



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 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 THE MONTH AT 2:00 P.M.

NEXT MEETING AUGUST 14, 1988

MEETING PLACE TOM & MARGARET HUGHES VINEYARD & NURSERY,
DOVER. EXIT 9 OFF I-4 AT McINTOSH ROAD,
TURN LEFT JUST PAST CHEVRON STATION ON
McINTOSH ROAD.

PROGRAM No formal program. Following the business
meeting, we will have the monthly plant
drawing. Then members will be free to
visit the vineyard and purchase grapes.
Muscadines will be in season.

NEW MEMBERS:

Jimmie & Jeanne Caudle, 9490 S. Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, FL 32952

Harlon & Esther Parchment, 4414 W. Hanna Ave., Tampa FL 33614 (813) 886-0103

Lillie Belle Simmons, 9440 Fowler Ave., Thonotosassa FL 33592 (813) 986-3805

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THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

To: Herb Hill for native vanilla orchid rootings,

Lewis Maxwell for Abaca pineapple plants,

George Riegler for Annato seed (Lipstick plant),

all of which were given to members attending the July meeting.

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We regret to announce the passing of member Wayne S. Schafer, and of the father
of member Paul Rubenstein. Our condolences are extended to the families of the
departed.

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From the November 1981 Newsletter:

EPSOM SALTS (Magnesium Sulphate) when used with an acid fertilizer is good for
Jaboticabas (Myrciaria cauliflora). Epsom salts are also good for the Grumichama
(Eugenia dombeyi) which can also benefit from a nutritional spray of minor elements
for treatment of yellowing.

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GROWING LYCHEES by J. L. Allen

Mr. Allen indicated that he was not a real authority on lychees because he had been growing them for about 15 years but that the Chinese had been cultivating them for 5000 years. He also indicated that he had no formal education in agriculture or horticultural sciences, and that his total agricultural experience before he began raising lychees consisted of three years of forced labor on his father's farm in charge of the collection and disposal of animal waste.

The original center of lychee growing and trading was in Canton, China, the original home of the lychee. In China, the fruit is called leechee, in America it's called lychee, and when Americans originally saw their first lychees and noted the shell, they began to call it a lychee nut because of the shell.

The Chen Family Purple, which is what we call Brewster in America, was propagated and cultivated by the Chen family in China for over 4000 years. But the lychee only recently has come out of China, being introduced into India and Burma and other Far Eastern countries in the 17th century. Probably the earliest record we have of trees growing in Florida is at Indian Key in 1840. Sailors and other world travelers would occasionally bring them in and over the years, there has been a tree growing here and there throughout south Florida and the Americas.

Between 1903 and 1906, the Reverend Brewster brought in nine trees of the Chen Family Purple, which he distributed throughout south Florida. In November 1952, the Lychee Growers Association was founded in St. Petersburg.

The lychee will only grow successfully in a very small band of Florida. It has also been introduced in California and other southern areas but lychees have not done well at all in these areas.

Lychees are not well known in the United States and in general are not really appreciated by the Caucasian people, whereas our Asian cousins have a liking for lychees that is extreme and many think it is the finest fruit in the world.

There are several varieties of lychee available in the United States. The Chinese say that there are more varieties of lychee than any other fruit in the world. There are two basic types of lychees, the mountain lychee which grows, obviously, in the mountains, and the water lychee which grows on the lowlands and on the banks of rivers and streams. Lychees which are in cultivation today are the water lychee; the mountain lychee serves as a strong root stock for grafting. The Chinese give their varieties very odd and exciting names, or unusual and colorful names, such as Bright Moon Pearl and Red Embroidered Shoe; also Hit and Kill the Cow and Rice Dumpling; and another called Penetrating the Lungs and Bowels, which doesn't sound like one we would like to enjoy. The most famous of all lychees in China was called the Imperial Concubine Smiles, and therein lies a tale. It seems that the favorite concubine of an 8th century emperor developed a passion for lychees among other things, but for a particular variety that grew 2000 miles away. Since the emperor was eager to please her, he set up a relay station or system similar to the Pony Express, to bring these lychees to the palace where they were placed in a golden bowl and presented to his favorite concubine. When she saw the bowl of lychees, she smiled. This lychee has been described as very large, very sweet, with a thin skin and a small seed, but no one knows the whereabouts of that variety today.

