



NEWSLETTER

MAY 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 MAILING 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 MAY 10, 1992

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

PROGRAM AL HENDRY HAS RECEIVED A VIDEO TAPE CALLED
"PHILIPPINE FRUIT" which is reputed to be
very informative, entertaining and interesting.
The tape was made by David Guggenheim, president
of the California Rare Fruit Growers during his
latest trip to the Philippines.

We will also have our usual raffle and tasting
table.

Incidentally, our tasting table was rather skimpy
last month. This month we need help! We're
asking all those handy in the kitchen to bring
some goodies!

New Members:

Edgar Ripoll 13110 N. Mitchell Tampa, FL 33612 (813)977-2180

James Kovalski 11617 Innfields Dr Odessa, FL 33556 (813)920-6064

Following is information just received on new Botanical tours
available from "Nature Trail" and Tom Economou:

English Gardens May 20-31 (12 days) \$1890
Costa Rica Fruit & Flower Safari June 20-30 (11 days) \$1275
Costa Rica Fruit & Flower Safari July 17-28 (12 days) \$1360
Honduras Fruit Safari Aug 15-23 (9 days) \$890
Honduras trip 4 day extension Aug 23-26 \$320
Honduras Fruit Safari Oct 17-25 (9 days) \$890
Mexico Fruit Safari Nov 12-16 (5 days) \$399
Guatemala Fruit Safari Nov 25-Dec 3 (9 days) \$850

Price covers airfare from Miami, hotels, and tours. For more
information call: (305)285-7173. Members who have gone on such
trips in the past have praised them highly.

PROGRAM EXCERPTS FROM A PROGRAM BY MR. ANDREW ROSE
entitled "PROPAGATION OF PINEAPPLES"
with Comments by the Editors & Other RFCI Members

Mr. Rose began his discussion with a slide taken in Honduras of the smooth cayenne pineapple in fruit. The smooth cayenne is a commercial variety with virtually no barbs on the leaves except the point at the end, and tends to produce a large cylindrical pineapple. This was his introduction to his subject.

The propagation of pineapples is a vegetative propagation and the varieties that we grow are in essence all clones. The most common way of propagating pineapples is with slips which are found right at the base of the fruit. Suckers come out in the leaf axils all the way down to the ground and these have different names, depending on where they grow. Those from one particular location are called hoppas. Those that come out immediately below the surface of the ground are called ratoons and most of the commercial plantings will grow a ratoon crop so that after the pineapples are harvested, the ratoons are allowed to grow for the second crop from one planting, and probably average about one and one half new plants for each original.

The first planting is in pretty orderly rows but with a ratoon crop, the pineapple field becomes almost a solid mass and after these are harvested in 16 to 18 months, the entire field is plowed under for the next planting. The pineapple in commercial production is probably one of the most man manipulated fruit in the world. Something is done almost every day to the plants. They are planting every day or fertilizing every day or hormonizing every day or harvesting every day. And all of this lends itself very nicely to control by computers.

Another portion of the plant used for propagation is the crown, which is the part that grows on top of the fruit. Of course, if you're raising pineapples for sale, the crown is sold with the pineapple and that eliminates that as an option. The crown takes a month or more longer to develop a fruit than do the slips. For home production I normally wait til I harvest the pineapple fruit, remove the plant from the pot and separate all the ratoons and slips to be re-planted. I have gotten as many as 10 new plants from one original pineapple plant this way. Commercially, the time from planting of the propagating material until development of a mature plant will range anywhere from 13 to 16 months. With care, we can produce mature plants in central Florida here in as short as 13 months. But the time of year that we plant also affects the length of time to maturity. If you plant late in the winter, or early in the spring, that will give you the shortest maturity time in that the pineapple can grow well through the warm months of summer. But if you plant in the fall, the winter months will retard growth and it could take 16 to 18 months. With less than optimum conditions, it may take 2 years to reach maturity.

