



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1994

**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 THE MONTH AT 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING FEBRUARY 13 1994

MEETING PLACE RARE FRUIT COUNCIL CLUBHOUSE. 313 PRUETT RD, SEFFNER.
Take I-4 To Exit 8 North, S.R. 579, go one mile to
Pruett Road. (See McDonald School sign) Turn right
(EAST). Go one mile. See Clubhouse on left immediately
past McDonald School.

PROGRAM OUR SPEAKER THIS MONTH WILL BE PAUL HORNBY, WHO IS WITH
THE DIVISION OF PLANT INDUSTRY IN GAINESVILLE. He will
speak on the movement of plants and seeds interstate
and internationally. This is of primary concern to
the RFCI because of our search for plant material and
seeds. We will also have our raffle and tasting table
so please contribute.



SOCIAL/EXERCISE/EDUCATION DAY FOR CLUB MEMBERS

Beginning on Saturday, February 19, and
every Saturday morning thereafter, except
for sales days and special events such as
Christmas weekend, we intend to initiate
landscaping parties for our 2-acre plot.

We will be planting trees, watering,
mulching, installing walkways, putting
up fences, clearing where necessary,
jawwing with each other, and in general
doing those things which RFCI people enjoy.



We will start about 9:00 in the
morning and continue until noon
or later as we so desire, and
those who want to participate
can work as much or as little
and as long as they feel inclined.



TOM ECONOMOU: A POTPOURRI OF FRUIT

Tom began his talk reminiscing about earlier days of our Chapter, Joe Constantine and his place on Lake LeClare, and the many times he's spoken to our group. He said, "Coming here is like coming home." He also talked about the 18 years he has been leading parties into the American Tropics for tours of the beauties of the Latin American countries. He also talked about the Fruit & Spice Park in the Miami area and Chris Rollins, who manages the park. He recommended that members visit this fabulous place of many tropical fruit species. Chris is one of the leaders of the trips that Tom arranges and has been leading groups for 10 years or more.

His next trip will be to Guatemala and Tom had some beautiful posters on Guatemala hanging on our walls. Guatemala is a fascinating country and though it is in the Tropics, it also sports some very cool weather up in the mountains so that one can go from a tropical climate to an arctic climate in just hours. The hotel they stayed in actually had a fireplace in each bedroom. When he goes to Colombia, he flies south from Bogota to Cali. One can actually see glaciers in the mountains. It's unbelievable to see how many ice glaciers are there. South America is a big continent and sports every kind of climate and while it may be warm down in the valley, he guarantees that at 15 or 20,000 feet, you're going to freeze.

This year in July, Gene Joiner also will lead a trip to Guatemala. Tom has arranged two trips to Guatemala this year for any of our members who might be interested in visiting this exciting country. Gene Joiner's trip will be a very interesting 11-day trip.

In addition, Tom is planning to lead a trip to the Chelsea Flower Show in England. The Chelsea Flower Show is the oldest continuous flower show in the world. It was started over 150 years ago by the British Horticultural Society. The English are noted for their gardens and they have some of the finest in the world. The Chelsea Gardens are at the Chelsea Hospital, which is not really a hospital but is instead a retirement home for retired soldiers. The Gardens cover about 20 acres. The first leg of the trip will be to Holland, to one of the most famous gardens in the Netherlands, seven acres with millions of tulips and other kinds of bulbs. The trip will be for 16 days and will include one night in Paris, then back to England, stopping in Dover at the Castle Gardens, Stratford for two nights, which will include a visit to the theatre there, and then three days in London; all in all, a fabulous trip.

Finally, Tom got started on the fruit that he had displayed on the table. The first item he picked up was the baobab which is native to Africa. There are specimens growing in South Florida. The tree produces an absolutely tremendous trunk. In Africa the tree gets so big that they actually carve out and live in the trunks, using them for houses. The fruit he showed us was hard, about 6" to 8" long and 4" in diameter. Tom indicated that, in Africa, they make a beverage from it and also use it to make beer.

Next he showed us a Brazil nut which is not a cultivated nut but grows on wild trees and is gathered by the natives in Brazil and neighboring countries. The Brazil nut is a compound nut in that the husk is 5" or 6" in diameter and contains dozens of the Brazil nuts as we know them packed tightly inside. This is what accounts for the triangular shape that most of them have.

