



# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1990

**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 . . . . . APRIL 8, 1990

MEETING PLACE . . . . . HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS  
CENTER. (COUNTY AG. AGENTS' BUILDING, SEFFNER)  
Take I-4 to Exit 8 South, S.R. 579, go past  
traffic light at U.S. 92 intersection.  
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  
probably be locked. Walk around.

PROGRAM . . . . . THE PROGRAM THIS MONTH IS A SPECIAL TREAT  
WITH TOM ECONOMOU, AND A VARIETY OF EXOTIC  
FRUIT. If you have had the pleasure of  
attending one of Tom's programs in the past,  
you certainly will want to attend this month's  
meeting. Tom Economou has made numerous trips  
into the American Tropics, conducting tours  
for our members. He brings to this program a  
fabulous amount of knowledge on exotic tropical  
fruits accentuated by a table full of fruit  
from trees in South Florida. In addition to  
this memorable program, we will have our usual  
tasting table and plant raffle. Please contribute.

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TAMPA RFCI MOURNS the loss of one of our Chapter's founding members, Paul Rubenstein, who passed away suddenly March 11. Paul was an active member, a past president, a fruit tree enthusiast, and was one of the initiators of our annual tree sale. For six years Paul took charge of this major fund-raising effort, and built it into the huge success it has become. It was through his efforts that we were able to purchase our new property. Paul will be sorely missed by all of us, and our thoughts and sympathies are with his wife, Irene, who also has been a long active member, and for years was our Chapter's treasurer.

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## OUR NEW LAWNMOWER

On March 17, Frank Honeycutt and Bob Heath drove up to Spring Hill to see Louis and Margaret Zoehrer. Louis had a riding lawn mower which he chose to donate to the RFCI. The mower is almost new, a Sears Craftsman, 8 horse-power with grass catcher and electric start. It is a great mower and so necessary for our two acre site. Our heartfelt thanks go out to Louis and Margaret for this gift. It is presently being stored in Bob Heath's shop building until such time as we get a storage shed built at the club house on Pruett Road. Dank you again, Louis!

# A FRUITFUL, DELICIOUS MISTAKE By Tom Economou

RAMBUTAN, MAMON CHINO (Sapindaceas, Nephelium lappaceum)

On one of my early Fruit Safari tours to Costa Rica, our Safari group was surveying the tropical plant collection of C.A.T.I.E., the 2,100 acre experimental farm in the city of Turrialba. Dr. Jorge Leon, acting director of the research station, had graciously instructed his staff to collect and save a bushel of ripe mangosteens for our group to taste on our visit. Eating that fruit was like being in tropical fruit heaven!

As our group of 19 ate this popular fruit of Southeast Asia under two mango-steen trees - often called the "king of fruits" - I noticed another tall (25-30 foot) wide-canopied tree with lots of small, dark red fruits on the ground. I walked over and picked up some fruit. The skin was thick, about 1/4 inch. I peeled the fruit with my finger nails with some difficulty. The inside looked and tasted similar to the lychee, but not as sweet. I knew it wasn't a lychee from the thickness of the skin. I surmised that I was tasting - for the first time ever - a rambutan, a close relative to the lychee (*Litchi chinensis*) that I had read about. This was my first experience with this native fruit of the islands of the South Pacific between the Philippines and Malaysia.

I continued to sample fruit off the ground. Others joined in when they had finished their mangosteens. Everyone liked the new fruit and agreed that it did taste like a lychee.

The ground was covered with many seedlings and seeds that had germinated. I suggested that anyone who wanted to collect seeds - and germinated seeds - to take back to the United States, should get their plastic bags out. I also told everyone that we would be allowed to bring back these small plants/seeds subject to USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) permission upon our return to Miami/Los Angeles.

This was August. We looked but did not find the fresh rambutan in the Costa Rican markets that year. Our safari group returned to the United States after eight days. Everyone, to my knowledge, was able to get their seeds through USDA inspection. I and others on the safari planted our seeds, and passed out seeds at Fruit Council meetings. I lost all my seedlings to the cold the following winter. Fortunately, the plants I gave Dr. Bob McNaughton (Miami) and Joe Constantin (founder of the Tampa Rare Fruit Council) were protected in their greenhouses. I learned early in my travels that Bob and Joe were dependable growers - men with unbeatable green thumbs and two of our best tropical fruit plant growers. (Unfortunately, Joe is confined to his Clear-water home by illness - we miss you, Joe.)

