



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1991

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: BOB HEATH
THERESA HEATH
ARNOLD STARK
LILLIAN STARK

PRESIDENT: LILLIAN STARK

CHAPTER MAIL ADDRESS: 313 PRUETT RD., SEFFNER FL 33584
(INCLUDING RENEWALS)

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 2:00 pm.

NEXT MEETING AUGUST 11, 1991

MEETING PLACE RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL CLUBHOUSE.
313 Pruett Road, Seffner. Take I-4 to Exit 8 North, SR 579, go one mile to Pruett Rd. (See McDonald School sign), turn right (East). Go one mile. See clubhouse on left immediately past McDonald School.

PROGRAM FRUITING PALMS BY DR. FREDERICK B. ESSIG.
Dr. Essig is the director of the University of South Florida Botanical Gardens. He will discuss the several palm trees that produce edible fruit. This is information on a subject not often available to members of our group and should be of great interest. Dr. Essig will also tell us about the botanical gardens at U.S.F. and his plans for the future.
We will also have our usual tasting table and plant raffle. Please contribute.

New Members:

Ch. & Margaret Maquet 5216 Birchwood Dr. Zephyrhills, FL 33541
(813)783-3699

Mark & Susan Bennett 1316 Weber Dr. Clearwater, FL 34624
(813)535-1883

Volunteers Needed

There is still a great deal of yard work to be done. The ground over the drainfield needs to be leveled. It was suggested that this could be accomplished by dragging a piece of chain-link fence over the ground with a tractor. Also, there is a pit in the back that needs filling with dirt (we need the dirt too). Call Arnold Stark if you can do any of these jobs (654-4198).

We are scheduling a yard work day on Saturday August 17 for general maintenance and clean up. We will start by 10 A.M. and continue until about 4 P.M. Please mark the date on your calender and plan on coming. Come as early as you can, work as long as you can. Bring a picnic lunch!

CITRUS by Pamela and Bill Gilmore

Pam and Bill own and operate the Pleasant Trees Nursery in Dade City. The main thrust of their business is strictly to provide the home owner with a good basic system for growing trees and to provide them with a line of products that makes this job easy and effective. They currently grow 53 varieties of citrus. They grow their trees in the 4 x 4 citra pot which is easy to package and ship throughout the state.

Bill indicated that to insure success in raising citrus trees, the first and most important step is to select a healthy tree. There are several good indications of a healthy tree in the nursery. Look first for an abundance of new growth. Look for bright waxy leaves. This tells you that your root system is in good shape. One of the biggest problems that home owners have with their trees is root rot fungus in the soil, which may occur in a potting soil that is poorly drained. It may be in the roots of a tree grown in a field nursery and potted for sale. If the fungus exists in the ground, it may be carried with the tree. A smaller tree frequently will grow better and establish a root system better than a larger tree in a small pot. The root system should be relatively in the same size and shape as the tree above ground. A large tree in a small pot may have only 16 or 20 percent of the root system that's needed for producing fruit. So that when the tree is planted, it will take a year or so under ideal conditions for the roots to develop the symmetry of the top growth needed to produce fruit. It is also important that you select a grafted or budded tree on the proper rootstock. A seedling tree may take 7 to 10 years to produce fruit and the quality of the fruit is undetermined before fruiting. Also the root stock of a seedling tree may lack disease resistance and other desirable characteristics.

There are four major root stock that you may encounter in selecting citrus trees. Bill indicated that in their nursery they use almost exclusively a Cleopatra Mandarin root stock. This is a good all around root stock. Its main drawback is that the fruit grown on the trees grafted on this root stock tend to be slightly smaller than on others. The sour orange root stock was at one time the most widely used root stock for grapefruit and navel oranges, but it is no longer recommended for anyone to use anywhere under any conditions for any citrus. It is highly subject to the disease tristeza, which is a wood virus. The virus causes stunting in the tree and causes pitting at the bud union which interferes with the tree's feeding. In the nursery the tree may put on a host of small fruit which will never ripen but may induce the unwary to buy the tree. Tristeza is spread by winged aphids and even if the tree is healthy when you plant it, it is still subject to infestation by the virus from area trees which have the virus.

