Thoughts from Among the Apple Trees
– Orin Martin

Some thoughts while wandering among the apple trees at UCSC’s Alan Chadwick Garden –

- The rows aren’t straight—actually they aren’t really rows at all.
- The trees aren’t (too) tall (6’-10’)—a stepladder-assisted orchard.
- Actually it’s not an orchard—merely an aggregation of trees. (A-GRE-GET—a collection or sum of units or parts. An aggregate is often an example of something being greater than the sum of its parts, as in soil aggregates or aggregation. From the Latin verb aggregare—to add to. Or alternately, as in the sentence, the well-rounded collection of fruit trees was, in the aggregate, sufficiently extensive to merit attention.)
- The hillside is insanely steep, but then the garden and the gardeners have always had an utter disregard for the impossible.
- The soil is 3-layer chocolate cake rich and deep. But then deep digging for 20–30 years will do that.
- Almost all the varieties planted are good—excellent in terms of quality and taste.
- Some “perform” better than others.
- Some are worth the struggle: Kandil Sinap and Aroma get inadequate chill two out of three years, Cox’s Orange Pippin splits and cracks, Spigold sets a “shy” crop two out of three years, Rubinette lacks size, etc.
- Some are regularly reliable annual bearers: Golden Delicious, Chehalis, Gala, Sunrise, Fiesta, Fuji, etc.
- How time (history) and travel (geography) come to you as you stroll among the trees. No need to travel further away than say—Capitola.

With over 500 deciduous fruit trees planted at the Chadwick Garden (not all are apples) and 100+ varieties of apples, it’s far past time to update the inventory and develop a tabular, descriptive list. Quite a tableau!

Wandering farther afield, several impressions jump up and onto the page: early-ripening varieties (good ones) are a bit like the search for the Holy Grail—obsessive, mythical and largely unsuccessful. And yet the quest continues . . .

Here are some musings on a handful of the varieties growing in the Chadwick Garden’s collection to consider for your own garden/orchard –

Gravenstein

What an old apple (400+ years), with a storied and conflicted past. It has a cult following owing to its early ripening (late July-mid August) and distinctive tangy-sweet flavors. It has ivory-white flesh that is both crisp and juicy, and yet soft and melting. The thin skin is a yellowish-green with variable red striping. Gravenstein is favored for fresh eating, juice, pies and a fabled sauce (think Mott’s).

This variety is thought to have originated in either Italy (the Tyrolian Alps), Germany, Russia, or most probably Denmark in the 1600s. It was transported to California (Sebastopol area) by Russian immigrants from the Southern Ukraine (Sevastopol area) in the 1800s. Gravenstein was a leading, although problematic, commercial apple into the early 1980s. At one time it was the leading agricultural “product” of Sonoma County. Sadly almost all the commercial plantings have been abandoned either for higher dollar value per acre vegetable and grape crops, or even more sadly, second homes for Bay Area professionals.

The distinctive flavors of Gravenstein coupled with its early season maturation have created a loyal, almost feverish following, as in “Are the Gravies in yet?” So what are its problems? A multitude.

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1. It is one of the most vigorous of all apple scions. Unless planted on very dwarfing rootstocks, it’ll be you and the high wire act of the flying Wallenda Family at 25 feet above the ground. A perilous proposition.

2. It is a shy and erratic bearer, as in “sets a shy crop.” Some strains, Rosebrook Red, and Red, are more consistent, as well as being a bit prettier and sweeter. As for pollination and fruit set, because of its early bloom, sometimes the weather is the culprit. So much of a successful year of fruit growing is dependent on weather conditions during a ten-day – two-week stretch in early spring. And as we all know, spring weather is nothing if not erratic. So if the sun doesn’t shine, air temperatures aren’t above 60-65°, then the bees don’t fly and pollen doesn’t flow. There’s no control (thankfully) over the weather, but helpful and good pollen sources are: Thomkin’s King, Fuji, Braeburn and Gala.

