



# NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1983

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

EDITOR: Ray Thorndike, NEWSLETTER MAIL ADDRESS: 3114 Troy Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803  
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MEETINGS ARE HELD AT 2:00 PM ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING.....SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1983 AT 2:00 PM

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

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS OUR REGULAR MEETING SITE.

THE MARCH MEETING WILL BE THE FIRST HELD IN OUR  
NEW MEETING PLACE. DETAILS IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

PROGRAM....."TISSUE CULTURE" by Martha Burke  
Mrs. Burke works for Ceres 2000, Inc.  
in Winter Haven, a company which pro-  
duces ornamentals by the tissue cul-  
ture method for the nursery industry.  
Mrs. Burke's program will illustrate  
the steps in the tissue culture process.

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## NEW MEMBERS

Allen & Dorothy Ebanks, Route 2, Box 654, Dover 33527, Tel. 986-2843

Robert & Doris Lee, 824 Lafayette Lane, Lakeland 33805, Tel. 683-3457

Albert P. Lima, Route 2, Box 1604-A, Lutz 33549, Tel. 228-8539

Gary B. Staley, 401 Merlin Court, Brandon 33511, Tel. 685-4383

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## STRAWBERRY FIELD DAY - AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER, DOVER

A Strawberry Field Day will be held at the Dover Agricultural Research Center on Wednesday, February 2, 1983 to provide the latest information on strawberry production. Several topics of interest will be discussed, followed by a tour of the research plots. Faculty will be available to discuss specific aspects of their research.

The Dover ARC is located on Lewis Gallagher Road,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile south of US 92 Dover, Florida. From Tampa, take I-4 to Exit #9, McIntosh Road south to US 92, then east to Gallagher Road, then south to Lewis Gallagher Road. The Dover ARC is between Gallagher Rd. & Moore's Lake Rd. on Lewis Gallagher Rd.

President Bob Heath called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. New members present were Gary Staley, Carolyn Fowler, John & Jean Wells and Doris Lee. Pres. Heath thanked all those who helped on our work day. A Strawberry Field Day was announced for February 2, 1983 at the Dover ARC. A sign-up sheet was passed around for members who wanted to participate in our next workday at Seffner - January 22, 1983. There will be an election of Executive Board members at the March meeting and Ray Thorndike, Betty Dickson and Leland Terrell were named to the Nominating Committee to select candidates for the board. Our March meeting will be held at Tampa Bay Center Shopping Mall. The first person to arrive on the meeting date will pick up the key to the community room at the office, Room 3302. Our February meeting will be at our usual Seffner location. There was a discussion about our Seed Exchange Committee. Volunteers are needed to package seeds for the exchange. Romagene Vaccaro volunteered to serve on the committee. Paul Rubenstein told us of an offer from a California gentleman to sell us Kiwifruit cuttings at 75¢ each if we order 25 or more. Ray Thorndike mentioned that two of our California members will be moving back to this area. As they grow Kiwi, they may be able to improve on the above offer. Walter Vines then lead a talk on the benefits of tissue culture and suggested that we form a committee or study group. Walter volunteered to head up the group and Maja Byvoet offered to help. The meeting was closed and the Plant Drawing held.

