TAMPA BAY CHAPTER, RFCI

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER, RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

NEXT MEETING.....SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 1981 at 2:00 PM

MEETING PLACE.....NORTH TAMPA COUNTRY HOME
OF JOE & JANE CONSTANTINE
ON LAKE LECLARE ROAD

PROGRAM.....Flowering and Fruiting Characteristics of Fruit Trees by Dr. A. H. Krezdorn, former Head of the Fruit Crops Dept., U. of Florida, Gainesville. Now an agricultural consultant and writer in the field, you will see his name on articles in Lewis Maxwell's monthly "Garden Guide".

ANNOUNCEMENTS

#1- ANNUAL DUES: Please remember that unpaid dues are delinquent after April 1, 1981. Either pay Irene Rubenstein at the April meeting or mail to P.O. Box 16003, Tampa 33687.

#2- FREEZE DAMAGE REPORT: Also please do not forget to fill in the form provided in the February Newsletter with all data possible at this time. When you finish, see that Bob Heath receives it.

#3- COMMITTEES: All Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Chairs were appointed except for Yearbook. Now we need volunteers to fill out these committees, most especially the Hospitality (needs Door Host or Hostess, and Circulating Hosts or Hostesses), Correspondence (the letters are piling up), and Annual Plant Sale (only six months left!) Committees. Contact the committee chairman or Pres. Bill Lester.

#4- PALM BEACH CHAPTER ANNUAL PLANT SALE: Opens at 10:00 AM, Saturday, May 9 at the Mounts Building, 531 North Military Trail (near the airport), West Palm Beach. Expect all choice material to be sold out within 30 minutes of opening! Gene Joyner invites any of our members who attend to join him at his property between 1:30 and 2:00 PM for a guided tour of his fruit tree collection (2½ acres). Ask Ray Thorndike for directions.

#5- MIAMI ANNUAL PLANT SALE: Saturday, June 13, at the Youth Fair Grounds, Miami.

1981 CALENDAR - TAMPA BAY CHAPTER

April 5.....Regular Meeting - Program: Dr. A. H. Krezdorn from Gainesville
May 3.....Regular Meeting - Program: Mrs. A. J. Snapp from Alachua - "Blueberries"
May 9.....Palm Beach Chapter Annual Plant Sale (see above).
June 7.....Field trip to Leesburg Experiment Station for Watermelon Open-House hosted by Dr. Gary Elmstrom and staff.
June 13.....Miami Annual Plant Sale
July 12.....Regular Meeting (Note the Date) - Program: Ed Grosz from Orange Lake. The topic: Grapes, Culture and Home Wine-making.

1981 CALENDAR (Continued)

August 9.....Field Trip to Tom & Margaret Hughes' Vineyard in Dover for Open-House. (Note date).
September 13.....Regular Meeting (Note Date) - Program: Gene Joyner from West Palm Beach.
October 4.....Organizational Meeting for Second Annual Plant Sale (Meeting date may change).
October ?.....Second Annual Plant Sale. Location to be announced.
November 1.....Regular Meeting - Program: Dr. Tim Crocker from Univ. of Fla., Gainesville.
December 6.....Regular Meeting - Program: Dr. George Marlowe from the Bradenton Experiment Station.

Above is a tentative calendar of chapter events for the balance of the year. This will be repeated periodically and corrected accordingly. Note that the July, August and September meetings will be on the second Sunday of the month.

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER, RFCI
1981-1982 OFFICERS & CHAIRMEN

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President.....Bill Lester
Vice President.....Paul Rubenstein
Secretary.....Willard Sarrett
Treasurer.....Irene Rubenstein
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At-Large Member.....Ray Thorndike
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Plant & Seed Exchange.....Bob Heath
Program.....Ray Thorndike

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Newsletter.....Ray Thorndike
Fla. State Fair Booth..Eliz. MacManus
Membership.....Glenn Warren
Correspondence.....Rosalie Obregon
Hospitality.....Jane Constantine
Research & Fruit List.....Bob Heath
Recipes.....Betty Dickson
Publicity.....Paul Rubenstein
Historian.....Kay Netscher
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Report of March 1, 1981 Meeting

Acknowledgment was made of the fine job done by Elizabeth MacManus and her crew of magicians on the Florida State Fair Booth. Thanks go to all who prepared, set-up, manned and tore-down the booth. A large job well done.

