



# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1992

**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 P.M.

NEXT MEETING . . . . . MARCH 8, 1992

MEETING PLACE. . . . . RARE FRUIT COUNCIL CLUBHOUSE. 313 PRUETT RD.,  
SEFFNER. Take I-4 to Exit 8 North, S.R. 579,  
go one mile to Pruett (see McDonald School  
sign.) Turn right (East). Go one mile. See  
clubhouse on left immediately past McDonald  
School.

PROGRAM . . . . . PLANT PROPAGATION WORKSHOP  
(or... How to Make Graft)  
Our resident experts will demonstrate their  
skills and show you their techniques for  
plant propagation methods, including:  
cuttings, air layers, grafts, and budding.  
Audio-visual aids will also be presented.  
Anyone who has root stock or bud wood should  
plan on bringing it along and please call Bob  
Heath (289-1068) or Al Hendry (977-2988) to  
let them know what to expect. Also bring along  
grafting supplies if you have them. And get  
your questions ready!

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## RECIPE: COCONUT RAISIN COOKIES

1 cup brown sugar	1/2 cup raisins, chopped
1 egg	2 cups flour
2 Tablespoons grated orange peel	2 teaspoons baking powder
3 Tablespoons orange juice	1 cup shredded coconut
1 teaspoon rum extract	3/4 cup walnuts, chopped
1 cup oleo (room temperature)	

In large bowl, beat sugar, butter, egg, orange peel, juice and rum extract. Stir in raisins, flour and baking powder, mixing until blended. Drop by heaping teaspoons on greased cookie sheet. Bake for 10-12 minutes until lightly browned.

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## GROWING AND EATING EXOTIC FRUITS by Marian Van Atta

Marian started her talk with a slide showing a beautiful display of fruit. "Unfortunately," she said, "this picture was made in California. Somehow, it seems as though California is blessed with a much more diversified climate than Florida, having dryer areas, wetter areas and cooler areas so they can grow a greater array of plants."

She pointed out the kiwano, the African horned cucumber, and indicated that it was rather difficult to grow, although personally I have had little trouble growing it in my yard. Growers thought that with the kiwano, they may have an exciting new fruit, such as the kiwi, and do very well in growing it. But the plant has proved itself difficult to grow, the fruit is covered with very sharp spines which have to be removed before marketing and the flavor of the fruit is rather bland. She also pointed out the kiwi fruit and indicated that it is being grown extensively in South Carolina and is being grown in south Georgia and in north Florida. With her inquiry as to whether we have any fruiting vines in the area, she was advised that Bemis Gordon is fruiting kiwis in Brooksville. She pointed out the chayote which is being grown by several of our members, and does very well in this area. The chayote is a fast growing vine and produces flowers and fruit in the fall and thru the winter, but it is also very tender and is killed back by freezes.

The next slide showed a pummelo which was cut in half to show the beautiful dark pink, almost red, color of the pulp. The pummelo is the largest of the citrus and is a progenitor of the grapefruit. The citrus family is a very exciting family and those who have been to the citrus arboretum at Lake Alfred know how extensive the family is. But there is still much that can be done with the citrus and its relatives.

Her next slide showed the calamondin which is as much smaller than the average citrus as the pummelo is larger. It is a small orange colored fruit with a sour juice and sweet skin and pulp, and is relatively cold hardy. It is frequently grown as an ornamental because at this time of the year, the tree will be covered with beautiful orange fruit. It is a shame the fruit is not used more extensively because it makes excellent sauce, marmalade and other deserts. Marian showed us a calamondin cake which she had baked using the pulp and skin of the calamondin.

The next slide showed the loquat and Marian was concerned whether we were suffering the same problems with loquats here that they seem to be having on the east coast where the fruit are very tiny this year. As those who are growing loquats know, our fruit is all standard size. Why the east coast would be suffering with diminutive sized fruit is unknown. Also, Marian warned us against fire blight which affects the loquats and is a carrier for fire blight to other susceptible species such as apples and pears. Her suggestion was not to plant loquats in close proximity to apples and pears.

She showed us a slide of her loquat tree which was quite massive and advised us that we should keep our loquats trimmed down to a more manageable size because the fruit at the top, of course, is inaccessible. Loquats make excellent desserts. They can be used to make a pie that tastes very similar to peach. Also, loquat jam is excellent.