3. It is a short-stemmed apple, so if it is not thinned (and when it sets it always throws apples in clusters of 3–5), the apples will “push” each other off the tree as they enlarge.

4. Gravenstein has a soft skin, which is good for eating but simply look at it cross-eyed and it will bruise. Coupled with a tendency to pre-harvest drop (>65%) and you’ve got a low packout and no profits.

5. Gravenstein is a bit of a shape shifter. Some fruits are big, some small, some oblong, some round or elliptical, some ribbed, some smooth, almost all are lopsided. Good though.

John Bunyard in his tome Anatomy of a Dessert said: “of Gravenstein it is hard to speak in mere prose. So distinct in flavor Cox’s itself not standing more solitary, so full of juice and scented with the very attar* of apple . . . bringing to mind the autumnal orchard in yellow sunlight.”

(*Attar is the fragrant oil from rose petals — an old Persian term.)

Aroma

Ripening on the heels of Gravenstein comes Aroma, a cross between Ingrid Marie (Cox’s orange pippin seedling) and Filippa (possibly a Danish seedling of Gravenstein) introduced in 1973. This very large (10–14 oz.), multiple flavored, aromatic apple has soft melting flesh that is creamy. The juice “quotient” is high. Eating an Aroma can be a sublime experience. Typical of one parent line (Gravenstein), it has preharvest drop (>70%) problems. Pick ‘em, put ‘em in a bowl, ripen, enjoy. Again, like Gravenstein, coloring is variable and much aided by full sunlight in the center of the tree. Thankfully the tree has an open habit, with strong yet graceful arching branches. With requisite sunlight Aroma attains a rich red-over-yellow stippled look. And like Gravenstein, it is a shy bearer.

McIntosh History and Profile

Growing up in New England, I thought two things were ordained (in addition to the parish priests):

- The Boston Celtics always won the NBA title.
- All apples were McIntosh—at that time in New England (1950s-60s) it was just about a certainty.

Time moves on. Horizons broaden. Opinions change . . . The Lakers get “Showtime” . . . an onslaught of new varieties have piqued people’s curiosity—all for the better.

The McIntosh apple probably derives from an older French apple, Fameuse (aka Snow apple, owing to its pristine, fine-grained white flesh). Fameuse is written in France as early as the 1500s. Now that’s an old apple! It remains an excellent apple to this day.

It was imported into Quebec in the 1600s. In the early 1800s a Fameuse tree sprouted a seedling on a farm belonging to John McIntosh along the St. Lawrence River (waterway). At the time it was called Granny’s Apple and later renamed Red McIntosh and eventually McIntosh (known in the parlance as Mac). The original tree was damaged in a fire in 1894 but lived on (100 years old) until 1910. McIntosh became and remained a regional favorite until its spread to New England and upstate New York orchards in the 1900s.

The winter of 1933-34 was, as they say in Boston, wicked cold—even by Northeastern standards. Most of the leading commercial apples of the time—Baldwin, Northern Spy and Rhode Island Greening—succumbed to the cold. McIntosh proved much harder and grabbed market share for the next 40–50 years. Eventually it was supplanted by the ubiquitous varieties of supermarket fame, Golden and Red Delicious.

In part, McIntosh’s popularity was due to its pretty red (sometimes almost black-red), shiny look. It also responded admirably to moderate New England summers with cool-cold night temperatures during the last month of growth. These conditions raised the soluble solids (carbs) and expressed the sugar content.

McIntosh is an excellent eating and juicing (hard or sweet) apple. As a cooked apple it turns to mush—sweet though. It is a medium-sized apple that is round and conical. Some Mac offspring are quite small. The skin is bright red, if unevenly colored. The stem is quite short, making hand thinning difficult to impossible, and it must be thoroughly thinned to attain even decent size. The skin, while pretty, is actually tough to penetrate, and irritantly chewy.

