



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1988

**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 JUNE 12, 1988

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

PROGRAM. "WATER - THE CUP OF LIFE" BY DAVID E. BRACCIANO.

Water is such an interesting compound and yet so taken for granted that most people know little more than that it comes from a faucet when we turn the handle. David Bracciano works for the West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority and he will tell us about water - where it comes from, where it goes, and many other interesting things.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

We welcome volunteers for all sorts of jobs. Food for the hospitality table is always useful. Share your good recipes with us. We need some one to handle publicity for the tree sale.

Let me know what type of program you like at our meetings. We have had a good mixture over the years on various fruits, vegetables, herbs, horticulture, botany. Are our programs too simple, too complex, too long, too short?

Al Hendry

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In Ocala it's blueberry season
So to go there you now have a reason
Just take I-75
If you get there alive
The fruit that U-pick will be pleasin'.

(The Blueberry Festival was June 3-5 this year.)

The U-pick season is from May 1st to June 30th, and if you would like a map of the farms where U-pick is available, you may call Marion County Extension Service at (904) 629-8067.

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SOME FRUITING PLANTS FOR CENTRAL FLORIDA by Gene Joyner

Gene began his discussion of some tropical fruit trees that will grow here without too much difficulty through the average winter, and indicated that he would touch on some of the commercial possibilities of these trees for anyone who might have some unused acreage or be able to join someone else who has.

Carambola. One of the favorites is the carambola, which is a very dense tree when grown under favorable conditions. The young tree has a very upright characteristic which we could see in the first slide of a tree which was about eight or ten feet tall. With a grafted tree, maybe three feet tall, you'll have the possibility of getting fruit. The carambola is a native of southeast Asia, particularly China, and is found in commercial plantings in many areas there. Here in Florida, there is commercial acreage in the Homestead area, about 65 acres at the present time, and a projected additional 35 acres in the near future. Mostly these are small acreages, five to eight acres in size. The carambola flower is quite pretty. If you like a tropical fruit tree that produces attractive blooms, certainly the carambola is it when it's in flower. Main flowering occurs twice a year, a summer bloom and a winter bloom. Carambolas are just coming into bloom in south Florida at this time, which is a little late, and flowering should follow shortly in central Florida. The winter bloom is normally much larger, the peak of which usually occurs during the early fall. In full bloom, the tree is virtually covered with pink flowers as we could see in the next slide. The fruit, as it ripens, is very attractive also, with a shiny, waxy appearance, and always attracts a lot of attention in the shows where they are displayed. Gene showed us a couple of slides of carambolas virtually packed like sardines on the tree. There are several cultivars of carambolas available at this time, which basically fall into two groups, the sweet and sour, or tart, varieties. The sweet type, like Arkin, comprises probably 90% of the acreage. The sour types are mostly Golden Star and Newcomb. There is definitely a national market for carambolas, a definite market for both the sweet type and the tart type, and the more common varieties which you are likely to find are the Maha, Fwang Tung, Arkin, a new variety called Deep Ten, the Newcomb, and the Golden Star.

One of the nice things about carambolas is that they stay on the tree for quite a long time after they're ripe, which gives you an extended period of use. Carambolas take five or six years to produce their first crop from seed so it is advisable to purchase grafted varieties unless you are experimenting or attempting to get new varieties. The carambola is a rather large tree topping out at maybe 35 feet, so for a small yard, one would definitely have to practice extensive pruning, although our winters may do that for us. The best time for pruning carambolas, of course, is immediately after harvesting. Some trees, with proper care, will bloom for an extended period of time. On occasion, trees will start maturing fruit in July or August and still be producing fruit as late as February or March, so that you may have blossoms, immature fruit and ripe fruit on the tree all at the same time. A fertilizer program very similar to citrus seems to work very well. The same fertilizer and the same frequency is recommended, in February, June and October. Carambolas are well adapted to most soil types as long as it isn't flooded. Carambolas will not stand wet feet. Carambolas are in general fairly free of pests and problems. Stink bugs occasionally will damage the fruit, and very occasionally, the Caribbean fruit fly will get into the carambola, but they do not seem to prefer it. Carambolas also seem to set fruit better where there is more than one tree in the vicinity, although they are heavy producers usually as single trees. Carambolas are very well suited to container culture also, and they will grow very well in a 15 or 20 gallon tub where they will easily grow to eight or ten feet without any trouble.

