RFCI **NEWSLETTER** NOVEMBER 1982

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

EDITOR: RAY THORNDIKE CHAPTER MAIL 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 BUILDING, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

NEXT MEETING.....SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1982 AT 2:00 PM

MEETING PLACE.....HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL CENTER
5339 STATE ROAD 579, SEFFNER
TAKE EXIT 8 SOUTH OFF I-4

PROGRAM....."TROPICAL FRUIT FIESTA" by Tom Economou
Tropical Fruits of Tropical America will be illustrated in slides and in actual samples brought up from Miami and Homestead by Tom. Tom is known by Council members especially for his Botanical Tours to Central & South America.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

NEW MEMBERS - We wish to welcome these new members, many of whom signed up at the Plant Sale.

Guillermo (Willie) Carreras (T-Sgt., USAF, Ret.), 4409 Lanier Drive, Tampa 33616, Tel. 839-0227

Francisco & Jean DaCosta, 19228 Yontz Road, Brooksville 33512, Tel. (904)799-0441

Curtis & Carolyn Fowler, 951 Elnora Drive, Riverview 33569, Tel. 677-0739

Francis & Kathe Furtado, 4402 Presidential Street, Seffner 33584, Tel. 681-7347

Frank & Rita Galatocky, 4681 Shore Acres Blvd., N.E., St. Petersburg 33703, Tel. 526-4944

Norman & Estrellita Gensolin, X-Ray Department, Walker Memorial Hospital, Avon Park 33825, Tel. 452-1415

Donald Hartman, 311 Honey Locust Court, Seffner 33584, Tel. 681-1113

Ruth McClure, 570 Marmora, Tampa 33606, Tel. 251-2759

Daniel J. Michaud, 16102 Hanna Road, Lutz 33549, Tel. 949-5296

Jean F. Miller, 1842 Lady Mary Drive, Clearwater 33516, Tel. 585-1305

Jack & Phoebe Moss, 1401 Stewart Blvd., Clearwater 33516, Tel. 536-6724

Randy Nangle, 13236 N. Dale Mabry, Tampa 33618, Tel. 961-7972

Richard & Marilyn Preston, 4923 Shetland Avenue, Tampa 33615, Tel. 886-2874

Jeannie Hock Schiff, 2904 W. North Street, Tampa 33614, Tel. 875-9404

NEW MEMBERS (Continued)

Henry M. Stewart, Sr., 102 Lentz Road, Brandon 33511, Tel. 685-0667

Helen Suri, Route 3, Box 126, Tampa 33619, Tel. 626-5260

Willis & Anita Unruh, 16315 McGlamery Road, Odessa 33556, Tel. 920-3547

John & Romagene Vaccaro, 3505 Dartmouth Avenue, Tampa 33603, Tel. 223-2131

John & Jean Wells, 7901 Northbridge Blvd., Tampa 33616, Tel. 885-6891

Rick & Ginna Wilson, 15706 Garden Side Lane, Tampa 33624, Tel. 961-4592

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

THIRD ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Ideal weekend weather accompanied the sale and brought a healthy turnout. The final tally is not in at press time, but the gross receipts were roughly $15,400. This is 3/4 of last year's take, but our net will probably be close to the same since we are getting smarter each year resulting in a more efficient operation. In one very important respect this was our most successful sale - the turnout of working members was by far the best yet. It was very heartening to see so many show up to volunteer their services both Saturday and Sunday.

The Armory was an eminently suitable site with none of the problems or hassles found at the fairgrounds. We had more than enough room, security was relatively easily handled and the flow of people in and out through the cashiers was amazingly fast. The young ladies from the 4-H Club did a fantastic job both days and were a bargain. I hope we have the good sense to get them back for future sales. And I hope that we reserve the Armory for next year's sale as soon as possible.

The smaller gross this year was probably mainly due to the lack of TV coverage like we had last year. This was not for lack of trying. There was just no cooperation from the local stations and channel 8 has dropped their noon interview program. Also, members would not volunteer to appear, as usual.

Other factors affecting the take were lack of tree stock in certain categories, the economic climate at this time, and perhaps the change in sale site. Some worried that people might be going to the fairgrounds by mistake, especially those who talked to us at the Florida State Fair booth.

