentioned in England around 1785. The medium-sized fruits are a golden color with firm, juicy flesh. The flavor is variously described as honeyed, nutty, musky, sweet and rich. Golden Pippin x cross.
**Baker's Delicious** is a variety from Wales first mentioned in 1932. It is a medium-sized pale golden fruit, often russeted, fully streaked with red, richly flavored, juicy cream flesh that ripens in September.

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- [www.hockinghillsochard.com](http://www.hockinghillsochard.com) although horribly out of date!
- [www.fourseasonscabinrental.com](http://www.fourseasonscabinrental.com) for a great vacation stay in a cabin in the woods!
- [www.travelingchapel.com](http://www.travelingchapel.com) get married in the Hocking Hills!
After 30 years of research and seven years of editing, *The Illustrated History of Apples in the United States and Canada* is finally available. The lavishly illustrated hardcover set of seven volumes (each 500-600 pages, 8½" x 11") comprehensively documents all of the apple varieties that have appeared in publications in the United States and Canada through the year 2000.

- 16,350 varietal listings (descriptions, origins and histories)
- 9,700 synonyms (other names the apples were known by in different locations)
- 1,650 cited references (more than two centuries of pomological literature on apples)
- 1,400 life-size watercolors (painted a century ago for color documentation)

This unprecedented compendium is the result of a collaborative effort between Daniel J. Bussey and Kent Whealy. For 30 years, whenever time allowed, Dan Bussey has searched countless libraries in an attempt to locate everything published about apples during the last two centuries in the United States and Canada. In total Dan's research has identified information about apples in 1,650 pomological publications, horticultural and pomological society reports, governmental and experiment station bulletins, and commercial nursery catalogs. Dan transcribed and compiled that vast amount of information into 16,350 apple variety listings, while also identifying an additional 9,700 synonyms.

For the last seven years, entirely gratis, Kent Whealy has been editing Dan's massive compilation of research and notes. The seven volumes that Kent designed include a unique system of codes and dates for the 1,650 "Cited References," which is by far the most complete cataloging of the pomological literature on apples ever compiled. Each of the seven volumes is gorgeously illustrated with life-size watercolors. From 1886-1942, USDA employed 21 artists to paint 7,584 watercolors of 38 families of fruits, including 3,820 apples. USDA's Pomological Watercolor Collection provided documentation before color photography existed and today is a little known national treasure. More than 1,400 of these breathtakingly beautiful paintings (those that match the book's historic descriptions) have been included as illustrations, in order to create an accurate and unequalled identification tool for apple sleuths searching for lost varieties.

This fascinating ly rich slice of agricultural history documents the robust interactions and invaluable contributions of expert pomologists, local apple growers and nurseries, horticultural and pomological societies, apple breeders and government research stations. In times past, apples were so highly valued and such an integral part of peoples' lives, displayed and judged at local, state and national Pomological Society meetings, and at annual County Fairs and State Fairs and periodic World Fairs. When viewed in its entirety, these detailed varietal descriptions, meticulously recorded by expert pomologists, plus the histories of the apples' origins and movements around the country is truly staggering in its scope.

*The Illustrated History of Apples in the United States and Canada* will be the most important book on apples ever published in English. There has never been anything like it.”

– John Bunker (Maine apple historian)

Apple illustrations courtesy of the USDA’s National Agricultural Library, Pomological Watercolor Collection, Special Collections.
In 2015 Kent Whealy formed his own publishing company (JAK KAW Press, LLC) to ensure that Dan Bussey’s extensive research on apples and the appropriate pomological watercolors are recorded for posterity. This new publishing venture is dedicated to creating books that celebrate the diversity of our food crops. *The Illustrated History of Apples in the United States and Canada* is designed to comprehensively record and illustrate our food crop heritage in rich detail, thus helping to rescue and popularize the historic varieties that still exist. This unique seven-volume set of hardcover books, already being heralded as a pomological classic, has been priced deliberately low to provide affordability for food historians and apple enthusiasts (growers, grafters, cooks, cider makers, breeders, collectors and sleuths):

$350 per seven-volume set throughout the continental U.S. (includes shipping by UPS Ground)
$380 per seven-volume set throughout Canada (includes shipping by UPS Ground)
Please allow three weeks for delivery.

**Extensive information about the book and how to order online:** jakkawpress.com

Credit card orders should be made at this secure website, or by calling toll free: 844-567-5888.
Orders by check mailed to: JAK KAW Press, LLC, Post Office Box 218, Mt. Horeb, WI 53572 (must include name, physical address (not P. O. Box) and phone number for UPS shipping).

Wholesale pricing is available (drop shipped, due to 32 lb. per set shipping costs).
Brochures, promotional assistance and images may be provided to authorized booksellers at no charge by contacting the publisher’s office: jakkawpress@gmail.com (or 844-567-5888). Quantities of brochures for distribution at events are also available free of charge.
The Illustrated History of Apples in the United States and Canada
by Daniel J. Bussey, edited by Kent Whealy, published by JAK KAW Press, LLC.

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John Bunker (Maine apple historian)

Apple illustrations courtesy of the USDA’s National Agricultural Library, Pomological Watercolor Collection, Special Collections.
The 2017 Fruit Report from Zone 4A (N 45° 00’ 000”) in Central Wisconsin

Norm Deffner
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The 2017 year was notable for the large amount of rainfall – about 37 inches or so. We seldom had to water anything. But because of the large amount of rain and relatively low growing temperatures, we had major fungal problems (scab, mildew and rots). We also had one of the worst years in the last 20 or so for apple maggot and codling moth. The Spotted Wing Drosophila was particularly bad on our raspberries, blackberries and plums (which split open as they ripened).