Loquat. The loquat is sometimes called the Japanese plum. They are grown all the way up into North Carolina and throughout much of the gulf states; however, once you get north of Georgia, usually the blooms and/or fruit are injured by the cold; not the tree, just the bloom and fruit which develop during the winter time. The

loquat is a broad, spreading tree, the mature tree reaching approximately 30 feet with a 40 or 45 foot spread, with a typical umbrella type shape as shown in the next slide. Probably the largest collection of name varieties of loquats is in Homestead at the IFAS Research Center, where they have 12 to 15 varieties, all of which are large, mature trees. If you need graft wood for any of the more common varieties, you may go to the station where Carl Campbell will be happy to provide you with bud wood. Loquats begin flowering about September but do not set fruit until sometime in December or January. The fruit is borne on the ends of the branches in clusters and if the cluster sets too many fruit, it is recommended to thin them out when they're green pea size to about three or four per cluster. It is surprising how this will increase the fruit size. Some of the better varieties include Oliver, Champagne, and Wolfe. They are a very delicious fruit and are a prize in the landscape. The fruit are round to oval-shaped and have one to three small brown seeds. The bunches are very attractive hanging on the tree as we could see in the next slide.

The Caribbean fruit fly is the biggest problem we have with loquats, and they can decimate a crop when they exist in large numbers. In the larger fruit, there is considerable amount of flesh around the seeds and well worth picking. Many people like to peel the fruit before eating, but others eat skin and all, which seems to be a personal preference. It is excellent as a fresh fruit and makes good leather, pies, jellies, jams and relish, and also excellent ice cream. Loquats will grow from seed and are a relatively fast growing tree which is one reason why they are used extensively in the landscaping trade, but it takes about four years to fruit so if you are in a hurry or want the better fruit, you should definitely find a grafted variety. Loquats are among the easiest fruit trees to graft, using a veneer graft, whip and tongue, or wedge graft, all of which take very readily. Loquats are not very particular about the soil type. They do well in almost any kind of soil including alkaline and acid, and require little fertilizer to produce well. There is also a variegated leaf variety, a sport that has green and yellow leaves, very attractive tree, and the fruit, when immature, is striped.

Longan. Another fruit which a lot of people enjoy is the longan. It is also a native of China and is the type of fruit which is easy to grow, provided it isn't frozen back when it's small. The next slide showed a young tree in the spicepark at Homestead, a small tree that was fruiting very heavily. The common means of propagation is by air layering. Even though the seeds sprout readily, grow very rapidly and make nice trees, it takes from six to nine years for fruit production to begin, versus about two years from an air layered tree. The variety most widely planted and being grown on limited commercial acreage in the Homestead area is the Kohala. Commercial acreage is only about 25 to 30 acres. The Kohala is an excellent fruit brought in by Bill Whitman from Hawaii a number of years ago and has the biggest proportion of flesh to seed of any of the more common varieties. If allowed to, the tree can get rather large, as much as 50 feet tall, with a 50 foot spread, and trunks that you can't reach around, but the trees can be pruned back to keep them within reason so the fruit can be harvested easily. The bloom normally appears in February and the fruit ripens in July or August, with large terminal clusters all over the tree, as we could see in the next slide, a virtual profusion of fruit, resembling large bunches of grapes. They actually looked much like bronze muscadine grapes. Because of the large number of fruit, longans do not get as large as lichees. As is usual with fruit, in order to get large sizes, it is necessary to thin the fruit when they are about pea size. Thinning a large tree is a time consuming chore but you actually get more flesh by thinning than you would in the smaller fruit. You have to watch them closely as they reach maturity because the only sign that they are ready to pick is a slight change in color to a lighter tan, similar to the change in bronze muscadine grapes. The fruit is very similar to the lichee, having a rather hard shell and a soft melting flesh around a single brown seed. Longans can be eaten fresh, or they may be frozen in their shells for up to a year in a zip-lock bag without any loss of quality. There is a big market for canned longans, particularly among the Thai people. When you get ready to harvest, you need to let them dry out in the soil for two to six weeks.