Tom also had a bowl of jaboticaba fruit which range in size from 1/2" to 1" in diameter and are deep purple in color and very delicious, somewhat resembling a muscadine grape. The fruit develops on the trunk and large limbs of the tree and presents quite a unique appearance, covering the trunk and limbs with purple fruit.

Tom next held up a big brown bean approximately 8" long and 1-1/2" wide and 1/2" thick, a member of the Inga family, more commonly referred to as the ice cream bean. The dark

colored beans inside are surrounded by a white pulp which is very delicious and slightly resembles ice cream when it's chilled.

Tom also had a nice specimen of the sugar apple which grows to about apple size but has an extremely bumpy exterior skin, each bump representing one segment of the fruit and containing one seed. It is a very sweet, very delicious fruit with a custard-like texture, having only the drawback of many seeds. Like eating watermelon, you separate the seeds in your mouth, relishing the flesh and then expelling the seeds when you finish.

Tom also mentioned the Cas, or Costa Rican guava, which is one of the most popular fruits in Costa Rica. When he tasted it and let other North American natives taste it, they found it so sour, they want to know what's the matter with those Costa Ricans. But the Costa Ricans make a drink out of it which is really fabulous, and the fruit is said to be excellent for jellies and jams. It just shows that what pleases one person's taste may be repulsive to another's, and vice versa.

Tom also had some beautiful black sapote fruit. One actually measured over 4" in diameter. It is one of his favorites and one that he has named chocolate pudding fruit, which has become pretty widely accepted because of the chocolate pudding appearance of the pulp. The fruit may remain green until it gets soft and ripens, or it may turn brown as it ripens. Inside there are usually two to six rather large seeds in what Tom describes as chocolate pudding, but which others have described as tar and used axle grease. The flavor is not very reminiscent of chocolate pudding; however, it is very sweet and very delicious. Almost everybody enjoys it once they get by the color. Tom says because they remain green, he can't always see them in the tree and they ripen and fall off the tree onto his driveway where they splatter. The neighbors think he's kind of crazy because they see him out there eating something off of the driveway. He says, "I can't afford to let that delicious fruit go to waste."

Another fruit of great interest that he showed us is the Mamay Sapote, or just Mamay. It was about 4" long, shaped somewhat like a mango, but has a brown scurfy skin. The fruit is so esteemed by Cubans that when they were first imported into the Miami area where so many Cubans live, they were willing to pay as much as \$5.00 a pound for them. Now the price has come down and you can get them for \$2.00 to \$2.50 each, but in Guatemala they sell for about 35 cents for that size fruit. It is certainly one of the most delicious fruit and is generally appreciated by everyone who tries it. It has one large seed and a texture like cooked sweet potato and with a similar color, but is much more delicious.

Another one of Tom's favorite fruit and one that is grown extensively in South Florida is the sapodilla, which in appearance is very similar to a small mamay with the same brown scurfy surface. The pulp is exceptionally sweet and really delicious. The sapodilla tree is the tree that produces chiclet, a white sticky sap that used to be the main source of chewing gum, and is still used to some extent for that purpose. The tree is tapped somewhat like a maple tree for syrup and produces a white gummy liquid that is boiled down to produce the chiclet. Likewise, the fruit does not ripen on the tree; it needs to be picked at maturity and allowed to soften and ripen indoors and cannot be eaten until it is soft ripe or your lips will end up covered with chiclet.

Next Tom showed us some spondias fruit, also called red mombin or hog plum. They are small plum size fruit with a large seed but a good flavor. There are two kinds, the red mombin and the yellow mombin which are very similar in growth habits and flavor. He also had a couple of monstera deliciosus fruit which have a shape like a straight banana, being 6" or 8" long and an inch and a half or so in diameter. It is produced by the ornamental monstera which is a vining type plant with extremely large perforated leaves. The fruit is very delicious but it ripens only about an inch a day after it is picked. There are lots of people who are allergic to the fruit because of the oxalic acid that it contains, so be

careful. It grows as the center part of a jack-in-the-pulpit type flower and is somewhat like eating a popsicle with a very large stick.

