



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1989

**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 AUGUST 13, 1989

MEETING PLACE. HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS
CENTER. (COUNTY AG. AGENTS' BUILDING,
SEFFNER.)
Take I-4 to Exit 8 South, State Road 579,
go past traffic light at U.S. 92 inter-
section. Building is less than 1/2 mile
on left (east) side of u.s. 92. Use parking
lot. Meeting room is in rear of building.
Main door will be locked. Walk around.

PROGRAM LEON HEBB OF THE CITRUS BUDWOOD CENTER will speak
on the wide range of citrus available. The citrus
center has tried to assemble in one place every
citrus species available anywhere in the world, plus
all citrus relatives. In addition, we will be doing
some preliminary planning for the Tree Sale.

TREE SALE

This year marks our First Decade of Tree Sales and what can we say? Tote that barge, lift that bale, just be thankful we're not selling a whale! It's time for each member to put shoulder to the wheel, ear to the ground and nose to the grindstone, and how we'll get anything done in this position, only God knows. But seriously, folks - if you don't come out on Saturday, September 23rd and Sunday, September 24th, our one and only fund-raiser flops, and you get no more newsletters. And it is just as important that each of us publicize the sale to everyone and his or her uncle or aunt. POST THE FLYERS wherever you can. If you need more, contact us at the newsletter address.

New for Tree Sale -

This year we will add a new dimension to our sale. Since fruit sales have been going so well the past few years, we have decided to also try to sell preserves, pickles, and baked goods. So get out your tried and true recipes, and make a batch for RFCI! Remember to use utmost hygienic precautions in both preparation and packaging. Because such recipes are often time-consuming and costly, we will have a slightly different split from our usual 50-50 for plants and fruit. Rather, in this instance, the club will get 1/3 of the selling price, and the seller will get 2/3. Of course, donations will be gratefully accepted. As is the case with fresh fruit, there will be no member discounts on these items.

SEED COLLECTING TRIP TO MALAYSIA by Chris Rollins

Chris Rollins is the curator of the Fruit and Spice Park in Homestead, a 20 acre fruit garden for Dade County since 1944. His trip last January took him to Malaysia, which is about half way between Australia and Indochina. Malaysia is an interesting country because it is divided into two distinct geographical areas, several hundred miles apart. At one time Malaysia consisted of a scattered group of small kingdoms. It was united by the British in colonial days but the British granted them their independence after World War 2 and up until recently, they've had a very stable government. The people are very alien to us in customs and lifestyle but they are very courteous and hospitable. English is spoken very widely as well as 55 other languages and dialects. Approximately half of the population is a race known as Malay, people that came in over 1000 years ago from Polynesia and have an Islamic culture. About 25% of the population are Chinese and they've also been there for over 1000 years. About 10% are Indian Hindus and the rest are scattered tribes and Europeans. Until very recently the Chinese and Europeans had been dominant, controlling the economy and politics, but recently the Malaysians have assumed domination and taken over the legislature and declared Islam as the State religion. Now a lot of the Europeans and Chinese that were in power are being evicted from their posts and effectively replaced on a racial basis.

Chris Rollins and the scientists with whom he was traveling landed in Kuala Lumpur in West Malaysia, which is the capitol of Malaysia and is becoming a very influential center, partly because of the exodus of capital from Hong Kong.

Chris showed us slides of some of the beautiful buildings in Kuala Lumpur, which are required tourist sight-seeing spots. One of the striking things about Malaysia was that anywhere you went, there was fruit, and that the entire population was interested in their fruit.

Then he showed us a slide of a tropical market which like all those in Malaysia, was jammed with fruit, and covered about an eight square block area. Chris showed us several slides of markets and the various fruits and vegetables that were displayed there, carambolas, rambutans, bread fruit, mangosteen and jak fruit. Much of the fruit is picked and used green as well as ripe, in order to get the jump on the insects, which are a tremendous problem in Malaysia, much worse than we have in Florida. It was interesting to note that all of the fruit in the market had been bagged in little paper sacks while still on the tree to protect them from the insects and other predators of fruit. Those that are not bagged are removed and used either green or destroyed.

The next slide showed the salak palm which is an extremely spiny trunkless palm from the swamps of Indonesia. Despite the fact that Malaysia has an abundance of fruit of various kinds, they also import the selic palm fruit. The skin of the fruit is like a scaly brown snake skin and the flesh is like a crisp apple. They may be very sour or sweet like an apple and they are very popular. The slide showed the extent of thorns on the tree which indicated how extremely difficult it is to get the fruit. It has to be picked with a pole like you would pick avocados off of a high tree, although the fruit may be only 18" off the ground.

The next slide showed two of the native palms which are very abundant in Malaysia; Nepal palms which grow 60 and 80 feet tall on a very slender trunk and the Sago palm which is the original source of Sago starch which comes from the pith within the stem. The Sago palm grows, matures and flowers one time and dies. Normally they cut the palm down before it flowers and use the stem for starch.

