



NEWSLETTER

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: BOB HEATH
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(INCLUDING RENEWALS)

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2nd SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DECEMBER 12, 1993

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

PROGRAM WINEMAKING. Winemaking is another way of
utilizing the fruit of our labors. Wine may
be made from just about any fruit, including
bananas. The American Medical Association
says a glass of wine with your dinner meal is
good for the digestion and for the heart. We
will have a panel of winemaking members to
provide information on this ancient art, and
all the paraphernalia used in making and enjoying
wine. Also, we will have our regular tasting
table and raffle. Please contribute.

Tasting Table: August

Janet Conard: 2 Papaya Upside-down Cakes

Diana Mills: Sweet Bread

Bob Heath: Pumpkin-Nut Bread, Carambola Preserves

Pat Jean: Coffee Cake

Nancy McCormack: Apple Muffins, Strawberry Muffins

New Members

Robert E. & Margarette B. Hines 8836 Gall Blvd., Zephyrhills, FL 33541 (813)782-3194

Beverly Millar 3823 San Luis, Tampa, FL 33624 (813)831-3099

P.C. O'Berry PO Box 675, Lacoochee, FL 33537-0675 (904)583-2888

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Ronald K. Webster 7819 North Lois Ave. Tampa, FL 3614 (813)886-3633

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To Pearl Nelson, Samm Philmore, Frances & Gene Wagonseller for their work during the
October Tree Sale (these names were inadvertently omitted from last month's list).

To Frank Pupello & Charles Novak for the lovely Pomegranate donated for auction, and to Grady
Tate for his successful bid on it.

FRUIT FOR THE SMALL LANDSCAPE by Gene Joyner

Fruit trees for the small landscape are trees that you can keep trimmed back and still get a lot of fruit without having to worry about having an acre or two for growing trees. For those that do have acreage, they find that in time, that fills up pretty quickly and they're back to that same problem of trying to get as many fruit trees as possible into that available space. Gene has two & a half acres and he keeps planting, and the space between them keeps getting smaller and smaller. But he doesn't give up. He just keeps putting things in, and people say, "How do these grow without getting any sun?" He says, "Oh, I just cut a hole in the overhead so they can get a little shaft of light." Hence, he decided to talk about things one could grow on a small lot or even in containers.

The first slide showed the pomegranate in a big pot and he indicated that one could keep the pomegranate in that pot for several years and still enjoy fruit from it. So if you find yourself without any space, but you do have a patio or porch, you can grow these things in a container and still have fruit to give away to your neighbors.

Gene switched to a slide of a banana tree and indicated that with the mild winters we've been having, those people who have banana trees have been getting quite a lot of fruit from them in this area, and even further north. The slide showed the Apple banana which is one of the better dooryard bananas. It produces rather large bunches, 40 to 50 pounds, and is being produced commercially in the Miami area. It's a high quality fruit with thin skin. The tree is rather tall, growing 18 to 20 feet, but many people prefer this banana to the commercial varieties. They will frequently produce fruit in less than a year from small suckers. Gene indicated that this year, with the great weather and lots of moisture, that he's had some bunches with as many as 10 hands, which is unusual for the apple banana.

He also showed us the Cavendish, which you frequently see in dooryard landscapes. Cavendish bananas don't get that bright yellow color that most of the others do, but even though they are still greenish-yellow, they're ripe on the inside and more nearly resemble the commercial bananas in flavor, texture and size. The tree is relatively short and stocky, up to 10 feet, and the Dwarf Cavendish may be only 7 or 8 feet. It will frequently produce fruit within 9 or 10 months from a sucker if given a lot of fertilizer, water and lunch, to which they respond very quickly.

He next showed a slide of a beautiful hand of Jamaican Red bananas, which are a little slower growing, and may take as much as 2 years to produce fruit. The payoff, of course, is the beautiful red bananas which have a darker pulp, almost orange inside, high quality, and very appreciated. The Valerie, Williams and Grand Mame are commercial varieties which will also grow here and produce fruit very readily. All three of these produce large bunches of bananas, sometimes over 100 pounds, and still the trees are only 7 or 8 feet tall.

