



# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1988

**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: AL HENDRY      CHAPTER MAIL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 260363, TAMPA FL 33685  
(including renewals)

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

NEXT MEETING . . . . . MARCH 13, 1988

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

PROGRAM . . . . . NEGLECTED FRUIT OF BRAZIL, BY CHRIS HOWELL.  
Chris is presently the president of the RFCI  
Miami Chapter, a world traveller who has  
visited over 30 countries on seed collection  
trips. He is knowledgeable in biochemistry  
and toxicology. He will provide a slide  
presentation on his recent trip to Brazil  
and will touch on tropical seed preparation  
and the neglected fruit of Brazil. This  
should be a very interesting and informative  
presentation.

\* \* \* \*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Fairchild Tropical Gardens has announced the establishment of the Tropical Fruit Program. The program will be built around the existing collection of over 100 species. New species will be introduced, tested and propagated. A computer center will be established to house a data bank on cultivars and species from all areas of the world.

Tropical fruits have been little researched compared to temperate fruits. Many of the advisory committees are very active in the Rare Fruit Council and government research facilities.

According to "The Primary Source" by Norman Myers, a book on tropical rain forests, over 250 varieties of fruit trees are found in New Guinea, only a few are regularly used, less are regularly sold in local markets and only a couple are sold in American or European supermarkets.

Much can be done by the researchers at Fairchild. Much can also be done by non-scientists like us who grow in small plots, back yards and patios. We can develop new varieties, new growing techniques, and collect data on growing conditions. This should be one of our more important aims as R.F.C. members.

Al Hendry

# RECIPE OF THE MONTH - CARAMBOLA COOKIES

1-1/2 cups unsifted flour	3/4 cup sugar
3/4 tsp. baking soda	1/2 cup molasses
1/2 tsp. baking powder	2 eggs
1/2 tsp. salt	1-1/2 cups quick oats
1 tsp. cinnamon	1-1/4 cup chopped carambola
1/2 tsp. ginger	1 cup chopped nuts
1/2 cup shortening	

Mix flour, baking soda, baking powder, and spices. Add rest of ingredients. Mix until blended. Place on baking sheet (ungreased) and bake for 15 minutes at 350° (small cookies 12 minutes).

## HOSPITALITY TABLE

Bea Seekins - Cream cheese with fresh orange raisin graham crackers, cheddar cheese crackers.

Mrs. Sukhu - Spaghetti with chicken and mixed vegetables & spices.

Pearl Nelson - Persimmon cake.

## FEBRUARY PLANT RAFFLE

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Lemon Grass	Nels Gullerud	K. Netscher
Lemon Grass	Nels Gullerud	Jim Murrie
Lemon Grass	Nels Gullerud	Jim Murrie
Red Spanish Pineapple	Nels Gullerud	B. Beasor
Carisa	Nels Gullerud	Walter Vines
Fig (Conadria)	Heath	Honeycutt
Barbados Cherry	RFCI	P. Sukhu
Pineapple	Heath	Eliason
Chayote	Bruce Beasor	Heath
Chayote	Bruce Beasor	N. Gullerud
Chayote	Bruce Beasor	K. Netscher
White Chayote	George Riegler	?
Ceylon Gooseberry	Rome Vaccaro	Nels Gullerud
Raspberry Bush	Eliason	Heath
Raspberry Bush	Eliason	F. Tintera
Carisa	Frank Tintera	?
Carambola	L. Shipley	Eliason

\* \* \* \*

## THE FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting was a pleasant change of pace. A question and answer session was moderated by Bob Heath.

Many thanks to all members who offered their expertise in answering the thoughtful questions of others.

Special thanks to Lewis Maxwell for his extensive discussion of many of the questions asked.

The attending members were very responsive to this kind of meeting and we hope to repeat the format again.

Excerpt from the February 15, 1988 issue of the Florida Market Bulletin:

#### BIOLOGICAL CONTROL FOR CARIBFLY BEGINS

Back when bobby socks and the croons of a fellow named Elvis and his rock and roll buddies were sweeping the country, the United States federal government and the state of Florida had joined efforts to wipe out a menace called the screwworm which threatened to annihilate the livestock population.

Although this effort took place thirty years ago, irradiation was the method used to sterilize male screwworms, and the campaign was successful - screwworm was eradicated.

Today, irradiation once again is playing a major role in wiping out threats to Florida crops.

In LaBelle, one million Caribbean fruit flies, sterilized by irradiation, are being released weekly to mate with wild female fruit flies.