Longans will take a wide range of soil types and pH range. They are also relatively resistant to drought although during fruit development, they can't be allowed to get too dry, otherwise there will be considerable fruit drop. Fertilize as you would other fruit trees, three times a year for bearing trees and every other month for non-bearing younger trees. Young trees will suffer some damage at 30° but mature trees should take temperatures down into the mid 20's without too much damage.

Lichee. The lichee is a cousin to the longan. It seems to be a little more resistant to cold weather and does form a larger tree than the longan, sometimes up to 50 feet in height. The lichee is propagated most often in the nursery trade by air layering. Lichee seeds are easy to germinate and grow but it may be 15 to 20 years before they fruit. Lichees usually flower in February and March. The fruit ripens during the latter part of May and on into late June and sometimes even early July. Gene showed us a slide of some lichee trees at the Fruit and Spice Park in Homestead where they have a considerable number of cultivars, beautiful trees with red fruit hanging on them in profusion. Cultivars such as Brewster, Sweet Cliff, Bengal, and Mauritius are common excellent varieties. The average size of the fruit shown were about 1-3/4" to 2". The Brewster is probably very popular because of its bright red color, but the Sweet Cliff, while not so pretty, is considered of better quality. The lichee is like the longan with a hard shell easy to remove, white flesh and a small brown seed. Lichees can be eaten fresh from the tree, or frozen in a plastic bag for a year or more without any loss of quality. They are also excellent in fruit salads and they dry well. Soil requirements and culture are very similar to the longan, and the fruit, likewise, are not subject to many pests.

Macadamia Nut. The macadamia nut is a well known commercial product. Hawaii is probably the biggest producer of macadamia nuts at this time, but Central America, particularly Costa Rica, is putting in large acreage of macadamia trees so in a few years, because of their lower labor cost, they will probably be giving Hawaii a run for their money. The macadamia tree is native to Australia and does very well in most tropical climates or areas of the world. In South Florida, there are tens of thousands of macadamia trees, mostly in dooryard plantings. The problem we find here in Florida, which is not seemingly a problem in other areas, is that they are very shy producers. Vegetatively they do quite well, they grow like weeds and make enormous, beautiful trees but the nut production could probably be held in two hands. So far, we haven't had the development of the cultivars which are heavy enough producers to warrant the expense of putting in commercial acreage. The tree is a vertical upright type tree with a leathery, holly-like leaf. The flowers are produced in late February and March, long clusters of white or pinkish bracts of flowers, and then large quantities of little nuts which, over a period of months, thin out by 50% or more. It's possible to get ten to twelve nuts on each flower spike but it's uncommon and we usually get three or four. Unfortunately, squirrels like the immature nuts and from the time they are the size of marbles, squirrels will begin eating them, so you can expect small production because it is the following fall and winter before the nuts actually mature. You have nine to ten months for the nuts to hang on the tree exposed to all the dangers. When the nuts are mature, they may be 1-1/2" to 2" in diameter, and the outer husk will split open and drop the nut which has a hard brown shell. There are varieties in Miami that are being promoted as thin shell or paper shell macadamia. One variety actually has a thin shell but the majority of others only have a thin shell before the nut is matured. If you wait until the nut is fully mature, the shell is relatively hard and thick. The macadamia can be grown from seed but you're looking at seven to eight years before you get a producing tree. It is much better to purchase a grafted tree or air layer from a producing tree. The air layered tree will bear within two years of the layering. The grafted tree, depending on the size of the graft, may bear the following year or the year after that. The tree is a fairly rapid growing tree but should be planted on a well drained site and fertilized for the first year or two every other month with a good citrus fertilizer.