The only thing that was completely effective against Drosophila, and other bugs, on our blueberries, was putting a fine mesh (wedding gown tulle) over the entire patch right after blossom fall. I also sprayed one time with a fungicide and insecticide just before covering the plants. I held up the fabric over the berry bushes with 6 to 7 foot fiberglass T posts with a plastic cup upside down over the top of the post to prevent fabric tears. To pick the berries I would quickly enter under the fabric on one end of the patch with my berry bucket and a tall bucket to sit on, so no flies, no bugs, no fruit damage – not even mosquitos! Best crop ever!! This method does not work so well on raspberries and stone fruits, for a variety of reasons, but I tried.

For the problems on pome, stone and other fruits, I will try to use appropriate sprays in a more timely and effective manner.

In 2016 we had a killing frost while the pear trees were in full bloom. We still got a fair crop of pears, but they were small and cylindrical in shape rather than “pear” shaped. The most interesting part was that they had no seeds or central core. I think the seeds must be necessary for the fruit to form normally.

Over the past few years I have grafted a number of varieties of apples on G11 rootstocks. So far they have done well in our zone 4A/3B climate. Time will tell.

We have had major damage (loss) of pears and apples from squirrels moving in from the surrounding woods. In one case, in a three day period, they took nearly all the fruit from a late-ripening Regent apple tree, and raccoons took a large batch of our grapes.

Chipmunks took lots of our pie cherries. They left the cherry skin and flesh on the ground, taking only the pits. Too bad I can’t work out some sort of picking arrangement with them. Squirrels, chipmunks and field mice took or damaged a lot of our strawberries. I realize they have to eat, too, but I wish they would go eat something else!

I end up resorting to fencing and trapping to get my share of the produce from my gardening efforts!!

Happy Gardening!
NOVEMBER, 2017 – It’s Composting Season! The last of the grass is being cut, leaves are falling, sawmills are grinding out wood chips, cotton is being ginned, cardboard is being thrown away, cows are cr…well, doing what cows do best, and frequently, plop, plop. I love composting time. Sometimes the composting can be as interesting as the fruit-growing.

I’ll pot between 500 – 1,000 trees this year. I have a ½ acre of nursery beds. I have one tiny plot of pure sand, and the rest is hard red clay – those beg for amendment, and I couldn’t successfully grow much without a lot of mulching/composting. Fate has destined that I shall be a poor man, monetarily (that’s OK, I am exceptionally wealthy in family, friends, and interests); I can’t afford to purchase an 18-wheeler load of potting soil every year, so I do what pore folks always do - I make do; I make my own. I haven’t bought bagged potting soil for the last several years. I make my own, by composting.

My one-acre yard is completely surrounded by a fence of stacked railroad ties, waist high. Jenniffer (and my neighbors) object to my keeping big piles of rotting composting materials in our front yard, and moving them around with the tractor, so I’ve come up with a clever solution: I take heavy wire fencing and roll it into a cylinder,
four or five feet wide, and place those right along the outsides of my railroad tie fence – they’re hidden by the fence and go unnoticed by a casual observer. I can walk right up to the fence and dump composting materials right over, into my wire baskets, handy and convenient. It works great. I have rather a lot of these.

Sometimes I use 6’ tall wire, the kind often used in dog kennels, with 2” X 4” squares. I roll these into a cylinder about 3’ wide and stand it upright, to make a tall “composting tower.” I use these in the fall, when I’m raking hardwood leaves, and I dump them right in there and wet them down. After you fill it up to the top, you can KEEP adding leaves, later – especially if you dampen them; those leaves SETTLE, and you can watch the top level sink lower and lower, two or three inches per day, as the weight of the top layer mashes down and condenses the lower. It will surprise you how you can keep adding and adding leaves to such a pile, as the bottom layer decays and condenses. A big pickup load of leaves, in time, will rot down to, say, a gallon or two of finished compost. That compost will be BLACK, with fine particles and grains, and rich as sin. A few handfuls of that in a pot is better than Miracle-Gro, believe me.

A tall “composting tower” like this is probably best used with mostly lighter-weight material, like leaves. If you add denser materials, the weight can get to be TOO much, and spread out and warp the wire basket. Even heavy steel wire has its limits.

After you dump each armload of leaves into the basket, wet them down thoroughly with a water hose. That’s important. Fresh dry leaves won’t absorb water very well; it kinda runs right off, but soak them as well as you can. The process of decay DEPENDS on water, dampness – if you just let a big pile of dry leaves sit, it’ll take YEARS for them to decompose properly. If dry, I believe they are broken down mainly by fungi, rather than bacteria, and that process is slower. For proper decomposition, you need a mix of things: biological substances that WILL decay,
moisture, a degree of warmth, bacteria, fungi, and a host of various small insects and worms. Those things are ubiquitous, found all over the world, so all you really have to do is put them all together in one spot, and time and nature will do the work for you.

For a big leaf pile like this, it’s important to COMPACT it, for speediest results. A stack of dry, loose leaves won’t decay very fast. You really want them all mashed together, tightly. Wetting each layer with a water hose will help compact it quite a bit. Another way is to pack denser, heavier materials on top, and also wet them. I often build up a big stack of pure leaves, then pile cow manure or cotton gin trash on top of those, and wet it. For maximum and fastest decomposition, the various components of your compost pile need to be in close contact, pressed up tightly against one another. Smaller particle size will help, too. For example, I often rake leaves into long windrows in my yard, and then run them over with my lawnmower, with a grass catcher attachment. This works well to chop them up into a smaller particle size (especially with big magnolia leaves, otherwise slow to break down, as are pine needles). Then I dump the contents of the bag into my leaf piles and wet it. It’ll work faster.

A leaf pile may take MORE than a year, or two, to decompose completely. What you really need are your “Browns” and your “Greens.” “Browns” are carbon-rich materials with low nitrogen content, like dry leaves, paper, cardboard…by themselves, Browns aren’t exactly inert, but they will be slow to decompose. What you need are “Greens,” materials with a higher nitrogen and moisture content to “fire off,” begin the process of decay. Fresh green grass, kitchen vegetable scraps, green leaves, animal manure, cotton gin trash, roadkill, etc., those are “Greens.” Yes, gin trash and manure are brown in color, but they’re high in nitrogen, so they’re “Greens” (that makes perfect sense to composters).