It isn't practical commercially because of the man hours involved, but for backyard fruiting or for research, the crown may be divided; cut up, into as many as twelve pieces to produce a potential of twelve additional plants from one crown. However, it may take as much as an additional year to bring the plant to maturity because the plants produced by division of the crown are extremely small when they begin growing.

It is also possible to treat the plant with a hormone such that the plant produces a myriad of crowns in lieu of a fruit and each one of the individual crowns may be broken off and planted, but unfortunately the mature plant will normally produce the same results with a bunch of crowns and no fruit. Usually it takes two or three generations to work the hormone out of the plant so the plant will start producing pineapples again.

Mr. Rose indicated that after sectioning the crown, it might be advisable to treat it with a fungicide to help prevent fungus growth. He showed us a slide of a woman

sectioning the crown which was obviously a very delicate procedure, cutting small pieces with a sharp knife, as the woman had at least three fingers bandaged.

Mr. Rose demonstrated the procedure with a crown that he had brought, by cutting it top to bottom in half and then each half into quarters, giving him fourpieces, each of which he cut twice horizontally to produce 12 total sections. Each of the pieces had some root buds and leaf buds available for growth. The cut part of the crown is pressed into a potting soil with the leaves protruding upward to enable the root buds to form roots. He then showed us slides of the plants after about a month (it's a very tiny plant, but obviously a pineapple) and the same plants after six months, at which time they are ready to be planted in the field.

Pineapples require a slightly acid soil and do best in a sandy well drained soil but need plenty of fertilizer and water. Commercially, pineapples are fertilized as they are planted, because the black plastic that is used as a mulch eliminates the possibility of fertilizing the soil until after the harvest. However, for dooryard growing a liquid fertilizer may be added into the bud of the pineapple at about 2 week intervals.

In the research work with which Mr. Rose was involved, they brought 60,000 crowns in from Hawaii and after sectioning and growing plants, they had approximately 600,000 plants. After 6 months of growth, they cut the plants into 4 pieces to increase the total number of plants.

Mr. Rose indicated that a mature pineapple plant may be induced to differentiate (change from vegetative growth to productive fruiting growth) by adding a hormone.

The pineapple fruit is a compound fruit. As it develops, the first flowers form in a circle around the bottom of the fruit. Flowers continue to develop in a circle up the pineapple from the bottom to the top. They're blue and actually are the flowers for each of the individual segments of the compound fruit. And because the bottom ring of flowers are the first to form and are the older, the pineapple tends to ripen from the bottom up. Pineapples normally do not produce seeds, however, if they are cross pollinated from the wild species that grow in some of the Central and South American countries, they will produce seeds which are very hard and detract from the quality of the pineapple.

Commercially, when the crown reaches the size that the producers want, they can chemically or physically stop the growth of the crown and let the growth go entirely into the pineapple fruit. This can be done by inserting a screwdriver down through the center of the crown and twisting it, which will stop the growth of the crown. If you look down in the crown of a pineapple in the grocery store, you may see the rounded out hold where a tool has been inserted if that was the way the growth of the crown was stopped.

In Florida pineapples produced in full sun tend to sunburn in the summer and to prevent this it is frequently necessary to shade the pineapple during the hot part of the day. In Florida frequently the stem of the pineapple fruit will grow excessively long and let the pineapple bend over, which exposes the fruit to the sun much more than if it were standing up straight. It is frequently necessary to shade the fruit with a paper bag or something while it develops.

Mr. Rose showed us a slide of pineapples covered with ice. He indicated that the pineapple is very easy to protect in freezing weather by the use of sprinklers because the ice reaches down to the ground and does not damage the plant, like it might in a tree, and prevents the plant from going below 32° which a pineapple can withstand very well. In my own garden I plant pineapples in 3 gallon pots so that I can bring them inside during freezing weather. This is easier than sprinkling.

