



# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1983

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 ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING.....SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 1983 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 CULTURE IN FLORIDA" by Mary Ann Ogden  
Ms. Ogden is well-known to the Miami Council, having  
given several programs there. She has presented several  
papers at Florida State Horticultural Society conventions  
and is presently a graduate student in the Fruit Crops  
Department at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

~~~~~

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Scott F. Alexander, 430 Bluff View Drive, Belleair Bluffs 33540

John & Olga Blaha, P.O. Box 38, Masaryktown 33512

Alberta Cassady, P.O. Box 5072, Spring Hill 33526

Robert & Rose Nelson, 201 - 2nd Isle South, Leisure Beach, Port Richey 33568  
Telephone: 863-4602

Ben & Carol Parker, Route 1, Box 1838, Plant City 33566, Telephone: 752-0896

## ADDRESS CHANGE:

Rick & Ginna Wilson, 2202 Butch Cassidy Trail, Riverview 33569, Tel. 634-7249

~~~~~

## DEMONSTRATION PLANTING, SEFFNER AG CENTER First Work Session, December 4, 1982

Our project was off to a very enthusiastic start with the following members  
and Master Gardeners participating:

Bob & Terry Heath	Leland Terrell	Tom Goldsworthy
Jim & Grace Calhoun	Dan Thornton	Ray Thorndike
Arnold & Lillian Stark	Armando Mendez	Pat Chelman
Richard & Marilyn Preston	Glen Myrie	

Unfortunately, a couple of names did get omitted that were not known. The bridge  
was about two-thirds completed and part of the pathway, made of wood & tree scraps  
laid over black plastic, was also put down. Most of the remainder of the winding  
pathway was staked out for future work sessions.

Second Work Session, December 18, 1982

Present were Bob Heath, Tom Goldsworthy and Ray Thorndike. The bridge was virtually completed in this second session. Minor finishing touches are required and a protective finish of some sort applied during the next session.

Probably the next phase will be the grape arbor construction. Later we may add a Kiwi-fruit trellis, pergola or arbor. There is a lot more footpath to put down when we get more scraps for the job. The date of the next scheduled session will be announced at the January meeting. Volunteers will be requested.

For those not aware of the purpose of this project, we intend to fill as much of the two acres or so of grounds as possible with fruiting trees and shrubs suitable to our Central Florida growing conditions. The landscaping with pathways winding around all of the specimens will provide the visiting public with a demonstration of what anyone can plant, assuming that they have the space. Most of the maintenance of the completed project will be handled by the Master Gardener Program of Hillsborough County. A drip-irrigation system is planned by the county for eventual installation.

The idea is hardly original, the Palm Beach Chapter and the RFVC of Broward County having beat us to it. The Miami Council has a planting on the USDA Station grounds.

Soon we shall need to assemble the various plants specified on our present plan. These should be of the best quality and of the best varieties of the represented species as we can obtain. If you can help in this area, please contact Bob Heath. Likewise, if you have any landscape planning expertise, now is the time to volunteer your talents as the overall plan, though still somewhat flexible, is beginning to gel.

~~~~~

DECEMBER 12, 1982 MEETING - FLORIDA CITRUS ARBORETUM, WINTER HAVEN

Braving the elements on a very threatening day, twenty members and guests enjoyed the very educational tour of the 6½ acre arboretum. Our gracious host, Mr. Leon Hebb of the Bureau of Citrus Budwood Registration staff, assisted by his teenage son, was most generous with the various species and varieties of ripe fruit. Most of those attending found themselves lugging at least two large sacks of miscellaneous fruit back to their autos at the end of the afternoon. There were various pummelos, grapefruit, tangerines, oranges, lemons, etc. to be had, besides some lesser known fruits. This collection of plants and trees includes more than 230 specimens of valuable citrus and citrus relatives. Some members were even allowed to have cuttings of wanted cultivars. So, despite the growing discomfort of the weather as the afternoon wore on, it turned out to be a very worthwhile and educational field trip and one that we hope to repeat in the future. Once again, our thanks to Leon Hebb and his son.