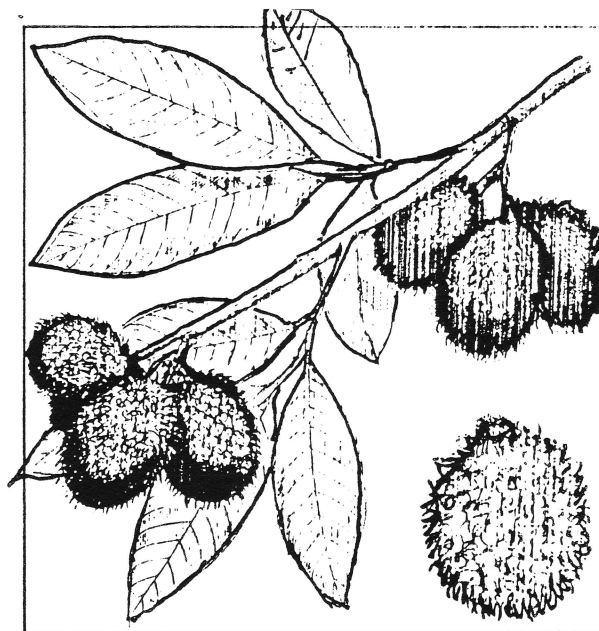
The following year, another safari group returned to Costa Rica. The CATIE experimental farm's fruit collection was visited. Again, I thanked Dr. Jorge Leon for the mangosteens he had given us. For the first time I told him about collecting rambutan seeds the previous year and what had happened to my "rambutan" seedlings. Jorge said, "Tom, the seeds you got were not rambutan. We don't have a rambutan tree in our collection. The tree next to the mangosteens is a pulasan (*Nephelium mutabile*), a close relative to the rambutan. And it is a much better fruit!"

# HORTICULTURAL & MARKETING NOTE

(Tom Economou)

In recent years - nearly five or six years - the rambutan has been introduced to Costa Rica and has become very popular and an important fruit in the markets. There are two color varieties, deep red and bright yellow. The taste of each are similar, moderately sweet and slightly acid and equally good. Rambutans are found in Costa Rica 'for sale' from July through September.

The trees mature rapidly and produce fruit within three years from seed. They enjoy the low-land tropics and are considered cold sensitive. The rambutan is spreading to other tropical American countries such as Columbia and Guatemala because of its easy and rapid growth from seed.



*Nephelium lappaceum*, rambutan

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The new Board of Directors have elected the following executive officers and chairpersons:

President	- Jules Cohan
Vice President	- Bob Heath, Arnold Stark
Treasurer	- Lillian Stark
Recording Secretary	- Bobbie Puls
Corresponding Secretary	- Edith Freedman
Program Chairman	- Al Hendry
Membership Chairman	- Monica Brandies
Tree Sale Chairman	- Bob Heath, Arnold Stark
Plant Drawing Chairman	- Frank Honeycutt
Tissue Culture Chairman	- Walter Vines
Library Chairman	- Alice Burhenn
Hospitality Chairman	- Al & Pat Jean
Research Chairman	- Bob Heath
Seed Chairman	- Arnold Stark
Seffner Planting Chairman	- Arnold Stark

MARCH HOSPITALITY TABLE:

JoAnn Cimino.....Fruit Muffins, Cranberry Raisin Sweet Bread  
 Al Hendry.....fresh Strawberries  
 Pat Jean.....Sour Orange Squares  
 Joan Murrie.....Tamarind Juice  
 Alicia Pruet.....Peanut Butter Fingers  
 Arnold & Lillian Stark.....Hamentaschen (Purim pastries), fresh Mulberries

MARCH PLANT DRAWING:

<u>PLANT</u>	<u>DONOR</u>	<u>WINNER</u>
Camphor Tree	Louis Figueroa	?????
Muscadine Wine	Jim Murrie	Armando Mendez
Orange Berry	Bob Heath	Frank Honeycutt
Longan	Bob Heath	Laura Caradonna
Surinam Cherry	Bob Heath	Leo Cotter
Mulberry	Bob Heath	Bobbie Puls
Rangoon Creeper	Bob Heath	Armando Mendez
Lemon Grass	Lloyd Shipley	Alice Burhenn
Malanga	Pat Jean	Jules Cohan
Fig	Charles Novak	Walter Vines
Kiwi	Charles Novak	Frank Honeycutt
Julie Mango	RFCI	Jules Cohan
Barbados Cherry	Walter Vines	Bob Heath
Barbados Cherry	Walter Vines	Al Hendry
Spearmint	Walter Vines	Harry Klaus
Spearmint	Walter Vines	Will Miller
Hot Peppers	A & L Stark	Bill Mendez
Hot Peppers	A & L Stark	Louis Figueroa
Kwaimuk	A & L Stark	??? (can't read!)
Annato	A & L Stark	Charles Pruet
Banana	Monica Brandies	Jim Murrie
Basil	Charles Pruet	Bobbie Puls
Basil	Charles Pruet	A & L Stark
Basil	Charles Pruet	Win Miller
Basil	Charles Pruet	Bob Heath
Basil	Charles Pruet	Armando Mendez
Basil	Charles Pruet	Alice Burhenn
Basil	Charles Pruet	Monica Brandies
Basil	Charles Pruet	Louis Figueroa

