



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1985

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: BOB HEATH
THERESA HEATH
ARNOLD STARK
LILLIAN STARK

NEWSLETTER MAIL ADDRESS: ARNOLD & LILLIAN STARK
6305 Eureka Springs Rd.
Tampa FL 33610

PRESIDENT: ARNOLD STARK Chapter Mail Address: P.O. Box 260363, Tampa FL 33685
(including renewals)

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

NEXT MEETING. SEPTEMBER 8, 1985

MEETING PLACE THE HOME OF JANET CONARD, 919 WEST HENRY AVE.,
TAMPA, PHONE 239-9246. YOU WILL FIND JANET'S
HOME ON THE NORTH SIDE OF HENRY AVE., BETWEEN
KENNETH AVE. & THE RIVER, NINE BLOCKS WEST OF
FLORIDA AVE., AND FOUR BLOCK NORTH OF HILLS-
BOROUGH AVE. TAKE I-75/275 TO THE HILLSBOROUGH
AVE. EXIT AND GO WEST TO FLORIDA, HIGHLAND OR
OLA, AND THEN NORTH TO HENRY AVENUE. THEN WEST
ON HENRY TO JANET'S.

PROGRAM Pot-luck (covered dish) luncheon at 1:00 p.m.
Please bring cold dishes such as salads, luncheon
meat, breads, desserts, etc., that do NOT have
to be warmed up. If you have any folding chairs,
bring them too. There will be a plant raffle,
and a very important planning session for next
month's annual Plant Sale.

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By now you should have received your new membership directory. Please report any
errors to Irene Rubenstein.

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All donated trees have been planted at the Seffner Agricultural Extension Center.
You are cordially invited to stop by and see all the efforts of some of our mem-
bers and the master gardeners.

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** Please peruse with patience:

Enclosed are some Tree Sale flyers for you to post in prominent public places
providing publicity in your proximity. Perhaps pedestrian passersby will
perceive them as they perambulate in the propinquity and possibly proceed to
purchase plenty of pretty plants providing us with profitable proceeds for our
practical and pleasurable pastimes.

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GRAPES

Our meeting last month at Tom Hughes' nursery was, as usual, what you might call a 'grape' success. We enjoyed a guided tour (with sampling) of the various varieties of muscadine grapes promoted by Tom's nursery.

Tom Hughes has been growing grapes for 30 years, here and in other locations, and has worked closely with several universities, testing grape varieties for Florida. One of their most successful grapes, and one in great abundance at the farm, is the Triumph.

The Triumph was developed by the University of Georgia Agricultural Experiment Stations. Dr. R.P. Lane, assistant professor of horticulture at the University, was instrumental in that development. The Triumph is a sweet eating grape that is quick producing, large fruited and self fertile, and it sets well in the hotter Florida climate.

Grapes grow very easily and they fit with most landscaping very well. Grape vines can handle just about anything. They are cold hardy and not bothered by frost, but they flourish in the full Florida sun.

Among the decorative uses of grapes promoted and sold by the Hughes farm are hanging baskets, vines for arbors, potted vines and even bonsai tree grapes no more than 8 to 10 inches high that produce normal-sized fruit. Vines are sold and priced by the year.

"We'd like people to feel free to come out to the farm and enjoy the day; pick some grapes and enjoy the cool shade of the arbors."

Earliest explorers and settlers found wild grapes upon arrival in Florida. But more than 200 years of trying to grow European, Northern, and California types of bunch grapes have resulted in dismal failure.

Climatic factors, due to Florida's geographic location and customary high humidity, were a principal cause of failure. Even worse is a devastating virus disease, to which none of these types of grape are resistant, and which is transmitted by insects feeding on the vines and foliage.

Through the years of experimentation, a number of promising bunch-type grapes were wiped out by the deadly virus, before or by the time they were 11 years old. Through the period, five bunch-type grapes were developed that can withstand the virus, but none of them have proven as desirable from the standpoint of size, flavor, and freedom from cultural problems that it had been hoped they would.

Only since grape-production interests turned to the Muscadine-type grapes has there been any real promise shown for satisfactory grape growing in Florida by the average home-owner. But their appearance, being borne in open clusters of two to 24 grapes, instead of pendant, tight bunches that are traditional grape form, has made it difficult for the general public to accept the Muscadines.