~~~~~

Due to space limitations and last minute panic of publication, mention of Tom Economou's November program got omitted from the last issue. With his usual showmanship, Tom thoroughly entertained the 59 members and guests who attended. Like last year, he brought us a "plethora" of exotic fruits fresh picked in Miami just before his trip up here. Some were saved from immediate consumption to be used in our display at the "Florida Holiday Festival" in Curtis Hixon Hall on the following Thursday. Our thanks again to Tom and an invitation to do it all again.

~~~~~

Suggestions are requested for the July and September meetings. Anyone care to host us?

From the San Francisco Chronicle of October 25, 1982:

KIWI PIONEERS HAVE LAST LAUGH

by Stephen Magagnini

Gridley, Butte County (California)

When the three Tanimoto brothers planted their first acre of Kiwifruit 17 years ago, "we put it back of our peach groves so people wouldn't laugh at us," recalled George Tanimoto. "Everybody laughed anyway, and we laughed too," Tanimoto said. "Now they say 'he's laughing all the way to the bank,' and it's true."

Year after year, the Tanimoto brothers waited for a crop. Finally, in 1970 - after five years of fruitless ridicule - the first fuzzy brown egg-shaped pods of Kiwi appeared on their vines. Tanimoto sold his maiden crop to a Los Angeles fruit dealer, shipping the fruit south at first in wooden boxes, then individually wrapped in packages called "flats," because Kiwis are very sensitive and will shrivel and shrink when exposed to gas fumes or other ripening fruit.

Today, the 56-year-old Tanimoto is a millionaire because he didn't quit on what he affectionately calls the "Ugly Fruit."

Butte County now has almost 1000 acres of a plant that was once an embarrassment. Peach groves - whose fruits sell for three cents a pound - are being uprooted in favor of Kiwifruit, which bring between \$1.50 and \$2.00 a pound, with a net profit of about \$1.00 a pound. Gridley, population 4500, boasts it is the Kiwi Capital of California. It has become a sister city with Te Puke, New Zealand, which bills itself as the Kiwi Capital of the World.

Tanimoto is acting president of the California Kiwi Commission, which represents the interests of 1000 Kiwi farmers in 33 counties. Late October to early November is Tanimoto's favorite time of year, because 135 white-gloved workers pick and pack about 330,000 Kiwifruit a day from his more than 50 acres. They wear the gloves to keep from scarring the precious fruit.

At \$1.75 a pound, Tanimoto can expect to gross close to \$2 million by the time the harvest season is over. He will tell you the first million was the hardest. "People were trying to grow Kiwi from seeds and all failed," he said. "everything we did was trial and error, mostly error," from the spacing of the plants to the size of the trellises to the amount of water. They found that by stringing the vines along T-shaped bars and spreading them out along wires, the plants would get more sunlight and produce more fruit. And, instead of using one male plant - which doesn't bear fruit - to fertilize four females, as in the old New Zealand method, they taxed each male plant with eight fruit-bearing females, and used bees to deliver the pollen. Once he and his brothers, Jim and Mori, figured it all out, the Kiwi seemed the lazy man's way to riches. "Kiwi is really a pleasure to grow," Tanimoto said.

In California, Kiwi sleep from November through April, ignoring frost and cold. They don't require particularly rich soil, and don't need to be fumigated because they are bug resistant. The thick-skinned fruit can withstand the heavy rains that have ruined so many other crops. And, because it is the last fruit to be harvested, there are always plenty of migrant workers around to pick the Kiwi, once they have attained a sugar content of 7 percent.

The days of making a killing on Kiwi may soon be over, said Bill Olson, a farm advisor in Butte County. "I don't know if there will be too many more millionaires," Olson said. "Kiwis are everywhere. We're getting close to the saturation point, and prices are bound to drop."

Before the year is out, most of California's Kiwis are on European and Japanese tables - four out of every five Kiwis are sold for export. "Japan takes the big fruit, Europe takes the small fruit, and the inferior fruit is sold here," Tanimoto said. "The American buyer is more considerate of price." California growers are now exporting 2 million flats of Kiwi a year (with between 21 and 49 fruits per flat), but the Kiwi-eating nations are growing more and more of their own fruits.

"We are trying to hit the domestic market because we have been exporting it to Germany and Japan, and Japan especially is growing enough so they won't need ours," said Cyndy Michelson, spokeswoman for the Kiwi Growers Association. So the Kiwi farmers are finally going to have to sell Kiwi in their own backyards - an unappetizing prospect.

(Thanks to Harold & Bea Seekins for sending this article to me. - Editor.)