The flavor is characterized by what I call “Mac Twang” (not to be confused with Mark Twain). Either you love it or loathe it (a lot like feelings surrounding cilantro). For most Easterners it is to die for. Californians can usually take it or leave it (laid back approach). Truth is, Eastern transplants are merely eating a memory, as California-produced Macs can never rival Eastern Macs.

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late Winter/early Spring Calendar

Seed Starting and Spring Garden Preparation  
Saturday, April 1, 10 am - 1 pm  
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm  
Garden manager Christof Bernau will share ideas on getting your spring and summer garden off to a good start. Tips on selecting varieties, starting seeds, transplanting seedlings, preparing garden beds, and much more at this lecture/demonstration workshop. Dress to be outdoors; heavy rain cancels. $10 for Friends’ members; $15 for non-members, payable the day of the workshop. No pre-registration necessary.

Life Lab’s Spring Break Day Camp  
Monday - Friday, April 10 - 14, 9 am - 1 pm  
Garden Classroom, UCSC Farm  
Children ages 7–11 are invited to join us on the UCSC Farm for spring gardening, cooking, and crafts. We’ll be preparing food fresh from the farm, including herb omelettes and strawberry sundaes. Gardening activities will include seed sowing for home gardens, composting, and planting. Garden-based crafts and games will round out this exciting new week of camp. For registration information call 831.459-4035, or see www.lifelab.org (click on the Summer Camp link).

Organic Rose Selection and Care  
Saturday, April 29, 10 am - 12 noon  
San Lorenzo Garden Center, 235 River St., Santa Cruz  
Chadwick Garden manager Orin Martin presents a free workshop on choosing and raising roses, and controlling pests and diseases using organic techniques. This is a great time of year to select and plant container-grown roses when you can see them in bud. Note the location: San Lorenzo Garden Center.

Spring Plant Sale  
Saturday, May 6, 10 am - 3 pm, and  
Sunday, May 7, 10 am - 2 pm  
Barn Theatre Parking Lot, UC Santa Cruz  
(corner of Bay & High Streets, Santa Cruz)  
Friends of the Farm & Garden members will have pre-entry priority from 9 am – 10 am on Saturday.  
Come choose from a wonderful selection of organically grown flower, herb and vegetable starts, perennials, grasses, and other landscape plants, specially chosen for Central Coast gardens. Proceeds support the Farm & Garden Apprenticeship training program. Friends’ members receive a 10% discount on purchases. Memberships and renewals are available the morning of the sale, beginning at 8:30 am on Saturday and 10 am on Sunday.

Also coming up ...  
The San Francisco Flower & Garden Show  
Wednesday through Sunday, March 15–19  
Cow Palace, South San Francisco  
See six acres of fabulous gardens and attend a variety of gardening workshops and seminars. For the first time the show will feature a kid’s gardening area with hands-on activities and demonstrations for children. Check out the great lineup of workshops and purchase tickets at www.gardenshow.com or call 800.569-2832.

The Central Coast Home & Garden Show  
Saturday and Sunday, April 1 - 2, 10 am - 6 pm  
Cocoanut Grove, Santa Cruz  
Check out the latest home and garden ideas and demonstrations at this springtime show. Call 831.423-2053 for more information.

Events of note at the Arboretum, UCSC ...  
Healthy Soils, Healthy Roses  
Sunday, March 5, 1:30 pm  
$10 Arboretum Associates members; $15 general public

Flora of Scotts Creek Watershed  
Monday, March 13, 7:30 pm (potluck at 6:30)  
free

California Native Plants for the Garden  
Monday, March 20, 7 pm (potluck at 6 pm)  
free

Garden and Climate  
Sunday, April 9, 1:30 pm  
$10 Arboretum Associates members; $15 general public  
See www2.ucsc.edu/arboretum or call 427-2998 for details.
ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Members of the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden gathered at the Live Oak Grange for a lively evening of food and socializing at this year’s annual meeting. Board president Jeffrey Caspary reported on highlights of last year’s Friends’ activities, took a look ahead to future efforts, including the 40th Anniversary planning work, and presented by-law revisions and the 2006 slate of officers for membership approval. Jeffrey will continue to serve as Friends’ president for 2006. Other officers approved for the new term are Trish Hildinger (vice president), Susan Ford (treasurer), and Sue Tarjan (secretary).

