



NEWSLETTER

MAY 1985

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

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(Including Renewals)

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 2:00 P.M.

NEXT MEETING. MAY 12, 1985

MEETING PLACE. COMMUNITY ROOM UNDER WEST RAMP, TAMPA BAY
CENTER SHOPPING MALL, BUFFALO AND HIMES
AVENUES NEXT TO TAMPA STADIUM. (TAKE DALE
MABRY TO BUFFALO AVENUE, AT STADIUM.)

PROGRAM. DR. DALE JENKINS of the Sarasota Fruit and
Nut Society, speaking on: "GROWING FIGS
IN FLORIDA". He is presently cultivating
over two dozen varieties of figs in his own
back yard. He will also devote part of his
presentation to the cultivation of pine-
apples.

This coming meeting is on Mother's Day, so why not bring your mother or mother-in-law
along? Each member's mother who attends will receive a free ticket for a special plant
drawing.

BRAZIL

Tom Economou has an especially interesting trip to Brazil planned for 14 days
sometime in August; the exact date has not been determined yet. Tom is trying
to hold the price down to somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1,400.00, which is
a very economical price for this kind of trip and it certainly may be a once
in a lifetime opportunity for serious plant and seed collectors. So be sure to
keep your options open for an August vacation in Brazil.

Keep the weekend of October 19th and 20th open! That's when we've scheduled our
annual plant sale at the State Fairgrounds. We will need you!

SELECTED FRUIT TREES FOR DOOR YARD PLANTING IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

by Gene Joyner

Gene Joyner, as most of us know, is a horticulturist from West Palm Beach County Extension Service and is very knowledgeable of fruiting trees for Florida. The plants which Mr. Joyner chose to discuss are those that should take the cold in central Florida with a minimum of damage during normal years.

WHITE SAPOTE. The white sapote will survive very well in central Florida and makes a very excellent dooryard fruit. It has very little commercial value because it bruises too easily for shipment due to its thin peel. You usually get two or maybe three crops each season with the major crop during the late spring and early summer. There is considerable variation in fruit size with trees propagated from seed, anywhere from golf ball size up to the size of a small orange. The fruit color is nearly a butter yellow when ripe and they should be picked as soon as they begin to show color and not allowed to ripen on the tree because they ripen quickly and fall, which results in bruised and spoiled fruit. The pulp is very soft and whitish yellow with usually two or three seeds about the size of the end of your finger. The flavor is sweet and custardy. The tree gets quite large, up to 40 or 50 feet. From seeds we are figuring 5 to 6 years before flowering, while a tree from air layer or graft will usually produce in 3 to 4 years. Growth is very vigorous and the tree needs pruning to maintain a rounded configuration for easy fruit collection.

WAMPI. This is a fruit that is blooming quite heavily in the Palm Beach area at this time, having received no damage from the January freeze. The wampi comes from China, very close to the area where longans and lichees originated. On the tree the ripe fruit looks like a bunch of muscadine grapes hanging from the ends of the branches. The fruit varies in size from about 1/2 up to 3/4 of an inch with a rich yellow color very similar to a longan and ripening usually from May through July. The trees are relatively small, 25 to 30 feet, with very dark, dense foliage. From seed, the usual flowering time is about 4 years. They are usually propagated from seed but there are grafted varieties available.

LOQUAT. The loquat does quite well in central Florida with a minimum amount of attention. They are found not only in Florida but up the eastern seaboard into the Carolinas and across the Gulf states. Loquats will normally start blooming as early as September; however, they will not set any fruit until they get sufficient chilling which normally comes about Christmas. Then they will fruit from late December even into early April. The tree is a spreading type tree growing to 30 feet at maturity with an equal spread. The fruit clusters are quite ornamental and the individual fruit may be up to 2" in diameter, with from one to six seeds. The pulp is usually almost the same color as the outer skin. The fruit is very good for fresh eating, jams, jellies, pies and other uses. Grafted fruit of name varieties may fruit the following year after grafting, certainly within two years. Seedlings may take three or four years to fruit.