The result of this biocontrol program will be no Caribfly offspring to continue the threat to Florida citrus crops.

"This kind of program represents the direction I see for the future of agriculture. We must develop new technology such as the use of irradiation that sterilizes these flies that will reduce our dependence on pesticides while assuring us of safe, wholesome and insect-free products. The sterile Caribflies that are being released are harmless to man, animals and plants, but should prove very destructive to the native Caribfly population," said Commissioner of Agriculture Doyle Conner.

Eventually, releases are expected to reach between two and five million sterile flies per week. Conner said this pilot program will act as a guide in expanding sterile Caribfly releases to other parts of Florida in the next year, particularly those areas which plan to ship fresh citrus fruit under the guidelines of the Caribfly-free area protocol.

\* \* \* \*

#### ANNUAL ELECTION

In accordance with the bylaws of our Chapter, we will be electing Board members at our March meeting. We wish to request all members to make an attempt to be at the March meeting for this important event. The nominating committee, consisting of Celso Gomez-Sanchez, Bobbie Puls, and Bob Heath, has comprised a slate of members who are willing to serve on the Board for the coming year. At the March meeting, additional nominations from the floor will be accepted. If you are interested in becoming active in your Club, please consider a nomination to the Board.

Proposed slate of Board of Directors is as follows:

Bruce Beasor  
Celso Gomez-Sanchez  
Bob Heath  
Armando Mendez  
Nels Gullerud  
Kay Netscher  
Arnold Stark  
Lillian Stark  
Walter Vines  
Al Hendry  
Bill Ryland

## RARE FRUIT LIST

The Miami Chapter of RFCI is collecting information on the varieties of tropical and low-chill temperate fruits grown by members of all Chapters, as well as the degree of success in fruiting. To further this effort, we request that all members of the Tampa RFCI send in data to the President, Al Hendry, 13433 La Place Circle, Tampa, Florida 33612, tel. no. 977-2988. Please list your plants and add information using the following abbreviations.

G - in the ground, but neither fruited nor flowered

GF - in the ground & has fruited

GB - in the ground, flowered but not fruited

C - in a container, but neither fruited nor flowered

CF - in a container and has fruited

CB - in a container, flowered but not fruited

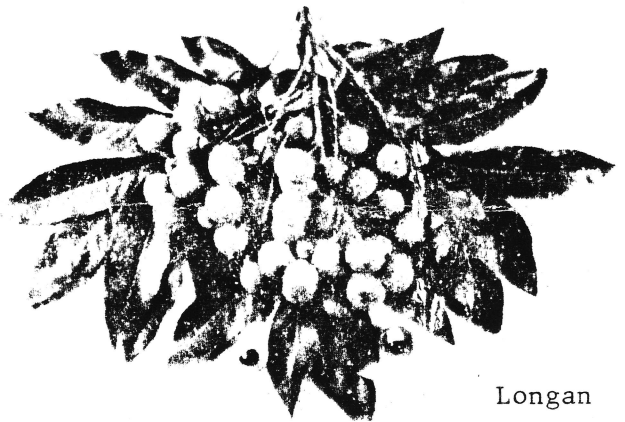
Also any cold hardiness information you can provide would be useful.

\* \* \* \*

THE LONGAN

*Euphoria longana*

The longan, a close relative of the Lychee, is a handsome, medium-sized, evergreen tree with dense, dark green foliage which reaches a height of up to 35 feet. The leaves are compound, up to 12" long, and the small flowers are borne thickly on large, upright, branched panicles at branch tips and leaf axils. The fruit generally matures in July and August and is one inch or less in diameter, with a thin, nearly smooth, reddish brown rind and a rather large brown



Longan

seed. The fruit is eaten fresh, dried or preserved. Although generally recognized as less delicious than the Lychee, the Longan merits wider planting, both for its fruit in the better varieties, and as an ornamental. The tree is slightly hardier than the Lychee, and less exacting in its cultural requirements. It is a fast growing tree and responds very well to good care.

The longan is cultivated in much of southeast Asia. Specimen trees are found in Hawaii and Florida and in some Central American countries. There are no commercial orchards in Florida but there is some sale of fruit produced in home gardens. It is grown extensively in southern China and Indochina but it has not achieved the importance of the lychee in other areas.

