



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1986

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

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(including renewals)

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

NEXT MEETING APRIL 13, 1986

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

PROGRAM. GRAFTING & AIR LAYERING Program presented
by our members, Joe Constantine, Herb Hill
and Walter Vines.

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The new Board of Directors has elected its Officers for the present year. They are:

President - Arnold Stark
1st Vice President - Al Hendry
2nd Vice President - Bill Ryland
Treasurer - Irene Rubenstein
Recording Secretary - Bruce Beasor
Corresponding Secretary - Kay Netscher

The following have been named Chairpersons:

Book Sales - Doris Lee
Hospitality - Priscilla Lachut & Bea Seekins
Membership - Bill Ryland
Newsletter - Bob & Terry Heath, Arnold & Lillian Stark
Plant Drawing - Harold Seekins
Program - Bruce Beasor, Bill Ryland & Walter Vines
Tree Sale - Bob Heath & Arnold Stark
Seffner Planting - Al Hendry
Research - Bob Heath

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Question:

What do many fruit trees have in common with past Hillsborough County Commissioners?

Answer:

GRAFT!

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THE PRUNING OF FRUIT TREES by Joan T. Bradshaw

The presentation by Joan Bradshaw was very interesting and presented us with an excellent approach to the pruning of fruit trees and grape vines. She punctuated her comments with a variety of excellent slides showing "before" and "after" situations involving pruning. She also brought some publications on pruning for those who might wish to learn more about the subject. Two of the brochures are "Pruning Principles and Practices for Florida Citrus" and "Pruning Foliage Trees", both of which have principles applicable to tropical fruit trees and deciduous trees.

Reasons for Pruning. The reasons for pruning remain the same regardless of the type of trees which are being pruned. The first reason is for the removal of diseased or damaged wood. Storm damaged limbs and rotten limbs should be removed for aesthetic reasons as well as for the health of the tree, as rotten and damaged limbs provide access for various insects and fungus. Another time for pruning is during the transplanting of potted or bare root trees where the foliage and root systems should be fairly well matched at time of planting. In this case, it is usually necessary to prune the top of the tree to match the root system. This is important because excessive foliage can overburden the root system and result in poor development. Another reason is for the rejuvenation of old trees. This is very important in the development of fruit trees, particularly where an older tree has become too spindly or too large to make fruit harvesting easy. At this time it is convenient to head the tree back or prune the long limbs to develop in more compact form. It's also sometimes necessary to thin out growth within a tree that has become so thick with interior branches that sunlight cannot reach the interior. By removing some of the interior foliage, we tend to increase fruit production. By pruning the tree to more convenient proportions, it is also easier to develop a spray program for the trees. A fourth reason for pruning is to improve the flowering and fruiting of plants. This is particularly true in the case of grape vines and some other fruiting plants. Pruning back will actually, in these cases, improve the fruit production. In other cases, the decrease in foliage will result in fewer but larger and more desirable fruit. Another reason may be for special effects. Espalier is sometimes used on grape vines and small varieties of fruiting trees where the aesthetic effects of the plant are desired as well as the fruit production. As an aside to this particular topic, concerning topiary plants, Joan let us in on a little secret about the sculptured plants at Disney World. A big portion of some of these statues and forms are artificial and not living plant material at all. In cases where the plants have not been 100% cooperative with the gardeners in the development of forms, artificial parts have been added to fill out the plant and give it the exact form desired.

Types of Pruning: Pinching, Heading Back & Thinning. All these principles are used in the pruning of fruit trees. Pinching is the removal of the terminal bud and is used to develop laterals and to thicken the growth in a tree. Heading back is used principally on fruit trees to lower the height of the tree for easy harvesting. Thinning is the removal of some interior branches to allow for better air flow, sun light infiltration and fruit production. Pruning also allows for the direction of growth of the limbs. If the cut is made directly above a bud that's on the left side, the limb will tend to grow to the left; conversely, if the cut is made above a bud on the right side, the plant will grow towards the right.

Pruning Techniques. Removal of water sprouts. Citrus, apples, pears all have a problem with water sprouts which not only detract from the appearance but also from the general vigor of a tree. Each tree should have its own central leader and water sprouts from the base cause a very cluttered appearance and interfere with the proper form of the tree. Water sprouts should be removed as soon as they appear and not left to develop to such a point where they become difficult to remove.

Broken limbs. After a storm or high winds, trees should be inspected for broken limbs which may harbor fungus or disease or provide an entrance for boring insects.