Mr. Rose demonstrated the proper way to remove the crown for planting in that you take the pineapple in your left hand, the crown in your right hand and twist, and

it will come right out without any excess flesh to cause problems. The crown should then be left to dry for a few days before it is planted to prevent fungus forming. It is also advisable to dip it in a fungicide. Then Mr. Rose indicated the best time to pick a pineapple is when it is roughly 3/5 ripe, when the lower 3/5 of the pineapple fruit has turned yellow that is the point at which most people find the pineapple the best.

In order to make a relatively mature pineapple plant differentiate, there are several methods available. The one that home owners use most frequently is to place a piece of apple or other fruit directly in the center of the crown of the plant and allow it to stay until the fruit begins to develop. In the process the apple will give off ethylene gas which causes differentiation. Another method is to pile up oak leaves near the plant on the downwind side and light the leaves so that they smoulder and produce a lot of smoke and direct the smoke across the pineapple plant so it gets well saturated with the oak leaf smoke. This only takes a second. If you can get the smoke to swirl into the pineapple even very briefly, it will do the job. Also, one pebble of calcium carbide placed into the center of the bud of a mature pineapple with water will cause the plant to differentiate.

Pineapples are the fruit of one of the five species of *Ananas* found from Paraguay to Mexico. The small seedy ancestral type of fruit had found favor among the American Indians long before Columbus discovered the New World. By the time he met these fruits in 1493 on the island of Guadeloupe they were known all the way from their native southern Brazil and Paraguay into Central America and up the West Indian island chain. Spanish and Portuguese colonizers introduced the plants into their colonies in Africa. By 1548 they were being raised in India and the Dutch East Indies. Yet it was in English greenhouses, where the fruits were being raised to supply a larger market than imports could match, that the new horticultural varieties without seeds and with larger fruits were developed. The improved stock was reintroduced into the Americas, the Azores, Africa, India, Malaya and Australia. Those upon which the Hawaiian pineapple industry got its start came from England by way of Australia.

The purple flowers of a pineapple develop in a cylindrical head a short way back of the tip of an upright stalk. The bracts in whose axils the flowers appear, the ovaries of all the pistils in a cluster, the pedicels upon which the flowers are borne, and the fibrous upright stalk that holds them (and continues to a terminal cluster of stiff small leaves) all fuse into one sweet, juicy mass containing up to fifteen percent of sugar.

* * *

PLANT FESTIVAL

The University of South Florida Plant Festival was held Saturday, April 18, from 10:00 a.m. til 4:00 p.m. THANKS to the following RFCI Tampa Bay Chapter members who volunteered their time to work at the festival:

Bob & Sherry Baker
 Frank & Alice Burhenn
 Tony Gricius
 Bob Heath
 Frank Honeycutt
 Al Hendry & his friend Yuku Tanaka
 Charles Novak
 Bill Ryland
 Paul Zmoda

Everyone had a great time! The weather was beautiful and the area that was assigned to us was perfect! It was quite profitable for the club and those members who supplied plants.

-Submitted by Sherry Baker.

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Plant Exchange: April

Plant	Donor	Winner
Surinam Cherry	Stark	
Aloe	Stark	Charity Reece
Pomelo seedling	Novak	Bob Wente
Pomelo seedling	Novak	Walter Vines
Pomelo seedling	Novak	Charity Reece
Pomelo seedling	Novak	?
Peppermint	Burhenn	?
Rosemary	Burhenn	Stark
Tropical Oregano	Burhenn	Sherry Baker
Lemon Balm	Burhenn	Bobbie Puls
Baba Berry	Heath	Samm Philmore
Pineapple	Heath	Zmoda
Pineapple	Heath	Charity Reece
Roselle (X2)	Heath	Max Means
Roselle	Heath	Janet Conard
Roselle	Heath	Rome Vaccaro
Papaya	Novak	Charity Reece
Papaya	Novak	Heath
Italian Parsley	Samm Philmore	Charity Reece
Holy Basil	Samm Philmore	Heath
Passion fruit	Joseph ??	Monica Brandies
Red roasting Pepper	Joseph ??	Mel Luxenberg
Celeste Fig	F. Honeycutt	Novak
Celeste Fig	F. Honeycutt	Charity Reece
JuJube, grafted	F. Honeycutt	Charity Reece
Chayote	F. Honeycutt	N. McCormack
Chayote	F. Honeycutt	Zmoda
Chayote	F. Honeycutt	Bob Wente
Chayote	F. Honeycutt	Janet Conard
Red Mulberry	Zmoda	Mel Luxenberg
Climbing spinach	McCormack	Monica Brandies
Climbing spinach	McCormack	Charity Reece
Climbing spinach	McCormack	Pat Jean
Sweet Potato	McCormack	Samm Philmore
Pineapple Crowns	Walter Vines	Pat Jean
Pineapple Crowns	Walter Vines	Zmoda
Pineapple Crowns	Walter Vines	Charity Reece
Pineapple Crowns	Walter Vines	Frank Honeycutt
Seminole Pumpkin	Monica Brandies	Walter Vines