The next slide showed the process by which the Sago palm is shredded and washed in a water trough to remove the starch. The white powder which settles to the bottom in the water trough is an edible starch which takes the place of our wheat starch.

He also showed us slides of the pitcher plant which is an insectivorous plant and the sealing wax palm which is extremely cold sensitive and utterly impossible to grow outside in Florida even in the Keys.

We saw slides of the Malaysian dwarf coconut which is being grown extensively in South Florida to replace the more common coconut which has been decimated by disease, and also the oil palm which has been imported from Africa and planted in plantations for the production of palm oil.

Chris and his group also visited a palm oil factory run by a Chinese owner. The palm fruit from the entire area is processed into palm oil. The factory is self supporting energy-wise in that they burn the residue from the palm oil extraction process to feed the boilers to power the entire plant and the surrounding village.

Next we saw some slides of a palm very important in the area, the rattan palm, from which they make furniture. It's a vining palm of the forest, and the fronds have recurved thorns which hook on to the surrounding foliage and allow the palm to vine up into the forest canopy. The trunk of the palm may only be an inch or so in diameter but it may be as much as 200' in length. However, the forests are being destroyed so rapidly where the rattan grows that rattan will not be available very much longer, at the present rate of destruction, and the government is now trying to develop plantations for rattan.

Another of the palms is the Nipa palm which grows with the mangroves in the brackish waters along the ocean and gulf on the coastline. The Nipa palm sap is used for making sugar in the same manner as the maple tree and the fronds are used for thatching.

Chris showed us some more market scenes with the greatest adversity of fruit and and vegetables that he's ever seen. He pointed out the durians, the sour sops which are an imported tropical plant, lemon grass, ambarellas, key limes which they call Malaysian limes, many different kinds of greens, some cultivated, some brought in from the wilds, velvet leaf, wild aquatic fern and a member of the garcinia family that grows only in the peninsula of West Malaysia, and is a fruit so sour that it actually hurt Chris's hands to open it. Out of four grapefruit size fruit, Chris got two small seeds about the size of kidney beans which were not fully developed and never germinated.

We saw slides of the mangosteen, which is everything they say it is, a beautiful fruit with an exquisite flavor, sweet and melting, and a mangosteen relative, garcinia ombriana, seeds of which they have brought back and hope to propagate. There were many kinds of bananas but none that we haven't seen here in the States. Also, the Vietnamese guava, which is grapefruit size, and the wax jambu. The group brought back three different types of jambus, a green one that stays green when ripe, doesn't turn pink nor white like the ones we have here, a pink one with ridges and a brilliant red one with an excellent flavor, and in the markets they found, of all things, oranges from California, imported, since oranges won't grow in Malaysia. They have some of the most beautiful exotic fruit in the world but they don't have navel oranges and there's really nothing like the navel orange. They import tremendous quantities of oranges from California, Australia and New Zealand.

There were also many rambutans, which is a fruit similar to lychee but maybe not quite as good. Also we saw a slide of the pulasan, which is related to the rambutan but is considerably better with sweeter finer textured flesh. Pulasans come in purple, green and red.

A lot of new fruit are being discovered in these tropical forests and the government is attempting to rescue some of them before they are lost completely, or made into furniture in Japan. One of the trees they saw in a research planning was a giant rambutan, which is about orange size. There are only one or two other trees of this species known to be in existence.

Chris also showed us many slides of vegetables and greens that grow in Southeast Asia and Malaysia, including several that are not cultivated but just collected from the countryside, including some that are illegal in Florida because of their rampant growth in waterways and swampy areas. One of the slides in the market showed bilimbi, which are the sourest fruit imaginable, but when it's cooked, it loses the sourness and all flavor, likewise, so what you have is just a little green blob of tasteless pulp. Chris could not quite understand why people would bother growing it. Also some slides we saw were of jak fruit that ran up to 60 pounds. Everybody on the expedition had to have their picture taken with a big jak fruit. Incidentally, jak fruit are cooked and eaten as a vegetable and are very good.

The next slide was of a champedak, which is a relative of the jak fruit but with much poorer quality flesh. The taste is more like a bad jak fruit.

Chris said it was very frustrating driving through the forest and being on a schedule where he saw strange fruit hanging on the trees, fruit he had never seen before in pictures or in the literature anywhere, and not being able to stop because of his schedule, and there were certainly many of these kind of trees as he went through Malaysia.

The next slide showed the morange which has a skin that feels like a scrub brush and a flesh that is white, very sweet and pleasant. They were growing abundantly throughout Malaysia in almost every neighborhood.