Carrizo Citrange root stock is a very vigorous root stock but is not quite as cold hardy as the Cleopatra. The fruit will be larger and the tree will grow faster. It is subject to some less damaging wood viruses but is not susceptible to tristeza. Swingle is the newest release for a root stock. It is very cold hardy, is not subject to tristeza, but causes a slower growing tree. And the fruit left on the tree tends to dry quicker on Swingle and Carrizo root stock than on Cleopatra.

A couple of points which Bill commented on in planting the tree is to plant the tree at the same level that it's growing in the pot, being careful to keep the bud union above the ground. Also, after digging the hole, fill the hole with water and allow it to wet all the adjoining soil very well. After the plant is in place, use plenty of water in placing the soil around it. This will eliminate any air pockets and compact the soil to the proper density. Bill cautioned not to water citrus too often or too heavily. He said that the citrus tree will let you know when it needs water. If the mature leaves show signs of wilting, then the tree probably needs water. Over-watering is probably the main cause of fungal

diseases and once the fungus has established itself in the root system, it is virtually impossible for the home owner to eliminate it.

A newly planted tree requires about 1/2 lb. of a mild fertilizer such as 6-6-6 every 6 to 8 weeks through the first year. After the first year, a pound for each year of age, divided into four applications through the year. It is important that the tree gets in the fertilizer all the minor elements that are available. Otherwise they will suffer from deficiencies.

Mites are the biggest pest that bothers citrus trees, red spider mites which you can see as very small red dots on the foliage, and rust mites which cause the black blemishes on the fruit. Both of these can be controlled with insecticidal soap. Bill recommends using Murphy's Oil Soap for both the red spider mite and the rust mite, at the rate of 1/4 cup per gallon, or purchase it in the spray bottle ready to use. Scab is also a pest of citrus fruit. This scars the fruit but does not damage the inside and it may be controlled with a copper spray after petal fall in the spring. The pH of the soil is also very important for rapid growth of citrus trees. The slightly acid soil of 5 to 5-1/2 on the west coast of central Florida may be good for azaleas and blueberries, but citrus prefers a pH of 6-1/2 to 7 for rapid growth. Bill recommends the use of dolomite at the planting site and at a rate of 5 pounds per tree per year. Tests have indicated that a tree will grow twice as fast at these higher pH's.

To summarize, Bill said, grow your citrus in well drained soil at a neutral pH value, use a fertilizer with all the micro nutrients such as Dr. Chatelier's, keep the area around the tree clear or provide a neutral mulch which doesn't touch the tree trunk. Water amply but only when the tree needs water and control the mites, aphids and scab.

At this point Bill turned the meeting over to Pamela, who proceeded to show us several of the trees which they had brought and to describe the fruit and trees. Pam emphasized that all of their trees are on Cleopatra Mandarin root stock. The Cleopatra is a small, sour mandarin resistant to tristeza and many other citrus diseases and is highly adaptable to many different soil types, is relatively cold hardy and creates a massive root system for the scion tree. The scion wood for grafting is taken from what might be called the middle wood. It's not near the tip which is too tender and will not take and it is not the old hard wood that is difficult to work with and grows poorly. It is wood that has hardened some but has not reached its full hardness. Select a plump bud, remove the thorn and the leaf. The bud eye is cut off in a small oval shape. In the root stock cut an inverted "T" and slide the bud right into the root stock under the bark. The bud should be wrapped with grafting tape and left in the greenhouse, wrapped, for about 8 to 10 days. It is then unwrapped so it may grow and the top of the root stock above the bud is bent down and tied off so that the growing bud will grow straight up rather than off to one side. When the bud sprout reaches about 3", cut off the root stock above the bud. The best time for budding and grafting is in the early spring, beginning as early as late February, and is best performed between flushes so that after the bud is inserted, the next flush will cause it to grow.

The first tree that Pam showed us was the new Amber Sweet. It is the result of a cross-pollination program in Lake Alfred and has only recently been released for commercial production. It is a Clementine tangerine crossed with tangelo, which technically makes it a tangelo, but Florida is trying to get it classified as a round orange because it is very similar to a Mandarin type orange. It is very sweet and easy to peel and has a very good flavor.

