

# Louisiana Mayhaw Association Newsletter



Volume 6, Number 1 April, 2004

## Notes From the President

The Ninth Annual Mayhaw Conference and Field Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 17, 2004. This year's location will be the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Alexandria, LA.

A review of the year for the Mayhaw Association shows accomplishments and interest in several areas.

The Association is developing a website ([mayhaw.org](http://mayhaw.org)). Your comments, feedback, and suggestions are welcome.

The Association received selections of cultivars on dwarfing rootstock from Billy Craft. These were planted in each region of the state. This trial will give us more data on closer spacing in the field and could also result in expanded use of mayhaws as ornamental trees for yards and landscapes.

Billy Craft will also have some of his advanced selections grafted onto dwarfing rootstock for a similar trial. Research and the success of his efforts have created quite a stir and interest. I hope more about this can be shared at the conference.

Harvesting equipment adaptations for mayhaws are being prepared for this year.

Legislation was passed declaring Mayhaw Jelly one of Louisiana's Official State Jellies.

If you would like to become more involved in the association by serving on the board or in any other capacity, please contact a current board member or myself.

See you at the Annual Conference & Field Day.

Leroy Cole,  
417 Boothville Road, Marion, LA 71260  
[aleroycole@aol.com](mailto:aleroycole@aol.com)

## "Out Of The Swamp, Into The Orchard"

This year, two Claiborne Parish 4-H'ers informed and entertained LSU AgCenter judges with their knowledge of grafting mayhaws at the annual Short Course contest in Baton Rouge, LA.

Katie Bridges of Haynesville and Melissa Hylan of Athens impressed the judges with their ability to properly graft young mayhaw seedlings in a Horticulture Production demonstration by retired LSU Extension Home Economist Shirlene Carver.

As part of their demonstration, State Alternates Bridges and Hylan informed their audience of the history of the mayhaw and its journey from a swamp plant to one of the most popular agriculture crops of Louisiana.

Shirlene Carver assisted Bridges and Hylan with their speech and demonstration, while LSU Horticulturist Rafash Brew perfected their grafting techniques.

"We appreciate the delicious 'On Mayhaw Hill' jelly from Mr. Spec Sherrill. It seemed to be a big hit," commented Bridges.

After the competition, the young grafted trees were donated to a local orchard where they continue to flourish.

"I learned a skill that I may never have learned if I had not been in 4-H" said Hylan of her experience in this competition. "We appreciate everyone who helped us with this. We learned something new, made new friends, and brought home the State Alternate award", replied the girls when asked about their Short Course experience.

Teresa Price, Assistant Extension Agent (4-H)  
Claiborne Parish, 318-927-3110

## Hybridizing Mayhaws

About 9 years ago, my friend Glen Melcher taught me how to cross (hybridize) mayhaws. This appeared to be a very interesting project with visions of getting the "perfect" mayhaw after a few crosses. However, this undertaking led to weeks and weeks of work, doing the actual crossing, bagging blooms, collecting the seed, growing the seedlings in containers and then transplanting the seedlings into the field orchard. What I didn't realize at the beginning, that 99%+ of these cross seedlings would turn out to be culls. And, on top of that it takes 5 to 6 years to realize the plant is a cull. Then, it's more work to "chainsaw" it down or "jerk it up" with the John Deere tractor and dispose of it (thorns and all).

After evaluating several hundred crosses, only 3 criteria surfaced that's very important (1) Production, (2) Bloom Date, and (3) Shatter Resistance. Other criteria were considered, but if a plant did not meet the standard on these three criteria, it was culled. Commercial production of mayhaws in the future will primarily depend on selections that are very productive, bloom late to escape freeze damage, and are shatter resistant so quality fruit can be taken from the tree without laying on the ground for a day or two. Two other secondary criteria that received considerations were uniform ripening and disease resistance.

All Louisiana selections that were crossed to date have been culls. This probably indicates that a different "gene pool" has to be used. So,

crossing with two of Bobby Talbert's selections was done six years ago. A few of these F1 hybrids show promise.

