



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 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. SEPTEMBER 14, 1986

MEETING PLACE THE HOME OF JANET CONARD, 919 W. 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 (9)
BLOCKS WEST OF FLORIDA AVE., AND FOUR (4)
BLOCKS NORTH OF HILLSBOROUGH AVE. TAKE
I-75/275 TO THE HILLSBORO AVE. EXIT & GO
WEST TO FLORIDA, HIGHLAND OR OLA, & THEN
NORTH TO HENRY AVE. 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.

** Please post the enclosed fliers in a public place in your area to advertise
our upcoming Tree Sale **

Mary Jane McSwain, Garden Editor of the Daytona Beach News JOURNAL, and a member of
our chapter of RFCI has sent a lovely letter to this newsletter. She hopes to "do
an article on persimmons, especially the good ol' Florida wild ones", and needs some
good color pictures to go with the article. Anyone who can help should contact her
at: 128 S. Halifax Drive
Ormond Beach, Florida 32074

HOSPITALITY TABLE

Roma Vaccaro: Almond Cookies
Janet Conard: Spinach Balls
Harry Klaus: Banana Cookies
Lottice Shipley: Guava Shells & crackers
Paul Rubenstein: Fresh Strawberry Guava
Silas Wood: Red Marlberry Wine (Redlands Rare Fruit & Vegetable Society)

A "GRAPE" MEETING

Our August meeting, compliments of Tom Hughes, might be termed a "grape success". We were a little early for some of the grapes but there were enough for some delicious sampling of the numerous varieties of muscadine grapes available at Tom's nursery. As an added bonus for the day, Tom offered 1/3 off on all potted grape vines, an offer of which many of the members took advantage.

Tom Hughes has been growing grapes for over 30 years and has worked closely with several universities testing grape varieties in Florida. The newest grape available and one Tom calls a "super grape" is the Nesbitt. The Nesbitt is the largest self-fertile muscadine grape available at this time. It is also a very heavy producer and sets large bunches of beautiful black grapes, very sweet and with a relatively thin skin. Grapes are very easy to grow and fit well in the Florida landscape. They are cold hearty and not bothered by frost but flourish in the full Florida sun. Tom promotes several decorative uses of grape vines, such as hanging baskets, arbors, potted vines and even bonsai tree grapes that produce normal sized fruit.

Early settlers to Florida rejected the wild bunch grapes and muscadines in Florida in favor of the European and California type of bunch grapes. But despite all their efforts, their results were dismal failures. Florida's high humidity and the devastating Bright's virus disease which is transmitted by insects feeding on the vines were the principal causes of failure of the bunch grapes brought from the north and California. Because of the inability to produce a bunch grape totally resistant to Bright's disease, production interests have turned to the muscadine for satisfactory grape growing in Florida. Their appearance, being borne in open clusters of two to 10 grapes instead of tight bunches in the traditional grape form, has made it difficult for the general public to accept the muscadine. However, once experiencing the delights of easy trouble free muscadine growing and the delicious flavor of abundant-producing, large-size muscadine grapes, people have become eager to own vines in their own home planting.

The muscadine family is native to the entire southeastern United States and was found growing here at the time of the first European settlers. On a number of southern plantations the same muscadine vines have continued to bear frequently with little or no care providing a prolific yield 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 have ever been known. Tom Hughes sports about 10 of the 24 varieties which have been released so far. Their principal interest is in perfect flowering varieties that are self pollinating, making grape planting in limited areas practical. Yields of 100 lbs. or more per vine are not uncommon. They are better flavored than the bunch grapes that can be produced and are much easier to grow with less spraying and fertilizing. The 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 and 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% shade. Soils under 5.5 pH should have an amendment of five pounds dolomite per 100 square feet of 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.)

A Message from the President:

Our sincerest thanks again go to Tom & Margaret Hughes for again hosting our August meeting. As usual we all had a grape time and truly appreciate their hospitality and generosity. We look forward to being with you again next year.

As all of you know, our big event is rapidly approaching: our annual tree and plant sale. I cannot overstate how much we need your participation in this event. It is the lifeline of our organization, for it supports all our activities other than the one you are presently holding in your hands. Without our sale, we could not continue. So, if the RFCI is important to you, then you should join your fellow members in helping to make our sale its usual huge success. There are so many things we need help with, that I could not possibly mention it all here. Join us at our next meeting, where we will discuss many specifics, and have sign-up sheets available for the various plant sale committees. Participation in the plant sale will also reap higher benefits, in the form of greater discounts on plant purchases than will be enjoyed by nonworking members. In addition to physical help on both Saturday and Sunday, I hope that some of our members are planning on bringing some plants for sale. Our suppliers generally bring many beautiful plants, all of relatively large size. Many of our customers are also interested in experimenting with more varieties, and will purchase more plants, if there are also available smaller size plants that sell for less (we usually have tables set up for such specials, @ \$1, \$2, or \$3) and our members generally supply these. Remember, we deal with these sales the same as we do with our commercial suppliers, i.e., the sale price is split evenly between the seller and the club. Be sure to keep this in mind when setting your prices, which should be in half dollar increments. Plants should be clearly labelled as to type and price. All members who wish to sell plants must provide us with a specific manifest, listing quantity, type and selling price, and using the same forms provided our suppliers (no scrap paper is acceptable!). These forms will be available at the next meeting, and at the armory the day before the sale (Saturday). No plants may be brought for sale on Sunday, the day of the sale; they all must be delivered to the armory on Saturday. The same is required of our commercial suppliers, as things are far too hectic that morning to deal with plant unloading and inventory. Any member who wishes to donate plants to the sale may do so, and such donation will be much appreciated. Again, we request that they be delivered to the armory on Saturday. If you are selling plants at, or donating plants to the sale, please be sure to sign the appropriate sheet at the next meeting.