See, you want your leaf piles or compost piles to do a little more than just sit there and slowly decay; you want them to “heat up” – the beginning process of decay generates HEAT, a fair amount of it. They can get QUITE warm, up to 160°, too warm to hold your hand in there for very long, and that initial stage of the decomposition process is what breaks down material fastest. Once your leaf pile heats up, you can watch the top level sink down rapidly, inches per day, as it “works.” That level of heat is enough to kill off some harmful bacteria, and it kills most undesirable weed seeds (You hope. Morning glory and cocklebur seeds WON’T be killed, unfortunately.) This “hot” part of the process normally lasts three or four weeks, then it’ll cool down, and the initial and fastest stage of the composting cycle is complete.

I’ve not had any luck re-starting this “hot” phase – has anyone else? I’ve tried wetting it more and adding a few handfuls of urea. 46-0-0, or urine (Yes, I’ll admit it; I pee in a bucket outside for much of the year, for the sake of my compost pile. No, my wife and son adamantly refuse to make their own contributions; they just don’t see the science or the logic behind it. Yes, I may have to drink more beer than I actually want, but that’s a sacrifice I’m willing to make. Yes, my neighbors occasionally make smart-alec remarks about my personal habits, and Jenn makes sure I empty and wash out my collection bucket before we have company, but…I’m right and they’re wrong. I have very nice compost piles, and that’s important to me.), but to no avail.
Once this “hot” phase is over, fungi and soil-making insects move in to complete the cycle. Earthworms too; they help a lot. I’ve not deliberately tried to cultivate a vermicomposting pile, but when I’m removing my finished compost, I can literally pick out an earthworm from each handful. That’s some rich stuff, Black Gold to me, and it gives me a great deal of satisfaction.

(Bioturbation - the reworking of soils and sediments by animals or plants. Bioturbating activities are thought to be a primary driver of biodiversity.)

I begin most of my composting process in the fall or winter, simply because that’s when materials are easily available to me. Our housecats and the local freeloading raccoons have discovered that my actively-working leaf piles make wonderful wintertime BEDS – think about it, a nice layer of leaves with waves of heat rising from below – I’d sleep there myself!

So far, what I’ve been talking about are LEAF PILES, which is NOT the same as a compost pile. There’s an important distinction. My leaf piles are long-term projects, with minimal efforts put into them. Once I get them gathered and piled up and dampened, I won’t do much else to them, other than an occasional watering. Nature will do the work for me. Typically, they’ll reduce down to about ¼ of their original volume, over a year. After one year I’ll combine the partially finished compost, wet it down again, and wait another year for it to be broken down completely. Slow, yes, but it also takes minimal labor.

A real COMPOST PILE, now, that’s a different beast. The difference is that you “turn” a compost pile regularly—“work” it. You turn over the layers of the pile with a pitchfork, turning fork, or shovel, twice a week or so. Working it like this mixes the components better, gives the individual particles contact with each other, and importantly, aerates it, exposing it to the air. Most of the decaying organisms are AEROBIC bacteria, which need air to function. Mixing it often like this keeps the entire pile at the same level of decay, and you’ll get an evenly-finished product.

ANAEROBIC bacteria, ones that live without the presence of air – those function to break down biological matter, too, very well, but many of the anaerobic types are also ones that are harmful to human health, i.e., cause diseases. It’s mostly the anaerobes that are responsible for bad smells, too, as they emit methane or sulfurous gasses.

These actively-working compost piles break down surprisingly fast. If you put the labor into it, you can get usable, finished compost in a month or six weeks. It’s fastest in the warm seasons, of course. The “leaf pile” baskets that I’ve described are inferior for an actively-working compost pile, because it’s inconvenient to have to reach over the tops of them to get in to fork the materials around. A three-sided, C-shaped structure is best for working compost, because it gives you room to get in there and “work” the materials. Some people use wooden pallets, stood upright in a C-shape, to contain their compost piles. The best composting containment system I’ve used: I take “cattle panels,” cheap and easily available, made of very heavy galvanized steel wire, usually 5’ X 16’ in dimension, and I’ll line those with ¼ hardware cloth. I’ll bend “legs” on them, about 4’ long, then stand them up to get a fence 5’ tall, with 4’ X 8’ X 4’sides, open on one side. I stake the corners with t-posts. This works fantastically well; it gives you elbow room to
get in there and really work over your materials; it’ll hold a ton of finished compost; with a smaller amount you can easily toss compost from one side to the other to mix it; all the components are cheap and easily available. These will also last forever, never rot out, but can still be moved easily if you need to change locations.

How to tell when compost is finished – It’s “finished” when you can no longer distinguish one component from another. You shouldn’t be able to pick out leaf fragments, acorn hulls, pieces of paper – it should all be a fine-grained, black, gritty substance.
SOURCES:

If you’re orcharding, doing nursery stuff, farming, or gardening, you already know how important your “sources” are. You don’t want to PAY for composting materials, of course – you want to use what others discard as trash, which you can haul off for free. If you purchase a bag of fine pine bark, one of cow manure, and one of peat, and mix them up…where’s the fun in that? It’s the scrounging, the search for materials and steady sources, the thrill of the chase, which make for the exciting part of composting. (There’s a clue as to my personality, that I find watching things rot “fun.”) It’s VERY important to develop your sources, so keep a sharp eye out.

(Bricolage – something made or put together using whatever is at hand.)