The 'Kohala' longan was introduced to Florida from Hawaii in the early 1950's, and is one of the cultivars suggested for planting in south Florida since it bears good quality fruit with some regularity. Plantings of seedlings have been under observation for a number of years. Some have excellent quality fruit but none bear regularly. Work is continuing in the hope of finding seedlings or imported cultivars that are not erratic in their bearing.

Air layering is the preferred method of propagation and should be done from April through August. A period of 10 to 12 weeks is needed for satisfactory rooting. Veneer grafts on seedlings can be used but this is a more difficult method. Longan grows readily from seed, although seedlings are slow to bear, and the quality of seedling fruit varies greatly.

\* \* \* \*



### THE GRUMICHAMA

*Eugenia dombeyi*

The Grumichama is a compact, very attractive evergreen shrub or small tree which may grow to a maximum height of 20 to 25 feet. It is very attractive in appearance with an upright, compact growth habit. The leathery leaves are oval to obovate, about three to four inches long by two inches wide, a beautiful dark wine color when young and becoming a glossy, deep green. The showy white flowers are up to one inch long and are borne in the leaf axils and produced in large numbers on flushes of new growth in early spring.



Grumichama

The fruit is globose to oblate and scarlet to purplish-black in color. It is 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter, depending on the soil quality and water supply during development. It has persistent green sepals at the apex and is borne on long, slender stems, often in clusters. Little more than a month elapses between flower and ripe fruit. The skin is thin and delicate, the flesh soft and melting with an agreeably sweet subacid flavor in the better cultivars. The seeds are round, hemispherical, or angular, depending on the number present. The fruiting season may run from March to August in Florida. The fruit matures about a month after flowering. Seedlings may bear fruit as early as their fourth year, but are quite variable in quality. The Grumichama is related to the Surinam Cherry, Jaboticaba and Guava and it is subtropical, able to withstand 26°F or less when mature.

The fruit may be eaten out of hand, or made into jellies, jams, juices, pies or wine.

\* \* \* \*

### THE JABOTICABA

*Myrciaria cauliflora*

The Jaboticaba is a small, bushy evergreen tree which seldom exceeds 15 feet in height. The branches develop from near ground level, resulting in a dense rounded form. Its leaves are small and dark green and the bark peels as in the Guava. The tree is ornamental but is a fine conversation piece as well as the source of a useful fruit, much resembling a large grape in looks and flavor. It is unusual in that the flowers and fruit appear in profusion in clusters directly on the trunk and major branches. Within a month of the flowers, the purplish-black fruits, up to 1" in diameter, ripen and this cycle is repeated as many as five to six times per year. Aside from being eaten fresh out of hand, the fruit makes a superior jell or jam and can be used for juice and wine. It also freezes well.

Its main drawback is its slow growth and it may take from 10 to 20 years to fruit from seed. It is very difficult to propagate by vegetative methods.

The Jaboticaba's unique characteristics make it a highly sought after plant in South Florida where it is better known. It must have a constant supply of moisture and a rich soil. Minor elements (especially magnesium, manganese and iron) must supplement the regular fertilization and the use of a mulch is recommended.

\* \* \* \*

FRUIT DRYING

Fruit drying is very easy, something that can be done in your own kitchen. It is preferable to use a commercial dehydrator or a conventional oven. A microwave does not work well and sun drying presents some problems, one of which is getting enough sun during the rainy season. A small commercial dehydrator should be available at \$60 or \$70. But it will serve you better to spend a little more and get one with adjustable temperature control and a ventilating fan.

In drying fruit a few general rules apply:

1. If the skin of the fruit is normally not eaten or is inedible, peel it, except for fruit such as lychees which are dried in their shell.
2. If the skin is normally eaten, do not peel it.
3. The same rule applies to the seeds. If you do not normally eat them, remove them.
4. Clean the fruit as necessary.
5. Cut the fruit in thin slices so it will dry more easily.
6. We do not recommend treatment with sodium bisulfide, ascorbic acid, etc., but such chemicals may improve keeping and color. In any case, we recommend refrigerating the dried fruit unless it will be eaten in a few days.
7. Drying time depends on the humidity and the fruit itself. The simple rule is, "When the fruit is leathery and tastes done, it is." Mangoes usually take six to seven hours, carambola six to seven hours, bananas five to six hours, loquats about 12 hours. Longan and lychees take about 24 hours. Too long a drying period destroys the flavor.
8. Set the dehydrator or oven at 140°F.

\* \* \* \*

Tampa Bay Chapter RFCI  
PO Box 260363  
Tampa FL 33685



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