The major new business was the installation of officers and committee chairmen for 1981-1982, as listed above.

Program

Major Harold N. ("Nick") Acrivos of the Melbourne Rare Fruit Council gave the program on budding and grafting. Also included below are some notes taken from Nick's program given here on May 4, 1980. At the end of his program, Nick recommended the following reference material on the subject: Plant Propagation Principles and Practices by Hudson T. Hartmann and Dale E. Kester, Prentice Hall, Englewood, N.J., 1968. This book may be available at your local Community College bookstore. Also recommended was the Florida IFAS Circular #416, Propagation of Woody Ornamentals.

In spite of widespread skepticism, Nick highly recommends the use of the Farmer's Almanac in picking proper dates on which to do your budding and grafting. Use only

those days specified for planting above-ground crops. Nick reports that his percentage of grafting "takes" rose sharply to near 100% as soon as he began to follow the Almanac dates. So the moral is don't knock it till you've tried it.

Nick mentioned a new sour orange rootstock for dwarfing citrus, named "Chinoto"; a new dwarf avocado named "Herman" that is actually "Lulu"; a new dwarf mango named "Julie" and a dwarf "Brooks" mango. All these are highly desirable for dooryard use, especially so since they are easier to protect from the cold due to their size (about 8' to 10' for the mangos). They are not commercially important, so are impossible to find in nurseries. That is where doing our own grafting comes in handy.

Grafting tools should be disinfected before use in order to prevent transmission of disease from one tree to another. Alcohol may be used when grafting avocado, loquat, etc. But, alcohol will not prevent viral infections. When grafting citrus, the main danger is transmitting viruses, so Nick recommends either a solution of formaldehyde and lye or a 10% solution of chlorox. Either treatment is highly corrosive, so that the tools should be cleaned in water immediately after use.

Avocados should be veneer grafted while they are dormant. The first of March is a bit late. Tie a plastic (clear) bag, saran or whatever, around the graft to maintain a high humidity. Otherwise the scionwood might dry out and die. Remove the bag in about 3 weeks. You may expect a 95% success rate on avocado.

Use a clear plastic bag on all evergreen tree grafts. Do NOT use bags on deciduous trees, as they have a tendency to mold. Use grafting compound or wax instead, to seal the union from the air.

Carambola. Do not remove leaves from budwood or scion. Veneer graft with a long splice or veneer with at least three (3) buds complete with leaves. Tie and bag. Remove in 2 to 3 weeks. Expect 85% takes.

Mamey Sapote. This plant is very difficult to graft. Takes may be 15% or less (without Farmer's Almanac). It is worthwhile to try because good fruit sell at $3.50 or more each. (In 1978 I saw vendors asking $5.00 each for just the seeds alone in the open-air market.-Editor) Grafted plants sell for $65 to $250 in Miami. Since it is rather tender to cold, this tree may best be grown in a pot or tub and moved to a protected location during cold periods. Girdle the budwood two weeks before working. Use a cleft graft, leaving the leaves on the scion. However, cut each leaf back by one half. Tie and seal with wax or compound. Bag or use mist to prevent drying.

Chinese Jujube. Veneer graft or root cuttings under mist. This tree suckers prolifically from the roots.

Macadamia can be air layered or veneer grafted. Keep the leaves on the budwood, but cut in half if desired. Bag. (See Laymond Hardy's comments in this issue.)

Persimmon. Cleft graft in February and March before they break dormancy.

Dovyalis. Use cuttings or air layers.

October 7, 1979 Program by Laymond Hardy

Mr. Hardy is an Agricultural Consultant well known in the Miami area. He usually gives one or more programs per year at the Miami Council and at the Palm Beach Chapter, as well as at the Broward and Naples councils, etc. His talks are characterized by their rambling nature, but the nuggets gleaned from them make him a very interesting and

welcome guest. Mr. Hardy spoke for nearly 2½ hours here, with most attendees remaining for the last word. Some of his talk follows. More will be included in a later newsletter.