Myself – there’s a cattle sale barn one mile from my place of work, with a mountain of cow manure out back, and those guys are happy for me to haul off a truckload, anytime. (Go for the dried manure. The fresh stuff is…well, you’ll see for yourself.) The nearest cotton gin is ten miles away, but on my way back from work, so I stop by there and load up with gin trash. My uncle crafts outside lawn furniture and kindly saves his sawdust and shavings for me, so I get a couple of big bags of that each week. There are numerous small sawmills in this area, so I can easily find more wood chips and sawdust. I watch the sides of the road, especially within city limits – homeowners often, especially in the fall, set out bags of raked leaves on the curb for the garbage truck to pick up – it’s FREE, they don’t want it, and the garbage crew doesn’t either; all that stuff does is take up space in the landfill. Last year I scored fifty big bags of clean pine straw from ONE place - why a person would plant pine trees all around their house, if they abhor pine needles that much, I don’t understand, but their trash is my “Black Gold.”

You can find some of your best composting materials closest to home, in your own yard. I’m not a guy who places a high priority on yard and lawn maintenance, you probably get that. I look out over my yard, see the high grass, piles of leaves drifted against the corners, the sprouts of new growth on the hedges, the dead possum my dog drug up last night…those are all harvestable CROPS to me; more fodder for my compost files.

How much scrap PAPER do you throw away each year, do you think? Don’t throw it in the garbage and pay someone to haul it off – compost it, make soil.

Composting Materials

Well, in theory, anything of a biological origin will rot, decay. Some are better than others.

PAPER – The average American household throws away 850 lbs. of paper per year. I don’t think modern human society could function without paper. I think sometimes we forget – paper is a biological product; it’s wood, made from ground-up trees.

Coarse-textured, unbleached paper, without much ink, is best. The old-fashioned brown paper grocery bags are perfect. Cardboard, sure, but not if it has a glossy, printed side. You’ll want to pick out steel staples from large cardboard boxes, and remove any tape. Newspaper is good –
most of the ink they use nowadays is soy-based, and biodegradable. Typing and copy paper, office-type waste, yes, most of it is good. Most of that kind will break down faster if it’s chipped up or shredded. Junk mail, bills, cancelled checks – good, if not too heavily printed, and make sure you tear out the plastic “windows.” Paper towels, the cardboard cores from paper towels and toilet paper, they’re perfect. Paper products are the most easily-available for most of us.

The kind of paper to AVOID – slick, glossy, printed paper is not the best to compost. There are too many chemicals in that ink, and they may not break down quickly, or be desirable. Some paper may even have a thin plastic coating; throw it in the garbage. Glossy, colored fashion magazines, nope. Christmas wrapping paper, ugh, no. National Geographics and Playboys, no way.

KITCHEN FOOD WASTE – Of course, nearly all of it. Vegetable trimmings and scraps are great. Chicken or fish bones will break down relatively quickly. A t-bone or pork chop bone, um, it’ll take a while. A ham bone, no, too big, make soup with it instead, and then give it to your dog, she deserves it. Eggshells are wonderful, a fine source of calcium. Let them dry a day or two and crush them in your hand to break them up into small fragments. Tea bags and coffee grounds are fantastic – instead of composting, you can add these directly around a plant, as mulch. Paper coffee filters are good.

Avoid a lot of plant oils or animal fats. They’re slow, slow to decompose. So, if the oil in your Fry Daddy or fish cooker is getting rancid, dispose of it otherwise.

MANURE – Yes, from cows, horses, sheep, rabbits, and chickens. It’s far easier when it’s dry, trust me on this. Manure from cats, dogs, pigs, or humans – eh, not so much. Those animals can carry diseases which infect humans, so I avoid them myself. The heat of an actively-working compost pile MAY kill most potentially harmful organisms, or it may NOT. Bacteria, viruses, and some parasites have the ability to encapsulate when faced with an unfavorable environment, and they can lie in that dormant state for hundreds of years before springing back to life.

(In 2012, the long-lost gravesite of King Richard III, who died in 1485, was discovered. This was an intense archaeological dig, done exactly right. Around his pelvic region, and nowhere else at the site, were found ROUNDWORM EGGS, Ascaris lumbricoides. He was known, historically, as suffering from intestinal ailments. 527 years, some eggs survived? THAT’s my opinion of humanure.)

Horses, cows, and sheep are often dosed with Ivermectin to kill intestinal parasites (worms). That medicine is said to sometimes pass through an animal’s digestive system and still be active in the manure, and it actually kills MOST worms, including (desirable) earthworm populations. Practically, I have not found that a problem; the cow manure I haul from our local sale barn is full of red wrigglers and nightcrawlers.

ANIMAL WASTE AND MEATS – OK, to a degree, but I’d prefer those in small amounts. Big bones, like a cow femur – no, it WILL decay and add calcium, but it’ll take years. A deboned deer or pig skeleton – I’m unenthused about those. A bucket of rancid lard – no, it’d take decades.
to break down. An occasional small piece of roadkill, fish, a deceased goldfish, turtle, hamster, or parakeet, yes I’ll use those, but I’d bury them deep so they don’t smell and attract flies and scavengers. I’d prefer to use those in a “hot,” actively-working pile. Put it this way: I’d compost a Pekingese, but not a Doberman.

**PERENNIALS vs. ANNUALS** – Some experienced composters believe that plant tissue from annual plants, those that die back after one season of growth, decay more rapidly than those from perennials, like the leaves and wood chips from trees. I’m prone to agree with them, but mostly, I’ll really use whatever I can get. Wood chips may be slower-rotting by themselves, but if you keep them damp, and mix with other, faster-decaying matter, they’ll rot down soon enough.

**URBAN SOURCES** – Well, suburban, anyway. Oh yeah, just because you live in the big city, it doesn’t mean you can’t find PLENTY of compostable materials. Sometimes it’s even easier than it is in a rural area, with less driving. Your yard, even a small one, and your kitchen and household will provide lots. Grocery stores, restaurants, or any kind of food-processing place generate HUGE volumes of food waste. Many of your neighbors like a well-maintained yard, and they’ll kindly gather up leaves and grass clipping, bag them, and leave them on the curb for you to pick up. Every city will have arborists, tree-trimming services, who usually grind up their limbs, and are LOOKING for a place to dispose of these. Is there a horse stable in town? A zoo? IF you’re allowed access to go in a city landfill – some cities separate garbage by category, and you might find an acre or two covered with mountains of wood chips or bags of yard waste. You’ll be amazed at what you can find in an urban environment, if you do a little searching.