PAPAYA. The papaya is very tender and will be frozen to the ground with each cold winter. It should be propagated and treated as an annual. Under ideal conditions, it is possible to get fruit within 8 months of planting. During the winter months, what many people do here and further north is start the papaya plants indoors and get them up to a foot or 18" before spring. This way it may be possible to get fruit before the first frost hits. Fruit size and shape is quite variable. They may be round or oval shaped, from 1/2 pound to 4 to 6 pounds. Elongated fruit seems to have a better texture and a richer, sweeter flavor. They should be allowed to ripen on the tree for the best quality. Papayas come in several different sex forms, male, female, bisexual and others. Bisexuals are reported to give a better quality fruit. Fruit from seed even from the same plant are extremely variable. It is possible to take the seed from the best papayas ever eaten and get fruit that is virtually worthless, or vice versa. So take seed from the best fruit, of course, and cross your fingers and hope. The majority of fruit, however, is from satisfactory to excellent. Papayas, of course, have numerous seeds, in the larger sizes maybe even 100, and the seeds should be planted as soon after removal from the fruit as possible for the maximum germination.

BARBADOS CHERRY. The Barbados Cherry is another excellent candidate for this area because it provides fruit for a relatively long season. Fruiting starts in early spring and provides fruit all the way up until cold weather arrives. They have a small very attractive flower like a little crepe myrtle, and flowers over an extended period. You may have green fruit, ripe fruit and flowers on the same tree at the same time. The tree will grow to 15 or 20 feet and can be trained as a single trunk, though most people grow it as a multi-trunk shrub. It seems to flower well but frequently has problems setting fruit. The best approach is to take an air layer or graft from a good producing tree, one with sweet fruit because the fruit tends to vary considerably. The Barbados cherry is one of the highest sources of vitamin C of any of our fruiting plants. It is used commercially for the juice extract to obtain the Vitamin C, ascorbic acid, for use in baby foods and other similar products. The tree is tender but if frozen back can be trimmed and will come back very rapidly, and may even produce a crop late in the same year. Nematodes are also a problem so we recommend that the Barbados cherry be mulched heavily.

AVOCADO. The great variety of avocados allows us to select varieties which will grow in the cold weather even as far north as Gainesville. Trees selected for this area should be Mexican hybrids or pure Mexican species. Most of the Mexican varieties have a purple or black skin so they can tell you when they start ripening. They are green during development and as they approach maturity they begin to color up. Pick them at this point and let them finish their coloring indoors. The skins are very thin and the fruit is easily bruised. The fruit is also relatively small and may also suffer from anthracnose. A period of rainy weather will cause the skin to crack, which is another reason for picking the fruit before they are completely ripe and getting them inside. The avocado is an excellent fruit for this area. Some Mexican varieties will take temperatures as low as 20° with no damage whatsoever. There are some varieties in Gainesville that have survived the winters that far north. Avocados may be grown from seed but it takes from three to five years under ideal conditions to produce fruit and the fruit does not come true to type. Tree heights are quite variable and many reach 50 feet at maturity. However, the Mexican varieties tend to be somewhat smaller. The local extension office has a circular put out by the University of Florida on avocados. It lists many different cultivars for door yard use and gives a lot of information about them as regards their hardiness and various qualities.

The ANNONAS. The annonas are somewhat cold sensitive. In this area there are certainly cold pockets in which they cannot be grown. But there are areas up here in protected sites where annonas will do pretty well. The sugar apple is one of the more hardy types and is certainly worth the effort to grow. It is a small, very pretty tree and is deciduous. In the winter, about December, it loses its leaves til along about mid-March and then they leaf out and shortly after that, flowers follow. The fruit tends to ripen during the late summer or early fall. As they approach maturity, the fruit develops a yellowish blush between the segments, which lets you know that they are about ready to pick. They also begin to soften but you do not want them to soften much on the tree because they will loosen up and fall to the ground and make a big mess under the tree. Inside, they have a white smooth texture. Each segment has one small black seed so there are quite a few seeds within the fruit. But in spite of that quality, it is quite excellent and very delicious. Fruit may be anywhere from a small orange to a large grapefruit in size. As usual, the more fruit developed on the tree, the smaller the individual fruits will be. Therefore, if you have a large fruit set, it is wise to thin the fruit so the remaining fruit will get larger. The sugar apple is propagated from seed and from seed they will fruit in 2 to 3 years under good conditions. There are a number of name varieties, but few nurseries carry them. Since they bear so early from seed, it is hardly worth the trouble to graft them. The atemoya is another excellent annona to grow in this area. It is a cross between the sugar apple and the cherimoya. Gafner is one that has been planted in large numbers in the Homestead area. The fruit is a nice size, about the size of your fist, and has fewer seeds and a firmer flesh than

