



NEWSLETTER

JULY 1982

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

CHAPTER ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 16003, TAMPA, FL 33687

MEETINGS ARE HELD AT 2:00 PM, THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, AT THE SEFFNER
AGRICULTURAL BLDG., UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

NEXT MEETING.....SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1982 at 12:00 NOON

MEETING PLACE.....EUREKA SPRINGS COUNTY PARK,
EUREKA SPRINGS ROAD, ONE MILE EAST OF US 301,
(SEE LOCATION MAP, LAST PAGE) OFF I-4, EASTBOUND EXIT 6D. WESTBOUND USE
EXIT 8, TAKE US 92 to I-4 OVERPASS AND FOLLOW
EUREKA SPRINGS ROAD TO THE RIGHT TO THE PARK.

PROGRAM.....NO SCHEDULED SPEAKER. BRING A PICNIC LUNCH. WE
HAVE RESERVED THE SCREENED PAVILION WITH PICNIC
TABLES. THERE WILL BE A SHORT BUSINESS MEETING,
A WALKING TOUR OF THE PARK (A BOARDWALK TRAIL
CIRCLES THE PARK), AND A PLANT EXCHANGE AS USUAL.
PLEASE BRING PLANTS FOR THE DRAWING AND ANY FRUIT
YOU CAN SPARE FOR THE TASTING TABLE. EUREKA SPRINGS
WAS DONATED TO HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BY MEMBER ALBERT
GREENBERG IN 1967. HE CONTINUES TO OVERSEE THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARK AND ITS ORNAMENTAL GARDENS
BY THE COUNTY PARK RANGERS.
NO INTOXICANTS OR PETS ARE ALLOWED IN THE PARK.

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THIRD ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Another reminder to note the date and place of our third public plant sale:
OCTOBER 24, 1982, FROM 1 PM TO 5 PM, at the FLORIDA LIVING CENTER building,
Florida State Fairgrounds, TAMPA. Tell all your friends and relatives and,
by all means, volunteer to help set-up and tear-down and work at the sale
itself. We need all the help we can get. And, believe it or not, it is fun, too.

NEW MEMBERS

Stanley & Priscilla Lachut, 5402 Grovewood Drive North, Holiday 33590, Tel. 934-9167

Andy & Louise Andrews, 107 Sofia Drive, Lutz 33549, Tel. 949-1325

50TH ANNIVERSARY, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER, LEESBURG

We are invited to attend a July 22nd Contact Breakfast of the Leesburg Area Chamber
of Commerce in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Agricultural Research
Center, Leesburg. This will be at the Leesburg Community Building on Dixie Avenue
between 7:30 AM and 9:30 AM. The cost will be \$3.25 per person. For reservations,
call the Chamber of Commerce (904-787-2131) or the Agricultural Research Center
(904-787-3423). For further information, contact Dr. Gary Elmstrom, Center Director,
ARC, Leesburg (P.O. Box 388, Leesburg 32748). The breakfast speaker will be
Dr. F. Aloysius Wood, Dean for Research, University of Florida, Gainesville.

MIAMI FRUIT RECIPE BOOK

Bill Ryland advises that the B. Dalton Bookstore in the Pinellas Mall has copies of the Miami RFCI "Cookbook".

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

Please remember that the August 8th meeting will be held at the Hughes' Vineyard, McIntosh Road Exit (Exit 9) off I-4, with Tom & Margaret Hughes our hosts. Plan to bring plants for the monthly drawing and any fruit you can donate to the tasting table.

The September 12 meeting will be at the G.K. Palmer Nursery, 5063 Dartmouth Ave., North, (50th Street, between 4th & 5th Avenue, North), St. Petersburg. They have about fifty varieties of fruit trees (all sizes) for sale. We shall probably plan another stop to fill out the afternoon, perhaps the Gizella Kopsick Palm Arboretum, at the foot of 10th Avenue N.E., St. Petersburg. Anyone have any suggestions?

JUNE MEETING PLANT DRAWING RESULTS

| <u>PLANT</u> | <u>DONOR</u> | <u>WINNER</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Macadamia Nut | Armando Mendez | Maja Byvoet |
| Hawaiian Papaya | Armando Mendez | Ann McDowell |
| Banana | Armando Mendez | Arnold Stark |
| Banana | Armando Mendez | Frank Tayntor |
| Papayas | Armando Mendez | Lorraine Ball |
| Mulberry | Arnold & Lillian Stark | Kay Netscher |
| Mulberry | Arnold & Lillian Stark | Elby Pence |
| Jambolan Plum | Walter Vines | Pat Duke |
| Brewster Lychee | Walter Vines | Bill Lester |
| "Triumph" Grape | Tom Hughes | Walter Vines |
| Pitaya Cactus | Bob Heath | Walter Vines |
| "Abakka" Pineapple | Bob Heath | Albert Greenberg |
| Papaya (3) | Ray Thorndike | Walter Vines |
| Papaya (3) | Ray Thorndike | Herb Hill |
| Papaya (3) | Ray Thorndike | Bob Duke |
| White Sapote | Ray Thorndike | Bill Lester |
| "Okinawa" Peach | Ray Thorndike | Bob Heath |
| "Okinawa" Peach | Walter Vines | Kay Netscher |