*Elephant dung, the Holy Grail for composters.*

**AGRICULTURAL WASTE** – Some are potentially GREAT sources. It depends. If you are lucky enough to have an agricultural source, it’s usually a lot, a large volume.

Farmers growing corn, soybeans, or wheat – you may not be able to get much from their fields; the harvesting combines usually pick the grain clean. Corn kernels are separated from the cob by the combine, and cobs and stalks are chopped up and spread out over the fields. Soybeans are
separated from the pod, and wheat from their stalks. The place to look for their wastes is at a 
grain elevator or processing plant. Those most often will have mountains of waste that they’ll be 
happy to let you haul off, for free – they WANT to get rid of it. Peanut processing plants, pecan-
boxing outfits, cotton gins, vegetable processors, apple cider mills, sugarcane or sugar beet 
processing plants, sawmills, wood processing plants, rice and other grain mills – all great 
ources. You’ll need permission to go onto their private properties and gather. It’s VERY 
important for you to always keep in mind – places like this, they’re FACTORIES, serious 
industrial endeavors, and they’re not going to concern themselves much with a guy wanting to 
crung a pickup or two of their waste. They can be DANGEROUS. They’ll likely have big 
piles of waste materials sitting around outside, but there will probably also be lots of heavy 
achinery moving around, driven by employees focusing on their JOBS, their work, and not on 
avoiding or working around YOU. You need to keep a sharp eye out and DON’T get in their 
way! They’re BUSY during harvest, their peak season, so during their slower off-season is a 
much better time to collect.

Chicken-raising farms generate very fine composting materials. Chickens are raised on bedding 
of rice hulls, peanut hulls, straw, or wood shavings, stuff that will absorb their wastes. This 
 bedding will also be full of their spilled food, feathers, and dead carcasses – wonderfully rich 
materials which are high in nitrogen and will decompose quickly. Chicken litter is usually NOT 
so high in nitrogen that it will burn plants, so it can be applied as mulch/fertilizer even without 
composting. In MS, there’s actually an industry of chicken litter; the big chicken operations in 
south MS haul big truckloads to farmers and cattlemen, who spread and till it into their fields for 
tilth and nutrients. It depends on their feed and type of bedding used, but some chicken litter can 
be slightly alkaline, which will raise the pH just like lime does, which is very desirable for most 
of us. Good stuff, chicken litter.

When we were younger, my cousin raised quail for a while, commercially. He bedded them 
down on pine wood shavings. Every now and then, he’d clean out the pens, and I’d help him. 
We’d shovel out the pens and throw the quail litter in a trailer, and haul that out to my 
grandmother’s garden. Instead of spreading the litter properly, we just tossed it out randomly 
about the garden, by the shovelful. The next summer, after the garden was planted – you could 
look out over the garden and see where literally every single shovelful fell; the plants there were 
three times the size of their neighboring plants; with robust stems and dark green foliage. If there 
was ever a single incident in my life that showed me how important it is to work biomass back 
into your soil, this was it. (My uncle made some snide remarks about what a careless job we’d 
done in putting out the quail litter, so next year I obtained a packet of “giant corn,” corn that 
made small ears but threw a stalk twenty feet high, and I covertly planted them here and there, 
amongst his sweet corn. He’d stand out in the garden, musing at those gigantic stalks. “Yep, that 
quail litter sure did the trick. Wonder why they don’t all look like that? Next time, you boys be 
sure to spread that litter out better.”)

Understand, all these potential composting ingredients I mention – I gather them with the intent 
of MIXING them together, and letting them rot, usually NOT using only one single element! 
Each different component adds a certain part, or vital nutrient or mineral or micronutrient, so a
MIX is important. By themselves, many would compost poorly, with a not-so-great final product. A compost pile of pure paper, for example, is only a soggy, smelly mess. Mix it in with leaves, spoiled hay, or gin trash, a heavily mixed composition, and stir it around and it becomes something quite improved. ONLY table scraps or pure animal waste products, yuck. If I had to pick only one single substance that could be composted by itself – leaves, I’d say. Leaves, by themselves, break down into a very nice compost. Cotton gin trash does too, even quicker.

COTTON GIN TRASH – Gin trash is interesting enough to warrant a few paragraphs of its own. This will probably be new information to my Northern friends who aren’t familiar with it. Gin trash – after cotton bolls are picked from the fields they’re carried to a cotton gin, where the lint is separated from the seeds. Of course the lint is the most valuable, desired product, but the seeds and hulls are also used – cottonseed oil, pressed from these seeds, is a valuable product. (When I was a kid, raising cattle, the cotton hulls and a coarse meal ground from the seeds were what we fed cattle during the winter. They were waste products then, and CHEAP. You could get a barn filled with cottonseed hulls for, say, $10, or so. The cottonseed meal came in 100-lb. bags, and I’d mix a gallon or two with a bushel of hulls, like mixing mashed potatoes and gravy. My cows loved it. There’s 46% protein in the meal, and 4% fat, so it’s a fine winter feed. We fed only a little hay.) The definition of gin trash; everything else, besides the lint and seeds and hulls; it’s the chaff, the dried flower parts, sepals and petals, pieces of the stems and leaves, some lint, and broken up pieces of the hulls and seed. Unfortunately, other plants, weeds, that happen to be growing in the fields, like cocklebur and morning glory, are also contained in it. Everything that the combine sucked up and that the gin machinery rejected as not-lint or not-seeds, that’s what it is. (Probably a few insect parts in there, too).

Gin trash is a dingy brown color and slightly oily from the cottonseed oil, and not very appealing. Cattle will eat it (hungry cows). When it gets a little damp – wow, that stuff fires up fast, makes a very “hot” compost that “works” fast, and quickly breaks down into fine particles. If you’re turning it in a proper compost pile, you can get fine, finished compost in only a couple of months.