Bananas, of course, will grow in a relatively small area, but if left to themselves, they will eventually spread out over a very large area. However, most people keep the suckers cut off to give to friends and to trade, which keeps their bananas in manageable spaces.

The Ice Cream Banana produces a kind of silver gray fruit before maturity, but turn yellow like the rest of the bananas after ripening. They tend to be softer than other bananas and ripen very quickly. Gene says the bananas go from ripe to rotten in 3 days so you have to eat them in a hurry.

The Plantain is the other group of bananas, and the slide he showed us was of the Orinoco, which seems to have just a few degrees more cold hardiness than the ordinary banana. Plantains are normally cooked, baked or fried. The bunches on the Orinoco will often exceed 80 pounds with 6" and 8" long fruit, very definitely triangular

fruit. The tree is easy to grow and frequently produces in less than a year. Plantains may be eaten out of hand; they do not have to be cooked; they just tend to be a little more starchy than bananas.

Bananas and plantains are very tender, but if they are frozen to the ground, they come right back in the spring and will be producing fruit within a year.

The Barbados Cherry is another that is appreciated in small landscapes. It can be grown as a shrub, trained into a hedge, or shaped up into a small tree. They produce fruit 3 to 5 times a year and the fruit are very attractive, bright shiny red, about an inch in diameter; we could see from the slide that they don't all ripen at the same time. In fact, it's not unusual in the summer to have flowers, green fruit and ripe fruit all at the same time on the same plant. The flavor of the fruit is acid; this is because of the high content of Vitamin C, ascorbic acid, which, in one cherry, will provide a person more than their daily Vitamin C requirement. Nurseries frequently sell the Barbados Cherry under the name of acerola. If you look on Vitamin C tablet bottles, you will probably see that the Vitamin C is derived from the acerola. Barbados cherries are usually grown from cuttings or air layers. It is not usually recommended to grow them from seeds because it takes 3 or 4 years to produce fruit from seed and the fruit could very well be inferior. Cooking does not destroy the Vitamin C so jelly made with Barbados cherries is high in Vitamin C.

Carambolas are a native of Southeast Asia and one of Gene Joyner's favorite fruit. The slide showed a carambola tree in full bloom with thousands of tiny pink flowers adorning all the branches. The prolific yellow fruit that follow the flowers are also very attractive and range in color from a very light yellow, almost white, to a deep orange. Carambolas seem to have two seasons, a summer and a winter season. Carambolas can also be grown very well in pots and will fruit rather heavily if properly maintained. The tree can get very large in time, but it can be kept cut back and under control. Carambolas are relatively cold hardy, taking temperatures down to 25° or 26° without great damage. They come back quickly and will bear the following year after considerable damage.

The Clarissa, or Natal Plum, is also a very beautiful fruit. The plant produces a profusion of white flowers, followed by the oblong or round fruit, deep red with reddish pulp inside. There are a few small seeds in the center which are easily extracted and the fruit make excellent jams and jellies and ice creams. The Clarissa is used extensively as a landscape plant. It makes a beautiful hedge and is virtually impenetrable because of its large thorns. The plant is relatively cold hardy and is resistant to salt spray. It is important if you're looking for a fruiting plant in the nursery that you verify that the particular Clarissa they're selling is a fruiting variety because there are ornamental varieties that do not fruit, or fruit very poorly.

