



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1992

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

NEXT MEETING: DECEMBER 13, 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: GEORGE ANDERSON IS AN AMATEUR HORTICULTURIST AND MACADAMIA ENTHUSIAST. He is a member of the Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society and will speak to us on the propagation and growing of macadamia nuts. We will also have our customary plant raffle & delicious tasting table.

FLORIDA STATE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

by Al Hendry

The Florida State Horticultural Society met here in Tampa for their 105th annual meeting on November 3 to 5. We provided a very nice display of fruit that is grown locally. Thanks to the Starks for fruit, jams, wine, posters, and signs; to Janet Conard for figs, pummelo, and bananas; to Bob Heath for carambola and passion fruit; to Al Will, Dr. Maynard, Dr. Crocker, and Dr. Prevatt from Broward CC, UF, and Florida Southern, who also provided citrus, pumpkins, persimmons and other fruit. Thanks to all for a very nice display. (from the editor: also thanks to Al Hendry for collecting various fruit for display, working with me on the set-up and clean-up. lms)

All serious gardeners should join the Society. There were many research papers presented that are of interest to home gardeners and professional horticulturists alike. Some papers require an extensive background, but many do not. For the political minded, there was a workshop on the North American Free Trade Agreement. For fruit growers, there were papers on: "Propagation of the Mamey Sapote", "The Ruby Mango", "Character Needed for Commercially Successful Passion Fruit", "Chemical Control of Avocado and Lime Pests". Also, we heard papers presented on mango diseases, blue-

berries, plums, peaches, citrus root stock, and cold protection. "Creating A County-Wide Integrated Pest Management Program" should be of interest to all home owners, since they use far more pesticides per acre than do farmers. Amateurs and professionals participate in the Society, which is divided into Citrus, Garden and Landscape, Handling and Processing, Krome Memorial (fruit), Ornamental, and Vegetable sections. There is something for all who have an interest in growing garden plants.



TROPICAL FRUITING TREES by Tom Economou

Tom began his discussion with an introduction to Guatemala, which is in Central America, just to the southeast of Mexico, and is one of the countries frequently visited by Tom Economou's safaris. For this particular tour, the group flies into Guatemala City and from there to Flores, which is on the shores of Lake Flores, and then they go by bus from there up to Tikal. At this point, Tom handed out a group of photographs that he had made of his Guatemala tour so that we could see the beauty of the country and the things they had seen on the last safari. Some of the photographs were of Mayan ruins that they explored on their safari, with beautifully restored monuments to the great Mayan civilization. Some of the Mayan ruins have been somewhat restored and are very impressive. According to archeologists, there are approximately 2,000 other cities in Mexico and Guatemala in what was the Mayan nation area, that have not even been restored yet, or uncovered. Tom also described the beautiful scenery and lakes in the mountains of Guatemala.

While Tom's pictures were being passed around, he discussed some of the fruit that he had brought from South Florida and had on display on the tables. One of the fruit that Tom has learned to love and which is one of his favorites, is the large green when ripe, black sapote. It is also called the chocolate pudding fruit because inside its green skin is pulp that looks like chocolate pudding. It is a member of the persimmon family and like the persimmon, needs to be soft ripe before it is eaten. Otherwise it tastes terrible. Throughout the markets in the small villages of Guatemala, you will find the black sapote being served dead ripe, when it is at its best. This indicates the kind of respect the Guatemalans have for the black sapote.

Another excellent fruit which Tom displayed was the sapodilla, which is fairly well known in Florida. It is also from Central America. It is picked unripe and allowed to ripen off the tree. It is a very delicious fruit with a special flavor all its own. The best description of its flavor and sweetness may be described as brown sugar.

Tom had an immature jakfruit about the size of a large pummelo, perhaps 5 or 6 pounds, a nice round green fruit. The jakfruit is the largest fruit of the India/Malaysia area. In its native area it will grow to 80 or 90 pounds, hanging on the trunk and large branches of the tree. However, the largest one that has been grown at IFAS was about 35 pounds, and Tom said the largest one he had gotten from his tree is about 20 pounds.