Secretary Bill Ryland

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| <u>PLANT</u>              | <u>DONOR</u>           | <u>WINNER</u>                                  |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Seedling Avocado          | Armando Mendez         | Doris Lee                                      |
| Seedling Avocado          | Armando Mendez         | J. Wells                                       |
| Seedling White Sapote     | Armando Mendez         | Christine Prodanas                             |
| Papaya                    | Armando Mendez         | Regina Olszewski                               |
| Monstera deliciosa        | Armando Mendez         | Nancy Lester                                   |
| Helianthus tuberosus (2)  | Christine Prodanas     | ?                                              |
| Psidium molle (Guisaro)   | Tom Patterson          | Rosalie Obregon                                |
| Chaya                     | Bob Heath              | Maja Byvoet                                    |
| Chaya                     | Bob Heath              | Carolyn Fowler                                 |
| Chayote                   | Frank Tayntor          | Rosalie Obregon                                |
| Dasheen (2)               | Ray Thorndike          | Rosalie Obregon & Bruce Beasor                 |
| Passionflower Vine        | Ray Thorndike          | Ed Ciesla                                      |
| Passionflower Vine        | Ray Thorndike          | George Merrill                                 |
| Passionflower Vine        | Ray Thorndike          | Clifford Bertucci                              |
| Hot Pepper                | Bruce Beasor           | Arnold & Lillian Stark                         |
| Hot Pepper                | Bruce Beasor           | Glen Myrie                                     |
| Hot Pepper                | Bruce Beasor           | Gary Staley                                    |
| Hot Pepper                | Bruce Beasor           | Nancy Lester                                   |
| Tamarillo (Tree Tomato)   | Bruce Beasor           | Maja Byvoet                                    |
| Seedling Pummelo (19 ea.) | Betty Dickson          | 19                                             |
| Mamoncillo (Spanish Lime) | Betty Dickson          | David Rush                                     |
| Seedling Mexican Guava    | Arnold & Lillian Stark | R. Williams                                    |
| Seedling Loquat           | Albert Greenberg       | Carolyn Fowler                                 |
| 'Pearl Bush' (inedible)   | Albert Greenberg       | R. Williams                                    |
| Seedling White Sapote     | Bill Lester            | Maja Byvoet                                    |
| Papaya                    | Bill Lester            | Rosalie Obregon                                |
| Pineapple                 | Maja Byvoet            | Arnold & Lillian Stark                         |
| Aloe                      | Maja Byvoet            | Albert Greenberg                               |
| Artichoke                 | Frank Galatocky        | Armando Mendez & Theresa Heath                 |
| Pineapple (3)             | Frank Galatocky        | Romogene Vaccaro, Doris Lee<br>& Theresa Heath |

Program: TROPICAL FRUIT CULTURE IN FLORIDA

by Mary Ann Ogden

The material in this program is excerpted from lesson plans prepared for the Master Gardener program participants in areas where tropical fruits may be grown, which includes South Florida and warmer locations of Central Florida.

The Master Gardener program was initiated in the state of Washington in 1972 to train volunteer assistants to help alleviate the shortage of trained personnel. Since then, at least 25 states have adopted similar programs. The Florida Master Gardener program was begun in 3 counties in 1979 and has spread to 6 more since then, including Hillsborough. Volunteers from the public with gardening experience and proper training by county Extension Service personnel are able to answer most homeowner questions satisfactorily, and thus release county agents for work with commercial growers and programmatic efforts. Volunteers receive from 30 to 60 hours of training and then donate an equal number of hours in local Extension work.

Florida has been divided into three growing zones by horticulturists and these zones are designated as North, Central and South. The northern limit of the Central Zone is approximately the northern limit for safe growing of citrus, usually defined as a line through Ocala. True tropicals are limited to coastal areas from St. Petersburg on the west coast south and then north to Merritt Island on the east coast, all under the direct influence of the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf Stream. A small area to the south and to the east of Lake Okeechobee and localized microclimates in other areas, created by adjacent bodies of water, buildings, natural windbreaks, elevation differences, etc., also permit tropical horticulture. The major controlling factor is the periodic influx of arctic air masses which must be moderated by the above mentioned influences. California, by contrast, does not experience such polar air and citrus may be grown at higher latitudes than here in Florida. California lacks the long, hot, humid summers of Florida so necessary to most tropical fruits.

Tropical fruits recommended for the suitable growing areas of Central and South Florida are discussed in alphabetical order by family:

ANACARDIACEAE - The Cashew Family

Representatives of this family native to Florida include Poison Ivy, Poison Wood, Poison Sumac, etc., all having poisonous alkaloids in their sap. Well-known fruits in this family are Mango, Cashew and Pistachio. Mango is grown commercially in Dade County, but Cashew is too tender, except for the Keys, and Pistachio needs the colder, drier climate of California in order to bear. "Tommy Atkins" is one of the most favored varieties of Mango for export to northern markets, due to its shipping qualities. Due to the high humidity, Mango culture in Florida requires frequent spraying for anthracnose, a serious fungous disease of flower and fruit.