Mr. Hardy mentioned some experimental work done on breeding cold tolerance into tomatoes and bell peppers by a man in Miami named Jim Dunaway. Mr. Dunaway has succeeded in breeding 9th generation plants with 9 to 10 degrees better resistance to cold. He starts with hundreds of small seedlings and exposes them gradually to lower and lower temperatures in a cold chamber. When only a few survivors are left, he grows them on and repeats the process with their offspring. Usually by the 9th generation some plants will exhibit the extra cold tolerance. If these results are valid, this is the first time anyone has bred cold tolerance into a species without crossing with a hardier species. We hope this may be a breakthrough.

Another area for further study was brought to our attention. On a trip to the Florida panhandle some years ago, Mr. Hardy observed some camphor trees that had survived a freeze with minimal damage. Most other camphor trees had frozen down to mere stumps. The surviving trees had been exposed to strong fluorescent light during the freeze. The heating effect of the lights was totally insignificant (less than ½ degree F.). So the apparent cause of the phenomenon was the activation of chlorophyll. In January 1977 Mr. Hardy had a soursop which survived 24 degrees F. under strong fluorescent light without even losing its leaves. Normally a soursop will defoliate at 34 degrees F., lose wood at 32 degrees F., and freeze to the ground at any lower temperature. These results cry for more investigation. Try "Gro-Lite" fluorescent tubes or equivalent. (Please report any success in this area to our Research Committee.)

Still another area for experimentation is the breeding of seedless plants. To acheive the seedless state a sterile triploid (3N) plant must be bred from a cross between a diploid (2N) and a tetraploid (4N). The multiple-chromosome number plants can be bred by treatment with colchicine and then by back-crossing. Obviously this work would require a little training beforehand. The Persian (Tahiti) lime and the Navel orange are triploids. The Pollock avocado would be a good subject to start with as some of its fruit are seedless.

As is his custom, Mr. Hardy brought "goodies" for distribution. Included was a pile of Chaya (Cnidoscolus chayamansa) cuttings. Other common names are "spurge-nettle and "tread-softly". High in minerals and vitamins, the young tender leaves must be cooked before serving in order to deactivate the nettles. Use like spinach. (One should wear gloves when picking the leaves, because of the nettles.) Add a few turnip, mustard, cabbage or spinach greens to improve the flavor. Also, the upper 6" to 8" of terminal growth may be peeled and cooked as asparagus. Grow in full sun. It is a fast growing, pest-free, very attractive ornamental shrub. Since it is tropical it will freeze to the ground. It should return quickly from the root. However, it propagates so easily with cuttings, being one of the most tenacious of plants, that it is a simple matter to winter-over a cutting or two in a pot to be planted in March or April.
(There is another species with deeply cut leaves - like miniature papaya leaves - and lacking the annoying nettles. Joe Constantine has this plant. Mine froze to the ground and has not yet re-sprouted. - Editor)

Mr. Hardy touched upon another culture phenomenon. Northern varieties of apples, pears, peaches and grapes can be grown all the way to Key West if the lack of cold is compensated for by an increase in heat. For example, excellent roses are being grown by one individual in the Keys who surrounded them with concrete. The secret is in the night-to-day temperature contrast. In other words, the actual temperatures are not as important as the high-low spread. One can espalier a tree on a south wall to get intense heat in the daytime.
An additional tip for encouraging fruiting of apples, pears and peaches is to bend the branches down and tie, stake, or weight them to hold this position.

Some tips on propagation:

Grapes: In April, May and June, root vigorous tip cuttings in the mist bed. Use a vermiculite/perlite mix with a little Rootone.

Avocado: For air layering, select limbs as thick as a broom handle. Girdle in the early stages of the active growth period.

Longan or Lychee: Air layer just prior to an active growth period.

Macadamia: Although air layering is recommended, they will root from tip cuttings in a mist bed if taken just before an active flush. This information was given to Mr. Hardy by a Mr. Enpth of New Zealand. Air layers may root in two weeks, but they take 3 to 4 years to become established in the ground. Thus it is much more desirable to use grafted trees. First plant seedlings in pots and rush them (force growth). Veneer graft when one year old. Leave the upper node of leaves on the scion. If too long, each leaf may be cut back halfway. Cover the graft with a plastic bag. Wet and squeeze dry a small wad (cotton, sphagnum or whatever) and put inside plastic bag to add humidity. Keep the plant out of the sun, but in good light. The purpose of the leaves on the scion is to cause the phylem to callus to the plant. The graft should have taken in 6 weeks. 100% takes are possible with this method.

