



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 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 PM.

NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 13, 1992

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 Henry Ave, between
Kenneth Ave. and the river, nine blocks west
of Florida Ave, and four blocks north of
Hillsborough Ave. Take I-75/275 to the
Hillsborough exit and go west to Florida,
Highland or Ola, and then north to Henry Ave,
then west on Henry to Janet's.

NOTE: MEETING WILL BEGIN
AT 1:00 THIS MONTH!

LOOK

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 that 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!!

HURRICANE ANDREW...

After our terrific field trip down to Homestead, it is difficult to believe that most of what we saw likely no longer exists. A couple of days after Andrew, our newest and youngest member, Alexander Argiry, who had been with us at IFAS and the Fruit and Spice Park, called me to find out if we could do anything helpful about all those trees we had seen. Several other members called to see if we knew the extent of the damage at these places. We did not know then, and really know very little more now. I have been trying to reach IFAS, the Fruit and Spice Park, and J. R. Brooks (tropical fruit distributor), but have yet not succeeded. I either get a recording that the area's phones are overbusy, and I should try my call later, or I get no answer. I fear that the damage there is as bad as it was in the rest of Homestead.

Several days ago I did reach Bob Cannon, the editor of the Miami RFCI newsletter. Up to that time, he had been unable to reach anyone in the organization south of Miami International Airport. He lives in Hialeah, and said his damage was minimal. Most of his trees are in pots, and were brought inside. He did have 2 large cecropias and an avocado in his yard which were damaged; the cecropias were topped. Several members in north Dade told him they had had varying degrees of damage, including large trees blown to 45° angles or completely uprooted. Bill Whittman lost a number of rare, large, near-fruiting size specimens. I told him that our members would be happy to supply budwood to anyone in need of replacing trees. I also told him that any RFCI members needing shelter could come up here, if they wished to travel this far, and that I was sure some of our members could help put them up for awhile. This conversation is really the extent of the information I've received. If any of our members have learned more, please let us know.

Arnold Stark

Our Fabulous Field Trip to Homestead

by Monica Brandies

There were about 17 members (not counting spouses asleep in the car) when the group met for a tour of the IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center in Homestead, Florida, on Saturday, August 15th. Some came a day or two before and stayed after to visit relatives or see other attractions in the area. Some car-pooled. Some left Tampa at 1AM that morning and went back that night.

The IFAS program began with a talk and proceeded with a vigorous walk. The emphasis was on commercial fruit crops of southern Florida. Tall longans, Spanish limes, sapotes, tamarinds, mamey sapotes, groves of avocado, mango, and carambola were some of the attractions. We saw the detrimental influence of ordinary wind on carambolas. We know now to plant ours in protected spots. One of the most interesting differences, besides climate, was the soil there. It is very rich, but only two inches deep over hard limestone. People there do not just acquire a tree and plant it, but must have an auger drill holes in the rock. Large plantings like IFAS have tank-sized machines to break up the top 8 inches of rock and mix it with soil, then other monster machines dig trenches as deep as 24 inches. These are dug in two directions and trees are planted where the trenches coincide. Before machines, dynamite was used to make planting holes.

Lunch was tropical fruit milk shakes for some. For others it was a shopping spree for different banana plants. Then on to the Fruit and Spice Park where wonderful fragrances and fruit desserts left from a morning class were part of our special greeting. Most found this part of the tour more applicable to our home plantings. We followed our guide Jake over the 20 acres and saw many of the 500 different plants including large jakfruit, chestnuts that looked like footballs, winged beans with lovely blue blooms, and a magnificent bunch of praying hands bananas.

It was a memorable trip. We tasted, sniffed, gathered seeds, cuttings, information, took photos, and got to know fruit and fruit friends a little better. Those who missed it should really try to go next time.

{Addendum: Those of us who were fortunate enough to participate in this trip will never forget the experience which took place just one week before Hurricane Andrew devastated south Florida. We send them our prayers, and hope they will all get through this nightmare soon. We also hope that some day our members will again be able to visit this area and find it green and growing. lms}

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WEDU:

Mr. Green Thumb appears on Channel 3, WEDU, every Friday at noon and Saturday morning at 9:30. Once a year, at this time, WEDU devotes this one half hour to fruit trees and our tree sale.

However, it appears that WEDU does not think there is enough public interest in Stan De Fritos' show and may drop him from their schedule. For this reason we believe it behooves us to let WEDU know that we are interested by calling and perhaps pledging a donation or becoming a member of their support group. To call WEDU, call 254-9338. To make a pledge, call 1-800-354-9338 and emphasize that your pledge is in support of Mr. Green Thumb.