the sugar apple which makes it more desirable commercially. The trees are more vigorous and put on a heavier crop load than the sugar apple. African pride and priestly are other varieties of atemoya. Root stock is important for grafting purposes. At one time, nurseries used the custard apple but this has proved unsatisfactory and now seedling sugar apples or seedling atemoyas are being used for root stock.

EUGENIAS. Several of the Eugenias do very well in central Florida and can be grown as large shrubs or small trees. The grumichama is a very beautiful plant when it's blooming and they bloom at this time of the year. They are somewhat tender but should take the cold in most winters here. Flowers are white, about an inch in diameter and about 4 weeks later, you get all these nice clusters of black fruit. The fruit is about 1/2" to 1" in diameter, delicious in flavor and about as close to a northern sweet cherry as you can get in any fruit. The tree produces multiple blooms every year, as many as four fruitings per season, so you can have flowering, green fruit and mature fruit all at the same time on the same tree. It gives you almost continuous fruit production. The trees are grown from seed, which germinates very readily and fruits within three to four years.

Pitomba is another Eugenia, a very excellent fruit and usually has one or two crops in early spring. The pitomba makes a beautiful tree with lighter green foliage than the other Eugenias. The fruit looks like little yellow plums, about the size of a loquat, a good sized fruit, and the tree produces more than one crop per season. Like the grumichama, you may have green and ripe fruit on the tree at the same time. The fruit has a single seed on the inside and a flavor that is reminiscent of the apricot. It makes a jam that you would swear is apricot jam. Seeds germinate very readily but it takes 3 to 4 years to come into flowering. Name varieties are not offered in nurseries, they are only available as seedlings and since there is such a variation in the fruiting, it is advisable to grow your own plants from air layering or grafting from a known specimen.

CARAMBOLA. The carambola is highly recommended for this area. It is now the most widely planted new commercial fruit in southern Florida. It produces a very beautiful door yard tree with very heavy production of beautiful waxy, star-shaped fruit. Some varieties are as much as 6" in length and 3" across. A mature tree can produce up to 300 pounds of fruit per year. It produces an early summer crop and a fall crop. The fruit varies considerably in color from almost white to a deep yellow color. Many name cultivars are available that vary in flavor all the way from syrupy sweet to very tart with considerable acidity. The fruit is excellent for pies and jellies and for dried fruit. The trees will grow to 30 feet or more but can be pruned to a bush at, say, 10 feet. They also make good container grown plants and will fruit well in containers. They are propagated mainly by grafting and it is advisable to buy grafted trees for your own use. If you grow them from seed, you'll wait 4 or 5 years to get any fruit and the fruit does not come true to type.

CARISSA. The carissa or natal plum is used more often as an ornamental or hedge than as a door yard fruiting plant. It has a beautiful white, sweet scented flower and blooms all through the summer months. During the summer and late fall it produces these beautiful red fruit. It normally grows as a many branching plant and is very thorny, so they make a very excellent barrier hedge. Inside the fruit is a white milky sap and despite this, it is still very good to eat. It makes good jellies and jams. The carissa is normally propagated from cuttings. They may be grown from seed but fruiting may take 3 to 4 years and since they are so easily propagated from cuttings, this is the desirable way to produce new plants.

PERSIMMON. The persimmon is a more northern type fruit, native to China and the Far East. The trees are deciduous. They bloom during the early spring and produce mature fruit in late fall. Many name varieties of Oriental persimmons come from Japan and

China with Oriental names and other cultivars have been developed in the United States. Some common cultivars are the tane-nashi, fuyugaki, tamopan, hachiya, and triumph. The fruit are large, from the size of oranges to small grapefruit, depending upon variety. They are classified as astringent and non-astringent. Astringent fruit must be soft ripe to be edible while the non-astringent fruit may be eaten ripe but solid. The tree is very slow growing and remains a small tree at maturity so they do not occupy a lot of space in your yard. Persimmons, like apples and peaches, do require a certain chilling hours to produce fruit in the spring. As a consequence, they do not bear well in southern Florida but in central Florida they do exceptionally well.

