



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1992

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: BOB HEATH
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ARNOLD STARK
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(INCLUDING RENEWALS)

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

NEXT MEETING JUNE 14, 1992

MEETING PLACE. RARE FRUIT COUNCIL CLUBHOUSE. 313 PRUETT ROAD,
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 clubhouse on left immediately past McDonald
School.

PROGRAM OUR PROGRAM THIS MONTH WILL FEATURE OUR LONG TIME
FRIEND GENE JOYNER from Palm Beach with a slide
presentation of tropical fruit trees which do well
in Florida. He will also discuss the fruit
safaris into South and Central America provided
by their group. This should prove to be an
interesting and informative talk on the types of
plants that we are trying to grow here and should
help to provide a pleasant afternoon, along with
our raffle and tasting table. We are looking
forward to seeing all those we missed at the
last meeting.

Tasting Table: May

Lillian Stark: Carambola Almond Bread Pudding

Yuku Tanaka: Black Sapote & Macadamia Nut Bread

Al Roberts: Papaya juice

Janet Conard: Banana Cake

Lillian Wentz: Oatmeal Cookies

Pat Jean: Lady Fingers

Nancy McCormack: Pink Grapefruit

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To Frank Honeycutt for donating the lovely Fig plant for auction. The winner was
Alice Miller.

To those members who participated in the Bay Area Outlet Mall show last month.

FRUITS OF THE PHILIPPINES

We watched a videotape of a talk by Dr. Roberto Coronel to the San Diego chapters of California Rare Fruit Growers Society, during his most recent trip to the United States. Dr. Coronel conducts research at the Institute of Plant Breeding at the University of the Philippines at Los Banos. He is the author of two books: "Promising Fruits of the Philippines", published in 1983, and "Plant Resources of Southeast Asia, Part II: Edible Fruits and Nuts", published in 1991. Following are notes from the videotape talk.

The Philippines has more than 200 edible fruits and nuts from all over the tropical world. Some of them, such as the langsat, durian, rambutan, carambola, mango, mangosteen and santol originated in tropical Asia. Others, such as the pineapple, papaya, mamey and canistel originated in Central America. Of these 200 fruits and nuts only about 30 are economically important. And of these 30, seven are considered major fruits with the rest being minor fruits. Because of space limitations, not all the minor fruits discussed by Dr. Coronel are presented here.

MAJOR FRUITS

The first major fruit is the banana, a native of Southeast Asia. The International Board for Plant Genetic Resources in Rome has designated the Philippines as a Regional Center for Germplasm Collection of Bananas. They now have about 200 cultivars in this collection. Because of disease and pests in the field, about 120 of these cultivars are maintained in test tubes using tissue culture. Approximately 75 banana cultivars grow in the Philippines. The Lakatan is the leading variety for local consumption with the Cavendish being the leading export variety. Filipinos don't like the taste of the Cavendish.

The pineapple is the second major fruit, introduced by the Spaniards from Central America. The best variety for export and local consumption is the Smooth Cayenne. Red Spanish is widely used for fiber extraction to make native clothing.

The third major fruit is the mango, of which there are two principal varieties. The most popular is the Carabao mango (known as Manila in Mexico). It is golden yellow in color, has a very thin seed and is almost fiberless. The most important characteristic of a Philippine mango is that it can be forced to flower at any time of the year with the application of potassium nitrate. Depending on the time of year, a concentration of 1% - 2% sprayed on the leaves will force the trees to flower off-season. Only Philippine mangoes will respond to this treatment, not Indian mangoes. Although Philippine mangoes are polyembryonic (true to type), they are propagated by cleft and wedge grafting because seedlings take so long to bear.

Over 200 foreign mango varieties have been imported but the only one that caught on was a small-fruited one from India called Katchamita. It means "sweet even when green" and is the only other commercial variety. It is preferred by Filipino women, who favor green mangoes over any other. The Katchamita is not allowed to ripen because when ripe, it is not as good as the Carabao.

The next three major fruits are citrus: the calamansi, the mandarin orange and the pummelo. The calamansi is our calamondin which grows so well here. The favorite mandarin is the Ladu. They accept that oranges will never be a major export crop without processing because the fruit remains green, due to the lack of chill. However, the taste is as good and they've come to accept the green color. The pummelo is preferred over the grapefruit because most Filipinos don't like the bitter or sour fruit. Their favorite varieties of pummelo are the Mintal and the Sunwiluk.

The papaya from Central America is the last major fruit and can weigh up to 5 or 6 kilos. The favored variety is the Cavite although the Solo is preferred for export. Unfortunately the papaya industry is beset with the papaya ringspot virus around Southern Tagalog, so papayas can only be grown on some islands in Mindanao.

MINOR FRUITS

Jackfruit selections have been made with one of the best being a small and very prolific variety. Jackfruit are propagated asexually by sidegrafting with an 85-90% success rate. A smaller fruit with little commercial potential is called the monkey jackfruit for obvious reasons.