Next, two noteworthy news items: First, the August 11 issue of TIME magazine had an article on exotic fruits and vegetables cropping up in markets nation-wide. Hopefully, some of it will also be available at our sale. Second, we all need to congratulate member Glen Myrie, whose rose garden was selected as the August 2nd Tampa Tribune's Garden of the Month. Of course, they talked about his front rose garden, but they did mention he had fruit trees in his back yard. Great going, Glen!

That's about it for now. I hope to see you all at the next meeting. Remember, it's a covered dish event. Remember to put something edible inside your dish before you cover it!

Comments on the Avocado (*Persea americana*) by Bob Heath

The avocado is a member of the Laurel family and so is related to the Cinnamon, Camphor and Sassafras trees. The avocado consists of three races, West Indian, Guatemalan and Mexican. The trees of all varieties are very similar in appearance and growth habits, and may be cross grafted and cross pollinated. Only the Mexican varieties are cold hardy enough for consistent cultivation in central Florida, although Guatemalan and Mexican/Guatemalan hybrids have been grown extensively in this area during warmer times and in very protected areas.

The Mexican varieties are small as avocados go, seldom over 6 ounces. The skin at maturity is green or black, very thin, almost membranous with an anise taste. The flavor and texture of the fruit is excellent. Ripening time is July through August.

Our "Young" variety tree is eight years old and is planted in an exposed location. It has withstood our recent killer winters with virtually no damage to the foliage. We almost lost the tree, however, shortly after we planted it due to the cold which damaged the root stock which was apparently a cold sensitive variety. We have since banked up the ground to above the graft and the tree has recovered. It is presently about ten feet tall and provided us with about 60 of its small delicious fruit this summer. The tree was in bloom this past winter when we recorded 20 degrees in our yard. The flowers were only slightly damaged and still set this record crop. We highly recommend this variety for door yard planting in central Florida.

Other varieties of the cold hearty Mexican race of avocado recommended for central Florida are the Gainesville, Mexicola, Topa Topa and Duke.

PIGEON PEA (*Cajanus cajan*)

The pigeon pea is a short-lived tree (5 or 6 years in frost-free areas) reaching a height of ten feet. The peas are produced in pods, three to eight peas to the pod, and are about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter. The pods are very easy to open when they are dry. If left on the tree, they will pop open spontaneously at the proper time and plant themselves. The tree may be damaged by frost and may be killed at 22 degrees F.

Under normal conditions the tree will bear the year planted and all summer through subsequent years. The dried peas may be kept through the winter and planted in seed beds in February, then planted outside in mid-March or later. The tree will grow rapidly in good soil, likes water, but will stand drought. Limbs are long and slender, becoming pendulous under good conditions.

There are two varieties. The most common from Central America is brown when dry. A larger variety from Kenya is a marbled rust color. The flavor is different, more like peanuts or soybeans than English peas. They may be boiled like other dried beans with ham, or used in soups. The young green seeds are eaten as a vegetable in many countries and have been canned in Puerto Rico and Trinidad. The green pods are sometimes used as a vegetable, also. The plants are used as excellent cattle fodder and also can be made into hay and silage. Pigeon peas are planted as green manures and cover crops, used as temporary shade, wind-breaks and for erosion control. The dried stalks are used for firewood, thatching and basket-making in India.

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Member Ivan Leo is interested in selling some seedling papayas from seed of excellent varieties from Costa Rica, Brazil, and Thailand. They are about 2 feet tall. He will bring some to the next meeting, and place a couple in the plant drawing.

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GOOD NEWS

One of our long-time members, Juvenile Court Judge James P. Calhoun, is hanging up his robes, effective August 31. After 17 years as a Juvenile Court Judge, our friend, Jim Calhoun, is retiring from the bench to devote his time to his wife, Grace, their 40 acre farm, and the RFCI. However, he will continue working in his present position until such time as a replacement has been appointed by the governor and approved by the legislature to take his place, at which time, he assures us, he and his wife will be taking a much more active role in the affairs of the RFCI. We will, of course, welcome this increased activity on their part.