PINEAPPLE. Pineapples can be grown very easily either in the ground or as container plants and many people in central Florida choose to grow them as container plants because of the cold weather. The plant is quite cold sensitive. There are a number of name varieties: smooth cayenne, which is popular because of its smooth leaves without thorns, red Spanish, abacca and a number of others. For home use, the pineapple should always be allowed to ripen completely on the plant before picking. The size will grow to 3 or 4 pounds and each plant will only produce one fruit, which is common for the bromeliad family, of which it is a member. After the fruit is produced, the plant dies but at the bottom of the plant and at the bottom of the pineapple there will develop starter sprouts which may be taken off and planted to produce new plants and consequently new fruit. The fruit can be produced in as little as 18 months from the time the sprouts are planted if they are pushed, watered and fertilized well. After 18 months of growing, if the plant is mature but hasn't fruited, it can be forced by covering the plant with a plastic bag in which an apple or two has been inserted. Apples produce ethylene, which is a natural ripening agent. It promotes the flowering and production of pineapples.

FIGS. The fig is another tree that will do exceptionally well in central Florida because figs enjoy the cold weather and it makes them bear better. The types commonly found in this area are brown turkey, celeste, and the light colored types such as green ischia. Figs are deciduous from December to April. At maturity, figs range from a light yellow through green and brown to a purple color, almost black. They frequently have a very light pink color inside and are very excellent flavored. The season is late spring and early summer although you frequently get a fall crop which is fewer in number and of smaller, poorer quality fruit. Figs are propagated very easily and very often by air layering or cuttings. However, grafted figs are more desirable because they may be grafted on to Nematode resistant root stock. The nematode resistant root stocks are more tender to cold than fruiting varieties. Therefore, it is necessary to bank up around the fig in the winter time to cover the root stock and protect it from the cold. Where you have a grafted plant, you must be sure to cover the base of the plant up above the graft to prevent freezing of the root stock which would of course destroy the plant. Figs can be trained as a tree 20 feet or more in height or kept pruned to a bush.

BLACKBERRY. If you have a very limited space, you can grow some small tropical plants such as the blackberry. Brazos is especially well liked because it is the bush type and doesn't need a fence or trellis like is required for the trailing types. Blooming starts in March and fruit will follow very soon thereafter. It will continue to fruit until about mid June. Fruit size is quite large, up to an inch or more. The flowers are showy, about an inch across, and the vines are very spiny. They should be planted in an area where they won't require much maintenance. It is also wise to mulch them heavy to keep the weeds down so you won't have to weed around them. Berries bear quite well and multiply very rapidly. The plants will grow to about six feet in height and should be cut back every third year almost to the ground because periodic pruning tends to keep them under control.