Tom discussed the trouble he had procuring fruit to bring to our meeting. Fruit and Spice Park and IFAS in the Homestead area were devastated by Hurricane Andrew and he was only able to get an immature loofa and a banana blossom from those two sources. The rest of the fruit that he brought, and which he collected on Friday and Saturday before the meeting, he procured from three friends in the Fort Lauderdale area. They are three ex-presidents of the Broward Fruit & Vegetable Council, Bill Snyder, Evangelin Reed and Howie Levinson. Howie also gave Tom a styrofoam cooler full of ice, ready-to-eat jakfruit sections and frozen lychees for our tasting table.

One of the fruit he obtained from Ft. Lauderdale area was the pod from the tamarind tree. Within the pod around the seed is a pulp that is used extensively in the Orient for seasoning and as a snack out of hand. In India it is used in cooking and of course, the most well known use of tamarind is in the production of worcestershire sauce, of which it is a main ingredient.

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Another feature of the Guatemalan Safari is a visit to the Dole pineapple plant and plantation. Dole has 40,000 acres near the coast of Guatemala, all devoted to the growing of pineapples, and that, my friend, is a lot of pineapples. Tom brought a pineapple and assured us that the flavor of the fresh grown pineapple allowed to ripen on the plant is far superior to the pineapple purchased in the supermarket. This is because the pineapple is at its best immediately after picking and begins to decline from that moment on. Commercial pineapples are picked when they are first beginning to ripen at the very bottom and are allowed to obtain their yellow color as they are shipped and stored in the supermarket.

Tom brought three mamay sapotes that had been blown off the trees by the hurricane and while they were full size, they were definitely unripe and he advised us that the fruit would never ripen because it was too immature when it was dropped from the tree. A large, mature, ripe mamay will bring a fabulous price in South Florida and places where Cubans and other knowledgeable people have gathered because the fruit is so prized by those who grew up with them. However, the fruit he had would never ripen and weren't worth five cents. A ripe mamay is a delicious fruit, somewhat resembling sweet potato in flavor and texture. It is also a close relative of the sapadillo, which looks very similar to a small mamay with its brown scurfy exterior.

Tom also presented us with some annonas but he wasn't certain what varieties, possibly sugar apple or cherimoya, but in any event, a very delicious fruit. All of the cultivated annonas that we would be inclined to grow are delicious fruit. However, there are many annonas that are hardly edible or are not desirable as a desert fruit. The annonas, cherimoya, ilama, soursop, custard apple, sugar apple, atemoya, are all excellent fruit, ranging in size from 200 to 2000 grams. Easy to grow from seed, precocious but cold tender.

The yellow passion fruit is one of the few of the passiflora family that we are growing in Tampa, Florida. It is a rampant vine that produces a yellow fruit about 2" in diameter. The passiflora fruit is a commercial crop in several countries and the juice is mixed with other fruit juices and sold worldwide. The passion fruit flower is also very beautiful and comes in many different colors and sizes.

Tom also had a branch of a coffee tree covered with coffee beans, a section about 18" long which must have had 400 to 500 berries on it, some red, some green; very impressive. Seeds were available and many of the members took seeds home to plant. The coffee bean pit in the fruit consists of two seeds, each one of which is viable. At harvest time in the coffee producing countries, schools shut down to permit the school children to help with the harvest. The coffee plant can be grown in a pot because it is cold tender, and brought in in cold weather. It is a very ornamental bush and will produce coffee beans grown in a pot.

Tom also had the fruit of the sausage tree which looks like an overgrown summer sausage. The flowers are normally pollinated by bats but Tom said Gene Joyner hand pollinates his. That way Gene always has some sausages hanging from his sausage tree in his front yard. Unfortunately the large interesting fruit is not edible. However, it is used to make a tea and to make beer.

He also had two avocados. One was round like about the size and shape of a cantaloupe. It was a variety called Marcus pumpkin. The other was long, pear shaped and rather large, probably a Monroe. Both are relatively cold sensitive and not ideal for central Florida.