The thing about gin trash – “organic,” it ain’t, not by any stretch of the definition of the word. Cotton, as grown in the Southeastern US, is probably the most chemical-infused plant material you can find. It’s been grown on soil that has been chemical-laden for decades. ALL cotton is a GMO, a genetically-modified organism, very highly bred. “Natural,” “organic” cotton, I don’t think there is such a thing, not on any large scale. The chemicals – more than a normal person could understand, but cotton is cultivated with herbicides, insecticides, bactericides, fungicides, miticides, defoliants, liquid fertilizers, growth hormones, boll-openers, growth restrictors – the modern cotton plant comes from the efforts of plant breeders and chemical manufacturers, working hand-in-hand, and is BRED, developed and designed, to grow in conjunction with these chemicals. So, you can imagine, my organic-growing friends faint or throw up their hands in horror when I mention using cotton gin trash in compost.

In some states, I know they have a three-year standard – if you let gin trash sit outside and weather for three years, all the chemicals are theoretically leached out, and it can be legally
labeled as “organic,” and sold as such. That’s a rule of thumb farmers use too, three years after application, they figure any chemical residues will be gone.

In practice – I’ve lived in a cotton-growing region most all my life. For several decades I’ve observed my family and neighbors use this product in their gardens and yards, and have never observed any detrimental effects from it. Just the opposite; it really is “Black Gold” for any growing plant. It’s best when it’s rotted down for at least a year, but I’ve used it fresh, too, directly on my garden and nursery beds as mulch and compost. The fresh gin trash will have certainly been sprayed with defoliant just before picking, but I’ve not seen that harm any living plant.

I guess it depends on how strictly you want to adhere to an “organic only” strategy, as to what materials you choose to compost. If you want to be really, purely “organic” – you’ll have a hard time. There’s not much in this world that is completely untouched by human activity, you know. Leaves that you rake up from your yard? They’ll have traces of vehicle exhaust residue on them. Grass clippings from town? Most homeowners use some sort of fertilizer or weed control on their lawns. Wheat or rice straw, or hay? Those will nearly always come from fields that were cultivated with herbicides. Eggshells or chicken litter, or manure from feed lots? Those animals will most always have been fed with antibiotics, dewormers, or growth hormones; that’s how meat animals are cultivated, with the aid of modern medicines and chemicals. “Sustainable,” I’d say that these products are, but “organic” – umm. I believe there’s a middle ground we must all seek, as in most every aspect of our lives.

*Humankind, despite its artistic pretensions, its sophistication, and its many accomplishments, owes its existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains. (Anonymous)*

*(There are an estimated 1100 elephants in North America. Each and every one produces 300 pounds of dung per day, on an average. That means 60,000 tons of elephant poop are generated in North America every year, enough to fill the Rose Bowl Stadium 3½ times, by volume – so, where IS it? Have you ever SEEN any? I’m suspicious – I suspect The Government, or Big Ag, or Big Chem, has a hand in this mystery, somehow. And, I’m not even mentioning the rhino, giraffe, and hippo manure that should be available...)*
NAFEX Members’ Exchange: Seeds, Scions, Etc.

AVAILABLE

The Singing Tree Homestead, 588 Turner Rd., Oxford, NY 13830 has come out with its schedule of Spring workshops, starting April 7, and continuing through May 19. Among the workshops offered are fruit tree grafting, organic gardening, nut tree grafting, introduction to homesteading, and medicinal herbs. For a list of workshops with descriptions and registration information, please write to the Singing Tree Homestead and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Plenty.

Fence Company Baton Rouge: Fencing is our speciality. We are committed to installing a strong and durable fence for your needs in the Baton Rouge and surrounding areas. Visit our website at www.fencecompanybatonrouge.com. Please call us at 225-412-6727.

Past Pomonas for sale: I would like to sell my past issues of Pomona. I have 90 magazines plus 2 special editions and 2 indexes. They are in good shape, if a little dusty. I would like $30 plus postage for all of them. The issues are from 1986-2010. 17 of the years are complete, 7 are missing 1, and one year missing 2. Interested parties can reach me, Richard Jeske, at tootreese@gmail.com.

Past Pomonas to give away: I have old Pomona volumes anyone can have if interested. I am no longer able to garden much. 2005-2009 or thereabouts. Please let me know if interested. Bev Maki, bjmaki63@gmail.com.

Regarding our Exchange Page:

In these days of fast communication, I urge NAFEX members to check our Facebook page for many of your scion wood offers or searches.

In these pages, NAFEX members are still invited to exchange scions, seeds, cuttings, supplies, and study materials. These ads are accepted as a service to our members for free, but NAFEX accepts no responsibility for the authenticity of information given. Most material is to be given for free or swapped, however, reasonable postage or a small ($1) fee may be requested by the advertiser.

Be sure to answer all of your emailed requests (even a quick “all gone” note is appreciated.) Members inquiring via post should include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if they would like a response.

To list on the Exchange, email nafexmember@gmail.com and provide your listing, contact information (email preferred), terms (postage costs, small fee, free), and website address, if any. If you are offering multiple items, we can link to your listing on your web page, or publish the list in PDF format linked to your Exchange listing. The Member Exchange is NOT open to the public...only NAFEX members whose dues are current may list and use this area.

Larger ads are also available for Pomona. Ads offering fruit-related plant material, horticultural supplies, and publications are accepted from members and non-members. Paid ads are approximately one-half page for $50 or a full page for $85. Contact the Pomona Editor-in-Chief to place your advertisement. Payment is accepted by check, Paypal, or Google Checkout. Email the editor or nafexmember@gmail.com for assistance.
Fruit & Nut Interest and Regional Fruit Groups

Clifford England
2338 Highway 2004
Mc Kee, KY 40447-8342
http://www.nuttrees.net/start.html
nuttrees@prtcnet.org
(606) 965-2228 or (606) 493-8239

I’m so glad for the opportunity to be the Interest Group Coordinator. I love to talk and enlighten fellow enthusiasts in the participation of one of our most sacred freedoms of growing what we eat and providing for others.