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T R E E S A L E N O T E S

**** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THE ENCLOSED FLYERS - SALE IS OCTOBER 10 AND 11.****

- 1) Members may supply unlimited numbers of small plants (smaller than 1 gallon pots). Anything bigger in quantities of more than 4 must be cleared in advance. Call Bob at 879-6349 or 870-1788 (days) or 289-1068 (eves.) OR Arnold at 654-4198 (days) or 621-4987 (eves.) by October 4 for approval.
- 2) Members supplying must bring them before 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning and assist in the Saturday set-up. They must also be available Sunday afternoon to assist with the after-sale clean-up if they expect to get paid.
- 3) Members who work at least 1/2 day will be entitled to a 25% discount on plants. They may be selected between 12:00 and 1:00 on Saturday or 11:00 and 12:00 on Sunday. However, they are to be put in storage until 5:00 p.m. each day.
- 4) Only those members who work at least two half days will be entitled to select plants remaining on the sales floor after 4:00 p.m. Sunday at a 50% discount.
- 5) Non-working members (surely there aren't any of those) will only be entitled to a 10% discount on plants during 3 - 5 p.m. on Sunday.
- 6) No plants may be moved from the sales floor between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. Saturday and 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Sunday.
- 7) Workers must sign the Roster each half day to get credit for working.
- 8) Anyone who can let us have the use of 4-wheel dollies, garden type carts or flat bed carts, please bring them to the Armory on Saturday.
- 9) Work time: Saturday and Sunday: 8:00 a.m. till ?
(PLEASE plan on helping with clean-up.)
- 10) Please publicize the sale to everyone you know (and even people you don't know). Post the flyers!!!
- 11) Remember: YOU are needed to make this sale a success, and without a successful sale there is no RFCI!
- 12) Due to time constraints, RFCI will not be providing lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Bring your own lunch. However, beverages will be provided thru the mornings.

* * *

New Members

Alexander Argiry 15609 Morning Drive, Lutz, FL 33549 (813)971-1759

Mary Ann Campbell 3610 Morrison Avenue, Tampa, FL 33629

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To Glen Myrie and Al Hendry for their recent donations to our treasury.

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What's Happening

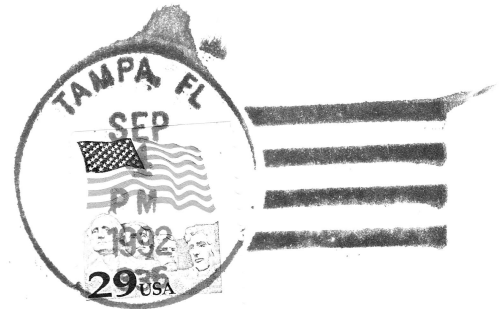
by Paul Zmoda

Here comes fall gardening time! I hope you've been preparing your soil for this big event. Soil amendments are very important here in the Tampa Bay area. You must add organic matter to increase the fertility and moderate the drainage; plain, native sand just won't do. Soil amendments are beneficial because they add nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, etc.), loosen and aerate, and help protect soils from erosion and drying out.

My favorite soil amendments include manures (green or animal), lawn clippings, seaweed, fallen leaves, and more, including human hair from the barber shop. Green manures are living cover crops (legumes, etc.) that are grown on the site and then plowed under where they rot. When using animal manures, select those derived from herbivores (plant eaters). I highly recommend rabbit manure. It doesn't seem to burn plants, even when fresh. It usually supplies fast and slow release forms of nitrogen and has little odor. I had never seen papayas, bananas, and just about everything else grow so well until treated with rabbit manure. One source of rabbit manure is in Hudson, FL (Pasco county). Rich and Sandi Brookfield can fill you in on obtaining some. Call them at (813)869-3352.

When your soil is prepared, you may put in seeds. Try "Aztec Black", an almost black corn from Peru. How about yardlong or winged beans? You can pre-sprout your seeds. Pre-sprouting allows you to plant viable, strong seedlings without empty gaps in your beds. Here's how: soak seeds overnight in enough water to cover. Discard "floaters" the following day. Rinse once and wrap seed loosely in damp paper toweling. Place the bundle of wrapped seed back into the container but do not add any water unless the towel starts to dry. Check frequently and plant your seeds when the emerging root tips are very small (less than the length of the seed). Your new plants will have a headstart and you will begin harvesting sooner.

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER RFCI
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HUNTER FL 33584



FIRST CLASS MAIL

P. JUDSON NEWCOMBE
314 DEER PARK AVE.
TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617