

CD DELTA CURRENT

CAPTURING LIFE IN MOTION ON THE CALIFORNIA DELTA.

JULY 2008




Hartland
Nursery and
Delta Ecotours
make for a
winning
California-
friendly combo.

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With the Delta
as a backdrop,
Clarksburg's
only restaurant,
the Dinky Diner,
is a big hit.

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The North Delta
is at perilous
risk and
North Delta
C.A.R.E.S. is
taking action.

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COMPLIMENTARY • 36TH ANNUAL COURTLAND PEAR FAIR EDITION



California's River Pears

By Arlene Rivera
Contributing Writer

With its mineral-rich soil, sunny days and kind evenings, it is no surprise that California produces 30 percent of the pears grown in the United States. Possibly more impressive is California's Bartlett pear, which accounts for 75 percent of California's entire pear acreage. Bartlett pears have the most sugar; their sweet taste makes them extremely popular for use in recipes or on their own. Only two primary regions of Northern California produce all of California's pears: One is the Upper Sacramento Valley along the Delta, and the other spans the mountains of Mendocino and El Dorado counties.

The pears everyone will be enjoying at the upcoming Courtland Pear Festival, Bartlett and otherwise, are from the local farmers of the Delta area. This region is known as the "early district," as the pears in this area are harvested earlier in the season than the "late district" pears. These earlier-blooming pears are called "River Pears," as opposed to the later-blooming "Mountain Pears," each named after its surrounding geography.

Take a leisurely drive on Highway 160 from Rio Vista all the way up to Sacramento, and you'll have a view of both these gorgeous pear



trees and the glossy-green Delta. Pear season starts in July and continues through September; there are plump and shiny pears everywhere to illustrate that the season has indeed officially began. You may notice that while fully-ripe pears are yellow, the pears weighing down the

limbs of these trees are all green. This is because, unlike other fruit, pears will not ripen on the tree. After being harvested by hand, pears are kept cool until they reach their destination, where they are brought up to room temperature. Only then will they finally ripen.



You may want to snatch up your pear supply quickly this year, as it has been predicted that last winter's frost will have an impact on the California pear's supply and demand. At a June 2008 meeting, the California Pear Advisory Board estimated that the weight of pears produced this year in California will be less by 16,000 tons due to the unlucky weather. However, while supply is expected to go down, demand is expected to climb.

Studies have shown that Americans are trying to incorporate healthier foods into their diets—pears being one of them. A recent study out of Rio de Janeiro (published in the journal *Nutrition*) reported that test subjects who ate three pears a day as part of their diet lost more weight and consumed fewer calories than those who did not. Pears help you feel full and are rich in fiber; you only need one pear to get 15 percent of your daily fiber recommendation. Who knows, maybe one day the doctor's advice will be to forget the apples and have a few pears for the day!





Pear Fair to begin with a fun run

By Kyle Szymanski
Staff Writer

Just in time to clear away some needless calories, prior to indulging in the brimming array of pear flavored goodies at the 36th Courtland Pear Fair, this year's event will once again feature a number of fun runs prior to its kickoff.

Scheduled to begin at Bates Elementary School in Courtland on July 27, the fun runs will feature races of five and ten miles through the scenic Delta orchards and vineyards while raising money for Courtland's high school cross-country teams.

The five and ten-mile races begin at 8:00a.m. with preregistration opening at 6:30a.m.

The annual race, which began in the 70's, will be conducted on a course that is 98.2 percent asphalt free, according to organizers, and will take runners through hay, gravel and hand-packed dirt roads that crisscross grape vineyards, pear orchards, corn fields and reservoirs.

"It really is kind of nice," said Pear Fair Spokeswomen Monique Viera. "It's pavement free and a really pretty run."

Participants, which will be divided into groups based on their age and sex, will have the opportunity to vie for awards that will be given



to the first man and woman to finish the five and ten-mile races, and the first three places in each of the age brackets; 18 and under, 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70 and over.

Complementary water stations, manned by the cross-country runners who will benefit from the event, will be available every mile except the first and last miles of the race.

The surface of the race is ideal, according to 2007 participant Laura Kulsik Yasso, because it is flat and traffic free.

"We ran alongside beautiful reservoirs complete with frogs, fish, cattails and lily pads," said Kulsik Yasso. "The course scenery, a true slice of the area's rich farming history, was a welcome change from the usual urban asphalt-laden race."

A children's version of the fun run that spans a half mile will kickoff the event at 7:30a.m. Bates Elementary

School is located at 180 Primasing Ave in Courtland.

Participants can preregister for \$20 or register on the day of the event for \$25. Checks should be made out to **Pear Fair 5/10 Miler**. All entries are given a com-

plementary tank top. Late entries may receive their tank tops via mail and not on the day of the race.