Grange members Ken Dickerson and Greg Kindig (who is also a Friends’ Board member) talked about the Live Oak Grange and its many activities and connections to the UCSC Farm & Garden. Graduates of the Apprenticeship shared their stories of current work: Beth Benjamin of Renee’s Garden, Erin Justus and Darryl Wong of the new Cave Gulch Community Supported Agriculture project at the Santa Cruz Waldorf School, and Nancy Vail and Jered Lawson of Pie Ranch on the San Mateo County coast (see page 7, this issue).

Thanks to the Friends’ Board members and second-year apprentice for their efforts, to all our Friends who shared in the evening, and to the Live Oak Grange for donating their facilities for the event.

Grant and Gifts Support Apprentice Training and Farm & Garden Facilities

We would like to acknowledge the following recent grants and gifts –

- $30,000 for the 2006 Farm & Garden Apprenticeship from Paul Newman Charitable Giving made at the suggestion of Nell Newman, of Newman’s Own Organics fame (among other things).
- $30,000 from the Marisla Foundation for the Apprenticeship program and for outreach about our organic and sustainable agriculture instructional materials (print manuals and online resources) through conference presentations and other means.
- $5,000 for the 2006 Farm & Garden Apprenticeship from Gaia Fund, which has contributed now for three years to fund the six-month organic farming and gardening education program.
- $7,200 for an international scholarship in the Apprenticeship from an anonymous donor.

And many thanks to the Apprenticeship alumni who have sent (and are still sending in) year-end contributions to the Apprenticeship for the greenhouse construction project.

Sign Up Now for the 2006 Community Supported Agriculture Season!

Sign up now to guarantee your CSA share

By becoming a shareholder in the Farm & Garden Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project, you’ll receive a box of fresh-picked, organically grown produce each week while supporting the Apprenticeship training program and establishing a partnership between the local community and apprenticing organic growers.

Shares cost $600 for a full share (feeds 4 people) or $380 for a half share (feeds 2-3 people). Payment can be in full or divided up into two or four installments. There are also shares available for low-income households at half the cost of a regular share. Pickups on the UCSC Farm start in early June (weather permitting) and run through October or into early November.

Members can also look forward to weekly newsletters with recipes, farm updates, and events; complimentary membership to the Friends of the Farm & Garden for one year; a 10% discount on plants and merchandise at our bi-annual plant sales; and quarterly issues of the News & Notes.

If you would like to receive our CSA Brochure and Pledge Form or have any questions regarding the CSA program, please contact Nancy Vail at 831.459-4661 or email navail@ucsc.edu.

Common Ground Magazine/Web Site Features Articles by Apprentice Grad

Jason Marks, a 2005 Apprenticeship course grad and a current second-year apprentice, is also an accomplished journalist. Check out his latest offerings in Common Ground, a free magazine available in the San Francisco Bay Area, or online at www.common-groundmag.com. Jason talks about his experience of making the transition from political activist to farmer, and also has a feature article on the San Francisco Jail Project and Santa Cruz’s Homeless Garden Project.

Free Slide Show on Agriculture in Cuba

Apprentice staff members Christof Bernau and Albie Miles will present a talk and slideshow about their 2005 trip to Cuba. “Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance: An Exploration of Agricultural Reform in Cuba”, documents their trip to study Cuba’s agricultural system, which emphasizes organic farming. The event takes place on Friday, February 17, at 7 pm at the Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Ave. in Santa Cruz.
Connecting Students to the Farm