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A BERRY STRANGE STORY

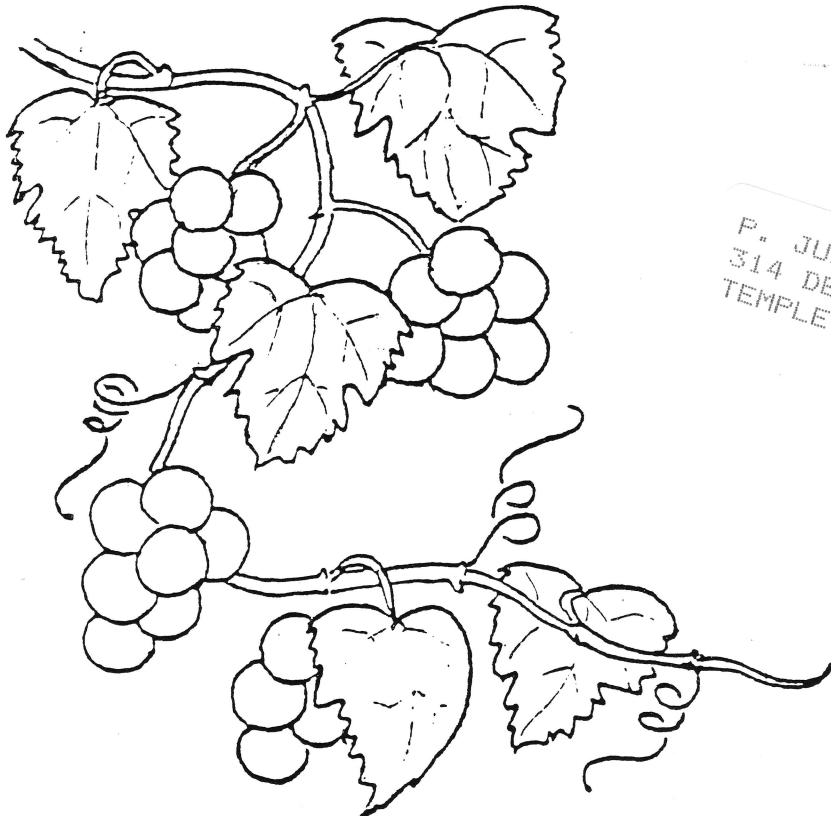
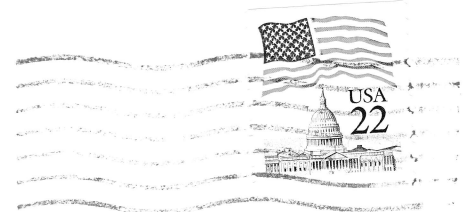
Once upon a lime, a long, long lime ago (before citrus canker), there was a little girl named Golden Rod. She grew like a weed, and being antisocial, she always said, "I want to be alawn, leaf me alone." One blight day, she visited her Aunt Ivy, and found her dead on the flour. "Goodness grapecious, who poisoned Ivy?" she exfoliated. "It must have been Belladonna." Utterly wilted, she ran from the house, losing her way in the woods. Luckily she frond a small cottage and entered. She suffered from a nutritional deficiency, and there on the table were three bowls of fruit and "I forgot" cereal, with minor-el milkshakes. So she tasted the first bowl and said, "This is too high in nitogen." But she ate it all anyway. She tasted the second bowl and said, "This is too low in potassium." But she ate it all anyway too. She tasted the third bowl and expollinated, "Gourd grief, this is weed and feed!" And she fell down dead.

When the three berries came home, they were berry mulch decompost. "Look," said Straw Berry, "something has eaten my fertilizer all up!" Black Berry said, "Great thornderation, mine too!" And Blue Berry pithily remarked, "I guess I put my cereal in the lawn spreader! I mow my life to Golden Rod."

Moral: There is nothing surer than death and fertilizer, especially at election time.

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TAMPA BAY CHAPTER
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTL.
P O BOX 260363
TAMPA FL 33685



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

Seventh Annual
FRUIT TREE SALE
Sunday, October 19, 1986
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

FT. HOMER HESTERLY ARMORY
500 N. Howard Ave. – Tampa

I-275 Exit 24 – 5 blocks South on Armenia Ave.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING

APPLES
ANNONAS
AVOCADOS
BANANAS
BARBADOS CHERRIES
BLACKBERRIES
BLUEBERRIES
CARAMBOLAS
CHERRIES OF RIO GRANDE
CHINESE CHESTNUTS
FIGS
GRAPES

GRUMICHAMAS
GUAVAS
JABOTICABAS
LOQUATS
LONGANS
LYCHEES
MACADAMIA NUTS
MANGOS
PAPAYAS
PEACHES
PEARS
PERSIMMONS

PECANS
PINEAPPLES
POMEGRANATES
BLACK RASPBERRIES
TREE TOMATOES
GRAPEFRUIT
KUMQUATS
LEMONS
LIMES
NECTARINES
ORANGES
TANGERINES

... AND MANY OTHERS

ALSO RARE HERBS AND VEGETABLES
All Varieties Subject to Availability at Time of Sale

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INT'L (INC.)
(A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION)