Next, Tom showed us the fruit of the baobab tree, which is a native of Africa. The tree has a very large trunk and when you see it growing wild in the field, it looks like it's growing upside down with the roots up and the foliage down. The trunk of the tree eventually becomes so big that it can be converted into a small house. The large, gourdlike, woody fruit is fuzzy on the outside and holds many small seeds embedded in a muscilaginous pulp with a pleasant mildly acid flavor.

The next fruit that Tom had were some he got from Barbara and Bill Hopkins' nursery in Ft. Lauderdale, some nice looking carambolas or star fruit.

Tom also had the leaf and fruit of a monstera deliciosa, although the fruit was immature and not up to full size. A large fruit can be a foot long and 1-1/2" in diameter and it ripens when it's mature at about 1" a day so that you eat about an inch of it and wait until the following day to eat another inch. The plant produces a jack-in-the-pulpit type flower and the edible part is the jack part of the jack-in-the-pulpit. The flavor is very delicious, reminiscent of pineapple and banana.

The macadamia nuts which Tom brought were obtained from the Reeds in Ft. Lauderdale. He indicated that some of them may be viable and could be planted to obtain seedling macadamias. Tom showed us a relative of the mangosteen, one of the garcinia family, which was about an inch in diameter and a russet red color with a large seed. He also had some wampis which resemble the lychee, but are tan in color and considerably smaller. Also the Costa Rican guava, or cas, which is a favorite fruit of Costa Rica, used to make a drink, which is its primary use, because it is too tart to eat out of hand. However, it does make an excellent jelly. And the velvet apple, which is about the size of an apple but is covered with a velvety coating in a pretty maroon color. It is very delicious but the fuzz on the outside is somewhat irritating and the fruit should be washed under water before it is cut to eat.

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TASTING TABLE: AUGUST

Janet Conard: Bananas

J. Murrie: Key Limes

Bob & Sherry Baker: Banana Bread

Nancy McCormack: Orinoco Bananas, Carambolas

Janet Conard & Al Roberts: Papaya Upside Down Cake

Joan Murrie: Key Lime Squares

Stark: Banana-Nut Cake

Roma Vaccaro: Butter Wafers

Al Roberts: Papaya Juice

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To Alice Miller, who also worked at the October sale, but whose name was inadvertently left off the list. Also a most heartfelt thanks to the member who created those neat looking and oh-so-useful traffic control stanchions. I regret to say that in all the rush and semi-chaos your name was not written down and it has been eluding all our attempts to determine it. Please let us know who you are. We certainly appreciate all your work and want to properly say "Thank you". To Paul Zmoda for setting up Floriland Farmer's Market Venture for club members (look for \$ Notice \$ elsewhere in this issue)

\$ Notice \$ Notice \$

Ever want to sell your tropical fruit? The management and vendors at the newly opened Floriland Flea and Farmer's Market (formerly Floriland Mall) have shown a positive interest in selling our excess fruit on consignment. The plan is to drop off the produce Saturday mornings and settle up on Sundays at closing time. The profits are to be split as follows: 50% for the grower, 25% for the RFCI treasury, and 25% for the vendor. We would like a steady supply of modest quantities of such items as avocados, pineapples, guavas, grapes, passion fruit, carambolas, bananas, persimmons, etc. Fruit should be in good condition and prices will be determined by you, the grower.

Everyone who grows their own fruits and vegetables often has an overabundance of produce that would otherwise go to waste. The contact person for this venture is Paul Zmoda. Please call him at 932-2469 to help raise some money for all of us and also to let others know what RFCI has to offer.