Last Wednesday, three freshmen from College 8 met me for a tour of the UCSC Farm. They were quiet, seemed a little unsure, shy, and had that slight air of adolescent disinterest. I asked them what they’d eaten for breakfast. Nothing. So quickly I began the tour in the persimmon orchard. They each plucked a ripe persimmon, a Fuyu, and bit into the orange fruit with curious looks on their faces. A first taste of something new. We talked about organic farming, buying local, we smelled mint leaves, hops, rose geranium leaves, cilantro going to seed. Then we harvested broccoli, assessed maturity, talked about the fine art of using a harvest knife, how to pack a box. We went on to harvest 10 feet of carrots. And that’s when they really came alive. There’s nothing more amazing then pulling a bright orange carrot out of dark soil. One of the students remarked about the sound of the root being plucked from its secure home. They started joking around with each other, bragging about who had the nicest carrot. We then washed them, boxed them, weighed the harvest, recorded the price and off they went, back up to College 8 with dirty white tennis shoes & the bounty of the morning’s harvest. The chefs in the dining hall would then prepare the produce for their dinner that night, and they’d eat it knowing exactly where it came from and a little bit about what went into growing it.

These students are a part of a new program, Building Community and Sustainability at College 8, a Course Core Service Learning Project. The mission of this project is “to engage incoming first-year students in college sustainability opportunities that will allow them to feel connected to their environment, expand their understanding of the food system, and help foster a greater sense of community.”

The students have four Sustainability Service Projects that take them outside the classroom, and build connections with staff, students, and other members of the campus community.

The projects include “Waste Watchers” about recycling, “Hidden Connections within Food Waste” about composting, “Jump to the Dump” where they learn about landfills, and “Harvest for Health” which is the project I’ve been involved with here on the Farm.

The “Harvest for Health” Project has been an engaging, twice a week experience, for first-year students to learn about food system initiatives at UCSC, the purpose and history of the farm, and harvest food they eat that evening in their dining hall.

Our work with College 8 students has increased interest among dining hall managers, chefs, student organizations, faculty and CASFS staff to replicate this type of program at all of UCSC’s residential colleges.

Providing students with the opportunity to pull a carrot out of the ground and eat it that very day in their dining hall could be one of the most tangible ways to create real, positive change in the lives of UCSC’s students, faculty, and staff. In future issues we’ll talk more about the many efforts taking place to strengthen connections between the UCSC Farm and the campus community.

– Nancy Vail, CSA/Farm-to-College Coordinator

February Garden Checklist

February is a good month for buying plants offered in bare-root form, such as grapes, cane berries, fruit trees and roses.

Cover frost-sensitive plants, preferably with a frost cloth (sold at nurseries). Prop up the cover with stakes so that the cloth does not touch the plants; otherwise the frost will penetrate straight through to the foliage.

Complete winter pruning of dormant plants such as cane berries, fruit trees, grapes, roses and wisteria. Do not delay too long because warm weather will send these plants into a vigorous growth spurt, which you want to direct by pruning.

If you did not prune hybrid tea roses last month, do it now. They bloom only on new wood. Cut back one-third to one-half, leaving canes about 18 inches long. Cut above a swelling bud, pointing out from the center. Remove all suckers and dead wood.

Prune climbing roses to remove twiggy growth and weak shoots. Prune canes that flowered last year to three or four buds.

Do not prune old garden roses unless you know where to prune. Old garden roses are very individual.

Do not prune back frost damage until March. Mother nature often stages amazing comebacks.

Spray fruit trees and roses with a dormant spray made of horticultural oil to kill overwintering insect eggs.

Azaleas and camellias are in bloom and rhododendron are in the budding stage. Now (while they are dormant and you can see the bloom color) is an excellent time to purchase them.

Continue to pick up fallen camellia flowers to prevent the spread of camellia petal blight.

Thinking ahead to summer’s vegetable gardens may prompt the more ambitious gardener to sow tomato, eggplant and peppers seeds indoors to get a head start on the growing season.

Prepare garden tools and machinery for spring use. Wire brush and sharpen tools with cutting edges such as shovels, spades, hoes, pruning shears, hedge trimmers and trowels.

