



# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1987

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

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(INCLUDING RENEWALS)

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

NEXT MEETING . . . . . SEPTEMBER 13, 1987

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 HILLSBOROUGH AVE. EXIT & GO WEST TO  
FLORIDA, HIGHLAND OR OLA, AND 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 \*\*\*

\* \* \*

## GRAPES....

The Number of varieties of bunch grapes recommended by the USDA for Florida cultivation has been increasing. The major varieties are: Blue Lake, a purple variety for juice and jelly; Conquistador, a purple variety for fresh fruit and red wine; Lake Emerald, green, for white wine; Stover and Suwannee, both green, for fresh fruit and white wine; Blanc Dubois, a new green white wine variety; and Orlando Seedless, the first seedless grape for Florida. Hull is a purple variety that produces well as far south as Homestead. THERE WILL BE 4 OR 5 VARIETIES OF BUNCH GRAPES AT OUR TREE SALE, INCLUDING LOTS OF ORLANDO SEEDLESS!!!

\* \* \*

CITRUS IS BACK!!! AT OUR ANNUAL TREE SALE - Lots of varieties,  
\*\*\*\*\* including many unusual ones! BE THERE!

# Excerpts from a Talk by John Brudy on THE ART OF GROWING THINGS IN TUBS

I am always pleased when someone such as Walter Vines mentions the importance of growing things in pots. There are so many things that are capable of being grown to nice dimensions, even to very good fruiting size, in containers. And there are so few people who do it. I realize that one of the objectives of the Rare Fruit people is to devise ways of growing rare fruit in the ground so that they are productive trees, but if you think back over your experience with rare fruit growing, you'll probably realize that you have failed in a lot more things than you have succeeded in. And a lot of the things you have failed with could have been successful if they had been in containers. Now I realize that there is a limit to growing things in containers because by the time you get a tree big enough to bear you may have a container that is too big to lift. You have defeated your own purpose because you can't move it indoors when it gets cold unless you have a couple of friends who are fullbacks on the Bucs.

Now how did I get started growing things in tubs? Well, this is what happened. I used to live for a while in Granada in the Windward Islands. The average rainfall in Granada is from 70 to 100 inches per year. Almost anything can be grown, from coconuts and papayas to tomatoes and sweet corn. Five miles to the southwest on the peninsula of Point Salines there is a desert with less than 15" of rain per year. There thrives cactus and exactly the kind of ratty, thorny scrub-growth that you would expect to find in New Mexico. Well, there are people who like this and who live there. Their problem was that they couldn't grow what they wanted. So they started growing things in containers. They would grow things in the darnedest containers you ever saw in your life. Anything that would hold soil could be watered, such as old tires stacked up four or five high which makes a pretty good container if you don't have to move the darn thing. But the things they grew there were a revelation. So I took a lesson from that, when I came back up to the states and went to work at Cape Canaveral.

Pat and I moved to Cocoa Beach, Florida, in 1959 and bought a house on a barren lot which didn't even boast a seedling sandspur. Pat's mom came up to inspect and... we hoped... to approve. She is an immensely practical no-nonsense lady. She owned a handsome garden herself that was jam-packed with everything that a Florida garden should have. She arrived. Tight-lipped, she examined the project. Hard-pressed to conceal her horror, she bore up in the face of what probably appeared to her to be an annex of the Sahara Desert.

She made several grim suggestions. We should plant tough grass before the place blew away. We should put down an artesian well so that the yard could be decently watered. We should fertilize lavishly, since there were obviously no nutrients whatever in the soil. And I.. specifically I.. should endeavor to raise some things that were unobtainable in nurseries.. some things that could only be obtained by raising them from seed, but which might stand the barest chance of doing well in this ghastly environment. Her reasons for this recommendation were simple and straightforward. Summarizing... if we stocked the property only with items from neighborhood nurseries it would look exactly like everyone else's.

She couldn't endure the thought of that.

I was in the employ of Pan American Airways at the time and was doing a fair amount of traveling. While Pat kept the place watered, I kept my eyes open for seeds wherever I went. I had been a farm kid myself. At least I knew what to do with seeds when I found them.

The scheme worked. Within five years we had more trees and shrubs growing on that lot than existed on all the rest of the street. Best of all, no one else had them. What triumph!! Many of the tender things were in containers. They

were the specimens that made our home unique.. an attraction for all the gardeners in town. It was especially astonishing to me, because at the outset I would never have believed that so many things could be so ruthlessly wrenched out of their normal habitat and forced to perform in the restricted space that an 8- or 15-gallon container affords.

As I observed, life takes unexpected jogs. Contradicted at every turn, we finally learned how to do it in a tub.