JABOTICABA. The jaboticaba is very interesting and always draws a lot of attention. It is a fruiting tree from Brazil and has very interesting bark and even more interesting flowers and fruit. When the tree flowers it looks like somebody has stuck cotton balls up and down the trunk. Flowers cover the trunk and large branches and are very fragrant. Fruit follows quickly after the flowers and likewise covers the trunk with large black fruit. Fruit size is in the neighborhood of an inch or even larger and resembles a thick skinned muscadine grape. It has excellent flavor and may be used similarly to a grape. Jaboticaba will have multiple blooms and fruit during each season to as many as 8 separate crops. It is very slow growing but will reach a height at maturity of about 20 feet under favorable conditions. Jaboticabas require a lot of water and a lot of fertilizer for good fruit production. The tree benefits from a deep heavy mulch because the roots are very shallow. During dry weather they suffer very badly if they aren't mulched. Jaboticabas are normally propagated from seed because they are very hard to graft and almost impossible to air layer, but it takes anywhere from 8 to 12 years for the tree to fruit from seed. So you need to find the largest specimen you can in a nursery, plant it, and sit back and wait and pray for good weather.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, let me thank Gene Joyner for another excellent program. We really appreciate his annual visitation, and are already looking forward to next year's program. This last plant drawing was a huge success, thanks to the many members who brought us a large variety and number of plants. The recent addition of plant products (fruit, etc.) has been most welcome. Let's please keep it up! If you took some seeds from the seed distribution project, and failed to sign the sheet (as apparently quite a few people did), PLEASE let me know what seeds you have taken. Your club incurred considerable expense for this project, and therefore adequate records are essential. I would also like to thank all those who have been bringing goodies to the hospitality table, but we still desperately need someone to organize it. Please volunteer. I would like to thank Stan Lachut, for his support of the plant drawings and our other activities, but most especially for the positive letter he sends me after nearly every meeting. It's gratifying to know some people really care about our organization! Stan and Priscilla want our members to know that the Yancy blueberry farm, on Silver Springs Blvd. in Ocala, have a number of blueberry varieties available for sale, and that their U-pick operation will begin about June 15. Stan and Priscilla are growing several unusual things this year, including Tahitian squash, luffa, chickasaw lima bean, spaghetti squash, asparagus bean, jicama, and peanuts. Why don't the rest of you let us know what you are growing? That's it for now. See you at the next meeting!

Shouldn't a female boysenberry be called a girlsenberry?

From where do the lyrics for hard rock songs come? From poem-a-granites!

If you think all these jokes have been corny, there's a kernel of truth in your thoughts, so ear's to you!

What did fruit butter say to nagging scarlet okra? "Frankly, my pear, I don't guava yam!" (This joke should have gone with the rind!)

What did the Mexican jumping bean say when he saw the voluptuous star?
"Ay carambola!"

APRIL PLANT RAFFLE

Plant	Donor	Winner
Cos	RFCI	L. Schmidt
Tanenashi Persimmon	RFCI	Roma Vaccaro
Nopal Opuntia	RFCI	Pearl Nelson
Nopal Opuntia	RFCI	?
Loquat	RFCI	Patsy Lachut
Ornamental Banana	RFCI	Maja Byvoet
Giant Grenadilla	Stark	?
Red Passion Fruit	Stark	C. Gomez-Sanchez
Eggplant	Stark	Maja Byvoet
Eggplant	Stark	Seekins
Calif. Wonder Pepper	Stark	Louis Alarcon
Calif. Wonder Pepper	Stark	Pat Duke
Calif. Wonder Pepper (X3)	Stark	?
Vine Peach (X2)	Stark	Stan Lachut
Vine Peach (X2)	Stark	Al Roberts
Vine Peach	Stark	Roma Vaccaro
Vine Peach	Stark	Pat Duke
Vine Peach	Stark	Pearl Nelson
Vine Peach	Stark	Wayne Schafer
Select Yellow Guava	Seekins	Wayne Schafer
Select Yellow Guava	Seekins	Nola Leclair
Guava	Seekins	Lloyd Shipley
Guava White	Duke	Mary Victor
Guava White	Duke	Louis Alarcon
Mint	B. Puls	Bob Heath
Dixie Grape	H. Klaus	Stan Lachut
Cowart Grape	H. Klaus	?
Mulberry Fruit	Stan Lachut	Anita Unruh
Summer Squash (4 var.)	Stan Lachut	A. Mendez
Miracle Fruit	Ray Thorndike	Herb Hill
White Sapote	Ray Thorndike	Lloyd Shipley
Cherry of Rio Grande	Ray Thorndike	Bob Duke
Select Yellow Guava	Herb Hill	Janet Conard
Bromelia Balansae	Herb Hill	Walter Vines
Kikuza Squash	Bob Heath	?
Orange Berry	Bob Heath	Maja Byvoet
Surinam Cherry	Bob Heath	K. Netscher
Ornamental Pepper	Bob Heath	Bob Duke
Grape (Stover)	Will Unruh	Mary Victor
Peppermint	Roma Vaccaro	Stark
Marjoram	Roma Vaccaro	?
Catnip	Roma Vaccaro	Anita Unruh