– Katherine Grace Endicott

(Excerpted from the SF Chronicle, February 1, 2006)
Among the Apple Trees (from page 2)

This is not regional chauvinism, but pure climatics. Yet it is amazing how memory activates—in this case the taste buds as well as nostalgia. The scent of sweet peas and sweet williams (stinkin’ billies by the Irish) universally evoke a trip down memory lane as well.

The apple has a perfumed smell even before eating begins—a hint of very ripe strawberries. After puncturing the skin (no mean feat) the pure white flesh is soft and melting. Some people dislike this. It is distinct from mealy, mushy, overripe flesh, and also different from modern varieties that place a premium on crisp, breaking, chunky flesh. Don’t blame the apple—it’s supposed to taste that way. The taste is at once spicy, sweet and sprightly with an acid/tangy kick—“Mac Twang.” If not dead on ripe, there are metallic, even phenolic overtones—now that will get your attention.

McIntosh Types of Note

Fortune (formerly NY #429) – A recently named and released Mac type from Cornell’s Geneva Testing Station. Fortune is a cross between an old-time American classic, Northern Spy, and the McIntosh/Red Delicious cross, Empire (see below). The catalogues state that Fortune “does not possess the problems of either parent” (oh that that were true of us as species).

Northern Spy is a late (in life, not in season) bearer, sometimes taking more than a decade to begin fruiting (now that is a problem). Fortune is better, taking 5–6 years to fruit even on dwarfing M7 rootstock. Empire’s “issue” is size or lack thereof, as is true of so many Mac varieties. This is even more marked if not thinned religiously (i.e., 1 fruit per cluster and 1 fruit every 6–8 inches). Fortune is basically a Mac on steroids, with fruits often reaching 6–7” across. The shape is flat-conic and the color can approach maroon at maturity. The taste is all Mac, as is the flesh (melting). But the sugar is a notch or two above most Macs.

Fortune is absolutely disease immune—well, very resistant at any rate. This is an impressive looking and tasting apple. The tree vigor is strong with well placed spreading branches, giving it an open, graceful appearance. Be careful (or refrain from) stimulating heading pruning cuts once the tree has established and filled its allotted space. On M7 semi-dwarfing rootstock, Fortune will easily reach a height of 12–15’ x 8–9’. The cropping period is all too short (2+ weeks). Like most Macs (author’s opinion/bias) it does not respond well to cold storage. Being a soft-melting flesh variety, it’ll go mushy quickly.

Empire – Probably the best for the West of all Mac types. Empire is a cross between McIntosh and Red Delicious. But don’t worry, all it gets from Red Delicious is a little more fruit size—unfortunately not really enough size, especially if not thinned well. Empire is a dark red, round-conic fruit, with a crisp breaking flesh and a sweet taste. It has coarse, chunky (for a Mac) and not the soft-melting, fine-textured flesh typical of most Macs. Empire is not subject to the extreme (70–90%) preharvest drop that plagues most Macs (especially in warm districts). It is virtually disease immune. Royal Empire is simply a redder, more uniform strain.

Macoun – Named after a Canadian fruit breeder, W.T. Macoun (pronounced Macoon, kind of like the Canadian aboot for about, eh?). This small black-red apple with a dusty bloom* is juicy, crisp, very sweet and hints of strawberries. Arguably the best tasting of the Macs and very popular in upstate New York and New England, where it excels climatically.

(*Bloom refers, not to flowering period, but fine hairs on the fruit, giving the appearance of dust—think dark red and black plums and prunes.)

Spartan – Glossy red, almost mahogany color. A McIntosh–yellow Newtown Pippin cross from British Columbia (1936). Highly aromatic, taste is sweet with hints of both strawberry and melon.

Paula Red – A found seedling from Sparta, Michigan in 1960. About the biggest of the Macs (along with Beverly Hills [below], two radically different geographies and cultures). Very sweet with firmer, crisper flesh. The usual Mac hint of strawberries, widely grown as a commercial apple in Michigan, upstate New York, and the Tyrolian Alps of northern Italy. Excellent eating quality, good juice cider potential.