All preregistered entries should be sent to Courtland

Pear Fair, P.O. BOX 296, Courtland, CA 95615, and be postmarked by July 18. Online registration is also available by visiting Pairfairrun.com up to July 26 at 11:59p.m. All entries should include a desired tank top size.

The races will be followed by the annual Courtland Pear Fair, which promises pear flavored treats, rides, music, cooking demonstrations and a parade. The fair begins at 9:00a.m.

For more information about the Pear Fair Fun Run, call (916)302-6483.

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Uniknot: A smooth, versatile knot which can also be tied to form an end-loop that tightens down to a conventional knot once you hook a fish

Local farm keeps tradition alive

By Kyle Szymanski
Staff Writer

Few things can be predicted in life. That is unless you are a member of the Greene or Hemly family, and it is the middle of July.

During this time of year, chances are good that multiple members of the legendary pear-farming family are at their Courtland orchard helping pick, pack and ship a variety of apples and pears, just as they have for the past 158 years.

Greene and Hemly's packing and cold store divisions handle fruit from July through January for up to 20 hours a day and seven days a week.

It might seem like a gruesome schedule, but such is life when fruit takes charge.

"You see, it is very hard to go out to the orchard and tell the fruit, 'don't ripen,'" said Packing House Manager Virginia Chava. "They tend not to listen. When it's ready, it's ready. If you have to start on Sunday, then you have to start on Sunday."

This year is no different. The stubborn pears ripened just in time for picking and shipping to begin in mass during the weekend of July 12 and 13.

The Greene family first made its mark on the Delta region in 1850 when Josiah Greene came to California during the Gold Rush. After deciding to farm, and subsequently purchasing land



which he had never seen, Greene began his family's lifetime work in the agricultural business.

Beginning first with vegetables and feed grains, and later adding a dairy and fruit farm, the family was eventually lured into growing pears by the high water tables along the big river, soil profile and climatic conditions.

"The family didn't choose pears. Pears chose the family," said Doug Hemly.

Today, Greene and Hemly, Inc. is owned and operated by fifth and sixth generation family members who continue the legacy by growing more than three kinds of pears and apples on an unknown number of acres, which Hemly refused to disclose.

The job continues to be a year-round operation, spiking between the months of July and January, when active harvesting takes place.

In groups of 16 to 18, con-

tracted crews descend onto the pear and apple fields, beginning at daybreak for an estimated six and a half hours a day to harvest the fruit before it is sent to be packed and shipped.

Because they are paid by the amount of fruit they harvest, the crews have learned strategic tricks, such as placing the ladder and fruit harvesting bags in precise positions, to maximize their efficiency.

From the fields, the pears, which are harvested for about a month straight, and apples, which will begin to be harvested at the end of July, go on an epic journey.

After being taken off the trees, the fruit is placed in large bins, given a receiving number, washed, placed in a chlorine substance to kill germs, placed in a pre-sizer, sorted for quality, weighed, labeled, packed and finally shipped.

The Hemly's customer

base spans the entire United States and even includes 10 or 12 foreign countries.

"The drive is the opportunity to create, the ability to create this sequencing of events that end with results that you get to be a part in," said Hemly. "But it's not just me; it's everybody here and everybody who is committed to making the crop."

Although the sixth-month harvesting season is by far the busiest for the family, the remaining six months are not void of work, as the precious trees need to be tended to.

From August to January, the family is consumed by an assortment of off-season tasks. From packing the remaining fruit to pruning, thinning and treating the trees for an array of pests and disease, the job of managing an orchard lasts the entire year.

"The seasonality of obligation of what needs to be done, and the seasonality of levels of intensity are kind of nice because it is not repetitive," said Hemly. "You maybe do the same thing every year, but you don't do the same thing everyday. From that standpoint, there is a certain elegance."

The year-to-year operation of tending to the orchard provides Hemly with both enjoyment and stress.

Hemly remains hopeful about this year's pear harvest, saying he expects it to be about equal in volume to last year. However, the quality of the fruit remains in question because of



high winds.

Through the 158 years of existence, Hemly admits it has not always been easy for the family, but they have consistently weathered the down times and remained an entity.

“The family history is nice, but it doesn’t do anything to remain viable,” said Hemly. “Generally speaking, if you look at how agriculture companies start, rise, demise, they start to peter out after about three genera-

tions for various reasons. Because we are in the fifth, sixth, generation, it means we have been broke more times than other families.”

Regardless of economic superiority, the tireless work of the Greene and Hemly family has helped make the Delta Region into the largest Bartlett pear growing area in the United States, according to Hemly.

“It’s a nice thing to feel,” said Hemly. “It’s a nice thing to be a steward of the land.”