WEST PALM BEACH SAFARI

The "Safari" to West Palm Beach and to Palm Beach had its ups and downs. The four cars and campers which went down earlier on Friday the 18th probably struck some pretty dirty weather on the east coast. That tropical depression which had dumped such heavy rains on west central Florida had cleared our area but lingered on all weekend over southeast Florida. The eleven of us in the rented van got away on schedule that evening, but quickly ran into bad luck just west of Bartow when the right rear tire exploded. Finding the spare tire only a little bit better than the hopelessly shredded flat, we hurried to the dealer in Lakeland where the van came from. Arriving there at ten minutes to eight, we were fortunate to stop the last employee from leaving their yard and talked him into cannibalizing one of their utility trucks for two wheels to get us back on the road. That still left us with three racing slicks on the pavement - wonderful for rainy weather. They did get us down and back, however. Through rain and high winds we finally did arrive at our West Palm Beach motel at 12:41 AM, having stopped for food at Yeehaw Junction before getting onto the turnpike.

At Gene Joyner's in the morning, we encountered more rain, but it slackened enough to enable us to enjoy touring the labyrinth of pathways around his "Unbelievable Acres", which lives up to its name. He has a good tall windbreak

all around and the whole area packed with clearly labeled trees of all kinds. Few of the fruit trees were bearing fruit except for citrus and his Miracle Fruit bush, of which everyone got a sample. The effect of the Miracle Fruit lasted longer than expected, resulting in a strange tasting lunch for some of us. From Gene's we went to the Mounts Building "Learning Center" plantings which have been contributed by all the various garden and horticultural clubs in the area. Besides fruit trees, there are sections for ornamentals, cacti, bromeliads, ground covers, poisonous plants, etc. Again, there were few fruit on the trees to see. Apparently the unusually warm winter followed by a cold spring and unseasonable heavy rains has upset fruit set in that area for many of the exotic trees.

During another period of showers we went to lunch and following that, proceeded to Palm Beach to see Tom Reese's home. At this point we lost the Seekins, whose camper broke down. Tom Reese, who is Newsletter Editor for the Palm Beach Chapter (and occasional contributor to these pages, also), received us warmly. He is an expert at budding & grafting and has many grafted plants in pots that our group homed in on. Soon, the Calhouns' camper was stuffed with purchases of Carambolas, Annonas, etc. and it was time to head back to the soggy mainland.

Our last stop was at Possum Hollow Nursery, which stocks a number of varieties of fruit trees. And even more were crammed into the Calhouns' camper. Light rain was falling steadily now as we prepared to head for home. Before leaving, the proprietor gave us many cuttings from his "Sunshine Trees". This is not a fruiting tree, but it is a very striking ornamental, reaching 30', which is one of the coral tree species, *Erythrina indica*, var. *Parcelli*. It is a fast growing deciduous tree which bears bright cinnamon-red flowers in January, followed by large yellow & green leaves. It is reputed to be somewhat hardy, tolerate salt-air and to thrive in pure sand. *E. crista-galli* is the common Coral Tree with its showy red flowers. My cutting promptly died from too much moisture, as it rained heavily all the following week. If this tree would live this far north (the gentleman claimed that he was selling them to Disneyworld), it would be a winner and a strong selling item.

Intermittent rain dogged us all the way up the turnpike, but it was bone dry from Yeehaw Junction on home. So, we accomplished what we had set out to do and made it back safely (I trust the Seekins made it home eventually - we'll hear at the next meeting, I expect). Our grateful thanks to Gene Joyner and Tom Reese for their hospitality. Perhaps we can get ourselves invited back next year. Maybe we shall include Fort Lauderdale in the next "safari", as Bill Snyder of the Rare Fruit and Vegetable Council of Broward County has invited us to visit their planting at the Ag Bldg. there. And let's hope that the Calhouns come along next time, too!

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REPORT OF THE JUNE 13, 1982 MEETING

The only topics discussed at the June meeting business session were the final details of the West Palm Beach Safari and the preparations for the July meeting at Eureka Springs.