Beverly Hills – A Melba-McIntosh cross, this very vigorous tree produces an abundant crop of large, oblate-shaped apples that are heavenly sweet and scented like strawberries. Thin skinned, with a soft, melting, fine-grained flesh and a sweet, aromatic taste. William Henry Chandler, UCLA’s pre-eminent pomologist, bred this apple in 1939—back when Beverly Hills had farms and orchards! Like most early varieties, this one is here today, gone tomorrow, lasting only 10–14 days on the tree.

William’s Pride – A relatively new McIntosh type, this mid-sized, round, slightly oblong apple is red striped over a yellow background. It is a typical Mac type with thin skin, fine, pure white flesh, and a slightly tart, spicy taste with plenty of juiciness. The tree is a reliable annual bearer and a very vigorous scion. It suffers 50–60% pre-harvest drop.

Liberty and Freedom – Two very similar varieties from the late 60’s/early 70’s from Cornell’s Geneva Testing Station. The names refer to freedom and liberation from scab via breeding resistance, and thus freedom from spraying. It is, however, somewhat subject to mildew. Both are dark red, intensely colored, intensely flavored (sprightly, spicy, sweet) medium-sized (at best) Macs.

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Kris Woolhouse (1995 apprentice course graduate) and her husband Walt run a beautiful farm near Cottage Grove, Oregon, that they work with draft horses. They also offer workshops in draft horse farming. Here’s a note they sent about upcoming workshops –

”Learn the sustainable craft of working with draft horses on a certified organic farm. Beginning and advanced subjects include harnessing, driving, plowing, and working draft horses with traditional horsepowered equipment. Advanced workshops include working draft horses in intensive bed systems, use of horsepowerers, and logging. Workshops can be tailored to meet the participant’s needs. For more information and dates call Ruby and Amber’s Farm, 541.946-1504, or send email to rubyandamber@earthlink.net.”

Darryl Wong (class of 2004 and a 2005 second-year apprentice) and Erin Justus (2004) are starting a Community Supported Agriculture project just up the road from UC Santa Cruz, at the Santa Cruz Waldorf School in Bonny Doon. The Cave Gulch CSA will serve members of the Waldorf School community, and will get the students involved in farming and animal care.


Jered Lawson (1994) and Nancy Vail (1997, and now the CSA/farm-to-college coordinator at the UCSC Farm) have started Pie Ranch, a “rural center for urban renewal,” with partner Karen Heisler.

Located on the San Mateo County coast, just across Highway 1 from Año Nuevo State Reserve, the 14-acre Pie Ranch offers educational programs related to food, farming, ecology, and community building.

Why Pie Ranch? Writes Jered, “We call ourselves Pie Ranch because the ranch is in the shape of a slice of pie; because pie, with all its ingredients and associations, is a great lens for understanding how food comes from the land to our tables; and because the promise of pie will encourage city youth and adults to come discover the beauty and importance of rapidly disappearing farms to the future of people in the Bay Area, our food security, health and our understanding and appreciation of life and nature.

“Through education about the full cycle of food production—from seed and shoot to scrumptious meal to steaming compost—we inspire young people to help build a healthier food system that supports the well-being of our communities and our ecosystems. While most of our activities are based on the farm, we also work with urban communities off the farm to help them understand where their food comes from and where it goes, the many implications, and how to make positive change” (from the Pie Ranch web site; see www.pieranch.org).

Students from Mission High School and the Urban School in San Francisco make regular visits to Pie Ranch, lending a hand with the planting, harvesting, and cooking while having the opportunity to reflect on inner and outer changes with each visit. They collaborate with a San Francisco-based non-profit, Nextcourse, whose staff come on the visits for on-farm culinary education.