Of much greater potential is the chempedak. Its foliage is similar to jackfruit with its fruit being small, cylindrical versions of jackfruit. Many Indonesians and Malaysians prefer the chempedak to the jackfruit. In his book "Tropical Fruit, an Australian Guide to Growing and Using Exotic Fruits", Glenn Tankard says, "The chempedak has a richer flavour with less fibre and acidity than the jackfruit." Dr. Coronel, however, finds the chempedak's aroma overpowering.

The langsat is very popular and very sensitive to cool weather. Like the jaboticaba, the langsat is cauliflorous, meaning the fruit grows directly from the trunk and branches. It is propagated by cleft or wedge grafting.

Another popular fruit is the sapodilla, known as chico in the Philippines. The best variety is Gonzales, which is propagated by marcotting and cleft grafting. Since sapodillas don't produce many seeds per fruit, Filipinos use sawoe kecil as a rootstock. Another more distant relative of the sapodilla is the mamey sapote, known as chico-mamey. Its seed has no dormancy requirements so it usually germinates inside the fruit. Dr. Coronel prefers the taste of the sapodilla to that of the mamey.

The Annona family is well represented in the Philippines. The atemoya was first hybridized in Florida by P.J. Wester and brought over to the Philippines by him in 1902. There are many varieties now available. The sweetsop or sugar apple, known as atis, exists in both purple-skinned and yellow-skinned varieties from Thailand. There is also a totally seedless variety. Although no good selections of soursop exist at present, Dr. Coronel is hoping the Cuban Fiberless will fruit soon and be a good producer in a few years. Not as favored as the above annonas is the custard apple, with the biriba coming in dead last. The cherimoya needs more chill than can be found in the Philippines.

The canistel is so sticky it's not popular. It won't become a commercial fruit in the future unless one can be found that's more juicy in texture. However, since the fruit is so high in Vitamin A, it can be dried to a powder and used as baby food.

The mangosteen is known as the Queen of tropical fruit, although Dr. Coronel doesn't know how it got that name. Its main problem is that it takes 10 years before it begins to flower. Since it has many relatives, the Institute is looking for rootstocks that will allow the tree to produce earlier.

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New Members:

Robert Love 1845 Cleveland Street Clearwater, FL 34625 (813)446-3972

Creighton J. Burns 828 Bayside Drive Tampa, FL 33609 (813)286-8580

A message of member Louis Zoehrer:

We are looking for information about the Babaco Papaya, which is not a Papaya, but just a relative. Andy Rose (Citrus County Agriculture Extension Ag. Director, IFS) and I (Spring Hill, Hernando County Rare Fruit Specialist and Honorary Master Gardener) are researching this plant and would appreciate any information you could share. Our address is: Louis J. Zoehrer, 12333 Glen Haven St., Spring Hill, FL 34609 (904)683-0004.

{The following is a new feature by member Paul Zmoda. Unfortunately, it arrived too late at the editorial office for inclusion in last month's newsletter, for which it was intended. We hope it is only the first of many. Thank you Paul}

What's Happening (April, May, June)

This is the first of what I hope will be a monthly item: observation of edible plants in the Tampa area along with suggestions to make growing them more productive. Please let me know how your plants are getting along. Write to me at the address below, or call and I'll try to include your plant's performance in upcoming articles. Thanks to a warm winter, 1992 is off to a great growing season. Jan 17th saw 31° F and Jan 21 had 38° F here, but that was nothing compared to years gone by. We were spared this time fortunately.

Mulberries started fruiting early as they are prone to do. They are just about done now, however, if you prune the tree well, you may be rewarded with a second crop. Gulf Ruby and Gulf Gold plums are low-chill trees ideal for our area. Right now Gulf Gold is loaded with quarter sized plums that need a little thinning to achieve maximum size later on. The sweet, juicy harvest is just now beginning. Enjoy Surinam cherries at this time. Appearing like miniature, ribbed pumpkins, these members of the *Eugenia* genus have a spicy, unique flavor. They prefer a sunny location for best results.

The passion fruit *Passiflora coccinea* is giving up a wonderful, endless bounty of green-striped fruit. One of the sweetest passion fruits, this plant needs some other species to produce fruit. *Passiflora edulis*, *P. edulis flavicarpa*, and their hybrids are the best bets as the pollen donors, although *P. coccinea* will accept many others. Be sure to plant in a shady spot, such as under a large oak tree for best flowering.

To encourage bananas and plantains to produce well all year, select a low place that collects water for planting. Keep adding organic matter (manure, compost, clippings, etc.) around the base of the planting. Occasional sprinkles of wood ashes supply needed potassium.