~~~~~

#### KIWIFRUIT

Actinidia chinensis, Planch

The Kiwifruit, formerly known as the Chinese Gooseberry until the early 1950's when New Zealand exporters renamed it after their native bird for better market acceptability, occurs naturally as a deciduous, twining woody vine growing to a height of 30 ft. or more on the forest margins in the mild-wintered Yangtze Valley of China. Older references place it in the botanical family, Dilleniaceae, but later publications from New Zealand relegate it to the newer family, Actinidiaceae. There are 35 or more other species of twining woody vines in the genus, all natives of eastern Asia. While a few are grown for their ornamental value, A. arguta, A. coriacea, A. kolomikta, and A. purpurea also bear edible fruit. They are generally much hardier than A. chinensis, which is considered more hardy than citrus, but less hardy than the peach.

Like other deciduous plants, Kiwifruit can be damaged by frost, and has different stages of susceptibility. A truly dormant vine in mid-winter can withstand temperatures as low as 15 F., but young shoots in spring are very frost tender, being severely damaged by 30 minutes of 29 F. Dormant chilling requirements are not specifically known, but flower production seems to be dependent upon adequate chilling. A cold winter produces greater flower production. This is apparently why the Kiwifruit is not recommended for growing in south Florida. Little is known of its performance in central Florida as yet. Mainly this is due to the relatively recent introduction here and the predominance of seedlings which take 4 to 7 years to come into flowering. Male and female flowers occur on separate plants (dioecious) and like the papaya, seem to produce a preponderance of males. Grafted plants are available by mail order and cost between \$30 and \$35 per mated pair.

Propagation by seed is relatively easy. The fruit being readily available in the local markets, seed is therefore always at hand. Instructions usually mandate stratification in the refrigerator, but this is not necessary for fruit shipped in from any distance. The fruit itself, seeds and all, obviously, has already been the route in cold storage and the seeds, if quickly planted, will yield a decent germination ratio. Each fruit bears hundreds of seeds and extraction can be tedious. Some nurserymen plant the pulp without extracting the seed and seem to have acceptable results. "Damping off" fungi are a problem, however, and sterile soil and containers plus application of a mild fungicide, such as captan, is recommended (after germination). Do not use copper, which is phytotoxic to Kiwifruit seedlings.



Seedlings can be grafted as yearlings. Graftwood is selected during dormancy and stored at 40 F. in tightly sealed polyethylene bags. Because growing wood "bleeds" copiously during the growing season, grafting is preferably done in January or February on half-inch wood. Late summer T-budding is also possible. Dormant seedlings may be whip or cleft grafted and older vines bark- or rind-grafted. Scions also may be grafted to root sections as is done in apples.

Softwood cuttings and root-cuttings from half-inch diameter wood taken in mid-summer can be used for propagation. One should be advised, however, that Kiwifruit are prone to heavy callusing when cut or injured. This is often mistaken for crown gall infection and it can restrict root development. Use of hardwood cuttings is not advised, since they do not root easily despite callusing. Each softwood cutting should be two to three nodes long (5 to 8 inches) and one whole leaf retained at the top node. If cut in half, the top two leaves may be left on. Cut the base of the cutting just below a node and dip in a rooting compound. Semi-hardwood cuttings, 7 to 10 inches long, taken in summer (June thru Sept.), may also be used. Save only the top leaf, which is cut in half.