Branches competing with the leader. On apple and pear trees specifically and certain others, we are trying to develop a central leader which will be the main trunk of the tree. Lateral branches below 4 to 5 feet should be removed to provide for a central trunk up to approximately five feet in height, at which point lateral branches may be retained.

Removing large limbs. In removing large limbs from any kind of tree, start a few inches from the trunk with a cut from the bottom of the limb about half way through. This cut is to prevent the stripping of the tree when the limb falls. Your second cut should be on the top as close to the trunk as possible, through the limb until the limb falls. At this point, this cut can be continued to remove the entire stump close to the trunk of the tree. The value of using a pruning seal at this time on a large cut is controversial. Some recommend it highly. Others indicate that it has no real advantage where the cut surface is clean. However, the use of a pruning seal can do no harm and we recommend it.

Pruning of Grapes. The pruning of grape vines is essential for maintaining fruit in the summer. A grape vineyard may remain productive for 30 or 40 years but it requires extensive pruning every winter when the vines are dormant. Bunch grapes and muscadines require similar but different pruning techniques but both types of grapes may be grown on the double strand, fence type arrangement, the "T", two wire arrangement or an overhead arbor arrangement. For the first year, grapes are permitted to grow at random and should provide one vine which will reach the wires of your trellis. During the dormant season, the longest vine should be tied up to the trellis, being careful to use a soft tie and not a wire which may damage the vine. All the shorter laterals and vines should be trimmed back to provide one main trunk. At the top of the trellis, allow two laterals to remain, one going each direction along the wire. During the next growing season, these two laterals will provide your main growth along the trellis. During the next dormant season, the laterals should be all cut back to four or five buds for the next season's growth, and these should be trained along the trellis during the next season. Each dormant season the laterals and spurs will be removed back to the original location and in due time, each lateral will have 50 or 60 spurs for producing the growing season's fruit. Tendrils which girdle the vine should be removed whenever they are found. Wiring for tying the vines to the trellis should be soft insulated wire, such as electrical wire.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, I would like to thank Joan Bradshaw of the Pinellas County Extension Service for her program on pruning. I am sure our members gained some guidelines for adapting general pruning principles to our fruit trees. We also greatly appreciate her bringing us some literature for distribution. I also wish to thank Lewis Maxwell for his continuing support and advice, and for bringing relevant editions of his garden guide for distribution, e.g., this last meeting, with the article on mulching by Gene Joyner. His booklet on "Florida Vegetables" is now available at our book sales table.

Now I would also like to thank several members who have volunteered to be on the Board and chair a couple of committees. A HEARTY welcome to Al Hendry, Stan Lachut and Bill Ryland, our newest Board members. Bill has also taken on the task of Membership Chairman, and Harold Seekins has volunteered to run our monthly Plant Drawings. We all thank each of you for bringing new chlorophyll to our organization, for we were beginning to etiolate in the shadow of the same old cultivators. We still need other volunteers to keep our organization growing and bearing. THIS MEANS YOU!!!!!! We desperately need someone to train for the position of Treasurer. Irene Rubenstein has handled this job, with great expertise, for more years than she cares to admit, and she needs a replacement.

This month's program will be presented by three of our members, Joe Constantine, Herb Hill, and Walter Vines, who will demonstrate grafting and air layering techniques. We are in need of stock and scion material for this workshop. Appropriate trees would be avocado, loquat, peach, plum, etc. Remember - NO CITRUS! Please bring whatever you can. Thanks. See you at the next meeting!

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March Plant Raffle

Plant name	Donor	Winner
Cavendish Banana	H. Seekins	Norman Fortson
Cavendish Banana	H. Seekins	Daniel Gomez Sanchez
Yellow Guava	Stark	Norman Fortson
Root Beer Tree	Bob Heath	Rome Vaccaro
Red Papaya	Beasor	Al Hendry
Anna Apple	RFCI	George Merrill
Hood Pear	RFCI	L. Yedkois
Guava (large)	RFCI	H. Klaus
Mulberry	Bob Heath	Daniel Gomez Sanchez
Pomegranate	Bob Heath	Bruce Beasor
Pepper Squash	RFCI	Norman Fortson
Pomegranate	RFCI	L. Yedkois
Tomato, Patio Pride	H. Klaus	Terry Heath

Hospitality Table:

Priscilla Lachut: Stuffed Prunes

Bruce Beasor: Blueberry Buckle

Bea Seekins: Pear-date nibbles; orange cream cheese bread

Janet Conard: Cooked papaya

Lottice Shipley: Fried Florida Peanuts

Recipe of the month: Pear Date nibbles (Bea Sekins)

6 dried pair halves (3 ounces)

1/2 cup pitted dates, finely chopped

2 Tbs finely chopped pecans

1 Tbs honey

2 tsp brandy (optional)

In a small bowl pour enough boiling water over pears to cover; let stand for 10 minutes. Drain well. On clear plastic wrap arrange pears, skin side down and wide and narrow portions alternated so there are no open spaces. Cover with plastic wrap and roll into an 8 X 6 inch rectangle. Remove top wrap.