Figs, which are not really tropical, make a great addition to the small landscape. This is another one that can be grown in a 10 or 15 gallon pot and still produce a considerable number of fruit. And of course you can control the soil in a pot and eliminate the problem with nematodes, the little microscopic worms that attack the roots and eventually cause severe decline and maybe even loss of the tree. Figs may be grafted on a nematode resistant root stock, and should be if they are to be planted in the ground. There are a large number of fig varieties available but the Celeste, Brown Turkey and Kadota are varieties that tend to be more available. Figs bloom in the early spring, ripen in the summer months, and frequently linger on into the fall, depending on the climatic conditions. The major problem with figs in Florida is the disease called fig rust, which develops thru the summer and early fall and causes a premature leaf drop which affects the production of the fig fruit. There is no effective control for rust because of the humid climate, although copper spray will help some; figs are really more adjusted to a dry climate. A ripe fig fresh from the bush is really a treat and nothing like those you buy in the market. Of course, birds are aware of this fine flavor and tend to destroy a lot of figs by pecking at them here and there. A mosquito netting over the plants will usually help to deter the birds.

Guavas are another favorite of Gene's, but unfortunately are very tender. However, even though they're frozen to the ground, they'll come back up from the roots and may produce fruit the following year. Guavas are grown throughout the world in tropical regions and in some areas they've escaped from cultivation and are almost a pest. The guava makes a small tree and, usually around here, you'll see them with multiple trunks because they've been frozen to the ground and come back from several sprouts. Most varieties have yellow skin with white, pink or red interiors. In mild climates, they will produce fruit year around, but in central Florida, they tend to be more seasonal. Fruit size varies according to variety, from about ping pong ball size all the way up to navel orange size. The pink flesh varieties tend to have fewer seeds and a milder flavor, but both types are used commercially for jellies, jams, butters, guava shells and other preserves. They may be propagated from cuttings or air layered or grafted, which will give fruit in a year or 2, whereas growing from seeds may take 4 to 5 years. The guava also lends itself to pot culture and in a 15 or 20 gallon pot, will produce a lot of fruit. Guavas are a great host for the fruit fly and the only reliable way to protect the fruit is by bagging. A close relative of the common guava is the Cattley guava, which comes in two colors, red and yellow, the red being more common, and is frequently called a strawberry guava. The Cattley guava is more cold hardy than the common guava, and produces a fruit that is only an inch or so in diameter. The fruit has a very similar taste to the common guava with a lot of seeds and can be used for jellies, jams and preserves. They normally produce a crop in the spring and another crop in the fall, and that's it. It is a pretty, small tree with glossy leaves unlike the common guava and is an excellent plant for the home landscape.

The jaboticaba is another excellent candidate for container growing or planting in the landscape. It is native to Brazil and is an attractive small tree with mottled bark and very small leaves. It is very slow growing, normally propagated by seeds, and takes 6 to 10 years to begin to produce fruit. It may be a long wait, but when it finally begins to flower, it's very attractive, as the white flowers cover the trunk & branches like little balls of cotton. Then 21 days after that, the fruit are ready to eat. Again, the tree is very beautiful with the trunk limbs covered with grape sized purple fruit. Inside, the fruit has a white translucent pulp and one or two small seeds. The trees are very productive, producing fruit up to 6 times in one year with fruit up to an inch in diameter and very delicious. It is excellent for jellies and jams and the making of wine. In south Florida there are some small commercial groves, mostly for U-pick crops for the local population. In their native Brazil, the trees frequently grow in the lowlands and in swamps, and along river banks, so are accustomed to a lot of water and rich soils.

The loquat is another tree you see extensively grown in this area and they may develop into a rather large tree but can be kept within limits by pruning and training. The loquat is in bloom at this time and is just beginning to set fruit which will be ripening between January and April. The fruit is quite pretty, bright yellow, an inch or so in diameter, pear shaped, and with one or more rather large seeds. Loquats are most commonly grown from seeds but there are several superior varieties. The main varieties are going to be larger and sweeter than most of the seedlings. This is a very hardy tree for central Florida and should not be kept in a pot too long because it develops so well in the ground. Unfortunately, they flower and fruit in the winter and a freeze anytime between now and March will damage the blossoms or the fruit. The pest of the loquat is the Caribbean fruit fly. Also, the tree is subject to a disease called fire blight and may also be the carrier for fire blight to apple and pear trees. The fruit makes excellent jellies, fruit leathers and pies.