One cross in particular between 'Gem' and 'Texas Star' is very impressive. It was labeled W-23 and I have given it the name 'Royal Majesty'. The following tabulation gives pertinent data on 'Red Majesty' and growers can decide if this tree has merit for their orchard. I will have about 300 grafted trees available this fall for sale and other licensed growers will also be offering it. The Louisiana Mayhaw Association will also distribute 160 trees for testing over the state.

Billy R. Craft -----Woodsworth, LA

### 'Royal Majesty'

1. Parentage - 'Gem' X 'Texas Star'.
2. Bloom date - March 24<sup>th</sup> (peak).
3. Color - shiny red, but orange early turning red at maturity.
4. Strawberry colored pulp.
5. Peak ripening date - June 5. Wait until fruit is full red.
6. Harvested on June 6, 2003. Produced 3.5 gallons. Best of any cross so far and better than any grafted tree at the same age (at my orchard).
7. Uniform ripening; 95% with one shaking.
8. Holds good, but shakes well when fully ripe (comparable to 'Maxine').
9. Production on upright limbs is as good as limbs on flat angles. This is unusual; G-5 (Royal Star) also has this trait.
10. Tough skin; firm fruit.
11. Brix = 8.5 (variably from year to year)
12. Diameter = 0.75 inches (average).
13. Disease resistance - No fire blight and minimal quince rust. Controls are available for these diseases, thereby reducing importance.
14. Average tartness.
15. Very high juice content.
16. Good spur development.
17. Production comparison:  
W-23 = 60 berries/linear foot. 148 grams.  
Georgia Giant = 45 berries/linear foot. 143 grams.  
G-5 = 42 berries/linear foot. 100 grams.  
Note: Sampling on straight limbs with mature spurs and no sub-lateral limbs (more uniform sampling technique).

18. It is very hard to get all of these good characteristics in a tree.

19. This was the first year this 5-year-old seedling produced fruit, with uniform fruit set over entire tree, even shaded limbs.

## Harvesting Mayhaws

There are many different ways of harvesting mayhaws, and most of them are labor intensive. Back in my younger days we just worked our way through the bushes, mud, and water to get to them. We then spread tarps and either shook or knocked them out of the trees. Some shook them into the water and used dip nets to gather them, and there are other variations to these methods. Trees in the wild are still harvested this way today.

Mayhaws grown in home orchards are still mostly being shaken by hand and gathered on tarps or some type of ground cloth. On smaller trees they are gathered also by hand picking.

We are looking for ways to harvest mayhaws that is more economical, and efficient for commercial operations. I have watched the cherry harvest machines harvest tart cherries in Michigan. They work excellent, but the cost factor for applying them to mayhaw production just would not work at this time. The small farm production does not justify the cost. So some individuals have started to create their versions of shakers. So far they have been limited to what they can do, but the concept is on the right track.

Elmer Langston and I contacted Kilby Manufacturing several years ago about the problem we had harvesting mayhaws. Kilby is one of the worlds leading manufactures of harvesting equipment. Bill Pritchard at Kilby sent us information on their harvesters, and a possible application of the shaking head to be mounted to a front-end loader of a tractor. After considerable deliberation, Elmer and I purchased two used rebuilt shaker heads. Elmer's was delivered to Pollock La., and the other was shipped to my farm in Vidor, TX. These shaker heads are about 9 feet long and weigh close to 2000 pounds. We knew right away that either a very large tractor or special modifications would have to be imposed. I set up a test with the shaking head using a backhoe to lift it, and the

hydraulics of my big mowers that was mounted on another tractor to power it. The test went well. I could shake any mayhaw tree into a blur. This shaking was a very short stroke, so the mayhaws would not be thrown any distance off the catch tarps. The shaking force is controlled by tractor throttle. I am now constructing the components for the permanent hook ups on my largest tractor. This tractor is 120 horsepower Kubota. More tests will be conducted to see if the shaker head can be reduced in size. This will make the concept more applicable for smaller tractors.

Elmer Langston is adapting his shaker head to a smaller tractor by constructing an extra support axel for the shaking head. Both our systems require an auxiliary hydraulic pump operated from the tractor PTO shaft. By this harvest season we hope to have both shakers operational. We will post follow-ups on our progress, and also of others that are developing their harvesters.