Poached California Bartlett Pears With Mascarpone Cream & Caramel Sauce

Recipe created by Chef Joe Mannke, Rotisserie for Beef and Bird, Houston, Texas
Exclusively for the California Pear Advisory Board

Poached Pears

- 4 cups semi-sweet white wine
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tbsps lemon juice
- 2 whole cloves
- 2 stick cinnamon (about 3 inches long)
- 6 medium-size fresh California Bartlett pears

Mascarpone Cream

- 3 eggs yolks
- 1/4 cup syrup drained from pears
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 8 ounces mascarpone cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup brandy (optional)

Caramel Sauce

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup vanilla extract
- 8 amaretto cookies, crumbled



- Fresh whole strawberries, for garnish
- Fresh mint sprigs, for garnish

For Poached Pears: Combine wine, water, sugar, lemon juice, cloves and cinnamon in kettle or saucepan large enough to hold pears. Heat to boiling and simmer for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, peel and core pears leaving stems intact. If necessary, remove a thin slice from bottoms so they will stand upright. Carefully, place pears upright and side by side in hot syrup. Baste pears with syrup; cover and simmer until pears are tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat and cool in syrup.

For Mascarpone Cream: Combine egg yolks and syrup in top of double boiler. Place over simmering water and whisk or beat until light and creamy. Remove from heat and continue beating until cool. With electric mixer, whip cream until stiff. In a large mixing bowl, beat mascarpone until smooth. Add egg yolk mixture; mix well. Fold in whipped cream followed by brandy. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

For Caramel Sauce: In heavy saucepan, caramelize sugar over low heat until light golden brown (210° F). Add butter and cream. Simmer until thickened and creamy, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. To serve, divide and spoon Mascarpone Cream onto 6 individual serving plates. Place 1 pear upright in center of each. Spoon warm caramel sauce over all. Sprinkle with cookie crumbs. Garnish with fresh strawberries and mint sprigs.

Makes 6 servings.

Snelling Knot "Snelling" is essentially a Uni-Knot tied around a hook shank. Where a hook has an offset eye, this knot allows for an efficient "straight pull" of the hook's point.



Fate of grape harvest rests with Mother Nature

By Kyle Szymanski
Staff Writer

Mother Nature is playing Russian roulette with the Delta's grape harvest.

Many wine grape growers along the Delta will say the key ingredients for yielding a nice crop of wine grapes are quality soil, adequate water, skilled farmers, warm days and cool nights.

So when nighttime temperatures in the region dipped below freezing during the month of April, they knew the 2008 harvest was going to get off to a rough start.

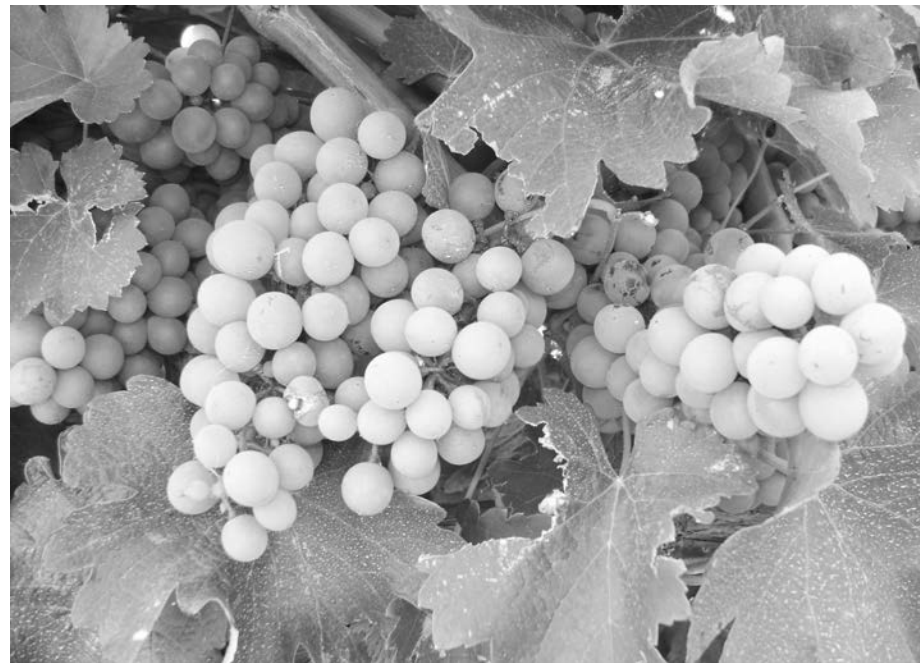
"It's been a very challenging weather year," said California Wine Grape Growers Association Executive Director Karen Ross. "Unfortunately, our friends in the Delta did suffer damage from the frost earlier this year. It hit some regions particularly hard. For some people, I've been told it was the worst frost incident they have had in 30 years."

