



# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 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 . . . . . SEPTEMBER 9, 1990

MEETING PLACE . . . . . THE HOME OF JANET CONARD, 919 W. HENRY AVE.,  
TAMPA, PHONE 239-9246. YOU WILL FIND JANET'S  
HOUSE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF HANRY AVE.,  
BETWEEN KENNETH AVE. & THE RIVER, NINE BLOCKS  
WEST OF FLORIDA AVE. AND FOUR BLOCKS NORTH  
OF HILLSBOROUGH AVE. TAKE I-75/275 TO THE  
HILLSBOROUGH EXIT & GO WEST TO FLORIDA,  
HIGHLAND OR OLA, AND THEN NORTH TO HENRY AVE.  
THEN WEST ON HENRY TO JANET'S.

PROGRAM . . . . . POT-LUCK (COVERED DISH) LUNCHEON AT 1:00 p.m.  
PLEASE BRING COLD DISHES SUCH AS SALADS,  
LUNCHEON MEAT, BREADS, DESSERTS, ETC. THAT  
DO NOT HAVE TO BE WARMED UP, UNLESS YOU  
HAVE A FAVORITE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BRING  
THAT IS HOT. WE DO HAVE A MICROWAVE. IF  
YOU HAVE ANY FOLDING CHAIRS, PLEASE BRING  
THEM TOO. THERE WILL BE A PLANT RAFFLE AND  
A VERY IMPORTANT PLANNING SESSION FOR NEXT  
MONTH'S ANNUAL PLANT SALE. PLEASE BE THERE!!

**\*\* PLEASE POST THE ENCLOSED FLIERS IN A PUBLIC PLACE IN YOUR AREA TO ADVERTISE  
OUR UPCOMING PLANT SALE \*\***

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\* YOUR RFCI NEEDS YOU!!! \*

\* The Annual Tree Sale is the Life's Blood (Sap?) of our \*

\* Organization. Without a successful Sale, we could have \*

\* no speakers for our programs, and we could not publish \*

\* this Newsletter - in short, there would be no RFCI! \*

\* We cannot have a successful Sale without enough people- \*

\* power, both Saturday for set-up, and Sunday, the day of \*

\* the Sale. \*

\* YOUR PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL - PLEASE BE THERE!!! \*

\* \* \* \* \*

## TREE SALE . . .

If the RFCI is important to you, then you should join your fellow members in helping to make our sale its usual huge success. There are so many things we need help with, that we could not possibly mention it all here. Join us at the next meeting, where we will discuss many specifics, and have sign-up sheets available for the various plant sale committees. Participation in the Plant Sale will also reap higher benefits in the form of greater discounts on plant purchases than will be enjoyed by non-working members.

In addition to physical help on both Saturday and Sunday, I hope that some of our members are planning to bring some plants for sale. Our suppliers generally bring many beautiful plants, all of relatively large size. Many of our customers are also interested in experimenting with more varieties and will purchase more plants if we have smaller size plants that sell for less (we usually have tables set up for such specials, at \$1.00, \$2.00 and \$3.00) and our members generally supply these. Remember, we deal with these sales the same as we do with our commercial suppliers, i.e., the sale price is split evenly between the seller and the Club. Be sure to keep this in mind when setting your prices, which should be in half dollar increments. Plants should be clearly labelled as to type and price. All members who wish to sell plants must provide us with a specific manifest, listing quantity, type and selling price, and using the same forms provided our suppliers (no scrap paper is acceptable!). These forms will be available at the next meeting, and at the Armory the day before the sale (Saturday). No plants may be brought for sale on Sunday, the day of the sale; they must all be delivered to the Armory on Saturday. The same is required of our commercial suppliers, as things are far too hectic that morning to deal with plant unloading and inventory.

Any member who wishes to donate plants to the sale may do so, and such donation will be much appreciated. Again, we request that they be delivered to the Armory on Saturday. If you are selling plants, or donating plants to the sale, please be sure to sign the appropriate sheet at the next meeting.