In a small bowl stir together dates, pecans and honey; dot evenly over pears. Replace plastic wrap; roll out date mixture evenly. Remove wrap. Starting from long side of pears, roll up jelly-roll fashion into a log, using wrap as a guide. Wrap and store overnight in the refrigerator. With a sharp knife slice log into 1/2 inch wide pieces.

COOKED PAPAYA (Janet Conard)

Take green papaya, peel and remove seeds. Slice in pieces about 1" x 3". In large pot put a layer of sugar, then a layer of sliced papaya. Alternate a layer of sugar, a layer of papaya. When all is used up, add two sticks of cinnamon and 3 or 4 slices of lemon. Add two cups of water, bring to a boil, then simmer 2 or 3 hours.

Plum Silly!

When you prune a prune tree -- it's the pits!

ANNUAL ELECTION

The Nominating Committee presented a slate of nominees to the Board of Directors at the March meeting. Nominations and volunteers were requested from the floor and the names of three additional members were added to the list. On a vote of the membership, all nominees were elected. The new Board of Directors for the 1986 year is as follows:

Bruce Beasor
 Celso Gomez-Sanchez
 Bob Heath
 Al Hendry
 Stan Lachut
 Doris Lee
 Robert E. Lee
 Armando Mendez

Kay Netscher
 Irene Rubenstein
 Paul Rubenstein
 Bill Ryland
 Arnold Stark
 Lillian Stark
 Walter Vines

Spring Is Here! by Bob Heath

Another winter has receded into history and I and my tender plants can now breathe a figurative sigh of relief. Some three hundred plants, M.O.L., have been moved from their winter hibernation to the shady areas of the yard. The next step, after a couple weeks or so to permit some adjustment to partial sun, will be moving them again to full sun.

Last summer from potted plants we harvested sugar apples, atemoyas, barbados cherries, wampees, downy myrtles, grumichamas and carambolas.

At this writing our "young" avocado, citrus, mulberry and cherry of the Rio Grande are all in full bloom. The plums, nectarines, and peaches are sporting little fruit and the figs, jujubes and persimmons are flushing out. And, of course, it's eating time for loquats. Also, we have one pineapple fruiting at this time. All in all, it sounds like spring is here.



(taken from American
 Scientist, July-Aug.
 1977)

"I find that an hour in the compost pile provides my minimum daily requirement of everything."

PRUNING CAUTION (from Florida Market Bulletin, Mar. 15, 1986)

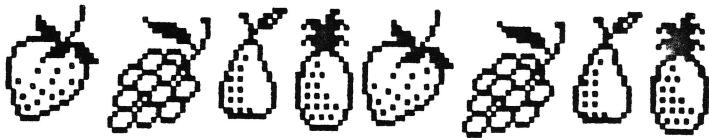
The time is drawing near for pruning trees and homeowners all over Florida may soon be approached by freelance tree trimmers offering to do the job at cut-rate prices.

The foresters of the Division of Forestry, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, caution homeowners to keep the health of their trees in mind when weighing the cost of pruning. Reports from county foresters throughout the state indicate a growing trend toward a radical pruning technique that they consider detrimental to the health of large trees. This practice is called "topping" but may also be referred to as heading, hatracking or buckhorning. It results in the severe reduction of the crown leaving only a few major structural limbs and lateral branches.

Homeowners who are not aware of the adverse effects on their trees see the results of topping and feel they have received their money's worth because the tree gives the appearance of having been thoroughly trimmed. Tree trimmers who use this technique justify it on the grounds that the tree won't require trimming again soon and so will not be a problem to the homeowner. If you plan to have your trees pruned soon, discuss your plans with your local Division of Forestry county or urban forester, your local County Extension Agent, or a reputable landscape professional. You will then be in a better position to explain to whomever you hire to prune your trees what needs to be done.

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