The longan is another fruit that many of us enjoy in this area. It is a summer fruit, usually late July and August. The trees are very dense with dark green, waxy leaves, usually bloom in late February or March, and fruit are large clusters of brown grape-sized fruit. If the bunches are thinned when they're very small, the fruit will get as much as an inch in diameter, but most people are reluctant to thin the fruit and they end up with great bunches of smaller fruit, which of course, are still very delicious. Inside the brown shell is a white, melting pulp with a large seed, very

sweet and delicious. The trees are frequently seed grown, but they can be air layered and grafted easily. The tree will get very large if allowed to, but it may be kept cut back in a smaller landscape. It is not very cold hardy, being damaged below about 26°, but it will take to container growing and still produce more fruit than you can take care of.

The lychee is a similar tree, producing red fruit very similar to the longan. full well rounded tree if it's grown in the open, a very pretty tree. Like the longan, the lychee also blooms in late February and produces clusters of red fruit an inch or more in diameter. The red clusters, as many as 10 to 15 fruit in a cluster, on the green tree, gives it a Christmas look. The lychee is not as dependable a fruiting tree as the longan and you can expect a big crop only every 2 to 3 years. In south Florida there are several hundred acres and more being planted. The Brewster, Sweet Cliff and Moritius are the 3 most common grafted varieties. The fruit, like the longan, can be dried, and they also freeze well in the shell. Commercially, they are canned for export, so you can find the canned fruit in Oriental stores if you don't have a tree. Propagation is most common by air layering.

The Macadamia nut is another tropical tree that can be grown in the small landscape. It may be kept pruned back to a large bush or allowed to grow on up into a 30 or 40 foot tree. The nuts are just beginning to ripen at this time and will continue to bear on into February. Like many of the nut crops, the mature nuts fall from the trees so you don't have to worry about climbing up to get them; just keep the ground clean underneath so you can find them. You'll have to check out the ground a couple of times a week for the nuts and pick them up. However, if you have any neighborhood squirrels, they're going to check them out before you do and eat the nuts before they reach maturity. It is definitely one of the highest quality nuts but requires a special nutcracker or a bench vise to crack the nuts without crushing the meat. The nuts range in size from about 1/2 inch to 1 inch in diameter, perfectly round like a marble. The biggest problem with macadamias here is erratic production; you may get a good crop one year and nothing the next. There is also a variety they call paper shell, supposedly a lot easier to crack; however, they certainly don't fall into the category of paper shell as we know them from pecans. Macadamias are fairly easy to air layer and normally produce fruit the following year, but seedlings may take 10 to 15 years to produce nuts and then the quality may be inferior.

Another favorite for the small landscape is the papaya. It is also one of the quickest plants to get fruit after planting the seed, frequently producing the fruit in less than a year. The fruit is very variable in shape & size. It may be round or oblong and vary from a few ounces to several pounds. It is normal to wait until the fruit begins to color to harvest them unless they are intended to be eaten green. For eating fresh, one should wait until the fruit colors up well because they are sweeter when they ripen on the tree than ripening in the kitchen. Inside we find a hollow cavity filled with seeds which may be easily propagated to start new plants. The seed may be used fresh out of the fruit or may be dried and stored maintaining viability for up to a year or more. The flesh ranges from a light yellow color to a deep red and the quality of the fruit seems to increase the darker the flesh. The papaya has several sexes; male and female are most common; bisexuals and neuters are also known; however, you cannot tell whether it's male or female until it begins to produce flowers; the female flowers are large, right on the trunk and the leaf nodes; the male flowers come on long stems out from the trunk and are much smaller than the female flowers. Gene eats the papaya green by making slaw. He picks the fruit just before they start to color, peels them and shreds them on a grater or electric shredder, and then adds his favorite dressing. He says this makes an excellent slaw without any of that odd papaya flavor. The green fruit also may be peeled, cut up and fried with onions and bacon to make a dish similar to fried squash. Papayas are very cold sensitive; a heavy frost will kill them, but if you have seeds to plant, next year you'll have fruit again. The seeds may also be eaten as a spice in salads to give a peppery taste, or they may be dried well and ground in a pepper grinder for seasoning.