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It has been stated that growing Chayotes (*Sechium edule*) is a method of control for the papaya fruit fly. The theory is that the fly will sting the Chayote fruit, get stuck in the gluey sap, then die. Unfortunately, it would take an awful lot of Chayotes to protect even a few papayas. Also, Chayotes bear sparingly in the summer months, the short days of spring and fall triggering fruit production. I have grown both papayas and Chayotes together for the past three or four years and have yet to find the first fruitfly stuck in a Chayote. Do you suppose this is due to the variety?

PROGRAM: FIGS

by Dr. A.H. Krezdorn

The Fig, Ficus carica, is in the family Moraceae, the Mulberry family. There are Ficus species that are deciduous, as is the common fig, and there are also ever-green species. Some Ficus are even vines. Hybridization between Ficus species, including crossing vines with tree forms, has been performed, but with no useful results to date.

The commercial fig growing and processing industry is now concentrated mainly in California. Figs are divided into four categories, based upon their flowering characteristics: Caprifig, Smyrna, San Pedro and common. Caprifigs are inedible, producing only male flowers. Smyrnas bear only female flowers, requiring Caprifig pollen for fruit development. San Pedro produces female flowers and bears two crops annually, the first, or "breba" crop, borne on leafless wood and requiring no pollination. The second crop is borne on new wood and must have pollination. Finally, the common fig, the only one recommended for Florida, produces female, but parthenocarpic (develops without pollination) flowers. In California, the most important commercial variety is 'Calimyrna' (a synonym for 'Sari Lop'), a Smyrna type fig. Caprification or pollination of Smyrna figs is performed by the fig wasp, Blastophaga psenes, which was introduced into California from Europe for this purpose. It does not survive in the southeastern states, hence our restriction to the use of the common fig.

The large Calimyrna fig is grown on a sizable tree and allowed to drop to the ground when ripe and dry before harvesting. The lack of rain and the low humidity allow this practice without danger of spoilage (as would occur here in our climate.) Thus the Calimyrna are the common drying fig. The 'Kadota' fig is grown for processing, being a yellowish-green fig. The Kadota trees are kept pruned low for ease of harvesting.

In cold regions like France, figs are kept cut very low, about two feet tall, and flat topped like a low table. In the winter, they are covered with dirt to protect them from temperatures below 7 F., which is all the plant can tolerate. Because of such temperature limitations, Washington, D.C. is about as far north in the U.S. that they may be grown without some means of protection.

As you can see, any form of pruning or training (e.g., espaliering) may be used in growing figs. In the southeast, the most common form is the bush. This is due to the fact that they sucker prolifically from below ground here, making a multiple trunk form of growth. If a tree shape is desired, the suckers must be constantly removed.

The fig prefers full sun, but will perform fairly well in half-shade or exposed to the morning or afternoon sun. In full shade it will definitely have problems.

The fig leaf is palmate in form with three to five lobes. Different varieties have recognizably different leaf forms, some more deeply lobed than others. Also, not all leaves on the same tree are identical, which can complicate the identification process.

The 'Magnolia' fig used to be grown commercially in Texas, between Galveston and Houston. In Europe it is known as the 'Brunswick'. Some time ago, a nurseryman in Houston bought what he thought was a load of magnolia trees and they turned out to be fig trees, instead. So, he called them 'Magnolia' figs.

Although the common fig grown in the south will set fruit parthenocarpically, it is capable of being sexually fertilized. When grown in Europe, where the fig wasp is present, these same figs will be pollinated and produce fruit of different color and shape than that produced here. As a result, different names get attached to the same tree in different locations. In Florida the nomenclature is very confused. The common 'Brown Turkey' of the southeast is also known by 'Everbearing', 'Texas Everbearing', 'Harrison', 'Ramsey', 'Lee's Perpetual', etc. The 'Celeste' is also 'Blue Celeste', 'Celestial', 'Little Brown', 'Purple' and 'Sugar'. 'Green Ischia' can be 'Ischia Green', 'White Ischia' and 'Ischia Verte'.

The major leaf disease of figs is 'fig rust'. The only control is to spray the undersides of the leaves with copper, either in neutral copper form or in a Bordeaux mix. Other fungicides are of no use whatever. Spray every two weeks religiously. Be aware that this is a preventative treatment only. A monthly application of a nitrogen fertilizer will force leaf production and overcome the rust problem to some extent. Most leaves will then hold until fall, though they may drop a bit early, which is no big problem.

In the spring, before new leaves come out, some fig varieties will form figs on the old wood. This "breba" crop will ripen later, after the tree has a full set of leaves. A second crop will then form in the axils of the leaves. Some varieties, like Celeste, will usually drop all of the breba crop and bear only the leafy crop, which appears continuously until fall.

Pruning tends to stimulate longer internodes (the distance between leaves), and, hence, a longer crop season. You should get more fruit without pruning, but a condensed crop season. Pruning will extend the season, but give a reduced crop.