Lychees grow fairly well in Hawaii, although not as well as in Florida, and in Hawaii they have several varieties. One of the varieties is the Mauritius, which originated on the island of Mauritius, supposedly from the Brewster variety, where it was imported into Africa and is a big fruit crop in Africa today.

In 1920, the Department of Agriculture introduced a lychee which we call Sweetcliff. The trees are small, the fruit are smooth and thin-skinned, with light yellow spots. The flesh is sweet. In the Sweetcliff, the fruit is frequently twinned, which is not unusual in the lychees. The Sweetcliff is

also relatively large.

The Peerless is another variety that is not very well known. It is frequently seedless. About 75% of the fruit will be without seeds. For some reason, there are not many around anymore. They are hard to find. The most famous lychee from China is called Hanging Green. It is a very large tree and developed in the area of Canton. It is blessed with a green stripe around it, which is why it's called Hanging Green, and was reserved exclusively for the Royal Family, but it dropped out of sight and while it was a wonderful fruit, all the attempts to reproduce the tree have been failures.

The Brewster lychee is the one you see more often in the Florida area. That is because it was the first lychee brought into this area and has been propagated most prolifically. But we don't know if all of the Brewsters are of the same variety because the Reverend Brewster brought nine different lychees into Florida and in China, there are twelve different varieties of the Chen Family Purple, which is the Brewster, so whether Reverend Brewster brought in all the same variety or nine different varieties, is not known at this time and it's rather late in the game to try to find out.

One of Mr. Allen's favorite lychees is called the Bengal. It is a variety that came from India where the soil and climate are quite different from those in Canton, China. The Bengal is exceptionally large and of very good quality. But it will probably be some time before there is enough graft wood available to propagate the tree to any extent.

The lychee grows in a very narrow range around the world. It is a subtropical tree, not a tropical tree. While they grow in the Tropics, they do not bear in the Tropics. Here in central Florida we are on the very northern fringe of the lychee growing area. Lychees prefer a heavy loam but on sandy soils they'll do fairly well if there's not too much lime and there is sufficient organic matter and provided the water table is not too close to the surface, no closer than about 2-1/2 feet, although the trees will stand some flooding for a few days as long as the water drains away after that.

Girdling at the proper season seems to produce fruit. Frequently lychees and many other trees, such as avocados, will just fail to bear, and if they are girdled by cutting a thin strip around a limb or limbs at the proper time of the year, they will immediately break out in blossoms. In England, it used to be common practice to beat the walnut trees in the spring to get them to bear. Just bruising the bark will cause them to come into flower. There is an old adage in England which says, "Dogs, women and walnut tree, the more you beat them, the better they be." In Hawaii they have to girdle in order to get their lychees to bear. Girdling is also used on apple trees and avocados that are mature but haven't borne yet.

In China they fertilize their lychee trees with animal manure and muck from the bottom of fish ponds. Mr. Allen recommends the use of 6-6-6 fertilizer in February. In May he suggests using 4-8-5 or something similar and in August 4-8-5 again. Most lychee trees suffer from minor deficiencies. This can generally be corrected by spraying the lychee trees a week or two after fertilization with a minor element spray on the leaves. Propagation of lychees in the United States is usually accomplished by air layering. In China they are reported to do most of their propagation by grafting but in the United States grafting doesn't seem to be very successful. In air layering of lychees, you need to be certain that there is a filled ball of root with some white roots showing, indicating that the lychee is growing before the limb is detached. After you cut the branch from the tree, it should be placed in a bucket of water for five to six days. During this time the plant will soak up all the water it can hold and then you may plant it and put the new plant in the shade, and it is wise to keep it misted or sprinkled if possible. Then after two or three weeks, it should be on its own. Remember, lychees are slow to air layer and it takes a while for the roots to develop.