We saw slides of the durian, which grows on a very large tree, as tall as 200 feet. It is native to Malaysia, grows wild in the forest & is a national pastime in Malaysia. During the durian season, the city dwellers pack up their belongings and head to the country to visit their country relatives or just drive through the countryside buying and collecting durians and sampling them. The durian has a lot of folklore surrounding it. Durians are also known for their foul odor and delicious taste. Chris describes the odor as a combination of garlic, onions and sulphur. Some are stronger than others but the flavor is very pleasant and eating durians seems to affect your physiology some way. They were even told not to consume much alcohol when eating durians but one member of the party went out of his way to prove that that was just a folk tale and risked his life to prove it. Durians are not allowed on buses and you can't take them into hotels. If you sneak them in, they will find them, which is easy to do, and make you dispose of them. Durians grow wild in the forest and there are many, many natural genetic variations of durians, including some which have no bad odor at all. The durian has a thick spiny skin and it takes a hefty knife or cleaver to remove the skin. Durians are undoubtedly the most expensive fruit in the world. In some of the markets in Hong Kong and Shanghai a good durian may cost as much as \$30.00 American. The pulp is creamy and custard like and has rather large seeds.

Chris showed us some slides of the betel nut and people chewing them. The betel nut is slightly narcotic. It's chewed with lime which activates alkaloids to produce the narcotic effect. But one of the side effects is to cause one's

teeth to turn black and eventually to dissolve painlessly away. And while you're chewing, your saliva becomes red. It is a custom or habit of the older people and country people. The betel nut grows on a palm tree which is very cold sensitive.

Chris next showed some slides of the pepper vine from which black pepper and white pepper are produced, and also some slides of the cocoa tree from which chocolate is produced. Both of these are important crops in Malaysia. The passion fruit is another crop raised extensively in Malaysia, where they grow the vines on a single wire fence.

The next slide showed a valley in Malaysia which includes a 3000 acre agricultural research farm, and which Chris described as probably the most exciting research farm he had ever seen. Everything there is a valuable useful product and experiment with immediate applicability. The trees in the foreground were a mango collection as the government is still trying to work with mangoes. There was also a little section of native forest remaining and then a large area of flatland where most of the research is conducted. One of the original forest trees which they have still growing there just by random luck is a lychee relative with a fruit the size of an orange. Some people like the fruit, others don't, but there were no ripe fruit when Chris was there and he was unable to sample it. There are only four of these trees known to exist anywhere in the world. One is in the Philippines, one is on the mainland peninsula of Malaysia, one is at this station, and Chris couldn't remember the location of the fourth one. There are probably others in the forest but the forest is being cleared so fast and they are so hard to recognize that they literally are not being saved. Of course, they are trying to propagate and save this species by taking seeds from those trees that they know of. This, obviously, is a good example of the urgency involved in collecting fruit trees and fruit from the forest that is being cleared. Who knows how many unique species of fruit trees have already been lost and how many will be lost as the forests disappear.

JULY PLANT DRAWING

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Surinam Cherry	Edith Freeman	Maya Byvoet
Black Sapote	Bob & Pat Duke	Lloyd Shipley
Annona reticulata	Bob & Pat Duke	Frank Honeycutt
Purple passiflora	Frank Honeycutt	Bell Mendez
Purple Passiflora	" "	Lloyd Shipley
Purple Passiflora	" "	Sherry Pearson
Purple Passiflora	" "	Louis Zoehrer
Purple Passiflora	" "	Michael Oratowski
Atemoya	Armando Mendez	Michael Oratowski
Black Sapote	" "	??
Lychee	" "	Lydia Oratowski
Mamoncillo	" "	Michael Oratowski
Jumbo Grape	RFCI	Bruce Pearson
Blueberry	Harry & Sandy Klaus	Bill Mendez
Cherry of the Rio Grande	Bob Heath	Cathy Day
Guava	" "	Cathy Day
Seed Tray	" "	??
Lady Finger Banana	Bruce & Sherry Pearson	John White
Lady Finger Banana	" " "	A & L Stark
Lady Finger Banana	" " "	Bob Duke
Lady Finger Banana	" " "	?? (2)
Lady Finger Banana	" " "	Maya Byvoet
Peach Tree	" " "	Walter Vines
Peach Tree	" " "	Jo Ann Cimino
Peach Tree	" " "	?? (can't read)
Peach Tree	" " "	Cathy Day
Peach Tree	" " "	Monica Brandies
Papaya	" " "	??
Surinam Cherry	John White	Joe Haskins
Bromeliad	" "	Maya Byvoet
	Jo Ann Cimino	??

THANKS FOR BRINGING TO SHARE.....

Monica Brandies	Kikuzi Squash
Al Hendry	Burr Gherkin
Edith Freedman.	Nisparo Seeds (Loquat from Spain)

July Hospitality Table

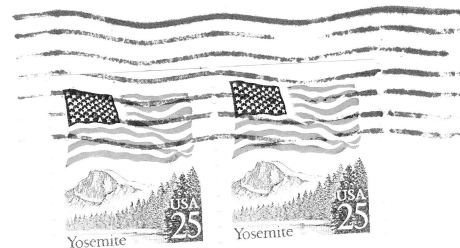
Al Hendry.....	Apple & Orange Juice
Irene Rubenstein.....	New Orleans Date Bars
Lillian Stark.....	Oat 'n Wheat Banana Date Bread

A more regular supply of goodies will insure each meeting has enough for all!

NEW MEMBER:

Frank Novak
2625 - 51st Avenue
Vero Beach, Florida 32966 Tel. 407-567-4762

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