ANNONACEAE - The Annona Family

Most of this family is from tropical America although there is a Chinese relative, Ylang Ylang (*Artobotrys uncinatus*), which furnishes the base scent for Chanel No.5. The Soursop or Guanabana (*Annona muricata*) is one of the largest annona fruits and has an aromatic sweet/sour flavor. Although it has a spongy texture with much fiber, it is popular as an ice cream or milk shake. It is basic in many tropical beverages. A fiberless variety is now being propagated in South Florida. This is a very tender plant and will survive in only the most protected areas. The Sugar Apple is hardier and bears a very sweet fruit without any detectable acidity. The Atemoya is a hybrid of the Sugar Apple and the Cherimoya, most of them having been developed in Israel.

APOCYNACEAE - The Dogbane Family

Allamanda, Oleander and Periwinkle (Vinca rosea) are well-known family members grown in Florida. Many members are known for their poisonous qualities, cyanide being an active agent present in the milky, bitter sap. Carissa is the only genus of interest here, bearing edible fruits.

The Natal Plum (Carissa grandiflora, syn. C. macrocarpa) is very ornamental with fragrant white flowers and red fruits. The fruits exude a gummy white latex when immature. This is a very thorny plant and is used occasionally as a barrier, especially effective on animals.

ARECACEAE (PALMACEAE) - The Palm Family

This is a very productive family, producing most of the edible oils used in the world. Aside from coconut oil, the most widely used cooking oil in the tropics comes from the Oil Palm (Elaeis guineensis). The common Coconut Palm (Cocos nucifera), though prevalent in South Florida before Lethal Yellowing decimated them, is not native and probably comes from Polynesia, originally. It is quickly being replaced by other species of shorter stature and obviously disease resistant.

BROMELIACEAE - Pineapple Family

One of the Bromeliads is the common Pineapple (Ananas comosus), which is grown in large plantations commercially. Because of the lack of spininess common to most other varieties, the "Smooth Cayenne" is the most practical variety.

CARICACEAE - The Papaya Family

The Papaya originated in tropical America and its main commercial use is for the production of the enzyme Papain from the milky sap or latex. Papain has a host of uses, from leather making and clarification of beer to various medicinal uses, including neutralizing bee stings. Breeding is continuing on development of virus resistant strains of papaya, since virus diseases have limited successful commercial production in Florida.

EBENACEAE - The Ebony Family

The Black Sapote (Diospyros digyna) is often called the Chocolate Pudding Fruit because it has the texture and color of chocolate pudding, although not the flavor. The ripe fruit looks like a large green persimmon. It is used fresh, but also is popular in various recipes, in breads and mixed with other fruit.

EUPHORBIACEAE - The Spurge Family

This family includes a number of poisonous plants, some that are cactus-like and even one group to which belongs the commercial rubber tree of the tropics, Hevea brasiliensis. One fruiting tree of interest to us is the Bignay (Antidesma bunius), which bears large clusters of small red fruits, turning almost black when fully mature. A very few people (one in one hundred) will find this fruit to be obnoxiously bitter because they are genetic "tasters". In other words, the ability to taste the bitter principle present in this fruit is a genetically transmitted phenomenon.

FABACEAE (LEGUMINOSAE) - The Pea Family

The Tamarind (Tamarindus indica) is a very useful tree popularly grown in Miami around the turn of the century as a landscaping plant. It is a very ornamental evergreen, a medium to large tree, a quick grower which will make a thick hedge. The granular, soft brown pulp of the fruit has a strong sweet/sour flavor, being very high in sugar and tartaric acid. It has the highest calcium content reported for any fruit and is also very high in phosphorus. Tamarind is a basic ingredient of Worcestershire and other steak sauces. Tamarind "ade" is a well-known refreshing drink having medicinal properties. In the Caribbean, the pulp is cooked down into a candy. Medicinally, the Tamarind has been used to lower fevers.