The pineapple is another plant that is very easy to grow and takes up very little room in the landscape. If you buy a pineapple fruit from your supermarket, you can cut the crown

off and plant it. It should be allowed to dry for 2 or 3 days before it is placed in the ground to help prevent rotting. Pineapples are an excellent plant for the small landscape. There are both spiny and spineless varieties, the Abaca and the Smooth Cayenne respectively. The crown may be grown in a 3 gallon pot or put in the ground and covered when a freeze occurs. From the crown it will probably take about 2 years to produce fruit. At that time, a flower will appear in the middle to produce a little pineapple which eventually will grow into the ripe fruit. The fruit should be left on the plant until it reaches a nice orange or yellow orange color to get the best quality. Those in the supermarket have been picked immature or too green and don't have the quality of those grown in your own yard. As the fruit matures, sprouts will develop at the base of the plant and at the bottom side of the pineapple. All of these may be taken off and planted after the fruit ripens to produce additional plants. The mother plant itself dies after producing the fruit. Other pineapples which we see in this area are the Natal Queen and the Spanish Red. The Natal Queen is variegated and quite beautiful and the Spanish Red, as the name implies, tends to be very well colored with a beautiful red fruit. The quality of these two are not up to the Abaca and the Smooth Cayenne. The ideal fertilizer for pineapples is a water soluble, such as Peter's 20-20-20. Mix according to directions and pour about one cupful into the crown every week or two.

The Mysore Raspberry is another good one for growing in a container. This will keep it from getting away from you as they are wont to do. If you let it go, it will make extensive patches in the garden and because they are thorny, it is hard to get in there and work around them. The Mysore is a very good raspberry for this area, up to an inch in diameter, and will produce from late February to June, which is a pretty good season. Individual canes can grow as much as 10 feet and get as big around as your finger. The undersides of the leaves and the stems are almost white. This is a tropical raspberry that will not take frost. A freeze will kill it all the way to the ground. If you have it in an area where you can cover it when frost occurs, or in pots where you can bring it indoors, you should get clusters of very good fruit. They grow readily from cuttings and they sucker up like blackberries so that you soon have more plants than you can use.

The White Sapote is a tree from Mexico which is appreciated in this area. It produces two or more crops a year of tennis ball sized fruit. The tree has very beautiful foliage, light green to medium green, large multiple leaves with 3 to 5 leaflets on a single stem. The tiny pale flowers come in bunches and set several fruit, most of which will fall off and produce one fruit on each stem. The fruit is light green when ripe and may be picked any time while still hard, and allowed to ripen indoors. The skin is thin, flesh white, melting custard-like with one or more large thin seeds. It is delicious dessert fruit and there are several named varieties. Propagation is by air layering or grafting, either of which will produce fruit the following year or the year after. The tree seems to grow as a large bush in this area and takes the cold about as well as the carambola or some citrus trees.

The Black Sapote is another excellent fruit for this area. It can produce a large tree if it is allowed to grow but should be cultivated in a container because it is rather tender and needs to be protected during a freeze. In growth habits and appearance it resembles the persimmon, of which it is a close relative. The flowers and fruit also resemble the persimmon in appearance but certainly not in flavor. The fruit remains green until ripe, at which time it softens with a slight lessening of the bright green color. Inside, the flesh is a very dark brown, which has been compared to chocolate pudding and also to tar. The appearance discourages some people, but the flavor is excellent and this orange sized fruit is definitely a recommendation for the home landscape.