Bobby Talbert ---- Talbert Farms

## Board of Directors

### Officers

President	Leroy Cole
Vice-President	Don Lord
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### Members

Region 1	Paul Scott
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At Large	Elmer Langston

### Technical Advisors

Dr. Charles J. Graham  
Dr. Charles E. Johnson  
Mary Gallent  
Mike Buchart  
Bobby Talbert  
Dr. Fred Trappey

## Ninth Annual Mayhaw Conference

Saturday – April 17, 2004

Holiday Inn Convention Center  
701 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Alexandria, LA 71301

8:15 - 9:00 a.m. Registration

Moderator -- John Pyzner

9:00 – 9:10 a.m.	Welcome and Announcements	Leroy Cole
9:10 – 9:30 a.m.	Improved Mayhaw Varieties	Billy Craft
9:30 – 9:50 a.m.	Mayhaw Health Benefits (Antioxidants)	Charlie Graham
9:50 – 10:10 a.m.	Tree Shaker for Harvesting Mayhaws	Bobby Talbert
10:10 – 10:20 a.m.	Mayhaw Festivals Information Marion, LA, Starks, LA, El Dorado, AR, Daisetta, TX, Colquitt, GA	John Pyzner
10:20 – 10:30 a.m.	Mayhaw Cooking Contest Results	Leonida Altazan-Brown
10:30 – 10:50 a.m.	Break	
10:50 – 11:10 a.m.	Mayhaw Web Site	Don Lord
11:10 – 11:30 a.m.	Experiences of a Mayhaw Grower	R.T. (Spec) Sherrill
11:30 – 11:50 a.m.	Mayhaw Market Potential	Charlie Hutchins
11:50 – 12:00	Louisiana Mayhaw Association, Inc. Business Meeting	Leroy Cole
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:00 – until	Mayhaw Grafting Demonstration	R.T. (Spec) Sherrill

Registration Fee includes Lunch

Members- \$30.00 (includes 1 year membership in the Louisiana Mayhaw Association Inc.)

Member's spouse – \$15.00

Non- Member - \$20.00

Notification of attendance by April 13 is requested to ensure adequate facilities and catering.

Contact Don Lord with expected attendance number.

Don Lord, 8297 Hwy 68, Jackson, LA 70748, Phone (225) 634-2618, Email: [mayhaw@Bellsouth.net](mailto:mayhaw@Bellsouth.net)

**Louisiana Mayhaw Cooking Contest**  
Holiday Inn Convention Center, Alexandria, LA  
Saturday, April 17, 2004

**RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Purpose

To promote and expand the uses of mayhaws.

Sponsors

The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES), LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Mayhaw Association.

Eligibility

All interested persons are invited to participate. If you have a disability which requires special assistance to participate in the contest, please contact Leonida Altazan-Brown, LCES, at (318) 627-3675 at least two days prior to the contest.

Divisions

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Cakes                     | 5) Jams and Butters         |
| 2) Other Baking Products     | 6) Syrups                   |
| 3) Punch and Other Beverages | 7) Any Other Mayhaw Product |
| 4) Jelly                     | 8) Any Other Dessert        |

Food Safety

Perishable foods, such as, meat dishes or dishes containing cream must be prepared and chilled to refrigerator temperature and transported on ice in an ice chest to the contest. Perishable foods not transported in this manner will be disqualified by contest officials.

General Requirements

1. All commercial and non-commercial products will be allowed.
2. Every product must contain a minimum of 1 cup of mayhaw juice, pulp or syrup.
3. Bring two copies of the recipe, one with your name and one without your name, to the contest. Recipes may be used in publicity and printed in publications by the Louisiana Mayhaw Association and the LCES, Louisiana Agricultural Center.
4. Products must be entered before 9:00 a.m. on April 17, 2004 at the Louisiana Mayhaw Conference and Field Day, Holiday Inn Convention Center, Alexandria, LA.
5. The product will be judged on both taste and appearance.

Awards

The first place winner in each division will receive a blue ribbon and gift card. An overall "Best of Show" plaque will be presented to an outstanding dish chosen by the judges.

For more information, contact Leonida Altazan-Brown, Extension Agent, LCES, LSU Agricultural Center, 200 Main Street, Suite 5, Colfax, LA 71417. Telephone (318) 627-3675 or 765-7209.