



# NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1988

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

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(including renewals)

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE 2nd SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING . . . . . FEBRUARY 14, 1988

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. . . . . A PANEL OF OUR EXPERIENCED MEMBERS AND  
FRIENDS WILL SHARE THEIR SPECIAL INTERESTS  
AND KNOWLEDGE WITH YOU AND TRY TO ANSWER  
YOUR FRUITY QUESTIONS. BRING YOUR PROB-  
LEMS, QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS FOR  
DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS.

## NEW MEMBERS:

Lawrence & Martha Shea, 1909 Vandervort Rd., Lutz, FL 33549, 949-8333

Frank Honeycutt, 3909 W. Spence Ave., Tampa, FL 33614, 885-4531

Chip Hill, 4979 Orange Grove, Palm Harbor, FL 34684, 786-3874

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A new fruit book is available: "Perennial Edible Fruits of the Tropics, an Inventory", compiled by Dr. Carl Campbell of Homestead and Dr. Frank Martin. This book is available now. Write to: The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Ask for the USDA Handbook 642. The cost is \$12.00.

Several members have asked, "What do we do with our money?" Some is spent for operating expenses, meeting room, speakers, newsletter, etc. Money not used for operation is being saved for the future purchase of a permanent meeting site where we can grow and research plants as a club. We can only do that now as individuals when we have a big enough yard. Our money comes from membership fees, interest, and profits from our annual tree sale.

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## THE PASSION FRUIT - Excerpts from a talk by Joan Bradshaw

Living in central Florida, we really do get to enjoy growing an awful lot of different types of fruit varieties which many of you grow in your own back yards. Today we're going to have a look at the passion fruit. From ancient times it has been featured in a lot of superstitions and legends because of the shape of its flower that is said to represent the crucifixion. The flower is very exotic looking and you may want to grow it just for its beauty but in addition, you may also enjoy the fruit that goes along with it.

There are about 400 to 500 different species of the passion fruit and we have about three or four that do very well here in central Florida and are therefore a little more common. However, it is not really a very common fruit here and it is difficult to gain information about the different varieties. But I understand that someone at South Florida has information on the passion fruit so if you need to reference them in the future, you can contact South Florida.

Commercially, the passion fruit is cultivated in Brazil, Hawaii, South Africa, Australia and other places where it is grown for its juice. In the wilds, it grows in mountainous areas. Because it is a vine, it must be provided with an external support. In the wilds this is provided by trees and bushes. In commercial use, or in home gardens, it needs a trellis or arbor to provide the support.

There are two different types of leaf forms. (A slide showed this very clearly, one being very heavily tri-lobed, the other form being more ovate with very tiny serrations on the edges.) If you use horizontal trellising, your supports need to be two to three feet apart. With horizontal trellises, the supports should be 12 to 18 inches apart. The supports need to be made of about 9 gauge wire because of the weight of the vine and fruit. With vertical trellising it is best to orient the trellis in a north-south direction in order to get maximum sunlight on the vines.

If we examine the fruit, we find that there are quite different forms in different varieties. The yellow and purple passion fruit are round to egg-shaped, about two to two and one half inches long. Other varieties get up to 10" long. It takes about 60 to 80 days from the flower to maturity of the fruit. Here in central Florida the fruit usually reaches maturity from late summer to about this time of year.

Commercially, it is the giant granadilla that is more often grown because it is much larger. (Joan brought some fruit of the yellow and purple passiflora for us to examine, taste and to provide seeds.)

The fruit contains numerous small black wedge-shaped seeds that are individually surrounded by deep orange colored sacs that contain the juice, the edible part of the fruit. The fruit remains green until fully mature, then colors rapidly within a few days. Normally the fruit will drop to the ground when ripe but it may be picked when it is ready to fall. However, the fruit picked from the vine too early has an unripe taste. Actually, you can tell when the fruit is ready to pick because it gets a little bit on the soft side. This, of course, can take considerable judgement and experience. The flower is another reason why many people grow the passion fruit. The flowers are very exotic looking with white rays on the purple passion and with deep bluish petals. As for the soil requirements, both the yellow and purple passion fruit require a slightly acidic soil but the yellow variety seems to require a little less acidity. The yellow variety, however, is not quite as cold hardy as the purple. In general, the flowers of many of the varieties are very beautiful, some varieties being grown strictly for their flowers.

(At this point, Joan showed us some slides of the different varieties available for flowering.)