There was not a large quantity of plants brought in by members. Assuming that there is going to be a Fourth Annual Plant Sale next October, we should go to work right now generating plants for it. We need seeds and this requires that we find a Seed Committee chairman real soon. Will someone please volunteer? See Pres. Bob Heath. We not only need quality plants from seed, but we also need rootstocks for grafting and budding. We shall need the services of those among us who can bud & graft successfully. Please volunteer. Those who have yard and/or greenhouse space to grow on these plants please volunteer also. Plants may be either donated outright to the sale for the chapter's benefit or the member may share in the take (50% of marked price, unless revised in future sales) which can be very profitable with the right plants. If anyone had brought in Kiwifruit plants this year, they could have sold out in a half hour. The newspaper article (Tribune) led everyone to think they would find them at the sale, and, to my knowledge, there was not one solitary Kiwifruit plant at the Armory. So, we can get smarter yet.

OCTOBER MEETING PLANT DRAWING RESULTS

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
1. Seedling Cherimoya	A. & L. Stark	Maja Byvoet
2. Black Mulberry	A. & L. Stark	Jim Calhoun
3. 'Celeste' Fig	A. Mendez	Bob Holben
4. White Sugarcane	A. Mendez	Bob Holben
5. Tamarind	A. Mendez	Kay Netscher
6. Black Sapote	Bob & Pat Duke	Stan Lachut
7. Carissa grandiflora	Bob & Pat Duke	A. & L. Stark
8. Guava	Bob & Pat Duke	Bob Holben
9. Malanga root	Christine Prodanas	Betty Dickson
10. Aloe vera	Christine Prodanas	Nancy Lester
11. Surinam Cherry (2)	Harold Seekins	Bob Holben
12. 'Abakka' Pineapple	Bob Heath	Joe Fonte
13. Feijoa	Bob Heath	Nancy Lester
14. Seedling White Sapote	Loraine Ball	Phala Fonte
15. Cactus (2)	Loraine Ball	Kay Netscher
16. Tamarind	Loraine Ball	Jim Calhoun
17. Blackberry Jam Fruit	Loraine Ball	Bob Holben
18. Seedling of 'Beaumont' Guava	Ray Thorndike	Walter Vines
19. Grumichama	Ray Thorndike	M. Pettijohn
20. Seedling White Sapote	Syd Goheen	Tom Patterson
21. Mulberry	Syd Goheen	A. Mendez
22. Governors Plum (4)	Syd Goheen	Nancy Lester Bob Duke Bob Heath A. Mendez

BRING YOUR PLANTS FOR THE DRAWING
TO THE NOVEMBER MEETING.

* * * * * * * * * * *

IN MEMORIAM

Joe Constantine informs us of the passing earlier this month (October) of his friend and neighbor in Clearwater and our former member, Mr. Ed Whitsun. In spite of failing health, Mr. Whitsun attended many of our first meetings at Lake LeClare. I had hopes of engaging him for a program or two, but his health deteriorated to the point that he was unable to attend for the past two years. Mr. Whitsun was one of the pioneers in collecting and growing rare fruits in this region. A number of excellent trees may be found on his property in Clearwater. His expertise will be missed. Our sympathies to the family.

* * * * * * * * * * *

LIBRARY - Maja Byvoet, Librarian

Acquisitions:
Al Hendry passed several recent issues of the "Avocado Grower" magazine (California) to me and I am, in turn, passing them on to Maja for the library. Some of the articles are very interesting.
I ordered a copy of the Australian RFC Fact Sheet No. 1, "RAMBUTAN" for the library and it has arrived. Although the Rambutan is too tropical for Central Florida, the information is interesting and we shall acquire all such fact sheets that are offered. Two more acquisitions from the Fruit Crops Dept. at Gainesville: "The Mango Industry in Florida" by Young & Sauls, a comprehensive 70 page booklet on varieties, culture, etc. and "Tahiti Lime Production in Florida" by Carl W. Campbell, 45 pages which about says it all.

Delving into our Library, I have selected an article from the March 1982 issue of the newsletter of the Rare Fruit and Vegetable Council of Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale).