The next tree she showed us was a Page orange. It is a cross between a Clementine and a Minneola tangelo, made in Washington, D.C. in 1942. It is a very early orange, excellent as a fresh fruit and for juicing. It is sometimes called the Christmas orange because it is fully ripe at Christmas time. She had two blood oranges, the

Budd Blood and the Sanguinelli. The heat and humidity in central Florida affects the pigmentation of blood oranges. That's why you will not find purple interiors in Florida. The Budd Blood is a round orange. It bears on the outside of the tree exposed to the sun so what you get is merely red streaking instead of solid red flesh. They are very pretty and the flavor is good, similar to a Valencia orange. The Sanguinelli is a close relative of the Budd Blood, comes from Italy, and fruits throughout the tree so the interior fruit are frequently much better pigmented than the Budd Blood. They are an oval shaped fruit, ripe in February and hold very well on the tree so you get a 3-month harvest period.

The Cara Cara is a red navel orange discovered in a Venezuelan grove and brought to the United States in 1976. The Cara Cara is from a grove of Washington navels and is a natural occurring sport thereof. It is early, starting to ripen in November, the same as the Washington Navel. It is the same size as the Washington Navel and very similar, except that it is blood red on the inside.

The Chinotto is an ever bearing sour orange from Italy. It is a Mandarin cross and tends to bear several crops a year, so there may be fruit on the tree all year round. It is very sour, very acidic, but excellent for marmalade and candied fruit.

The honey tangerine was developed in California about the time of World War 2. It is a cross between a King Mandarin and a Mediterranean Mandarin so it is relatively cold hardy. It is light, honey colored inside and very sweet. It is not a commercial fruit because it tends to plug when it's picked and it bruises easily in shipping. The tree is ornamental and very hardy. It is a great door yard fruit and if it plugs when you pick it, you're going to eat it, so who cares?

The Karamandarin is a cross between a Satsuma Mandarin and a King Mandarin. It's a commercial fruit in California but there are very few grown in Florida. They are very late, ripening about the same time as the Valencia orange, April, May and June. So for extending your citrus planting, the Kara will take you right on into early summer. It is cold hardy, like the rest of the Mandarin family.

The Wekiwa Pink tangelo is fairly rare and unusual. It is a hybrid of the pink grapefruit and a tangelo. It is a vigorous growing tree, fairly cold tolerant and produces a bright yellow fruit like a grapefruit but bright pink on the inside. The most unique part of the Wekiwa is its flavor. It seems to have a little of the flavor of the pineapple and strawberry. It's probably one of the best kept secrets in the citrus industry.

The Hirado Buntan is a vigorous growing tree smaller than a grapefruit tree but with fruit the size of a honeydew melon. The fruit, however, peel down to something more like the size of a grapefruit. The are light yellow on the outside like a grapefruit but inside they are lime green and the taste is like sweet lemonade without that bitterness that grapefruit have. It is one of the few citrus trees that will grow in salt marsh areas and near brackish water because of their salt tolerance. They are very easy to section and that lime green color in a fruit salad is spectacular.

The Siamese pummelo is from Thailand, very similar to the Hirado in its growth habit and fruit size, but the flesh inside is a light cream color like grapefruit; the flavor, however, is like sweet lemonade.

The Buddha's hand is undoubtedly the most unusual thing in the citrus family. It's real value is in the looking and the shock effect but the Buddha's hand can be peeled like an apple or cut up and put in a green salad. Unfortunately, they are very cold sensitive.

The Persian apple citron is very similar to the Buddha's hand in flavor and is a beautiful orange yellow color when ripe. Most fruit ripens between July and December but they will usually put on some fruit throughout the year. They are also very cold sensitive but they don't get extremely large and can be treated as a container plant.

The Corsican sweet lemon is actually a citron. They come from Corsica and are quite cold sensitive but make a beautiful potted plant. They are incredibly fast growing.