This is normally a dry time of year; irrigate often for best results, especially potted specimens. Fruit set is most successful when adequate water is available. Some edibles that grow well in dry situations, once established, are pigeon peas, amaranth, sweet potatoes, horseradish tree (moringa), cacti (pads and fruit), pomegranates, Chinese jujube, and others. Enjoy late citrus varieties now and be sure to fertilize at this time, preferably with a well balanced citrus food.

Paul Allan Zmoda 9612 No. 12th Street Tampa, FL 33612 (813)932-2469

A PURPLE TALE OF PASSION FRUIT

Once upon a vine, in a glycosmos far, far away, there were three pears, all of whom were single. One was a real peach, one was a cute tomato (Better Girl, of course), and the third was a wrinkled prune named Citronella. They lived with their mother who was a Ponderosa Lemon.

One day they received an invitation from the Quince to attend a Royal Palm at which he would select the best of the crop as his pride jujube. But Mamey Lemon refused to let Citronella go.

While left at home, she compost a lettuce to her berry gourd mother, Anna Apple, who appeared in a flush of growth. Anna sprouted: "Aloe! You will go to the dancy but be back before tamarind!" "But I'm ugli, with all these wrinkles." The gourd mother raised her mango wand and sang: "Salak, bamboo, la, mangosteen, loofa, blueberry, blueberry, blue, put them together and what have you got - we'll make a plum out of you!"*

So Citronella went to the bael in a pumpkin while wearing pomegranate slippers. (For years afterward, she wondered why she had purple feet.) She had a grape time because as everyone knows, plums have more fun. She dancyed a lot with the quince because gentlemen prefer plums. They fell in love. Everyone said it was too bad they cantaloupe since at the stroke of tamarind, she reverted to a prune. She turned to the quince saying, "Orange you going to marry me?" Recognizing her, the quince stewed right there and gingerly said, "I kumquat marry you, and this is my raisin: My papaya is your papaya!"

*from the Walt Disney Cinderella movie "Bippity Boppity Boo".

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THE PRICKLY PEAR

The Prickly Pear, a fruit of several varieties of *Opuntia* cactus, is a native of the Americas, probably originating in northern Mexico or the southwestern United States. It is an egg shaped fruit as large as a large chicken egg and is more properly described as a berry. It has a tomato or persimmon like skin dotted with prickly warts which are extremely annoying if contacted. The pulp is sweet, soft and spongy when ripe and of a striking beautiful red color. The external color of the ripe fruit ranges from dark purple to soft green in different species. In Florida the color is usually a dark red. Other varieties available in Europe may be chartreuse, inside and out. Of these the most delicious are grown in Sicily.

The prickly pear, also known as cactus pear, Tuna, Indian Fig or Barbary Fig, is very popular in a good part of the world although, because of its somewhat bland flavor and many hard black seeds, it is not a common market fruit in the U.S. Everywhere in southern Europe and North Africa and in Australia, South Africa, Southwest Asia, and Central and South America the fruit is well accepted and marketed. Mexico is a major supplier of the fruit and Elizabeth Schneider in her book "Uncommon Fruits and Vegetables" states that "Mexico's current production alone is double the current world production of apricots, and more than double the production of papayas, strawberries and avocados." This is quite amazing for such a prickly, bland, seedy fruit.

The fruit may be mixed with lemon juice and sugar in a processor to puree them, then sieved to remove the seeds, chilled and enjoyed straight or with rum to taste. The pulp may also be sieved and cooked up to make a spectacularly colored jam. In any event it is always necessary to peel the fruit first however it is to be used.

Plant Exchange: May 1992

Plant	Donor	Winner
Yam	Heath	Al Hendry
Yam	Heath	Nancy McCormack
Yam	Heath	Charles Novak
Yam	Heath	?
Strawberry salt/pepper set	Stark	A. Miller
Prickly Pear	Heath	Bob Went
Roselle	Heath	Greg Steiner
Roselle	Heath	F. Pupello
Roselle	Heath	Walter Vines
Roselle	Heath	Al Hendry
Pond Apple	Honeycutt	Greg Steiner
Pond Apple	Honeycutt	Stark
Chayote	Honeycutt	F. Pupello
Barbarberry	Honeycutt	Al Hendry
Pimento Pepper (X 2)	Honeycutt	A. Miller
Chayote	Janet Conard	Al Jean
Kiwano	Greg Steiner	Bob Went
Kiwano	Greg Steiner	Bob Heath
Buddha Hand	Greg Steiner	Charles Novak
Malobar Spinach	N. McCormack	Bob Went
Malobar Spinach	N. McCormack	A. Miller

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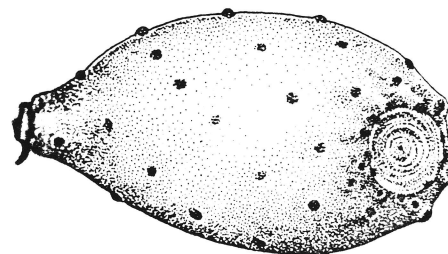


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prickly pear