Eggplant: Can be a successful perennial if grafted onto Solanum macranthum, the Tree Potato. Mr. Hardy tried this and his plant lived 3 years and bore prolifically.

Fig (Ficus carica): Graft onto F. cocculifolia. Make the union very low (6" from the ground) on the stock so that earth can be banked up above it for cold protection. F. cocculifolia will freeze. Do not graft in the winter months. December or January grafts will all take, but the scion will not awaken from dormancy and thus dries out and dies. Use year old F. cocculifolia for grafting. Take scionwood in the winter and refrigerate until about March 15th. Use a plastic bag over the graft. The rootstock should be in a deep pot and in sterile soil, because of the danger of nematodes. When the time comes to set the new plant in the ground, cut the bottom out of the pot and hope that the roots go out and stay below the nematode zone. (Mr, Hardy brought cuttings of F. cocculifolia for distribution.) If you are not getting good crops from your fig, and there is no obvious reason, try girdling it several times in the summer or girdle the main trunk every two months through the summer. This should ensure continuous bearing. Ungirdled branches may not bear at all.

Mysore Raspberry: Propagate by seed. You may have found that they germinate quite well after passing through a bird. Also they will root from the cane tips. Bury the tip of the cane pointed straight down. Stake the cane down under wet dirt. The only part of the plant that will root is the very tip end. And this will root only if pointed straight into the ground. Keep Mysore raspberries moist at all times. They must have good drainage, however. If the plant dries out, it goes into shock and that is the end of the fruiting season until next year.

Apples and Pears: Will graft onto loquat rootstock.

More on the Longan and Lychee: The Kohala variety of Longan definitely needs to be girdled. September is the best time. Remove ¼" of bark all around. If you try this on your Lychee, it is sufficient to merely sink the knife blade into the bark only to the depth of the wood (all around, of course).

If you are grafting avocados, be sure to use only Mexican seedlings for rootstock. Brogden and Bacon would be the preferred varieties to propagate in the Central Florida area. Try to have both A and B type pollinators in your area to improve on the fruit set.

The Okinawa Peach makes a very good rootstock. It is also nematode resistant. The fruit is good but small. The seeds germinate readily.

Jerusalem Artichoke or Sunchoke (Helianthus tuberosus): Plant the tubers in late March. They sprout in late March or April. The small daisy-like sunflower blooms in the fall just before the plants die back for the winter. The edible tubers will keep in the ground until spring or may be dug in the fall and washed and scoured with a brush. Then place in plastic bags and store in the refrigerator until needed. Do not freeze. They must not be allowed to dehydrate either. This plant is originally a native of Kansas and Oklahoma and were cultivated by the Indians of that region. The plants will not thrive in poor sandy soil. The soil must be enriched with peat, compost, manure or whatever in order to build up the humus content. Plant the tubers about one to two inches deep and at least 30 inches apart. They will make twiggy bushes to 7 feet or more with a spread of 2 to 3 feet. They are brittle and need support. Fertilize monthly and mulching is recommended. Problems are caterpillars and powdery mildew which will attack late in the season. Benomyl is one control for powdery mildew.

Sunchokes are a low calorie food, low in starch and high in fructose. It has potential as an alcohol crop, 500 gallons to the acre, twice the production from corn. The tubers can be used in any way that a water chestnut or potato is used. They are good raw (but will produce a lot of gas!). Try in soups and stews. They make excellent pickles, too. Try diced and added to scrambled eggs and bacon for breakfast. For lunch, slice and add to salads. For dinner, dice, bake, boil, fry, or mash. Use creamed en casserole, or as a tasty extender in meat loaf. Raw, sliced or diced, they may be added to most any other vegetable, as for instance, cooked carrots, string beans, peas or spinach.

(This information on the Jerusalem Artichoke is taken both from Laymond Hardy's talk and the feature article in Lewis S. Maxwell's Garden Guide for July/Aug. 1979).

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Tampa Bay Chapter Newsletter
Rare Fruit Council International, Inc.
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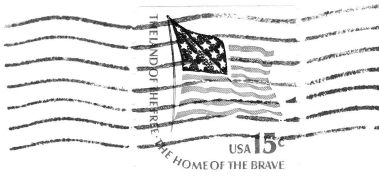

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BALLOT

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