JULY PLANT EXCHANGE

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Tamarind	Mendez	B. Puls
Canistel	Mendez	N. Gullerud
Black Sapote	Mendez	Frank Tintera
Red Spanish Pineapple	Stark	Frank Tintera
Red Spanish Pineapple	Stark	Walter Vines
Red Spanish Pineapple (2)	Stark	?
Rio Grande Cherry	Heath	Stark
Papaya	Heath	Monica Brandies
Papaya	Heath	Martha Shea
Cattleya Guava	Heath	Frank Tintera
Annato	Riegler	Heath
Annato	Riegler	Glen Myrie
Annato	Riegler	Nels Gullerud
Annato	Riegler	F.G. Hoffman
Black Russian Mulberry	Gullerud	Ray Jones
Lychee Seedling	Gullerud	Larry Shea
Orange mint	Gullerud	Martha Shea
Tamarind	Frank Tintera	Walter Vines

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Hospitality Table:

Bea Seekins: Peach Punch, Toasted Lady Fingers, Raspberry Cheese

George Riegler: Mysore Raspberry Jam

Jennie Tintera: Fresh Fruit

All members are encouraged to help out with the hospitality table. Your contributions of fruit, baked goods, finger foods, etc. are always welcome. Share your recipes too.* For further information, please contact Bea Seekins. Her efforts at organizing and providing for the hospitality table have been most appreciated by all of us and she deserves our help also.

*One of our recipes and an article from the March 1988 Newsletter was recently published in the Australian RFCI Newsletter!

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: PEACH FREEZE (Bea Seekins)

Process 2 cups of sliced fresh peaches. Add 3 Tbs powdered sugar and 2 Tbs Peach Schnapps (Brandy). Stir in 8 oz. plain yoghurt. Gently fold in 1 cup fresh blueberries. Spoon into 3 oz. paper cups. Freeze 15 minutes and insert a popsicle stick in each cup. Freeze 4 hours. Store in heavy plastic freezer bags.

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More from the November 1981 Newsletter:

To germinate very small seeds (like *Muntingia calabura*, Strawberry Tree), distribute on surface of moist screened peat moss in a pot. A glass plate over the pot will prevent drying and allow light to enter. After germination, handle plants in the usual manner.

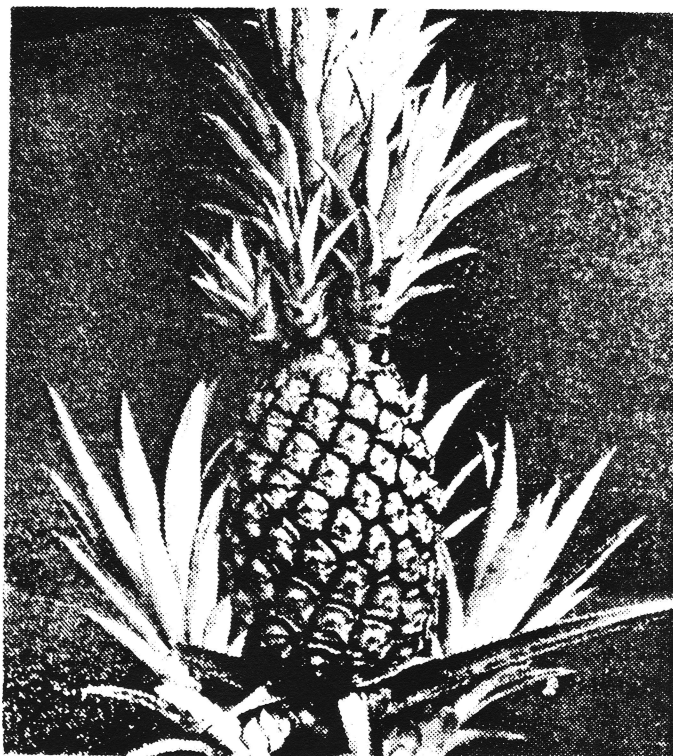
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From the MIAMI RFCI Newsletter, March 1988:

HOME GROWN PINEAPPLE

With a little extra attention, some really remarkable pineapple fruit can be grown by back yard gardeners. At one time I collected and grew well over 1000 plants. I ripened as many as 100 pineapples in the summer time, all of which were the cultivar "Golden Abakka". I followed three important steps:

Soil Management. Since cultivating South Florida rock is not easy, I suggest using concrete block to make a raised bed about 12" (60 cm) deep. A block bed is best kept small, perhaps 10 feet by 10 feet (3 x 3 m), which is ample room for 25 plants if spaced 2 feet apart (.6 m). Fill the bed with at least 60% dry, crumbly, cow or horse manure and 40% white or grey sand. If well composted manure is not available, then I would recommend a product called "Black Kow Composted Cow Manure". Thoroughly wet down the well mixed bed. Plant crowns or slips directly into loamy soil. I have harvested fruit from crowns in 12 months. Slips usually take 15 to 18 months. When the slips or crowns have been put into the ground, I make certain that no dirt has gotten into the center or heart of the plant. This is easily accomplished by a light spray of water into the heart.



A pineapple of the Abachi (*Abakka*) variety, showing basal slips, crown slips, and crown.

Mulching. Good clean hay is an excellent mulch for prevention of weeds and retention of water in the soil. Also, it keeps dirt from splashing up into the center of a pineapple.

Staking. Supporting "Golden Abakka" fruit is necessary to prevent sunburn. The fruit form and mature on a slender stalk which grows up through the center of the plant. Heavy pineapples often fall to the side, exposing one area to the hot summer sun. Place a wooden stake next to each plant and tie the fruit securely around the crown to keep it upright.

SELECTING A PINEAPPLE

Several factors should be considered in the selection of a pineapple. Color and size are not always dependable guides.

A yellow rind is not necessarily an indication of a good ripe pineapple. Many pineapples reach the market having what dealers call a chocolate-green color, or mottled green and brown. These fruits may be in prime condition. If the crown is small and compact, the fruit is likely to be well developed, while a pineapple with the crown as long or longer than the fruit is not likely to be of first quality. Pulling leaves from the crown is not a dependable test. The best one is to snap the side of the fruit with the thumb and finger. If the result is a hollow thud, the fruit is sour, not well matured, and lacking in juice. If a dull, solid sound results from the snap, it indicates a well-ripened, sound fruit, full of juice. Some experience may be necessary to distinguish between good and inferior fruit by this method, but the sound test is the most dependable guide for choosing a good pineapple.

"LYCHEE OR NOT LYCHEE, THAT IS THE TITLE"

This was the tale told to "Little Grasshopper" by Uncle Ortho:

Once upon a thyme, a longan lime ago, in the land of Chinaberry, there grew a young sprout named Lee Chee. He was very sad because his paw paw had been murdered by the Kumquat brothers, Meiwa and Nagami. To leek revenge, he went to the village Mandarin to learn the marsh-mallow arts. He said to the Mandarin, "Oh, grape Satsuma! Orange you sorrel my paw paw has crocused?" Satsuma replied, "I sapote will be minced." "Mysore-o will last forever!" Lee Chee rasped berry sadly. "Mulching the Kumquats to the compost pile will bring bok choy to my life." "That's a grenadilla! We'll do it surinam, but first we muscadine."

Vinally after maize of practicing marsh-mallow oats and grafts, Lee Chee had onioned the blackberry belt, and was ready to squash the Kumquats. No man ure beast could stop him.

When the Kumquats spied his appeach, they cried, "This is the pits! Let's split!" They rain away, never to be green again.

Full of fruitation, Lee Chee transplanted himself to Holly wood, where he appl'ed himself to a-pearing in seedy Ninja cinnamons.

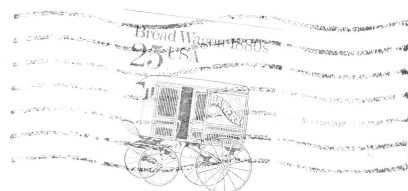
"Rye are you spraying this to me?" asked Little Grasshopper.

"Don't bug me about morels, that's not cricket!" Ortho fumed, and hit the dust.

Little Grasshopper hopped off into the Sunred, muntingiaing to himself, "There's no fuyu like an old fuyu!"

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