Already having thrown a wrench in the planned early season success of the Delta's many wineries, Mother Nature may not be done surprising the Delta region.

With September and October being the peak months for the grape harvest, the financial success of the 35,000 acres of wine grapes that line Yolo, Solano and Sacramento Counties will rest largely in the hands of Mother Nature, and what she

has planned for the months of December and January.

According to Ross, if the weather remains unseasonably warm during the day and cool at night, it's possible the grapes could bounce back from the early-season freeze to provide some yield for the vineyards.



So far, during the months of June and July, the weather has been ideal for a revival of sorts, but as vineyard owners have repeatedly learned, there's no way of predicting what Mother Nature will throw their way.

"We are hopeful that those crops who suffered damage can get a second growth, so they can get some yield from their vineyard this year," said Ross. It's all dependent on a nice, long fall so we can have an extended growing season."

Early indications actually look promising, according to the United States Department

of Agriculture, which released preliminary estimates about the industry on July 11 in its California Crop Production Report.

"The 2008 California grape crop is shaping up to be an average crop despite frost damage that occurred when unusually cold temper-

and Sauvignon Blanc wines.

California as a whole is such a huge producer of wine that if it were its own country, it would be the fourth largest producer of wine in the world, according to Ross. In 2007, California harvested 108,717 tons of grapes.

Of the 5,000 wineries that are found throughout the state, nearly half of them are in California with many along the Delta, including 25 in the city of Clarksburg.

With so much uncertainty, only time will tell what effect the below-average, early-season temperatures will have on this year's Delta wine grape crop.

"Different growers may have suffered different damage, depending on the specific location of the vineyard and may even have experienced different damage depending on the where in the vineyard," said UC Cooperative Extension Small Farms Advisor Mario Moratorio.

atures hit California during the middle of April," the report said. "Bunch counts were reported to be good and comparable to last year."

Although the Delta region provides the state of California with a very small percentage of grapes, which are then made into wine, the region is still vital to the state's success, according to Ross, because the region specializes in Chardonnay, Petite Sirah, Merlot, Zinfandel



The California-friendly Hartland Nursery

By Arlene Rivera
Contributing Writer

Hart Restoration, Inc. is a riparian habitat and wetland restoration company that takes a different kind of approach, growing only sustainable and eco-friendly plant life as the root of the restoration process. While working on various projects in the Northern California Delta area, the company found it necessary to grow the tools they needed themselves. Out of this need, a six-acre nursery of myriad flowers, plants and fruits was born.

Owners Jeff and Toni Hart opened the new subsidiary of Hart Restoration, Inc., which they called Hartland Nursery, to the public in 1997. The husband and wife team have been selling California-friendly vegetation since. They also run Delta Ecotours, offering people a chance to explore the Delta's unique ecosystem by boat, including Jeff Hart (Captain Tule) as the tour guide. This year the Hart's will be at the Courtland Pear Fair with some examples of what you may see at their nursery, which is open every Saturday until October.

The plant life from Hartland Nursery does well in part because it is native to Northern California's Central Valley, according to Jeff Hart. The Hart's specifically grow plants that respond positively to the Mediterranean climate



zone they will be planted in, a climate that is natural for them to thrive in.

"We use California-friendly plants that are not invasive, need less water and are more sustainable with less human input," Jeff Hart explained recently. While he acknowledges that there has been more interest on the public's part to buy "green" or "eco-friendly" products, "the bad economy has balanced the situation out."



The riparian habitat (water life) and wetlands Hart Restoration, Inc. works to restore are increasingly important for the economic and social well being of the people who live on or near the Delta. As time has gone by, multiple factors have led to problems with the vegetation growing along Delta banks. As the population of the area increases, so has the damage. Land development often leads to excessive

demands on the surface and ground water sources, and much of the consumed water in residential developments ends up in the area from which it came—through urban runoff, storm water drains

and sewage treatment out-falls. Riparian vegetation is crucial for the above reasons, as it helps to remove potential water contaminants to clean the water, while also minimizing soil erosion, helping to prevent floods.

To see special interest areas of the Delta and learn more about how we affect the aquatic environment around us, take a tour aboard the Tule Queen II. Captain Tule will also talk about the history of the area, from the beginning of the area's geological origins to Native American, Spanish and European explorers, to the Gold Rush era. The captain will also educate passengers on the extensive contributions to the area by the Chinese, who helped build the levees and introduced new plant life.



For more information about Hartland Nursery, including detailed directions, visit the Hart's online: www.hartlandnursery.com

For information about Delta Ecotours, visit deltaecotours@mac.com

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