Tasting Table:

A. Burhenn: Pecan Sandies

P. Jean: Pineapple Crunch Cake

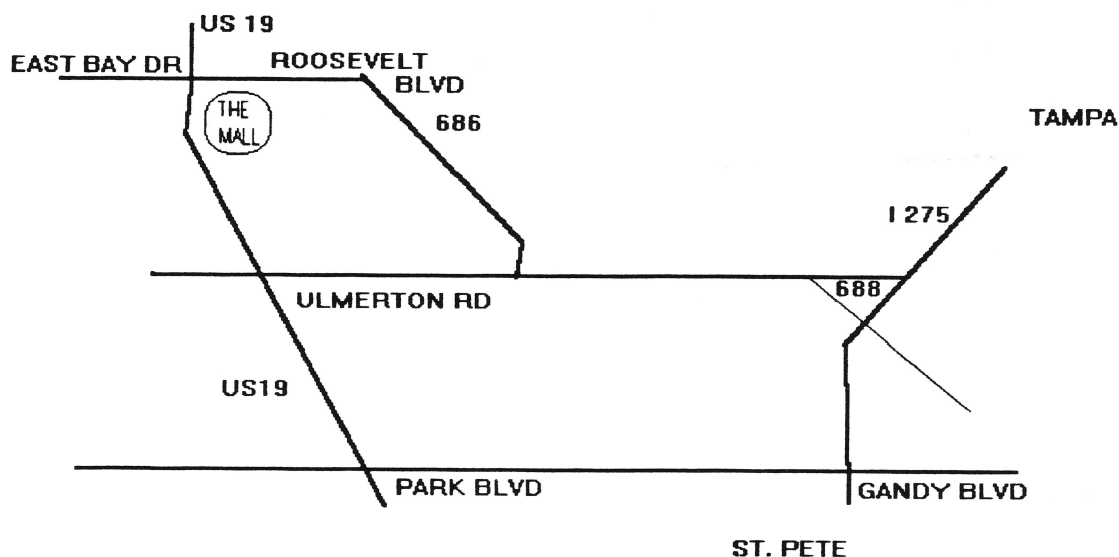
(The table was pretty sparse this month-won't you try to bring something to future meetings?)

Congratulations to Laura Caradonna for being the sucessful bidder on a beautiful Navel Orange Tree at our April meeting.

Bay Area Outlet Mall Plant Show and Sale

May 8, 9 & 10

We have another great opportunity to promote RFCI! Our club has been invited to participate, along with other plant societies from the surrounding area, in a plant show and sale at the Bay Area Outlet Mall. This will be heavily advertised by the media. In addition, the Bay Area Outlet Mall is located on a major Intersection (U.S. 19 & East Bay Drive) and is a high volume mall. RFCI should receive lots of publicity at this event! Members willing to man the display and/or sell their own plants please call Jeff & Sherry Dodson as soon as possible (Pinellas County:544-0869)



TAMPA BAY CHAPTER RFCI
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