THE CARAMBOLA

by Seek Brandon, Tree Editor

Scientific Name: Averrhoa carambola
Family: Oxalidaceae
Native to: Malaya and S.E. Asia

This slender upright tree has long been cultivated in the east for its profusely borne pleasantly acid fruit which is suitable for dessert, salads, beverages and other uses. Because of their potassium oxalate content, these other uses include rust removal and metal polishing. That is, the juice is used to remove iron rust from fabrics and for burnishing brass.

The carambola is one of the most decorative of the small tropical fruit trees. It barely reaches more than 25 feet in height, with a pleasingly symmetrical habit of growth. The deep green, odd pinnate leaves, composed of from 5 to 11 leaflets, graduating from 1 inch in length for the basal ones to 3 inches or more for those at the tip, are very sensitive to light and touch. They fold when touched at sundown.

The small pinkish white or purplish pink flowers are borne in clusters, mostly at leaf axils, but sometimes at branch tips on both old and new growth. Blooming often occurs three times a year, in early spring, mid-summer and frequently again in the fall.

The golden yellow fruit, angularly ovoid in form, averages from 3 to 5 inches in length and 2 inches in diameter. There are 4 or 5 rather acute longitudinal ribs, which give the fruit slices a star shape. The smooth, glossy, wax-like skin is thin and translucent. The crisp juicy flesh, of quince-like flavor, may be pleasantly acid or even sweet when ripe, dependent upon variety. Several smooth brown seeds are embedded in the center. Some seedling strains are quite sour while other cultivars are almost sweet.

CULTURE. Propagation is by seed, budding and air-layering. The small flat seeds are dried and planted in the nursery, from where they are set out when about 18 inches high. Young plants are delicate and require careful attention. Popenoe quotes P.J. Wester on the budding of the carambola thus, "...budwood should be beyond the tender stage, but not so old that it is brittle. It should not be used if the petioles have fallen. The buds should be cut an inch in length and inserted in inverted-T incisions."
[Florida Fruit Crops Fact Sheet, FC-12 states that, "Veneer grafting during the time of most active growth has given the best results. Healthy carambola seedlings of $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (7 mm) diameter are best for rootstocks. Graftwood should be taken from mature twigs on which leaves are still present and, if possible, the buds are just beginning to grow. Top-working of older trees has been done by bark grafting." - Editor]

Propagated varieties which may be found in South Florida include the following:
Golden Star, Maha, Thayer, Thai Knight, Fwang Tung, Star King, Star King Sweetie, Younghans, Newcombe, Arkin, Hart, Key West, Grimal, Butts Dwarf, Maher Dwarf, Wheeler.

[Again, quoting the Fact Sheet, FC-12, "CLIMATE. Carambola grows best in a tropical or warm subtropical lowland climate. Young trees are likely to be killed at temperatures of 30 - 32 F (-1.6 - 0 C). Large trees can withstand temperatures of 26 - 28 F (-3 to -2 C) for short periods with damage to only leaves and small branches, but may be killed if temperatures go below that for prolonged times." I have observed trees that survived our freezes of 1977, 1980, 1981 and 1982 without significant damage, so the minimum temperature is certainly lower than that found in the literature. - Editor]

The carambola is well adapted to many types of well-drained soils and grows best where soil reaction is moderately acid. In calcareous soils, special care is required to prevent minor element deficiencies, particularly iron and zinc. In soils of low fertility, young trees should receive light fertilizer applications every 60 to 90 days until well established. Thereafter, they should receive 1 or 2 applications a year in deep soils or 3 or mor applications in shallow soils where heavy rainfall causes nutrient loss by leaching. Application at the rate of 2 lbs. per year for every inch of trunk diameter is suggested. The use of 6-6-6-3 would be satisfactory in Central Florida, with one or two yearly applications of chelated iron and minor element foliar sprays where necessary.

A healthy tree in the home garden requires no pruning except for occasional removal of dead wood. Occasional reduction in height will facilitate fruit harvest. Mature trees seldom exceed 25 feet in spread. Trees grown in light shade tend to be leggier in form and would be better candidates for pruning. This tree is one of the very few fruiting species that does quite well in moderate shade, which is a distinct advantage in many home landscapes.