* * * * *

Raffle: November

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Pink Panda Strawberries	MaryAnn Campbell	Charles Novak
Fresh Bananas	S. Baker	?
Grafting Tape	Yuku Tanaka	Walter Vines
Guava, large white	Herb Hill	Joyce Wofford
Guava, large white	Herb Hill	?
Guava, large red	Herb Hill	Juanita Diaz
Guava, large red	Herb Hill	Bev Millar
Sugar Apple	Paul Zmoda	R. Hines
Sugar Apple	Paul Zmoda	Samm Philmore
La Lot	Paul Zmoda	John D. Jones
American Beautyberry	Paul Zmoda	P.C. O'Berry
Naranjilla	Janet Conard	Samm Philmore
Naranjilla	Janet Conard	?
Loquat seedling	Janet Conard	Ann Ratajik
Pineapple	Jerry Amyot	Juanita Diaz
Pineapple	Jerry Amyot	Francis Wagenseller
Pineapple	Jerry Amyot	Alice Rodby
Pineapple	Jerry Amyot	John Bell
Pineapple (2)	Jerry Amyot	??
Spinach tree	Charles Novak	John Bell
Spinach tree	Charles Novak	Dorothy Wofford
Spinach tree	Charles Novak	Mary Ann Campbell
Spinach tree	Charles Novak	Samm Philmore
Spinach tree (2)	Charles Novak	??
Loquat	Burhenn	Sue Tate
Loquat	Burhenn	Juanita Diaz
Loquat	Burhenn	?
Costos (orange cone)	Burhenn	Diana Mills
Glycosmos	Heath	Gene Wagenseller
Glycosmos	Heath	?
Wampi	Heath	Grady Tate
Wampi	Heath	Al Jean
Guava	Heath	?
Fig	Heath	Ann Ratajik
Fig	Heath	John Bell
Tree Basil (2)	Heath	??
Passion Fruit	Heath	Juanita Diaz
Pineapple	Heath	Sandi Schroff
Surinam Cherry	Heath	Al Jean
Rose Apple	Heath	?
Garlic with Pepper	Heath	?
Grumichama	Heath	?
White Sapote	Heath	?
Downy Myrtle	Heath	Gene Wagenseller
Avocado (Young)	Heath	P.C. O'Berry
French Mulberry	Heath	Joyce Wofford
Pineapple	E. Freedman	R. Schroff
Pineapple	E. Freedman	MaryAnn Campbell
Pineapple	E. Freedman	Lucy Rice
Lemon Balm	MaryAnn Campbell	?
Passion Fruit	MaryAnn Campbell	?
Giant Delicious Tomatoes	Samm Philmore	Grady Tate
Rosemary	Samm Philmore	Ann Ratajik
Fresh Bay Leaves	Samm Philmore	Sandi Schroff

What's Happening

November-December 1993

by Paul Zmoda

Let's make wine. Now is a great time to preserve your excess fruit for later use. Of course you can can some, or make jellies and jams, but making a good wine will test your mettle. Learn how at our next meeting. Be sure to bring a pad and pencil to take notes.

Spring Horticultural Offerings by Hillsborough Community College

Courses include:

- ◆ Horticultural Science
- ◆ Home Environment Horticulture
- ◆ Floriculture (with lab)
- ◆ Plant Physiology & Growth
- ◆ Plant Identification II
- ◆ Plant Pest Management (with lab)
- ◆ Principles of Woody ornamental Plants (with lab)
- ◆ Co-op Agri/Business

Classes begin in early January, but registration begins December 2.

Classes meet evenings or Saturday. Call 757-2188 for more information

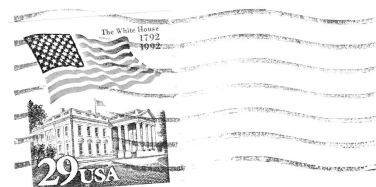
GUATEMALA SAFARI...

* * *

Chris Rollins (Homestead Fruit & Spice Park) will be leading a Fruit Safari and Mayan Culture Excursion to Guatemala March 27 - April 5, 1994 (10 days).

Cost \$1,595.00. Call (305) 285-7173 for more information.

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