Tom also had several carambolas, also known as the star fruit, but then we're all familiar with this fruit.

The next fruit he showed us was the tamarind pod. The tamarind is a member of the bean family and produces a large pod with a very interesting tasting pulp around the seeds. The tamarind is greatly valued, especially in the Far East, and is used to make a pleasant drink and in cooking for making sauces and chutneys. It is also one of the prime ingredients of worcestershire sauce, and of course it may be eaten out of hand, both fresh and dried.

Tom also had several egg fruit, which he says is also one of his favorite fruits, and he cut up several to remove the seeds which he said members of the club could distribute among themselves. Also he suggested those who had never eaten egg fruit could taste it, but since there was a limited amount, he suggested those who had eaten it in the past to pass up this opportunity. The egg fruit is a yellow fruit about the size of a guava with a thin skin and a texture of the pulp very similar to that of a boiled egg yolk. However, the pulp is very sweet and delicious, but some people do not like it because of its rather dry taste.

Tom showed us another of his favorite fruits, the velvet apple. It is an apple-sized fruit from the Philippines, very beautiful velvety red colored skin when it's ripe. It shows a star in the center when it's cut in half with small seeds and lots of delicious pulp. Before handling the fruit extensively, it should be dunked in water and the fur rubbed off because it is irritating to some people, making them itch and causing a rash.

He also had leaves of several spices; allspice, lemon allspice, cinnamon, curry and bay rum.

Tom said he always learns something when he goes out collecting and what he found out this time was that the podocarpus produces an edible fruit. The podocarpus is male or female and the female produces a bland purple fruit about an inch long and 3/8" in diameter at maximum. It fruits much like a cashew nut in that the edible part is really the peduncle of the real fruit which hangs below as the seed or, in the cashew, as the nut.

As a finale, Tom showed us several slides of his trips to South America, the Amazon Basin, Guatemala, Tikal, the mountains in Peru and Costa Rica, many of the ancient buildings built by the Spaniards and also some of the ruins and fascinating cities of the Mayans in their vast empire, and finally slides of his home in South Florida.



CANDIED CITRON

1 citron
2 cups sugar
1 cup water
1/4 cup white corn syrup
granulated sugar for coating

Peel citron, removing yellow skin with acid cells. Cut citron and remove center pulp and seeds. Cut white pith into strips 3/8" x 3/8" x 2". Cover with cold water and bring to boil. Boil for two minutes, drain and rinse. Repeat process one more time to remove the bitter taste.

Make a syrup of the sugar, water and corn syrup and boil over low heat for 30 minutes. Add the citron and boil for 90 minutes or until citron becomes translucent.

Lay out a piece of waxed paper and sprinkle it liberally with sugar. Put the peel on the paper and toss it so it is covered with sugar. Let it sit for a couple days to dry. The candied fruit will then keep indefinitely in the refrigerator, except that mine never gets to the refrigerator.