Once experiencing the delights of easy, trouble-free Muscadine growing, and the delicious flavor of abundant-producing, large-sized Muscadine grapes, people become eager to own vines in their home plantings.

The Muscadine family of grapes has been native to the entire Southeastern United States longer than has been recorded. Thus far (with the critical 11-year period long since past) they prove immune to the virus enemy that has wiped out so many kinds of bunch grapes tried in Florida. On a number of Southern plantations, the same Muscadine vines have continued to bear, frequently with little or no care, prolific yields of grapes for more than 150 years.

Improvement of these grapes in Southern experiment stations by hybridization has resulted in what is being considered some of the finest, trouble-free grapes that ever have been known. About 10 of the 23 varieties released are doing well in the Hughes' plantings. These include Higgins, Cowart, Triumph, Jumbo, Victory and Fry.

Their principal interest is in perfect-flowering varieties that are self-pollinating, making grape plantings in limited areas practical. Yields of 100 pounds or more per vine are not uncommon. They are better flavored than the bunch grapes that can be produced, and are much easier grown with less spraying and fertilizing.

A screening planting of Muscadine grapes on a three-wire trellis makes "a hedge you can eat." Espaliered grape vines on a blank wall surface are most attractive. The time-honored, overhead arbor adds a desirable outdoor living area.

Almost any well-drained Florida soil is suitable for Muscadine grapes. Location in full sun is desirable, but proportionate yields will be given in up to 50 percent shade. Soils under 5.5 pH should have an amendment of five pounds of dolomite per 100 square feet of grape planting.

Tom Hughes offers the following instructions for successful grape growing:

SITE SELECTION: Select a sunny, well drained spot. Grapes do not do well in very acid soils; a handful of lime (dolomite) will "sweeten" the area.

PLANTING CARE & CULTIVATION: Dig a hole larger than the root ball. Pull the vine out of the container. (A larger vine should have the container cut.)

Plant the vine using a good planting medium. We have available our own special soil mixture which has been specifically formulated for grape vines.

Muscadines are extremely hearty and do not require spray programs. Several insects may occur but seldom cause sufficient damage to warrant spraying. Insect pests can be controlled by Sevin or Malathion - fungus problems respond to Dithane or Benylate. (DO NOT use products which contain petroleum bases - NO oil sprays.)

FERTILIZING: We fertilize grapes 3 times a year, (March, May & Sept.) with a good citrus fertilizer. Several light applications per year are more efficient than one heavy dose.

As a rule, we give a plant 1 pound of fertilizer annually per year of age:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>MARCH</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>SEPT.</u>	
1 year	1/3	1/3	1/3	Liquid fertilizer may also be used as per instructions from the manufacturer.
2nd	2/3	2/3	2/3	
3rd	1 Pound	1 Pound	1 Pound	
4th	1-1/2	1-1/2	1-1/2	
5th	1-2/3	1-2/3	1-2/3	
6th	2 Pounds	2 Pounds	2 Pounds	

WATER: Water thoroughly at planting to get out any air pockets around the vine. Grapes do not want too much water but initially vines must be well watered until roots become established in their new homes.

CULTIVATION: Grapes can compete with grasses so we mow rather than clean cultivate. A small area around the vine should be clean - usually 12" around the trunk is satisfactory.

PRUNING: Grapes bear on new wood. Heavy pruning in January keeps our quality and yield high. TOM HUGHES' VINEYARD is pleased to offer everyone an opportunity to visit us any Saturday in January for a free pruning demonstration.

TRELLISING: Your grape vine will be your most cooperative plant. It can cover a fence, create a beautiful arbor, hide a wall or hang from a basket. We are happy to share our trellising ideas.

HANGING BASKETS: A hanging basket can provide years of beautiful foliage and fruit both indoors and out. Baskets do well in semi-shade to full sun and respond well to liquid fertilizers. Water frequently and avoid air conditioning drafts. Do not hang baskets in front of reflective glass as it will scald the vines. Grape baskets need protection only during HARD freezes.

POTTED VINES: As a patio or terrace plant, grapes provide years of fruit and beauty. A larger (3 gal.) pot should be used allowing for good drainage. Liquid fertilizers do best. Pruning is important here to both encourage fruit set and to shape the vine.