Also, remember we are selling baked goods, pickles, jams, jellies, etc., with the producer getting 2/3 of the price instead of the usual 1/2, to help defray the high cost and energy of production. Please be sure all items are packaged so as not to encourage sampling on Armory premises, but rather upon the purchaser's arriving home, etc. So as to insure freshness of baked goods, these items may be brought to the Armory on Sunday morning.

## TREE SALE NOTES:

- 1) All RFCI members, whether they work at the sale or not, receive a 10% discount on purchases at the sale (upon proof of membership).
- 2) Those who work a half day or more, receive a 25% discount on plants selected prior to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.
- 3) Workers receive a 50% discount on plants still on the sales floor after 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.
- 4) Workers may select plants prior to the sale until 12:00 noon on Sunday. These plants may be stored in the designated area during the sale after being checked out.
- 5) No plants may be moved from the sales floor between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. Sunday.
- 6) There are no discounts at all on fresh fruit or baked goods, etc. sales.

## BEMIS GORDON'S AMAZING ACRES

Sunday was a beautiful day, hot and clear at the Gordons' gardens east of Brooksville. On this field trip, Faye Gordon was our hostess and provided a comfortable place for us to sit and chat between tours of the Gordons' 40 acre garden. An amazing spread of baked goodies was provided by Mrs. Margaret Zoehrer. No stomach went away empty, no palate went away disappointed.

The first tour started about 2:15 and went through Gordons' nursery and out into the planting fields. Bemis has well over 100 different varieties of pear tree, most of which have already fruited. He also has a great variety of peach trees, plum trees and apple trees, all of which are planted in rows and well kept.

To control the weeds and provide mulch around all the trees, he has covered the ground with used carpeting. Local carpet installers in Brooksville save the used carpet removed from homes and businesses and appreciate Bemis removing same from their premises. He spreads the carpets finish side down, around the trees to control the weeds. This is an excellent idea and may be used with good results in some of our own gardens.

Of special interest was his kiwi vines, two different types, the larger brown fuzzy-skinned common variety and the hardy smaller smooth skinned variety which is much less well known. Both types have fruited for Bemis in Brooksville and we hope to obtain the same results soon in the Tampa area.

Bemis is also experimenting with muscadine grapes and has crossed several varieties for his own pleasure and curiosity. Actually everything that Bemis is growing on his 40 acres is a result of his curiosity and own pleasure. He is a man devoted to the growing of fruiting plants and beautiful flowers. His efforts with day lillies is legend. He is now interested in roses, and you can rest assured that some beautiful roses will come out of this.

After a very pleasant interlude with delicious food and drink, we toured the north half of Bemis's gardens where he was growing many unusual things. There were many hardy varieties of bamboo, a small grove of sassafras, a close relative of the monkey puzzle tree, several beautiful flowering trees, one example of a Chinese tree which was believed to be extinct a few years back, several varieties of named loquat which produce extra large fruit, and several other trees of different types.

Finally, we had the pleasure of raiding his chestnut grove, a half dozen or more of mature Chinese chestnut trees in full production with a scattering of nuts covering the ground.

Needless to say, everyone stocked up on these delicious nuts taken from their thorny seed pods.

After a pleasant, educational and enjoyable day, the membership bid farewell to Faye and Bemis and headed back to the Tampa Bay area.

At this point, we want to thank Bemis and his gracious wife for inviting us to this tour of their botanical extravaganza.

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#### THE MYRTACEAE FAMILY (continued)

##### Pitomba (*Eugenia luschnathiana*)

The Pitomba can be used either as a hedge or as a specimen tree. They fruit in the months of May and June. The foliage is a lighter green than some other members of the Myrtaceae family. The fruit is larger, sometimes golf ball size, and a brilliant yellow. It has very tasty flesh, somewhat resembling apricot in flavor, and makes a preserve very similar to apricot preserve.

Propagation is by seed, which occur one or two per fruit. Seedlings take about 3 years to bear fruit.

This plant is a bit sensitive to cold but recovers quickly when frozen.

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