FREE SERVICES AVAILABLE

The Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Florida has an office in every county. The Extension Service has agents trained in every area of plant and animal science. Information is available on turf and pasture grasses, food and ornamental plants, for home owners, amateurs and commercial growers. Publications are issued on request for cooking, food preservation, home repair, agriculture, ticks and fleas, bats and snakes. Call the Extension Service for free advice on home economics or horticulture. There is a good chance the agents can help you for free. There is a charge for lab tests for pH or disease problems. Call 621-5605 in Hillsborough and check the government section of your phone book for other counties.

The Extension Service also sponsors the Master Gardener program. This is a program in which people are trained to do horticultural work in return for assisting agents on a volunteer basis. See Al Hendry or call your county agent if you are interested.

The Florida Market Bulletin is a bi-weekly publication of the Florida Department of Agriculture with news, recipes, want and for sale ads for seeds, plants, animals and farm equipment. The Bulletin is free from Florida Market Bulletin, 410 Mayo Building, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800.

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May Plant Exchange

Plant name	Donor	Winner
Lang Jujube	Bob Heath	Diane Chamberlain
Abaca Pineapple	Bob Heath	Al Roberts
Sugar Apple	Bob Heath	Monica Brandeis
Loquat	Bruce Beasor	Glen Myrie
Loquat	Bruce Beasor	Glen Myrie
Honey Fig	Bruce Beasor	Janet Conard
Surinam Cherry	Bruce Beasor	F. Honeycutt
Surinam Cherry	Bruce Beasor	Martha Shea
Surinam Cherry	Bruce Beasor	Frank Tintera
Pepper	Bruce Beasor	Glen Myrie
Queens Lily	George Riegler	Martha & Larry Shea
Queens Lily	George Riegler	Bea Seekins
Queens Lily	George Riegler	Jennie Tintera
Queens Lily	George Riegler	Walter Vines
Chaya (spinach)	Al Roberts	Al Hendry
White Mulberry	Al Roberts	Bob Heath
White Mulberry (3)	Janet Conard	Larry Shea
Chaya (spinach) (2)	Janet Conard	Frank Tintera
Chaya (spinach)	Janet Conard	J. Murrie

May Hospitality table

Bea Seekins: Apple Kuchen, Apple juice

Bill Ryland: Grumichama, Cherry of the Rio Grande

Thank for donations of green and white chayotes to Gene Joyner, and for green chayotes to Bruce Beasor.

* * *

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: PAPAYA-BANANA WALNUT UPSIDE DOWN CAKE, by LILLIAN STARK

Melt 2 Tbs. margarine in an 8 x 8 square pan. Sprinkle 1/4 cup brown sugar over margarine. Slice fully ripe papaya (about 1½ cups) and 1 ripe banana and arrange over sugar in pan. Sprinkle with walnut pieces (about 1/2 cup). Prepare cake batter * and spoon over fruit. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes or until top springs back when touched lightly. Invert at once onto serving plate. Carefully remove pan and replace topping if necessary.

* Cake batter:

1½ cups Bisquick	½ cup cold water
½ cup brown sugar	2 Tbs. margarine
1 egg	1 tsp. vanilla

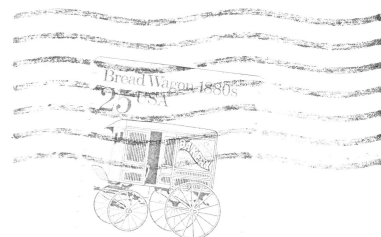
In a large bowl blend all ingredients on low speed 1/2 minute, scraping sides and bottom of bowl frequently. Beat four minutes on medium speed.



Is citrus wood ever used in boat construction?

Only the Navel Orange.

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