BONSAI grape vines provide a beautiful plant form using traditional bonsai techniques on a new plant medium - grapes!

VARIETIES: Proper selection of Florida adapted grape varieties can provide quality fresh fruit from mid-July through October. Triumph and Cowart are good season extenders ideally suited to the door-yard.

"All of our varieties are excellent fresh fruit. Some have special qualities which can produce wine of great beauty and quality. Since grapes are so productive, we have a delightful recipe book 'The Great Grape Cookbook', which is full of delicious treats from the vine."

Recipe of the Month GRAPE PIE

3 or 4 cups Muscadine grapes
1 cup sugar or more if needed
2 tbsp. tapioca or cornstarch
3 tbsp. butter
Cinnamon or apple pie spice
Pastry for 2-crust pie

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Wash grapes. Use two medium sized enamel saucepans. Squeeze pulp into one and use the other for hulls. Cover hulls with water and cook until tender, drain. Cook pulp until soft enough to run through sieve to remove seeds. Add to hulls. Mix sugar and cornstarch or tapioca. Add grape mixture and dot with butter. Sprinkle with spice as desired. Pour into pastry-lined pie pan, cover with strips of pastry. Bake until brown. Serves 6 to 8.

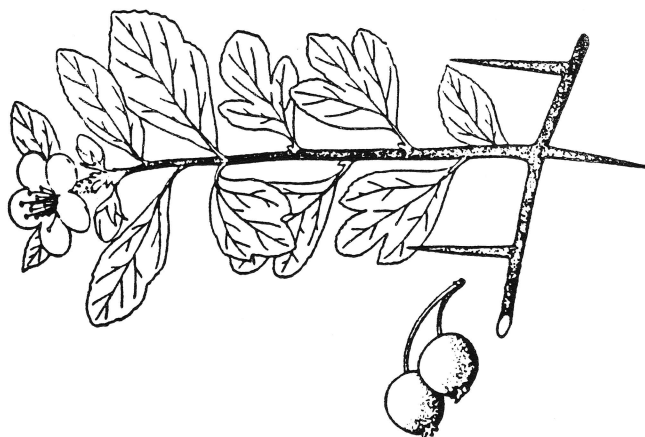
FLORIDA NATIVE FRUITING TREES No. 1

SHINING HAWTHORN *Crataegus aestivalis luculenti*

Grows to a height of 20 feet with slenderish trunks and with the family characteristic grayish, flaky bark and slender spiny crooked twigs. (Rose family.)

Leaves alternate to one and one-half inches long, glossy, with grayish underside, roundly pointed tips, bases broad to narrow, upper half of margins finely notched and often deeply lobed.

Flowers one-half inch wide with white petals, pink stamens, in clusters, followed by edible round reddish-orange fruit one-half inch thick and usually with five capsule-shaped seeds one-quarter inch long. Ranges south to north Central Florida.



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THIRD ANNUAL TROPICAL FRUIT SEMINAR

The third annual seminar shall be held in Ft. Myers, Oct. 11 through 13, 1985, hosted by the Caloosa Fruit Exchange. The program will consist of field trips on Friday to local gardens and presentations on Saturday and Sunday. Registration is \$5.00 per person for all activities except field trips and meals. Brochures and registration forms will be available at the next meeting on Sept. 8. We need an official representative and all the membership participation possible.

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A GROWER'S REPORT - Arnold L. Stark

Many of the herb and vegetable seeds we received had high germination rates, and produced vigorous plants; others were complete duds, or had a high damping-off rate. Unfortunately, most things were planted too late to give an adequate measure of productivity. Below is a list of types and comments as to how they fared.