Root-cuttings from pencil thickness to over one inch diameter, two to three inches long, may be used, also. Be sure that the root-cuttings are from plants known to have been raised from cuttings themselves, or from selected seeds. Otherwise, you might be propagating an unwanted male rootstock. Root-cuttings will strike readily in the ground, but the weed problem suggests the easier maintenance of container growing with sterile soil.

For cuttings, any propagation medium (perlite or a perlite/vermiculite mix will do fine) can be used with intermittent mist and bottom heat of 70 to 75 F. Rooting may occur in 3 to 4 weeks, but at least by 6 to 8 weeks.

Kiwifruit vines are supported in similar manner to grapes, but require stronger structures. T-bar trellises or pergolas are the most popular. The Kiwifruit is a long-lived plant, some more than 80 years old in China, for instance. Therefore, it is false economy to stint on support structures. The trellis or pergola should be six feet tall. Eight to twelve gauge galvanized steel wire strung from substantial cross-bars on 4 to 6 inch posts will suffice.

Wind shelter must be provided, since leaves and fruit are highly susceptible to damage. The vines are also brittle and may break in strong winds. In addition, bees, so important for pollination, do not like working unsheltered areas. Leaf scorch, the margins browning and curling inward, sometimes accompanied by spotting, is usually associated with hot, dry weather and strong winds. Adequate shelter seems to be the only cure.

Like grapes, both winter and summer pruning is absolutely necessary. Methods differ, however. Neglect will result in long, overcrowded and very tangled growth. In turn, this results in reduced bearing and poorer quality fruit.

Kiwifruits reach mature size by mid-summer, but are not ready for picking until November or later. Unless there is danger of frost, fruits may be left on the vine during the dormant season until wanted. The fruit is severely damaged by frost, however. Pick the larger fruit first and complete picking by the time winter pruning is begun. Without refrigeration, fruit will store in a cool, draft-free place up to 8 weeks. Storage at 32 F. and 90% relative humidity will maintain good fruit quality for up to six months. Storage must be separate from other fruits that might give off ethylene gas, however.

With its pleasantly sweet/tart flavor, reminiscent of the gooseberry, and its surprisingly appetizing green color, Kiwifruit fits many uses. It is served fresh, as an appetizer, in desserts and beverages, with salads, fish, poultry, meats and breads. It can be processed as a canned, frozen or dehydrated product. As a single-strength juice, it is very pleasant, though acidic. And the fruit is high in vitamin C and low in calories.

KIWIFRUIT CUTTINGS FOR SALE:

Vice President Paul Rubenstein has written to Mr. Wm. Loren McGhee in Smith River, California regarding obtaining a shipment of cuttings. Mr. McGhee wrote an article in the Pomona, the quarterly publication of the North American Fruit Explorers, in which he offered cuttings at \$1 per each, including packaging and shipping costs. In his reply to Paul, he made the price of 75¢ each plus 15% of cost for shipping on orders of more than 25 cuttings.

Paul suggests signing members up in advance to build an order of over 25 cuttings and charging a premium of 25¢ to 75¢ additional to be put into the Plant Exchange kitty. An alternative is for the chapter to order a quantity and distribute them to those members who promise to propagate them for future Annual Plant Sales. We were swamped with requests for Kiwifruit plants at the October sale (due to the Tribune article earlier that week) and there was not a one on the floor to sell. Said members must have facilities for rooting cuttings.

Since we have members Wayne & Carleen Lee who have been raising Kiwifruit commercially in California and are now starting a small acreage here near Mulberry, Florida, perhaps we can call upon them to provide cuttings at an equal or better price? At least, their vines are of a known quality (probably the Hayward variety) and communication would be somewhat simpler. What about it, Wayne & Carleen? (Am using the newsletter in lieu of writing a separate letter to the Lees. - Lazy Editor.)

**\*\*By the way, while we are asking favors, etc, does anyone have any native persimmon seed? It is a bit late in the year to ask, I fear, but we should be raising seedlings for next year's grafting of Japanese Persimmon (Kaki).**

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



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