For starters I proceeded to do what everyone should do who is a serious student of horticulture, especially people like members of the Rare Fruit Council, I got an import permit. It doesn't cost anything. In order to get some seeds from a friend in Thailand, for instance, you send him a sticker which he puts on his package of seeds and addresses it to the Import Inspection Station in Miami. The sticker will have your individual number on it, which tells the inspection station to inspect the seeds and then send them to you. This they will do at no extra charge. You unpack and plant the seeds. They are sent by airmail and they're so fresh you can practically smell the soil they grew in. Write to the Department of Agriculture in whatever country you are interested in receiving seeds from and ask them for a list of commercial seed suppliers. You will get a lot of things that you don't want but you'll find some you do and you'll never get them if you do not ask.

Now I've got here in my box some seeds that I just got the other day from Sri Lanka, which is an island off the coast of India. It used to be called Ceylon. A beautiful place. That wonderful movie, "Bridge on the River Kwai", was all photographed in Ceylon, which will give you some idea of the beauty of the place. The seeds came from the director of the Dept. of Agriculture. It is a nutmeg. We have a few here for you to take and try to germinate and see what you can do with them. The reason I ask is this. In Granada, the nutmeg trees grow everywhere but you can't harvest them like apples, for instance, because they don't ripen at the same time. The nutmeg farmers, really nutmeg harvesters, simply look under the nutmeg trees every morning and pick up those that have fallen through the night to sell in the market before they go to work. They do the same thing the next morning and the one after that for months. They don't plant these nutmeg trees, the nutmeg that falls on the ground and sprouts simply produces another tree. But I have tried and tried to germinate nutmegs in every conceivable way, even throwing them out on the ground, hoping they will think they're in Granada, but I have never succeeded in germinating a nutmeg. So I thought I'd give you a chance and see if you are luckier than I. Now I also have another seed here from Ceylon so each of you who are interested can have a couple of seeds. You might know that the botanical name of nutmeg is *myristica fragrans*. These other seeds are the Jamaica nutmeg, *monodora myristica*. They smell just like nutmeg but are not quite as strong. Try planting some of these too.

Anyway, germination is a problem with seeds. When you get some brand new seeds, you don't know what to try, whether to soak them, put them in the refrigerator, scratch them with a file or what. These come from the Tropics, so of course, they probably don't need refrigerator. The thing that I've always tried to do, regardless of where the seeds come from, if I have enough seeds, is to try some in many different methods and see which is the most successful.

What do we plant seeds in? What does the seed need? It needs oxygen and water. The looser the mixture you plant the seed in, the likelier it is to germinate. For germination, you need a light, airy, open mix. I have found that the potting soil you buy is too heavy and dense and it should be diluted with builder's sand or Perlite. I recommend mixing potting soil half & half with builder's sand. That is what I use universally. Perlite is better than Vermiculite in a mix because the Vermiculite tends to collapse and also holds a lot of water which decreases the amount of oxygen available. Plant seeds in equal parts of sifted soil, sifted spagnum peat and Perlite and use small injection molded plastic

cups for starting things unless the seeds are too big. Big seeds are usually slow and I start them in four or six quart containers where the sproutlings can remain for months putting on size if time is what they need.



Mad Margaret  
a.k.a.  
Nut-Meg

#### August Plant Raffle

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
*****	*****	*****
Coffee	A. Hendry	John Prokop
Imbe	Stark	Olga Blaha
Chaya Spinach	Heath	Bob Duke
Tree Basil	Heath	Al Roberts
Granny Smith Apple	RFCI	Olga Blaha
Yellow Guava	Herb Hill	Bob Moyer
Papaya Fruit	Betty Dickson	Glen Myrie
Pineapple	Heath	Janet Conard
Strawberry Tree	RFCI	Eliason
Blueberry, Climax	RFCI	?
Blueberry, Alice Blue	RFCI	Glen Myrie
Carambola	H. Klaus	John Prokop
Carambola	H. Klaus	Al Hendry
Carambola	H. Klaus	John Brudy
Sugar Apple	H. Klaus	Bob Moyer
Sugar Apple	H. Klaus	John Brudy
Sugar Apple	H. Klaus	?
Sugar Cane	Eliason	Al Hendry
Bilbergia Pixie	E. Freedman	Al Hendry
Globe Amaranth	Zieg	Anita Unruh
Black Berry	Duke	Romeo
Black Berry	Duke	Al Roberts
Black Berry	Duke	J. Murrie
Tamarind	Duke	Eliason
Dovyalis(Florida apricot)	Duke	K. Netscher
Ripe Papaya (2)	Duke	Maria Sennati
Ripe Papaya	Duke	Walter Vines
Ripe Papaya	Duke	Stark
Ripe Papaya	Duke	John Prokop
Ripe Papaya (2)	Duke	Janet Conard
*****	*****	*****

#### Recipe of the month: Pumpkin cookies (Bea Seekins)

Cream 1/2 cup butter with 1 cup honey or molasses.

Add 2 eggs and 1 tsp vanilla.

Stir together: 4 cups whole wheat flour, 2 cups oats, 2 tsp baking soda, and 2 tsp cinnamon. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture.

Add 16 oz solid pack cooked mashed pumpkin (not watery).

Add 1 cup each semi-sweet chocolate chips, raisins, and nuts.