APRIL HOSPITALITY TABLE

Priscilla Lachut: Crackers & Mulberry Jam
 Lillian & Arnold Stark: Crackers & Mulberry Jam
 Bea Seekins: Strawberry Bread; Opuntia Slices
 Rita Galatocky: Pecan Delight
 Betty Dickson: Apple Delights; Fig Bars

Knock, knock.
 Who's there?
 Banana.
 Banana who?
 (to be continued)

Walter A. Vines Real Estate

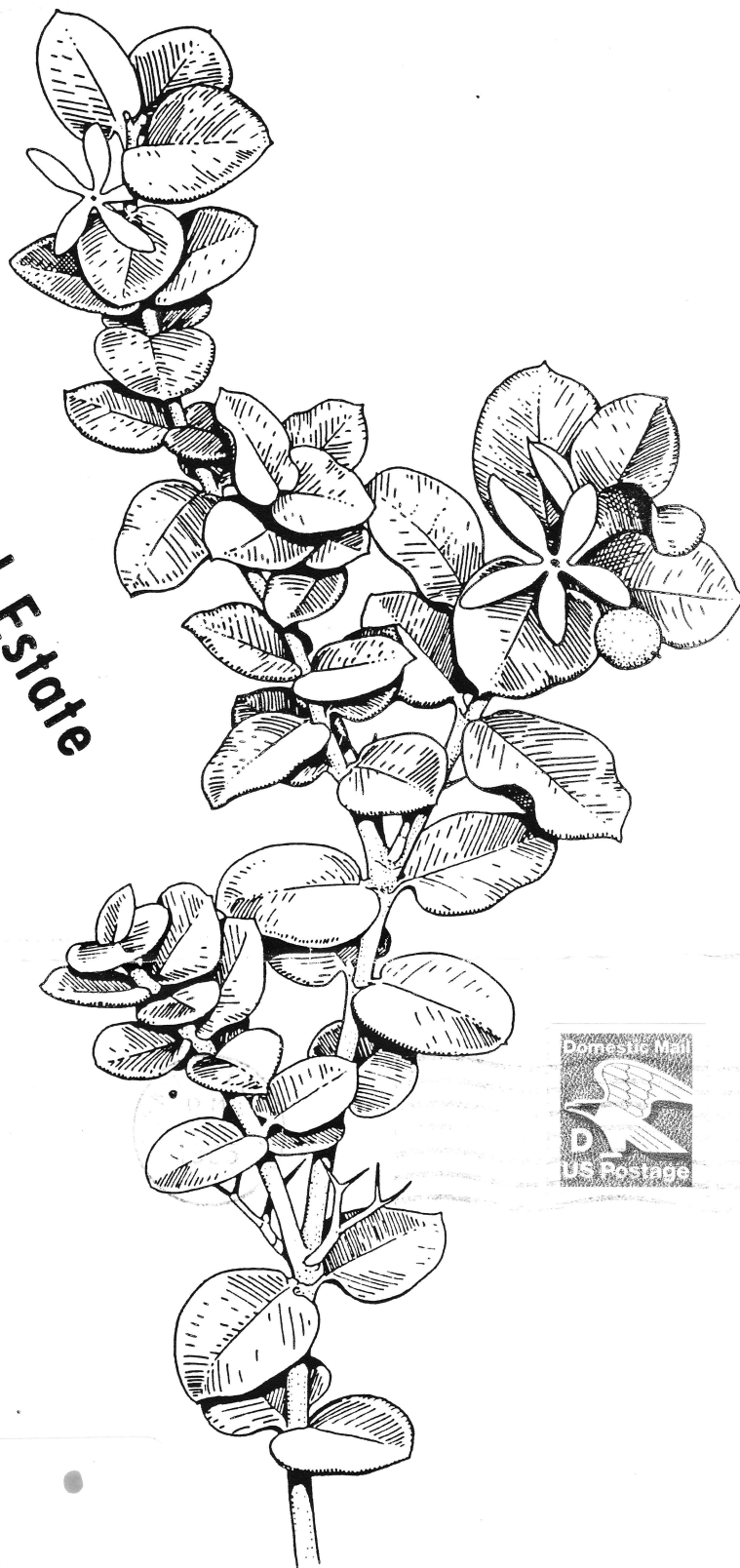
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NATAL PLUM