There are two types of carambola flowers, 1- Those with long stamens and short pistils, and 2- Those with short stamens and long pistils. Some varieties are very weakly self-fertile and require a pollinator. Cross-pollination usually results in larger as well as more fruit, although there is one drawback. Generally there are more seeds to a pollinated fruit, but they are usually smaller than with self-pollination. 'Golden Star' does fruit well in isolation and is a short stamen, long pistil type introduced by the University of Florida, Gainesville. It bears large attractive fruits with good flavor.

No insect pests or diseases are known to be of sufficient importance to require control measures. Birds sometimes damage the fruit during the dry months. A healthy tree will bear heavy clusters of fruit at least twice a year and often three times. The ripening season is mainly March to July in Florida, but some fruiting may take place almost all year. With good care and favorable weather, mature trees will yield 200 to 300 lbs. of fruit per year.

This is an excellent tree for home landscaping. Its foliage is dark green and attractive. It is even more attractive when in flower and fruit. The fruit is valued for its ornamental appearance and unusual shape. The common names, Starfruit and Five Points (Australia), derive from the shape of the fruit in cross-section.

Carambolas are eaten fresh, cut up in fruit salads, or used as garnish for meat and fish dishes. Virtually any use made of the common apple may be applied to the carambola. The juice even makes a delicious iced drink. The quince-like flavor becomes even more pronounced upon cooking. It makes a firm, cloudy yellow jelly with the quince-like flavor. Fully ripe fruits may be made into jam. The sweeter varieties may be eaten fresh, but the highly acidic types are more useful for prepared dishes.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

If anyone still has seedlings grown from fruit brought up from Miami and Homestead by Tom Economou for last November's program, and they are still in pots and portable, please bring them to the Meeting for show and tell. Tom will be bringing more of the same fruits plus any others he can find and an exhibit of yearling plants would be most interesting and an encouragement to other members to try their hand at growing rare fruit from seed. The Bignays and Spanish Limes (Mamoncillos) already distributed are among these.

If you have noticed an improvement in the quality of the print in this issue, you can thank Paul Rubenstein for providing an electric typewriter to replace the old Royal that I have been using. That also was provided by Paul and served quite well for the greater part of the first two years of the newsletter. - Ray Thorndike, Editor.

THE MAYA BREADNUT

Scientific Name: Brosimum alicastrum
Family: Moraceae
Native to: Tropical America

A tropical relative of the fig and mulberry, the Maya Breadnut, also known as Jamaica Breadnut or Ramon Breadnut, occurs in a genus of eight species, all yielding edible fruits. This medium to large evergreen tree has shining lance-elliptic entire leaves and is valued in Yucatan for its timber and for the young branches and leaves for use as fodder. When injured, the tree exudes a milky latex sap resembling cream which may be diluted with water to make a milk substitute.

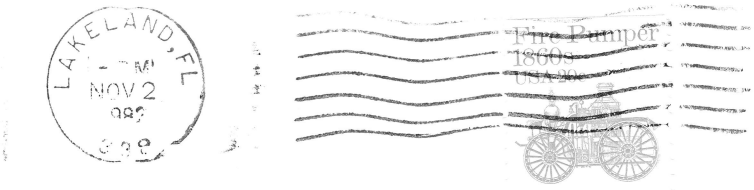
Small, white, inconspicuous flowers are followed by one inch diameter round edible fruits which turn yellow upon ripening in the fall. Although the pulp is edible, the tree is best known for the large seeds (one per fruit) which are roasted or boiled. These are quite nutritious and taste like potato after boiling. The dried seeds may be ground into a meal for making bread.

The Maya Breadnut is rather tropical in requirements, probably not tolerating freezing temperatures. Propagation is mainly by seed or by cuttings of young wood.

A theory has been expounded that this "nut" was used by the Mayans and certain Indian tribes in Central and South America as a supplementary food source to their staple, maize (Zea mays). It does not decompose or go rancid as quickly as maize. Even today, the pericarp (fruit wall), which is relatively sweet, is reduced to a meal that is mixed with maize meal to make tortillas, or is baked with green plantains.

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

There is a motive for including the description of the Maya Breadnut. I have two seedling plants in one gallon pots (grown from seed brought by Tom Economou for last November's program) which need homes, especially for the coming winter. I shall give them to anyone who can provide a suitable environment to grow them on. Tub culture would be one possibility. I shall bring them to the meeting. Since they are so tropical, I cannot donate them to the plant drawing. - Ray Thorndike.



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