Raffle: January

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Persian Apple (Citron)	Stark	Tate
bag of Lakeland Limequats	Stark	Yuku Tanaka
Puerto Rican Spiny White Chayote	Stark	Yuku Tanaka
Puerto Rican Spiny White Chayote	Stark	N. McCormack
Puerto Rican Spiny White Chayote	Stark	G. Diaz
Puerto Rican Spiny White Chayote (3)	Stark	?
Citrus	Charles Novak	?
Spinach Tree	Charles Novak	R.K. Webster
Spinach Tree (4)	Charles Novak	Diana Mills
Spinach Tree	Charles Novak	Schroff
Cassava stem	Zmoda	Al Jean
Cassava stem (2)	Zmoda	?
Gulf Gold Plum budwood	Zmoda	?
Smooth Cayene Pineapple	Gerald Amyot	Diana Mills
Smooth Cayene Pineapple (3)	Gerald Amyot	Tate
Smooth Cayene Pineapple	Gerald Amyot	George Nelson
Smooth Cayene Pineapple	Gerald Amyot	?
Brown Turkey Fig	Bob Baker	Brent Creighton
Brown Turkey Fig	Bob Baker	Van F???
Hawaiian Red Papaya	Bob Baker	Susan Lavenstein
Hawaiian Red Papaya	Bob Baker	?
Apple Banana	Bob Baker	Tate
Calamondin fruit	Heath	?
Fig	Heath	Diana Mills
Fig	Heath	?
Yellow Plum	Heath	?
Pineapple	Heath	Schroff
Ornamental Citrus	Heath	Bob Baker
Pomegranate	Heath	Yuku Tanaka
Surinam Cherry	Heath	G. Diaz
Loquat	Heath	D. Mills
Surinam Cherry	Heath	Tate
Ruby Guava	Heath	George Nelson
Chaya Spinach	Heath	J.D. Jones
Collard Seedling	Heath	A. Miller
Tree Basil	Heath	A. Miller
Jelly Palm	Heath	Susan Lavenstein
Pink Panda Strawberry	MaryAnn Campbell	?
Custard Apple	MaryAnn Campbell	?
Pineapple	E. Freedman	G. Diaz
Papaya	R.K. Webster	N. McCormack
Chinese Cabbage	Cathy Creighton	Jim Murrie
Chinese Cabbage (2)	Cathy Creighton	A. Miller
Chinese Cabbage	Cathy Creighton	Heath
Duncan Grapefruit	Chris Hayes	?
Calamondins	Chris Hayes	?
Pink Grapefruit & Tangelos	Mabel Galbreath	Schroff

New Members

Susan Roney 305 1st Street Indian Rocks Beach, FL 34635 (813)596-9003

George & Lana Nelson 801 Timber Pond Drive Brandon, FL 33510 (813)684-9592

Mark T. & Kathy M. Govan 11595 66th Street N. Largo, FL 34643 (813)546-8787

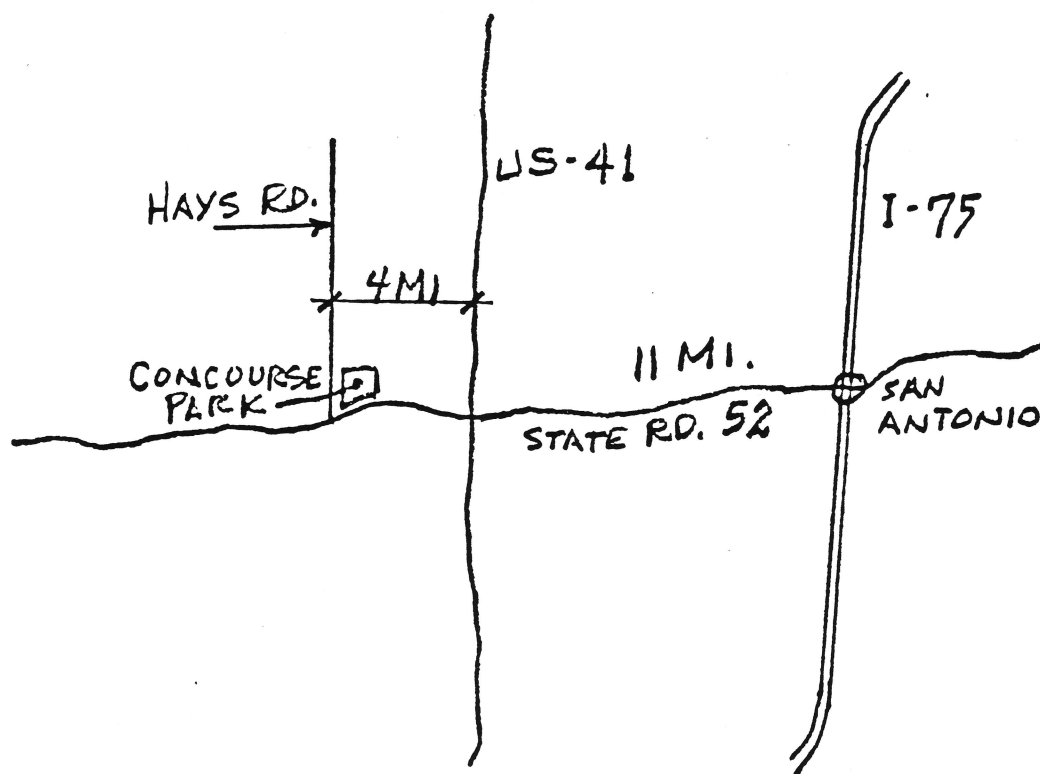


The Concourse Park

We will participate in the Concourse Park Plant Festival on Saturday and Sunday, March 5 and 6, in Pasco County. See map below.