The fig is a unique type of "fruit", called a syconium. It is in truth a hollow stem with flowers on the inside. It contains hundreds of male and female flowers, the females forming the true fruits, or seeds. In the Smyrna fig, the tiny Blastophaga wasp enters the syconium through the opening (eye or ostiole), searching for a place to oviposit her eggs in the female flowers. As she enters she brushes pollen from the male flowers and thereby serves to pollinate the female flowers. The wasp will leave and then enter other figs, thereby performing cross-pollination.

A tightly closed eye is preferred for southeastern figs. An open eye permits water to enter and results in fruit splitting and souring. A closed eye also discourages insects from entering. A long stem, resulting in a drooping habit of the fruit, is also desirable here, since it helps prevent water from entering the eye. Although the Kadota fig has an open eye, there is a drop of honey-like fluid in the opening which prevents water and insects from entering.

The milky latex which exudes from figs contains an enzyme, ficin, which is similar to papain, found in papayas. Like papain, it breaks down proteins and can be irritating to the skin. Those who are especially sensitive to it should wear gloves while handling the fruit. Ficin has been employed to clarify beer, but is much more difficult than papain to extract from its source.

Celeste, with its tightly closed eye and excellent eating quality, is the preferred variety for Florida. The Eastern Brown Turkey (different from the western Brown Turkey) is another favorite, having a larger fruit and has the advantage of setting a breba crop. Green Ischia is also a good fresh fruit. Although not useful for preserves, it has the advantage of not attracting birds due to its green color when ripe. Another good fig is the Kadota, a yellow-green fruit. It is a good fresh fruit and makes an excellent preserve. It also has a breba crop. 'Lemon', a yellow fig, is quite common, but has a rather insipid fruit.

Magnolia is not useful as a dooryard fruit, since it is a processing fig. It has a very open eye and must be harvested just before ripening, which means picking every day or two throughout the season. It does make excellent preserves and canned figs.

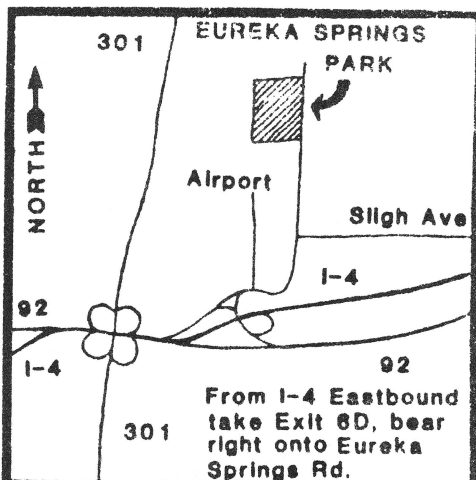
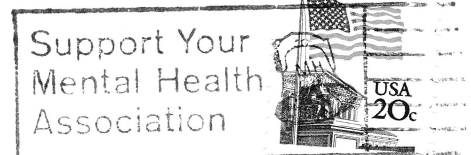
Birds may be discouraged from attacking the fruit by the use of toy snakes placed in the trees. The snake must be moved daily, however, or the birds will ignore it.

Nematodes in the soil are a severe problem for figs on their own roots. A very heavy mulch will lessen damage. If the fig is planted near to a building, sidewalk or paved driveway, that will allow its roots to grow where the nematode population is lower. In warmer regions, nematode resistant rootstocks are employed, such as Ficus coccu-
lifolia, F. glomerata (F. racemosa), F. gnaphalacarpa and F. palmata. F. coccu-
lifolia is the preferred rootstock. Like the others, it is cold sensitive and has a tendency to send up suckers, which must be removed.

Fig propagation is usually by dormant wood cuttings, 6" to 12" lengths and up to 3/4" diameter. Cut directly beneath nodes or joints and plant in a well-drained media, leaving 1" of stock above soil level. Keep moist, but definitely not wet. Leafy shoots will root under intermittent mist. Marcotting, or air-layering, is also employed.

Use chip bud, patch bud, side graft or inlay graft on rootstocks. Chip bud and side graft are preferred when wood is 1/2" or less, patch buds for 1/2" to 1 1/2" wood, and inlay graft for larger stocks. Latex flow from cuts does not hinder graft union.

Tampa Bay Chapter Newsletter
Rare Fruit Council International, Inc.
 3114 Troy Avenue
 Lakeland, Florida 33803



P. JUDSON NEWCOMBE
 3114 DEER PARK
 TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617

EUREKA SPRINGS COUNTY PARK
PICNIC MEETING, 12 NOON
SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1982.
COME EARLIER IF POSSIBLE.
BRING PLANTS & FRUIT.