I grew up on a small farm and spent a lot of time with my grandfather Blevins England in southeastern Kentucky on his 65 acres where he grew trees and farmed as a hobby. I remember like it was yesterday the joys of picking the fresh ripe fruit from the trees and the taste of happiness that such joy brings. Well, I’m 50ish now and to this day I still remember the lessons my grandfather taught me.

My grandfather’s teachings set me on a valuable path for the next 26 years. I traveled around the United States and the world in the military, spending time in 14 countries. Years later, I realized that what I learned and had been observing the entire time I was traveling was the desire to be semi-independent. Growing your own food helps you grow as a person and be closer to the earth.

I have been a member of NAFEX for going on 20 years and I love those evenings spent in the recliner in the winter months, reading the Pomona quarterly publications. I always look forward to the next Issue. All of you know that we grow as much in the winter months as we do in the summer months, except for the sweat. Just the planning during the winter months is encouragement enough, I often think.

I welcome questions and I will be more than glad to take calls about any of the temperate zone fruits and nuts that we grow and/or that I have experience with. I will be delighted to put you in contact with the chairperson of a specialty group.

If I can be of any assistance in any way please feel free to contact me. I am eager to work with all the plant species and the regional fruit study groups: the ones that are active now and that will be active in the future.

Thank you.

Clifford

Here’s some ideas for Interest Group chairs or those considering volunteering. Any current chairs would be happy to let you know what they do for their groups, as well. Interest Group Volunteer Info

- Acorn—Joe Hecksel, 7980 Bentley Hwy., Eaton Rapids, MI 48827. Email: joehecksel@gmail.com Website:http://acornsandchestnuts.blogspot.com
- Amelanchier—Rick Sawatzky, rick.sawatzky@usask.ca, 51 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, S7N 5A8
- Apple—Derek Mills, Hocking Hills Orchard, derekcs2005@aol.com, 14435 Nickel Plate Road, Logan, OH 43138
- Apricot—Bob Purvis purvisrc@msn.com, 1568 Hill Rd, Homedale ID 83628, (208)-337-3782, 5:30-10:30 p.m. MST weekdays, all day Saturday and Sunday. APRICOT SOURCES LIST

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• Canadian Sources—David Maxwell david.maxwell@dal.ca
• Cherry—Rick Sawatzky, rick.sawatzky@usask.ca, 51 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, S7N 5A8
• Cornelian Cherry: John Holzwart (920) 457-9290 littlejohn@moonwiseherbs.com
• Chestnut Joe Hecksel, 7980 Bentley Hwy., Eaton Rapids, MI 48827. Email: johecksel@gmail.com
• Citrus—(Hardy) John Panzarella, jpanza@swbell.net; Dr. Alfred R. Loeblich III, pyrrhophytes@yahoo.com
• Crataegus—Mayhaws, Hawthorns Travis Callahan, teejcee@cox.net, http://tandeecal.com/mayhaw.htm
• Elderberry—Paul Otten, 19060 Manning Trail North, Marine on St. Croix, MN 45324, PMO@CHOI.net.
• Eleagnaceae (Autumn Olive, Goumi, Sea Buckthorn)—Hector Black, 170 Hidden Springs Lane, Cookeville, TN 38501. (931) 268-9889, 6 AM – 7 AM and after 6 PM central time.
• Figs—NORTHERN FIGS - Bassem Samaan, 2184 Drury Lane, Bethlehem, PA 18018, 610-653-6435, bassgarden@gmail.com, Website URL: www.treesofjoy.com; CONSULTANT—Dr. A. J. Bullard, 307 W. Henderson St., Mt. Olive, NC, 28365-1999. (919) 658-4424.
• Fruit Trees for Public Spaces—Bill Whipple, whipplebill@hotmail.com
• Fruits for the Wild—David Osborn osborn@warnell.uga.edu
• Grafting and Budding (chip budding and bark grafting) — Lester H. Davis Lhdavis8@knology.net, 1644 Lokey Dr., Columbus, GA 31904 (706) 323-0857. Best after 9:30 PM eastern time.
• Honeybees—Ray Lackey lackeyray@tianca.com, 1260 Walnut Ave., Bohemia NY 11716-2176. (631) 567-1936 between 8 – 10:30 PM; http://www.tianca.com/tianca2.html
• Honeylocust (Gleditsia triacanthos): Andy Wilson awilson@pvcc.edu, Springtree Agroforestry Project, 268 Springtree Lane, Scottsville, VA 24590 (434) 286-3466 (evenings are best) Website: http://www.pvcc.edu/faculty/awilson/agroforestry
• Jujube—Shengrui Yao, Ph.D., Assistant Professor/Fruit Specialist, Department of Plant and Environment Science, Alcalde Agriculture Science Center, New Mexico State University, 371 County Road 40, P. O. Box 159, Alcalde, NM 87511, Phone: 505-852-4241, Email: yaos@nmsu.edu
• Kiwifruit (Vacant, Volunteer Now)
• Pawpaw—Blake Cothron healandserve@gmail.com
• Peach and Nectarine (Vacant, Volunteer Now)
• Pear—SOUTHERN—Travis J. Callahan teejcee@cox.net, 11403 Wesley Road, Abbeville, LA 70510. (318) 893-9134; Personal Website: http://www.tandeecal.com/page10.htm; NORTHERN—David Sliwa ddaliwa@gmail.com, 2682 Lannon Hill Rd., Decorah, IA 52101. (563) 382-3922. WESTERN—Rachel Elkins, rbelkins@ucanr.edu, Pomology Farm Advisor, Lake & Mendocino Counties, University of California Cooperative Extension, 883 Lakeport Blvd., Lakeport, CA 95453 & Joseph Postman joseph.postman@ars.usda.gov.