HERBS

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Lemon Basil | - | With the exception of cinnamon, all the basil |
| Licorice Basil | - | |
| Cinnamon Basil | - | |
| Holy Basil | - | |
| Spicy Globe Basil | - | |
| Bush Green Basil | - | was only about 33%, with much slower growth. |
-
- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Borage | - | About 95% germination with little damping-off, and vigorous growth - produced pretty blue flowers, but I thought leaves were yucky eating, either fresh or boiled. |
| Thyme | - | About 75% germination, but rainy season caused 100% damping-off; established plants fared better. |
| Sage | - | About 25% germination with slow growth - established plants did better. |
| Lemon Mint | - | About 50% germination with vigorous growth - doesn't smell lemony to me! |
| Peppermint | - | About 50% germination with vigorous growth - some |
| Spearmint | - | damping-back with rainy season. |
| Rue | - | About 75% germination with early vigorous growth - considerable damping-off with rainy season. |
| Wild Parsley | - | About 75% germination with most damping-off. |
| Coriander | - | About 95% germination with vigorous growth; late planting resulted in early bolting. |
| Cumin | - | About 10% germination with 100% damping-off. |
| Dill | - | About 25% germination with poor growth. |
| French Sorrell | - | About 75% germination, little damping-off, with slow but steady growth - good flavor. |

VEGETABLES

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Corn Salad | - | 0% germination! |
| Japanese Mizuna Greens | - | About 75% germination with little damping-off, but high predation by everything; mustard-leaf flavor. |
| Chinese Kankon Greens | - | About 75% germination with vigorous growth - too slimy when cooked. |
| Asparagus Chicory | - | About 95% germination with vigorous growth - bitter flavor. |
| Red Okra | - | About 75% germination, slow but steady growth; turns green when cooked; may be less slimy than others. |
| Sweet Sorghum | - | 95% germination with vigorous growth - produces edible grain, but how do I obtain syrup? |

Vegetables (continued)

Golden Crispy Melon	- About 75% germination with rapid growth; produces small, oblong melons with edible rind and crispy honeydew flavor - good choice.
Honey Gold Cantaloupe	- 0% germination!
Vine Peach	- About 75% germination but with weak growth; no production.
Lemon Cucumber	- About 95% germination with vigorous growth; poor production of small, round, yellow cucumbers.
Yard-Long Armenian Cucumber	- About 75% germination with straggly growth and no production.
Sweet Fennel	- About 50% germination with very slow growth.
Golden Yellow Eggplant	- About 95% germination with vigorous growth and high production - good flavor but very seedy.
Paprika Pepper	- About 95% germination with vigorous growth and high production.
San Marzano Paste Tomato	- About 95% germination with vigorous growth; good producer of firm, meaty, oblong, red tomatoes.
Golden Jubilee Tomato	- About 95% germination with vigorous growth; produces large, yellow tomatoes with good flavor.
Yellow Plum Tomato	- About 95% germination with vigorous growth; good producer of small, yellow tomatoes with excellent flavor.
Red Pear Tomato	- About 95% germination with vigorous growth; good producer, but most fruits very small.

* * * *

"Grape day in the morning!" exclaimed one Muscadine to another. "Have you read that purple prose by John Steinbeck, 'The Grapes of Wrath?'"

"I liked it," said the second Muscadine, "but it didn't have such a grape ending."

The first retorted, "Be grapeful for small flavors and stop your wine-ing. The movie caused a grape ferment in Hollywood."

"But," raisined the second, "not too many of our kind were in it because we don't like to hang around in bunches. Still I'll agree it was a vintage film with some seedy scenes as well as a tendril love story. Nevertheless, the hull thing leaves much to be desired. Proper pruning would have made it a Triumph."

The first one jelled, "Oh, quit your graping - you're being unraisinable!"

(The above discussion was heard over the grape vine by the editors.)

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AUGUST PLANT RAFFLE

Plant	Donor	Winner
Loquat	RFCI	Glen Myrie
Loquat	RFCI	Louise Schmidt
Tamarind	Stark	Doris Lee
Oregano	"	Sam Snipes
Bush Green Basil	"	Louise Schmidt
Nopalis Opuntia Cactus	"	M. Victor
Spanish Red Pineapple	RFCI	" "
Jerasulem Artichoke & Garlic & Comfrey	Bobbie Puls	Louise Alarcan
Mild S.A. Pepper	Bob Heath	Al Hendry
Sugar Apple	" "	Doris Lee
Cavendish Banana	H. Klaus	Sam Snipes
Chinese Yard Long Beans	Herb Hill	Al Hendry
" " " "	" "	Glen Myrie
" " " "	" "	W. Yedkois
Cactus	Walter Frati	Mary Swart
"	" "	Glen Myrie
"	" "	Doris Lee
"	" "	Eleana Fleischman
White Sapote Seedling	Ray Thorndike	W. Yedkois
Jap. Persimmon Seedling	" "	?
Victory Grape	Tom Hughes	?