NATURE TRAIL SAFARIS

Tom Economou, who will be our next speaker for a "Tropical Fruit Fiesta", runs NATURE TRAIL, a provider of tropical botanical safaris. He has announced several upcoming trips: June 6-16 and June 30 - July 7 to Guatemala, and August 18-25 to Costa Rica. For more information, pick up flyers at the meeting, or call Tom Economou at (305) 285-7173.



## FARMERS OF AMERICA

by Lewis Maxwell

Farmers of America are furnishing the most nutritious, and least expensive food in the world. Those who are low rating, and claiming poisons in our food are not the educated agriculturists or nutritionists but the movie stars and the health food nuts that know little of agriculture or health.

Organic gardening is a throw-back to agriculture in the middle ages. Look at the countries that practice farming with no pesticides or commercial fertilizers such as Ethiopia, Sudan, etc. Would you like to live there?

Paracelsus, a Swiss physician in 1567, wrote, "What is it that is not poison? All things are poison and nothing is without poison. It is the dose only that makes a thing not a poison." There are some chemicals that are very toxic acutely, but chronically, that in very small amounts are not toxic but may even be essential to life.

For example, Vitamin D is highly toxic acutely with an oral LD<sub>50</sub> of about 10 mg/kg which is the same for the insecticide parathion. If Vitamin D were not exempted from the Hazardous Substances Labeling Acts by virtue of its being a good or a drug, it would be required to carry a poison label. This is something to remember the next time you hear a scare story about pesticides and their dangers.

It is interesting that in the 50 or so years of man's use of pesticides his life span has increased from 50 to 74 years.

Human ecologists accredited three major factors to this extra life span. They are: 1. Sanitation, 2. Insecticides, and 3. Drugs. (Source Colorado State University)

The National Academy of Science reports: withdrawal of pesticides would result in a 30% reduction of crop yields, 50 to 75% increase in the price of farm products, and the complete elimination of farm exports.

Instead of the 17% of our income that we now spend on food, we would have to spend at least 30-40% of our income for this same food.

Dr. Bruce Ames, chairman of the Biochemistry Department at the University in Berkeley, recently stated that "the total amount of possible carcinogenic pesticides we eat in a day, on average, is both trivial and about twenty times less in amount than that of the known natural carcinogens in a cup of coffee, which in itself is a minimum risk."

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PAPAYA RELATIVES

(Continued from last issue)

by Ray Thorndike

C. goudotiana is a very ornamental species said to be a very vigorous grower and highly productive. The leaves are very deeply lobed. Ripe fruits are a glowing yellow or yellow with a red blush and may weigh 12 ounces. With the addition of a little sugar, they make a good eating fresh fruit. When candied, they become transparent. C. goudotiana and C. stipulata both are dioecious and both are native to the cool highlands of Ecuador and Colombia.

C. pubescens, the "Papuela" or "Siglalon", sometimes confused with C. candamarcensis, is a large, heavy-trunked plant. It is semi-deciduous, shedding its leaves for a short time in the winter. The fruit, which

ripens in spring and early summer, is sour but has a pleasant aromatic flavor when steamed with sugar. When ripe, the Siglalon has a very short shelf life.

Other species mentioned in the limited bibliography available to this author are:

C. monoica, a relatively hardy and very ornamental species, bears edible fruit which is enjoyed fresh with sugar. Its leaves are also edible and used like spinach.

C. microcarpa has a fruit that is merely cherry-sized.

#### Bibliography

- (1) John M. Riley, The Papaya and its Relatives, 1976 Yearbook, Vol. 8, California Rare Fruit Growers
- (2) Joh C. Hofmann, The Babaco - Ecuadorian Fruit with Commercial Potential, 1981 Yearbook, Vol. 13, California Rare Fruit Growers
- (3) Dick J.W. Endt, The Babaco - A New Fruit in New Zealand to Reach Commercial Production, The Orchardist of New Zealand, March 1981
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- (5) L.H. Bailey, Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture, MacMillan, N.Y. 1963

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