

# Cherimoyas with Ben Kotnik

Come learn how to care for this easy-to-grow tree that thrives in our region. Ben will cover all aspects of Cherimoyas including propagation, cultivars, pollination, and more.

Ben Kotnik is a native San Diegan, gardener, educator, and outdoorsman. San Diego is home to several important Fruity Folks. I gravitated towards the California Rare Fruit Growers, founded in San Diego in 1968. I gleaned knowledge from Tom del Hotal, Jim Neitzel, Dave Yetz, Bob Holzinger, Bill Roley, and other life-long growers. Learning from our elders is a great way to accelerate one's own success! It was fun connecting the dots from my background in Math, IT, and Project Management to Nature and our food system. I am a firm believer in local food production, and growing at least a portion of our own food for peak flavor and nutrition!

I served CRFG-SD as the Vice-Chairman and then Chairman. While a board member, we donated nearly 700 trees to local community groups and schools, and funded scholarships and internships. Serendipitously, I began teaching Ecologic Design / Permaculture at Foothills School in El Cajon, CA. Soon after I became the Soils instructor at Cuyamaca College. I'm biased, and feel Soil is the most important horticulture topic one can study...Next, I became the instructor for Organic Fruit Trees at City College and the Edible Landscaping instructor at Cuyamaca.

Along the way, I consulted/designed/built with hundreds of homeowners and businesses. I grafted thousands of trees, preserving the important varieties developed by my mentors, and the heritage trees of the Palomar Mountain State Park. My small nursery became not-so-small for a time...My early interest in propagation spurred much experimentation and study, leading me to become familiar with many of the fruiting plants that grow well in San Diego, in my own yard and in the extended network of properties I work with throughout southern California. He can be reached at <http://suburbanfoodfarm.com/about.html>