The Pie Ranch folks have embarked on an ambitious project with the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to acquire the adjacent historic Isaac Steele Ranch (which fronts Highway 1). POST will act as interim owner for three years, giving Pie Ranch a chance to secure outside support to purchase the Ranch. In exchange, POST will ensure that the agricultural, ecological, and open space qualities of the property are permanently safeguarded. They are currently working out the final structure and legal tools to accomplish this and call upon the generosity of individuals and institutions who wish to see the full vision for the property realized. Demonstrating your financial and other support at this juncture is most welcome. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting project, or see www.pieranch.org to find out how you can support this work.

Among the Apple Trees (from page 6)

Reliable annual croppers. Nice open structure to the tree. Ripens in October.

Belmac – New from Quebec, this medium to large size Mac has a shiny, deep-red coloring. Ripens in September. Sweet-tart combination a lot like Spartan but bigger. Disease resistant.

Shay – An absolutely well-behaved (tree), disease-immune Mac. Ripens in late August-early September. Elongated red fruit hangs heavy on the tree. Nice open structure to the tree allows sunlight to reach and color fruit in the center of the canopy.

Red Cort – A McIntosh/Cortland cross. Multi-purpose: sauce, cooking, eating fresh. Tangy/sweet taste. Heavy bearer.

For an up-close look at these and many other apple varieties, visit the Alan Chadwick Garden on the UCSC campus. The Chadwick Garden is open daily from 8 am to 6 pm. For more information on visiting the garden, call 831.459-3240 or see www.ucsc.edu/casfs.
**Citrus and Almond Salad (4 Servings)**

1/3 cup orange juice  
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon honey  
2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Pinch (or to taste) red pepper flakes  

2 grapefruits, peeled and segmented  
2 navel oranges, peeled and sliced  
1/4 cup finely chopped red onion  
6 cups spinach leaves, lightly packed, torn into bite-size pieces (can use arugula or mix of arugula, spinach, romaine, etc.)  
1/3 cup slivered almonds, toasted *

To make the dressing, combine juice, vinegar, oil, honey, ginger, salt and pepper flakes in blender and blend well.  

Toss fruit, onion, and dressing. Set aside at least 10 minutes or up to one hour.  

To serve, line four individual plates with spinach or other greens. Spoon fruit and onion mixture with dressing over greens, dividing equally. Sprinkle almonds over salads.  

*To toast almonds, spread in an ungreased baking pan. Place in 350° oven and bake 5 to 10 minutes or until almonds are light brown; stir once or twice to ensure even browning.

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**Wild Mushrooms and Angel Hair Pasta (4 servings)**

1 pound assorted wild mushrooms (morels, shiitake, chanterelles, porcini, oysters, black trumpet, etc.)  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2–3 tablespoons unsalted butter  
2 shallots, minced  
2–6 cloves finely minced garlic  
1 cup chicken or vegetable stock or white wine  
1 teaspoon dried or 1 tablespoon fresh chopped thyme  
1 pound angel hair pasta  
2 cups arugula  
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese plus additional as needed  

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add a little salt.  

Cut each mushroom into 2 or 3 pieces (not too small). In a large skillet, heat the oil and 1 tablespoon butter. Over medium-high heat, stir in the shallots, garlic, and the mushrooms, and cook 3 to 4 minutes until the mushrooms release their juices. Add the stock or wine, sprinkle with thyme, and reduce by half.  

Cook the pasta in the pot of boiling water until al dente, about 1 minute. Drain and toss with a little olive oil to prevent sticking. Add the arugula and the remaining 2 tablespoons butter to the mushroom mixture. Toss the pasta and mushroom mixture together with the 3 tablespoons grated cheese to combine well. Heat thoroughly. Correct seasoning with freshly ground pepper and salt.  

Divide onto four plates; sprinkle lightly with a little more Parmesan cheese and serve immediately.

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Winter is citrus fruit’s time to shine! To get the most juice from citrus fruit, bring it to room temperature and roll it around on the counter, pressing firmly, before juicing. And it’s easier to grate the peel for zest BEFORE you cut the fruit.

Of course, winter in our area also means fungus is among us!