Tasting Table:

Tom & Margaret Hughes: Lemonade

Al Roberts: Papaya Juice

Harry Klaus: Banana cookies

Lottice Shipley: Cookies, Keitt Mango, Kiwi Fruit

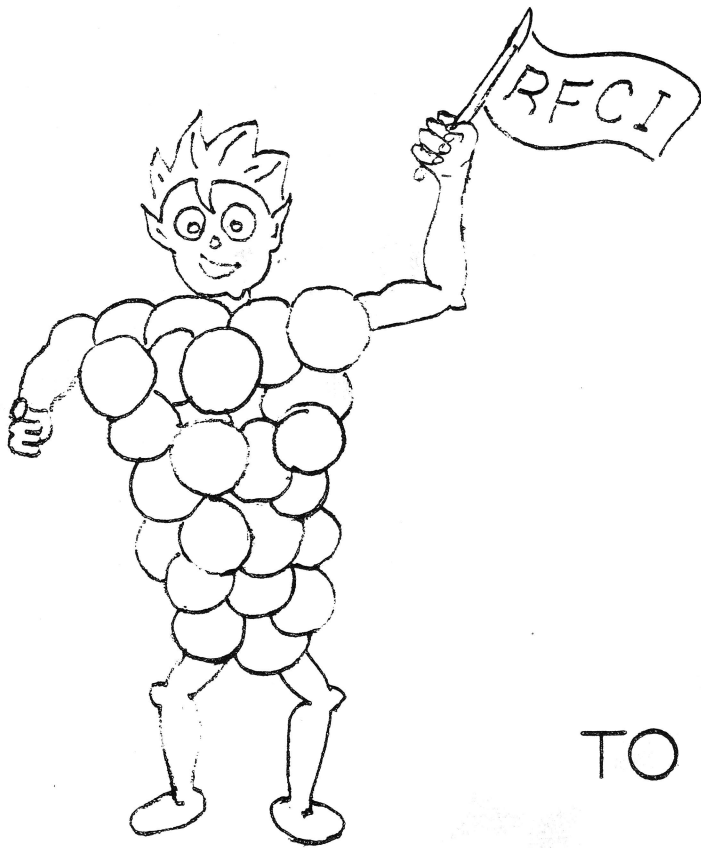
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Tom and Margaret Hughes and Tom, Jr. who each year host our August meeting, taking the time from their busy schedules to show us around their vineyard, answer our questions, and prepare a beverage and meeting place. We truly appreciate all Hughes hospitality.

Before we all know it, October will be here, and it will be time for our annual plant sale. So far only 28 people have volunteered for committees, albeit several of them for more than one committee. THIS IS FAR FROM SUFFICIENT TO RUN ANY TYPE OF SALE SUCCESSFULLY! PLEASE COME TO THE NEXT MEETING AND SIGN UP FOR COMMITTEES. RFCI NEEDS YOU!!!! Also, only 4 people have thus far indicated they will have plants for the sale. At least 21 people participated in the seed distribution project (unfortunately, many seeds were taken which were not signed for, so there may be other people as well). Please remember that one of the stipulations of participating in this project was that 1/3 of all plants produced would be returned to the Club. Again, PLEASE SIGN UP AT THE NEXT MEETING!

Another requirement of the seed distribution project was that each grower provide the Club with a grower's report. To date, we have received only 3 of them, including the one in this newsletter. Will the rest of you please get your reports in as soon as possible? Thank you.

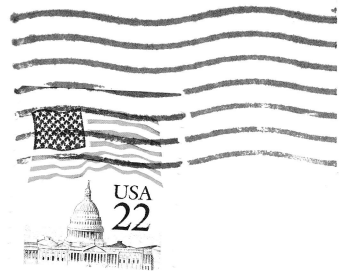
See you at the next meeting!



YOUR GRAPE
UNCLE JAM
WANTS YOU...

TO HELP AT THE SALE

Tampa Bay Chapter Newsletter
Rare Fruit Council International
P O Box 260363
Tampa FL 33685



NEWCOMBE, P. JUDSON (*)
314 Deer Park
Temple Terrace, FL 33617

You can "Triumph" at the RFCI
annual tree sale!