**LAURACEAE - The Laurel Family**

To this family belong the Cinnamon, Camphor, Laurel and Sassafras as well as the genus *Persea*, which contains the only fruit of interest to South and Central Florida, the Avocado. Most of this family has aromatic bark or leaves. The Red Bay, a Florida swamp plant, has leaves that may be substituted for the culinary Bay Leaf in your spaghetti sauce. A tea may be made from Avocado leaves, but , to date, has not achieved any popularity. The Avocado is native to mountain areas of Central America.

**MALPIGHIACEAE - The Malpighia Family**

The primary genus with edible fruits of use for South Florida is *Malpighia*. The Acerola or Barbados Cherry (*Malpighia glabra*) is famous for the exceedingly high content of ascorbic acid (vitamin C) in its fruits. One can purchase Acerola tablets in health food stores. One serious problem with growing the Acerola is that it is a favored host of the Caribbean Fruit Fly.

**MORACEAE - The Mulberry Family**

The three fruiting genera of most interest to South Florida in this family are *Artocarpus*, *Ficus* and *Morus*. The Fig (*Ficus carica*) is more adapted to a drier climate, but serves as a dooryard fruit in all of Florida, provided precautions are taken to cope with nematodes and fig rust.

Several species of Mulberry will grow in Florida, the White, Black and Red. (*Morus*) The Jakfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) will grow in South Florida. It is a close relative of the Breadfruit (*Artocarpus communis*) and bears huge fruits on short stalks directly on the main limbs and trunk of the tree. In weight they average 20 to 30 pounds and have been recorded as heavy as 80 pounds. The fleshy pulp around the seeds is delicious eaten fresh and the large nut-like seeds roasted. The fruit has a strong, sweetish fragrance which becomes objectionable in an over-ripe fruit.

**MYRTACEAE - The Myrtle Family**

Most of the Myrtle family is found in the warmer parts of the world, principally Australia and South and North America. Most Australian species do not bear useful fruits, but commonly known plants are *Eucalyptus*, *Callistemon* (Bottle-brush) and *Melaleuca* (Cajeput or Punk Tree). Western hemisphere plants in this family tend to have edible or useful fruits. Commercially important are Allspice, Clove and Bayrum. The Surinam Cherry (*Eugenia uniflora*) from South America is used widely as a hedge plant and in addition has a very good fruit. The two main varieties are the red-fruited and the purple- or black-fruited types. These have different flavors, but all are quite popular with birds and Caribbean Fruit Fly as well as with people. The Jaboticaba or Brazilian Grape (*Myrciaria cauliflora*) bears flowers right on the trunk and main branches which yield ripe fruit within 6 weeks. It is very slow growing and takes 10 years or more to fruit.

The fruit of the Allspice (*Pimenta dioica* or *P. officinalis*) is picked green and dried for grating as spice. The soft, ripe fruit will not grate. An excellent flavored liqueur called "Pimenta" is made in Jamaica and is exceptional served over ice cream.

Strawberry Guava or Red Cattley Guava (*Psidium cattleianum*) is well-known in Central Florida. It has a very good flavor and makes a beautiful rosy red jelly of superior quality.

The common Guava (*Psidium guajava*) is much less common than before, since the Brazilian Pepper Tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*, family *Anacardiaceae*) has taken over its wild habitats. Also, the Caribbean Fruit Fly will destroy most of the fruit.

**MUSACEAE - The Banana Family**

World-wide, the most important source of starch is the banana, especially the plantain or cooking varieties. The banana prefers the lowland humid tropics. New hybrids are being developed with improved disease resistance. They are also dwarfed somewhat and are earlier fruiting as a result.

(To be continued)



Line Drawing by Kay Netscher

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



FEBRUARY 13TH MEETING AT SEFFNER

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