Raffle: November

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Soler Pumpkin	Fl. Horticultural Society	Walter Vines
Borinquen Pumpkin	Fl. Horticultural Society	Bob Baker
Seminole Pumpkin	Fl. Horticultural Society	Walter Vines
La Primera Pumpkin	Fl. Horticultural Society	J.B. Creighton
La Segunda Pumpkin	Fl. Horticultural Society	Evelyn Reda
Linea C. Pinta Pumpkin	Fl. Horticultural Society	Al Hendry
Mango Seedlings	J. Murrie	Diana Mills
Mango Seedlings	J. Murrie	Samm Philmore
Mango Seedlings	J. Murrie	Bob Baker
Mango Seedlings	J. Murrie	?
Hawaiian Papaya (self pollinating)	L. McKone	Al Hendry
Mobolo-Velvet Apple	M. Bennett	Samm Philmore
Papaya	Burhenn	?
Papaya	Burhenn	J.B. Creighton
Loquat	Burhenn	?
Rosemary	Burhenn	A. Miller
Pummelo	Charles Novak	Diana Mills
Pummello	Charles Novak	G. Amyot
Pummello	Charles Novak	Tony Reda
Pummello	Charles Novak	?
Chaya	Arkwright	J. B. Creighton
Canendish Banana	Bob Baker	Walter Vines
Scarlet Pineapple	Bob Baker	?
Fig	Honeycutt	McKone
Pond Apple	Honeycutt	Walter Vines
Pond Apple	Honeycutt	J. Murrie
Kiwi (female)	Honeycutt	A. Miller
Chayote	Honeycutt	Arkwright
Chayote (3)	Honeycutt	?
Tamarind	Heath	JB Creighton
Grumichama	Heath	Nancy McCormack
YellowPassion Fruit	Heath	A. Miller
Tree Basil	Heath	JB Creighton
Tree Basil	Heath	J. Murrie
Tree Basil	Heath	Al Hendry
Pond Apple	Heath	G. Amyot
Guachilote	Heath	A. Burhenn
Sweet Basil (LRE)	Bojar	A. Miller
Sweet Basil (LRE)	Bojar	?
Cactus (Tuna)	Tom Economou	Evelyn Reda

* To all the lucky pumpkin winners: **Remember to bring the pumpkin seeds to this meeting**
New Members

Edwin & Pauline Torres 2706 E. 7th Avenue Tampa, FL 33605 (813)248-5874

What's Happening

November-December

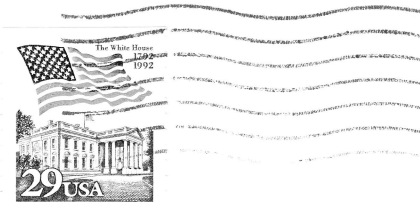
by Paul Zmoda

Good luck to you and all your plants as we head into the cold of winter. Many species will need some sort of protection from drying winds and frosts. Hopefully, we will not experience any hard freezes. Just in case, have on hand lots of cardboard boxes, newspaper, dry leaves, and cloth material so that you may cover and insulate your rare, tender plants. Don't be disappointed to lose papayas. They can be successfully grown as biennials: start seeds and keep potted through the first winter. Then plant outdoors in a sunny spot with rich moist soil for the second growing season. You should have fruit before the cold kills them.

You may wonder when to harvest bananas or plantains. After 3-4 months of growth, the fruit will reach a mature size. Cut off a single fruit from the upper-most cluster or hand. Place it indoors and see how many days it takes to turn yellow. If it takes 1 1/2 to 2 weeks, let them grow some more, but continue to monitor them this way every 2-3 weeks. As soon as fruits ripen in 1 to 1 1/2 weeks, begin harvesting several from the upper hands on down every few days. You want to have a steady supply of ripe fruit at all times, unless, of course, you desire them all ripe at once. If so, then cut down the entire bunch and hang it in a shady, dry place to ripen. If you prefer cooking green bananas or plantains, cut them at a mature size, but don't allow to ripen.

To facilitate banana harvesting, use a two-sided pruning saw. It has fine teeth for cutting off hands of fruit and coarse teeth for taking down and cutting up the stalk after the fruit is all off. You can use the saw to remove the purple bud hanging below the bunch to allow more plant energy to be directed towards the fruit. Use it as a cooked vegetable. Wash the saw with a blast from the garden hose right after use. Dry and oil it before you put it away.

Tampa Bay Chapter RFCI
313 Pruett Rd.
Seffner FL 33584



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR!



The African baobab (*Adansonia digitata*)