Her next slide was our friend the carambola. Marian's comment was that she never knew how God could make a fruit like that; it is so unusual. But then maybe she's never had a chance to look at a Buddha's hand. The carambola comes from the Viet Nam area of Asia. Perhaps because the people there had large families, they needed a tree that produced a lot of fruit, and that is one of

the carambola's most notable features. A healthy tree covers itself, the trunk, the big limbs, the small limbs, the twigs, with flowers and after the flowers, a similar abundance of fruit. And it not only does this one time but maybe two or three times a year. The carambola lends itself to so many uses, jams, jellies, wines, fruit salads and other deserts.

Marian had some slides of the pistachio nut which were taken in California but she indicated that there are some bearing trees in Florida, one she noted, on Big Pine Key. Work should be done on the pistachio so we might be able to grow it more extensively in Florida because it is a tasty nut and a nourishing food and a beautiful tree.

Marian next showed us some slides of the elderberry which grows wild in the wet areas of Florida and is a versatile fruit for wine, jellies and jams. Elderberries can be picked along the drainage ditches beside highways and throughout the area. When driving around, one should observe the white flowers and note where they are growing so that one can return later when the fruit is ripe for picking.

The next slide showed the roselle or Florida cranberry which everyone should grow as an annual. It grows rapidly and in the fall puts on pretty hibiscus-like flowers. After that the fruit, which is really the calyx of the seed pod, develops. This is what we use for jellies, jams and a mock cranberry sauce. For making the jelly, the entire fruit, seeds, calyx and all may be cooked for the juice. However, for a cranberry sauce, it is necessary to remove the calyx from the seed pod, which is relatively easy to do, and of course, the seeds can be dried and planted in the spring for another crop.

Marian next discussed the papaya and said that in the last couple years we have had an abundance of beautiful fruit which is the result of two mild winters. Papayas are usually grown from seed so there are countless varieties of papayas, both small and large and with different flavors. The papaya is also a very versatile fruit. It can be eaten fresh out of hand, in a fruit salad with other fruit, made into pies and other desserts and is also very good eaten green prepared like summer squash. Marian brought fruit for us to taste and also seeds for those who might want to plant some papayas.

The next slide showed the horseradish tree, *Moringa oleifera*, also called bensolive or drumstick tree. It is a tropical tree from Haiti and other Caribbean islands. It is a beautiful, quick growing tree and provides excellent nutrition. The leaves are the most desirable edible part of the tree and have a slight horseradish flavor. The pods are also edible but must be picked when very young and easily snapped. Mature seeds can also be eaten but are very high in oil. Likewise, the roots are edible and taste like horseradish.

Marian next showed us the miracle fruit and spoke briefly on the amazing qualities that it displays. The miracle fruit seems to deaden the taste buds that sense the sour quality of fruit and accentuate the sweet. This "miracle" is amply demonstrated with the lemon or lime or other tart fruit. One may eat the miracle fruit and afterwards eat the lime or lemon or other sour fruit and the sour fruit will now taste very sweet.

Marian indicated that the water chestnut can be purchased in a supermarket fresh and planted in a tub of water or other body of water to grow water chestnuts, which are excellent used in cooking. Instructions are in her book.

We next looked at the babaco papaya which grows at higher elevations in the tropics and is much more cold hardy than the papaya we are familiar with. However, it does require a dry climate and may be difficult to grow in Florida because of our high humidity and sometimes heavy rainfall. It is being grown in California at the higher and dryer elevations.

The persimmon is an excellent fruit to be growing in this area and comes in many different varieties including our native persimmon, Virginiana. The large persimmon comes from the Orient and is available in hundreds of different varieties and sizes and also in astringent and non-astringent varieties. The non-astringent persimmon is less well known in this area; it may be eaten when ripe but still hard like an apple.

Figs are another fruit that come in considerable varieties, from small black-skinned fruit to large light green or yellow fruit, and grows quite well in this area once they get a good start. Also, like the persimmon, it is relatively cold hardy and delicious, eaten out of hand or prepared in many ways as a dessert.

The next slide showed the passion fruit. Marian asked Paul Zmoda to give us some clues on growing good passion fruit as he is our local authority on passion fruit. It is certainly a nice fruit to grow, although it is very tender and may be killed back to the ground or killed entirely by freezing weather. It is a commercial fruit in Hawaii and other places and the juice is extensively used mixed with other fruit juices for canning and bottling. The passion fruit grows on a vine and is quite rampant in growth but may require hand pollinizing for good fruiting. It also helps to have more than one vine for cross-pollinization.

Marian also had some interesting slides of mangoes and chayotes. She mentioned the fact that the tuber of the chayote is also edible and delicious and may be eaten in the event that the vine is killed by a winter freeze. Also she mentioned that one may cook chayote pancakes just like one would make potato pancakes.