The times will be 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days. Set-up will be on Friday afternoon, March 4, after 3:00 p.m. and Saturday morning, March 5, before 9:00 a.m. Tear-down will be on Sunday, March 6, after 5:00 p.m.

Members selling plants will need to have their merchandise on the site Friday evening or Saturday morning before 9:00. We need members to attend our space for both days and to help with set-up and tear-down. Anyone with tables and/or chairs should bring them; also, food and water or drinks. We will also be selling fruit if anyone has any to bring. The details will be discussed at the next meeting. Those who wish to participate need to be at the February meeting.



What's Happening: Jan.-Feb. 1994

by Paul Zmoda

Winter is still with us; we are experiencing mild days and cool, if not downright cold nights. The lowest temperature of the night is frequently immediately before the sun's early rays are apparent. I hope you growers are as weather conscious as I am. Checking your outdoor thermometer several times a day is habitual. Of course, temperature highs and lows will be different depending on where you plant and also according to the local geographical characteristics. Large expanses of asphalt or concrete will accumulate heat during the day and gradually lose heat during the night, warming the surrounding air. Bodies of water regulate nearby air temperatures more evenly, which sure helps those growers along the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico, Tampa Bay, and even large lakes.

Did you know that many thermometers are not very accurate? It's true; because of the large scale production, many that are sold may have a substantial error of plus or minus (\pm) several degrees. To get the truest possible reading, every thermometer should be calibrated at least once. This means comparing it to a scientifically proven, accurate thermometer. If you would like to have your own thermometers calibrated at our February meeting, bring them along and I will determine their accuracy.

The days are getting longer now that we have passed the Winter Solstice (December 21). Many plants can sense this. Some respond by flowering, others by showing new leaf growth, or both. You can start grafting at this time, especially with nut trees, stone fruits (peaches, plums, etc.), pome fruits (apple, loquat, etc.), and others. Citrus seem to like warmer weather to accept buds, so you might hold off grafting these for awhile.

As you may recall, in late 1992 I began our fruit sale endeavour. Your produce was being sold at the Floriland Flea and Farmers Market. I am happy to announce that we raised \$190.25 for RFCI since then. This amount represents only a quarter of the gross sales; 50% went to the grower (you) and 25% went to the venders. As you can see, we collectively sold \$761.00 worth of rare fruit! Thank you to those who participated. There has been no interest in supporting this venture as of late, however. I will not be able to run this without your help. If I don't hear from anyone at the next meeting, I will have to discontinue my efforts and consider this fundraiser a short-lived success.

Tasting Table: January

Arnold Stark: Kumquats, Calamondins, Palestinian Sweet Lime

Pat Jean: Honey Cake

Diana Mills: Gingerbread

Al Roberts: Papaya Juice

Janet Conard: Pineapple Turnovers, cookies

G. Diaz: Candies

Glenn & Flo Myrie: Tropical Fruit Juices

Burhenn: Brownies

Nancy McCormack: Lemon Poppyseed Muffins, chocolates

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To Jim & Jan Murrie for donating an assortment of pots for member's use.

To German Diaz for being the successful bidder on the Fruit Cocktail Tree which was auctioned at the January meeting.

JOKES...

Where has Mombin? Looking for Pawpaw!

*
A skunk believed in reincarnation. When he died, he
came back as a muskmellon!

*
I think I have some ill trees. A horticulturist
told me I have a horse chestnut and a sycamore!

* * *



DUES ARE DUE: Membership is up for renewal at the March meeting. Dues are due then.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

The president has appointed a nominating committee consisting of John VanDer Hoek, Jerry Amyot, and Mary Ann Campbell. They are responsible for providing a list of board member nominees which will be announced in the next newsletter. Any member in good standing who would like to participate on the Board should contact the committee. Elections will be held at the March meeting.



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!



RFCI Tampa Bay Chapter
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

P. JUDSON NEWCOMBE
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TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617