Place 1/4 cup batter on buttered cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 for 15 minutes.

Dough may be frozen, then thawed and baked later.



FROM THE PRESIDENT:  
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Dr. Richard Baranowski of the IFAS Tropical Research & Education Center in Homestead has announced some success in suppression of Caribbean fruit fly. A number of parasitic wasps have been evaluated and released to prey on the Carib flies. There is not much hope in eliminating the pest, but reduction to an acceptable number is possible.

We need workers of all kinds for the Fruit Tree Sale. If you can possibly make it to the next meeting, do so. We need to know how many we will have. It is work, but fun and interesting!

\*\*\*\*\*

Tampa Tribune Agribriefs of August 16, 1987 refers to the germ-plasm depositories of sugar cane, mangos, avocados, coffee, and cacao at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Subtropical Horticulture Research Station, near Miami. Included in the sugar cane collection, are descendents of the variety brought to the West Indies from Tahiti by Captain William Bligh on board the Bounty. Those of us who attended the Rare Fruit Symposium in July visited the station.

August's issue of Florida Agriculture talks of tropical fruits and yuppies, and how carambolas, lychees, longans, atemoyas, and passion fruit are the 'designer fruits' of the 80's. Trees of these and other tropical fruits are being planted commercially around Homestead in anticipation of an exploding market. It seems many of our choicest fruits won't be 'rare' much longer!

#### Hospitality Table

Fran Stevens: Raspberry Cookies

Bea Seekins: Pumpkin Cookies

Bob Heath: Grapes

Janet Conard & Al Roberts: Banana muffins and cooked papaya

Bill Ryland: Tamarinds

R. Eliason: Home dried banana & papaya

Harry & Marian Zieg: Watermelon & other fruits

#### TREE SALE NOTES

1. All RFCI members, whether they work at the sale or not, receive a 10% discount on purchases at the sale (upon proof of membership).
2. Those who work a half day or more, receive a 25% discount on plants selected prior to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.
3. Workers receive a 50% discount on plants still on the sales floor after 4:00 p.m.
4. Workers may select plants prior to the sale until 12:00 noon on Sunday. These plants may be stored in the designated area during the sale after being checked out.
5. No plants may be moved from the sales floor between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. Sunday.

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POMEGRANATE

## BIG DAY FOR THE BIGNAY by Bob Heath

Well, yesterday I had my big day, 30 minutes in front of the cameras with Stan DeFreitas talking about fruit, fruit trees and the coming tree sale. Believe me, it's quite an experience and a lot of fun! I talked to Stan about a month ago and he told me to get together the fruit and fruit trees that we would talk about. Just like that!

So where do you find rare fruit this time of year? First I surveyed my own yard... not too much... one Spanish-red pineapple, several naranjilla, some muscadine grapes and a couple of pretty, black avocados. That was it. Next I called Modesto Arencibia a charter member, and Armando Mendez. No help there. Roma Vaccaro's mother lives down the street so I walked to her house and did well, two guavas, figs, and a nice pomegranate. Next stop, Alessi's Farmers Market on Gunn Highway. Here I picked up a tomatilla, some longans at \$6.00 a pound, a kiwi, a mango and another pineapple, and with a few potted trees from my own yard, I was all set.

I took this conglomerate with me Wednesday to WEDU-TV Station at 12:00. A big, husky fellow helped me carry it in and put everything on Stan's table in Studio 3. It took another hour and a half to get everything set up, to run Stan and myself through the beauty parlor where a comely lass did things with power and rouge to our faces, to clip microphones to our shirts and get ready for taping. At the countdown, Stan did his opening spiel and introduced me to the TV audience for whom we made our pitch for growing fruit trees, starting with the pineapples and ending up with the mangoes. It took most of 30 minutes but the time flew by and it was over before I knew it.

We were able to get in two or three good plugs for the tree sale and they flashed the information on the screen at the mid point to push it.

So it's all on tape now and Stan says that it will be on thousands of TV sets the first Saturday in October at 10:00 a.m. on Channel 3. So for the great thrill, tune in and see your TV star at work. Incidentally, I never found any Bignay fruit!

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## TREE SALE...

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 we could not possibly mention it all here. Join us at the 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 non-working members. In addition to physical help on both Saturday & Sunday, I hope that some of our members are planning to bring 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, & will purchase more plants if we have smaller size plants that sell for less (we usually have tables set up for such specials, @ \$1.00, \$2.00 & \$3.00) 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 & 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.

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 \* YOUR RFCI NEEDS YOU!!! The Annual Tree Sale is the  
 \* Life's Blood (Sap?) of our Organization. Without a  
 \* successful Sale, we could have no speakers for pro-  
 \* grams, and we could not publish this Newsletter - in  
 \* short, there would be no RFCI! We cannot have a  
 \* successful Sale without enough peoplepower, both  
 \* Saturday for set-up, and Sunday, the day of the  
 \* Sale. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL - PLEASE, BE  
 \* THERE!!!  
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 \* \* \* \* \*

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