She also had slides of pecan and loofah squash, both of which will grow very well in this area. Loofah squash may be eaten like other squash if it is picked when it is very small, less than 6" in length. Otherwise, the interior of the fruit may be used as a sponge after the fruit has matured and dried.

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#### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Janet Conard, Harry Klaus and Bob Heath, recommends the following club members as nominees for the governing board for the next 12 months. All of these volunteers are consistent meeting attendees and consistent workers.

Alice Burhenn	Charles Novak
Frank Burhenn	Arnold Stark
Frank Honeycutt	Lillian Stark
Edith Freedman	Frank Tintera
Bob Heath	Walter Vines
Al Hendry	Paul Zmoda

The bylaws provide for a Board of up to 15 members so we have room on the Board for additional volunteers, and we wish to invite any of our members who would like to serve, to volunteer at the March meeting.

Likewise, it is important that we have a good turn-out to elect our Board, the members who will guide us through the next year. The bylaws of the corporation also provide that the officers shall be elected from the Board by the board members after the March meeting and will take office at that time.

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Membership dues are due and payable this month.

If your mailing label has a red mark, please pay at the meeting or send a check for \$15.00 to RFCI, 313 Pruett Road, Seffner, FL 33584. Thanks.

### Plant Exchange: January

Plant	Donor	Winner
Wampii	A. Mendez	B.Puls
Black Sapote	A. Mendez	Amyot
Chayote	Janet Conard	?
Passion fruit	Heath	Amyot
Hood Pear	Heath	?
Carambolas	Heath	Jim Murrie
Carambolas	Heath	Al Roberts
Carambolas	Heath	?
Pummalo seedling	Novak	Monica Brandies
Pummalo seedling	Novak	Leo Cotter
Pummalo seedling	Novak	Amyot
Pummalo seedling	Novak	Bob Baker
Papaya fruit	Van Atta	Bob Went
Papaya fruit	Van Atta	?
Hot Peppers	Lloyd Shipley	Jim Murrie
Hot Peppers	Lloyd Shipley	W.B. Mendez
Celeste fig	Honeycutt	?
Chayote	Honeycutt	?
Carissa (Natal Plum)	Honeycutt	Connie Wilson
Chaya	Honeycutt	Bob Baker
Lemon Basil	Brandies	Bobbie Puls
Loquat	Brandies	John Jenkins
Mexican Sage	Brandies	Janet Conard
Rose	Brandies	Heath
Surinam cherry	Zmoda	?
Red passion flower	Zmoda	John Jenkins
Red mulberry	Zmoda	?
Batwing passion vine	Zmoda	Alice Miller
Pomegranate	Zmoda	Amyot

{Please sign the list when you select a plant so I won't have to type all those nasty "?"}

*Thank You Thank You Thank You*

To Pat and Al Jean for taking care of the tasting table for so long. Your efforts have been appreciated. And to Janet Conard and Al Roberts for volunteering to be the new tasting table coordinators. It is very sweet of you.

To Gerald & Al Amyot, Bob Heath, Frank Honeycutt, Charles Novak, Lillian Stark, and Paul Zmoda for performing much needed yard work at our last work day.

## Tasting Table: January

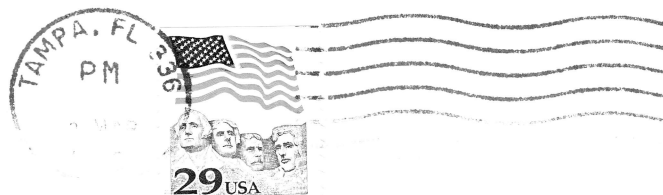
- Pat Jean: Cream cheese pound cake
- Al Roberts & Janet Conard: Papaya juice & oatmeal cookies
- Arnold & Lillian Stark: Banana walnut bread
- Charles Novak: Mamey
- Jud Newcombe: Carambola pecan coffee cake
- Monica Brandies: Pumpkin-papaya bread
- Fernando & Lita Galang: Rice cake
- Marion Van Atta: Papaya, feijoa, and sharon fruit
- Bob Heath: Papaya-raisin-nut bread

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Members will be participating in the USF Botanical Garden Plant sale, as well as the St. Petersburg Greenthumb festival. Both of these will be occurring in April. This is an opportunity to inform the public about rare fruits, gain new members for our club, and sell some plants (which means \$ for you, as well as the club). For more information contact Bob Heath (Tampa/USF Botanical Gardens sale) or Fernando Galang (St. Petersburg sale).

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TAMPA BAY CHAPTER RFCI  
313 PRUETT RD  
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FIRST CLASS MAIL
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