Spanish pink lemon is variegated. It is very unusual with variegated foliage and the fruit is also variegated with green and yellow stripes. The fruit is the source of pink lemonade although the pink color is much less evident than in the pink lemonade that you buy. That has been colored to produce more pink.

PLANT RAFFLE :July.

<u>PLANT NAME</u>	<u>DONOR</u>	<u>WINNER</u>
Buddha's Hand Citron	Stark	Heath
Pink Papaya	Burhenn	B. Pearson
Pineapple Sage	Burhenn	J. Murrie
Lemon Balm	Burhenn	Rome Vaccaro
Jalapeno	Burhenn	Stark
Jalapeno	Burhenn	?
Tropical Oregano	Burhenn	Heath
Tropical Oregano	Burhenn	Zmoda
Kiwi	Charles Novak	Maggie Marquet
Kiwi	Charles Novak	?
Ice Cream Banana	Jim Murrie	Nancy McCormack
Pink Papaya	F. Honeycutt	Elisa Harter
Dorman Red Raspberry	Rome Vaccaro	?
Hardy Papaya	F. Honeycutt	Elisa Harter
Hardy Papaya(X2)	F. Honeycutt	J. Murrie
Hardy Papaya	F. Honeycutt	Jules Cohan
Chaya(X2)	F. Honeycutt	Elisa Harter
Celeste fig	F. Honeycutt	Rome Vaccaro
Celeste fig	F. Honeycutt	Maggie Marquet
Celeste fig	F. Honeycutt	J. Murrie
Celeste fig	F. Honeycutt	A. Burhenn
Celeste fig	F. Honeycutt	Elisa Harter
Kadota fig	F. Honeycutt	?
Carissa	Frank Tintera	Jules Cohan
Chaya	Heath	?
Passion Fruit	Heath	Elisa Harter
Pomegranate	Paul Zmoda	Charles Novak
Cherry of the Rio Grande	Heath	?

Hospitality Table: July

Bruce Pearson: Mombin fruit

Stark: Peach jam and crackers

Heath: Date Nut cake

Burhenn: Choco-dot pumpkin cake

Pat Jean: cheese & crackers

Elisa Harter: fresh papaya, pickled papaya

Jud Newcombe: Carob & Black Walnut bread

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

To Bob Heath for the beautiful Jaboticaba which was auctioned at the July meeting. Alice Burhenn was the happy high bidder.

To Bob Heath, Frank Honeycutt, Max Means, Jud Newcombe, Charles Novak, Arnold Stark, Lillian Stark, and Paul Zmoda for being at our last Work-Day on July 28. Bushes were trimmed, crinums were transplanted, weeds were pulled, and grass was mowed. Bob and Frank built a new door for the shed and fixed its roof so the mower can be stored on site. (Now we need some of you to volunteer to get the mower in working condition and to use the mower on our grass)

To Janet Conard for agreeing to coordinate the tasting table at the next meeting. But she needs you to also bring some goodies!

PUSH MOWER...

A while back one of our members graciously offered to give the Club a push mower. Whoever made the offer, now is the time. We need the push mower for the fenced area. Thank you.

* * *

Tampa Bay RFCI
313 Pruett Rd.
Seffner FL 33584



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12th Annual
FRUIT TREE SALE
Sunday, October 13, 1991
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

FT. HOMER HESTERLY ARMORY
500 N. Howard Ave. – Tampa

I-275 Exit 24 – 5 blocks South on Armenia Ave.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING

APPLES
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AVOCADOS
BANANAS
BARBADOS CHERRIES
BLACKBERRIES
BLUEBERRIES
CARAMBOLAS
CHERRIES OF RIO GRANDE
CHINESE CHESTNUTS
FIGS
GRAPES

GRUMICHAMAS
GUAVAS
JABOTICABAS
LOQUATS
LONGANS
LYCHEES
MACADAMIA NUTS
MANGOS
PAPAYAS
PEACHES
PEARS
PERSIMMONS

PECANS
PINEAPPLES
POMEGRANATES
BLACK RASPBERRIES
TREE TOMATOES
GRAPEFRUIT
KUMQUATS
LEMONS
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ORANGES
TANGERINES

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