• Persimmon, American—Jerry Lehman, JWLehmanTreeGmail.com, 7780 Persimmon St. Terre Haute, IN 47802-4994. (812) 298-TREE

• Persimmon, Kaki or Asian, David J. Lavergne 5430 Blvd. D’Isle, Jarreau, LA 70749-3119, (225) 627-5591, lavergnedavid770@yahoo.com

• Permaculture—Co-Chairs: Dave Boehnlein, Education Director, Bullock’s Permaculture Homestead http://PermaculturePortal.com, P.O. Box 343, Deer Harbor, WA 98243, permaculture.dave@gmail.com and Trevor Newman, 8150 Knox Rd., Clarkston, MI 48348, Phone: (248) 535-9419, E-mail: Tnewman92@gmail.com, www.thefruitnut.com and www.rootstofruits.biz.

• Plum—NORTHERN—John Bunker john.p.bunker@gmail.com, 167 Turner Mill Pond Rd., Palermo, ME 04354. Letters or email preferred. ; SOUTHERN—David Ulmer davidu9999@gmail.com, 7157 Camellia Lane, Sebastopol, CA 95472. Phone 707-824-1650

• Pomegranate—Tom Knaust, tknaust@gmail.com

• Potted Culture—Lee Reich lereich@hvc.rr.com, 387 Springtown Rd., New Paltz, NY 12561. (914) 255-0417, early morning eastern time best.

• Quince—Joseph Postman, joseph.postman@ars.usda.gov

• Ribes (Gooseberries, Currants, etc.)—Deb Schneider debs913@gmail.com

• Rhubarb—Deb Schneider — debs913@gmail.com

• Rubus (Raspberries, Blackberries) NORTHERN—Jim Fruth jimfruth@charter.net

• Short-Season Perennial Fruits - Ron Martinez, ronemtz@hotmail.com

• Southern Fruits Consultant—Lloyd Williams, 205-665-4329

• Strawberries—Michael J Wellik, Middletown, DE 19709, Phone: 302-378-3633, email: mike@thestrawberrystore.com, Blog: http://blog.thestrawberrystore.com/ 

• Rare & Unusual and Tropical Fruits—Susan Davidson, Natuirpe Farms LLC, (239) 552 4730, Mobile: (239) 249 9149, sdavidson@naturipefarms.com

• Walnut—Jerry Lehman, 7780 Persimmon St., Terre Haute, IN 47802-4994. (812) 298-TREE, JWLehmanTreeGmail.com

• Winter Hardiness—William MacKentley trees@sln.potsdam.ny.us, 325 State Hwy 345, Potsdam, NY 13676. (315) 265-6739; Phone calls preferred to letters.

### Regional Fruit Groups

Although NAFEX does not have regional or state chapters, we do encourage the development of local groups that have the same interests and goals. Here are some current groups:

- **Midwest Fruit Explorers** (MidFEx): Chicago area active fruit growers.

- **Southern Fruit Fellowship** (SFF): Covers the southeastern states.

- **Backyard Fruit Growers**: Pennsylvania Group
Indiana Nut Growers Association
California Rare Fruit Growers
Holistic Orchard Network
Western Cascade Fruit Society
Seattle Tree Fruit Society
Buncombe (NC) Fruit and Nut Club

NAFEX Roster

Current NAFEX Rosters are available on request and are sent as a CSV file. Contact nafexmember@gmail.com.

If you would like to be removed from the roster email nafexmember@gmail.com for assistance. To update your member information, please go to Edit Your Profile in the Your Membership page of the NAFEX website and change your information there. We'll be reissuing these list quarterly.

Thinking about Pomona:
how do we bring our journal side of NAFEX into the 21st century?

NAFEX is us. You and me. Pomona is a member-written publication. Without you, we have nothing to say.

You are writing a letter to your fruit-growing friends when you submit to Pomona; you need not write a scholarly article, though we welcome those, too.

Tell us what fruits and nuts you are growing, how they are doing in your USDA or Canadian hardiness zone, what special techniques you may have used to enhance your fruit’s success.

Here are some suggested categories, but feel free to submit something that would fall under a different heading:

- Garden Mistakes,
- Lessons Learned,
- Eureka Moments,
- Recent Successes,
- Outstanding Varieties,
- Pruning Tips,
- Training Tips,
- Grafting Tips
- Getting to know your fellow fruit explorers—including yourself! Send us a sketch of you and your growing interests.

Ideally, each NAFEX member would submit something for publication at least once every year. Subject matter can be anything that deals with fruits and nuts, occasionally venturing a ways from the basics. Good subjects include description and evaluation of an unusual variety; new variations of a propagating technique; a progress report on an
experimental breeding or testing program; new methods of fruit culture, training, or pest control. Articles frequently respond to something printed in a previous issue.

In addition to hearing your experiences, we need to know your ideas for updating our organization to make NAFEX as useful as possible. Please let us know what you think. This feedback process is in keeping with NAFEX’s Round Robin heritage. Please check your facts, as much as possible.

**Gathering Editor:**

**Summer 2018:** please mail your materials to Jackie Kuehn, PO Box 29, Lucernemines, PA 15754 or email to jakuehn@verizon.net by May 15.

**Future Issues:** Because NAFEX is shifting editorial personnel, please contact the new editor-in-chief for information on what the new protocols will be for submitting articles. Watch for the new editor’s name and contact information on nafex.org.

“Why do we need so many kinds of apples? Because there are so many folks. A person has a right to gratify his legitimate tastes. If he wants twenty or forty kinds of apples for his personal use, running from Early Harvest to Roxbury Russet, he should be accorded the privilege. Some place should be provided where he may obtain trees or scions. There is merit in variety itself. It provides more points of contact with life, and leads away from uniformity and monotony.” - Liberty Hyde Bailey, “The Apple Tree,” 1922.