Passion fruit may be stored in polyethylene bags in the refrigerator for as long as three weeks without loss of quality. The fruit may get somewhat wrinkled or dimpled but this doesn't detract from the flavor. The purple granadilla flower is quite pretty but entirely different from that of the yellow and purple variety. It is bright red and hangs like an old fashioned lamp shade and the flower, like the fruit, is quite large. One of the problems many people have with passion fruit is the lack of a pollinator. The honeybee is not the greatest pollinator because he is too small and because they prefer to work other flowers at the time passiflora is in bloom. The best pollinator seems to be the carpenter bee which can be encouraged by placing hollow logs in the field near the vine. The carpenter bee is much larger than the honeybee, about the size of a bumblebee.

In the spring, if your vines have not been killed by the previous winter's freezes, fertilization is in order as soon as the last cold spell has passed. Use a balanced fertilizer, 6-6-6 or 8-8-8, with trace elements, every 4 to 6 weeks starting in the spring and ending about August. Spread the fertilizer in a circle 16 to 18" from the plant. Passion vines are heavy feeders but over-fertilization can damage the roots, and possibly destroy the plant. The amount to apply depends on the size of the plant and must be determined by experience. Use 4 to 6 ounces and then water it in. Then in the winter, all dead and weak wood should be cut out and the vine pruned back to vigorous, well-budded stems. We have found that nematodes can be a problem for passion fruit, particularly the purple passion which seems to be much more susceptible than the yellow. If we wish to grow the purple passion fruit, it may be advisable to graft it on to the yellow.

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#### THE CARAMBOLA - FRUIT OR VEGETABLE?

by Bob Heath

This year many members' carambola trees are doing their thing, rewarding their owners for the care and love which has been devoted to them. So some of us have lots of fruit. What do we do with them? There is a limit to how many carambolas we can eat out of hand. Giving them away to our friends and club members is honorable, of course; but remember, we grew our trees to eat the fruit.

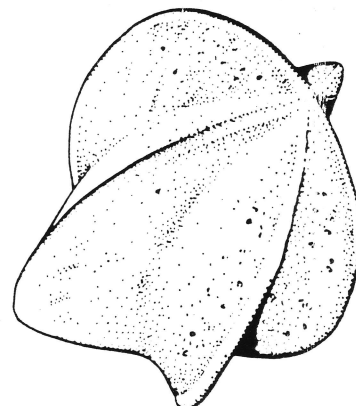
But is it just a fruit, like the apple and orange, or may we consider it also a vegetable, like the tomato or avocado?

Perusing the literature reveals all too few good carambola recipes for dessert but why not consider them as a vegetable? Like a tomato, the carambola has the sweet yet tart flavor that makes it so desirable.

Try it in salads in place of the tomato, or in addition to the tomato. Try it on sandwiches in place of tomatoes. Try it in vegetable soups and cut up in stews. Try it in a relish with peppers, onions and vinegar.

We have tried the above suggestions and in some cases, they work pretty well. But we found they tasted much better when we used the tart varieties, slightly unripe, for use as a vegetable. While some of our experiments tasted very good, others were not too great.

However, we will continue to experiment and we're sure some of our attempts will prove very fruitful.



Carambola

JANUARY PLANT DRAWING

<u>PLANT NAME</u>	<u>DONOR</u>	<u>WINNER</u>
Kadota fig	RFCI	Nels Gullerud
Malanga	RFCI	Jim Murrie
Abaca pineapple	Bob Heath	Frank Honeycutt
Surinam cherry	" "	" "
Kwaimuk	A & L Stark	Nels Gullerud
Kwaimuk	" " "	Walter Vines
Wing bean (seed pods)	Jim Murrie	Monica Brandies
2 Chayote	Bruce Beasor	Celso Gomez-Sanchez
2 Chayote	" "	Bob Heath
2 Chayote	" "	Jim Murrie
2 Chayote	" "	Frank Honeycutt
Basket chili peppers	" "	Nels Gullerud
Basket chili peppers	" "	A & L Stark
Basket chili peppers	" "	Glen Myrie
Bird pepper	" "	Frank Tintera
5 Carambola (fruit)	" "	Bea Seekins
Black sapote seeds	" "	?
Fig	Nels Gullerud	?
Dwarf basil	" "	?
Orange mint	" "	Connie Vernon
Black sapote (fruit)	Bill Ryland	Nels Gullerud
Horse banana	Betty Dickson	Walter Vines

For Distribution:

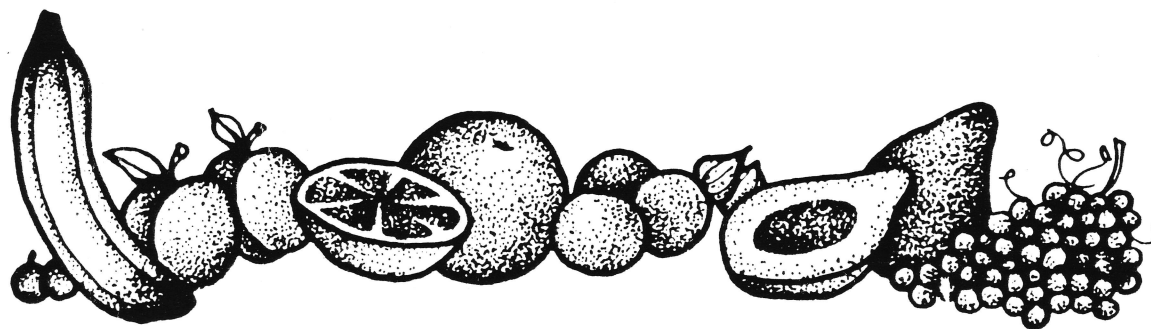
Hubbard squash seeds from Bruce Beasor.

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## Hospitality Table:

- Al Hendry - Strawberries and Asian pears
- Bruce Beasor - Carambola cookies
- Bob Heath - Papaya spread and crackers
- Joan Murrie - Banana nut bread
- Betty Dickson - Cranberry-carambola relish and crackers
- Jennie Tintera - Guava cheesecake
- Pearl Nelson - Persimmon cake
- Bea Seekins - Anjou pears, cheese and crackers, and apple juice

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RECIPES OF THE MONTH

## CRANBERRY-CARAMBOLA RELISH by Betty Dickson

Process together: 2 bags whole cranberries, 1 Mineola tangelo (or comparable citrus), 2 to 4 carambolas, 1 cup sugar, and 1 teaspoon "Fruit Fresh".  
Serve on crackers or as condiment.

## PAPAYA BUTTER by Bob Heath

1 papaya, peeled, seeded and cut up  
1 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, minced  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
2 calamondins, chopped  
1/4 teaspoon salt

Add all ingredients to 2 quart pot with 1 tablespoon of water and boil over low heat til tender. Mash with potato masher, and continue boiling til consistency resembles apple butter, approximately 45 minutes. Cool and enjoy!

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## THE GRAPE ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MUSCADINE

It was a dark and stormy night in Plant City. Passion fruits were running a muck and the streets ran red with strawberry juice. Al Capulin had struck again! This was a job for Eleag Nus and his unfreezeables!

When I called him, di ospyros said the line was tied up. I said, "Vine not cut in? This is orangent." She said, "Mombin, mombin not. I need my super-visor's persimmon." "Oh, fertilizer," I replummed. I was angry, but arbored no hedges. I slammed down the pome and appled across the hall to his orchard.

"Wake up, Eleag," I said tendrilly, "it's me, Karen Bola. You must save Plant City from the Mango Mobster, Capulin." "Not just now," he repined, "it's dinner time and I musca dine. Would you pear for some bunch?" "Thank you berry mulch." And we went to MacDovyalis for a strawburger and a nutrisol shake.

During dinner, the town was blighted by Nema Todes, one of Capulin's hedgemen. "Where are the unfreezeables?" I barked. "A-vocad-o find them, they were on ice."

Suddenly, Capulin brambled in, branchishing his pistil. We arose from our seats shouting, "Sta man!" and jumped for clover. It was a real shoot out! As the smoke clerodendroned, Capulin lay on the floor, with a bleeding heart. The unlucky sap! His dying words were an offer of graft: "This bud's for you!"

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Upcoming Safaris

Tom Economou has sent us flyers for upcoming safaris, including ones to Peru, Honduras, and Mexico in February; Jamaica and Trinidad/Tobago in March; Costa Rica and Brazil in April; and London in May.

For specific details, contact him at Nature Trail, Inc. in Miami (305) 285-7173.

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NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The president has appointed a nominating committee consisting of: Bob Heath, Celso Gomez-Sanchez and Bobbie Puls. They are responsible for providing a list of board member nominees which will be announced in the next newsletter. Any member in good standing who would like to participate on the Board should contact the committee. Elections will be held at the March meeting.

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DUES ARE DUE

Every membership is up for renewal at the March meeting. Your dues are due then.

Annual renewal \$15.00.

Questions and dues should be directed to the membership chairman.

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