



# NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1994

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: BOB HEATH, THERESA HEATH, ARNOLD STARK, LILLIAN STARK

PRESIDENT: SHERRY BAKER      CHAPTER MAIL ADDRESS: 313 PRUETT RD, SEFFNER FL 33584  
(INCLUDING RENEWALS)

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

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 12, 1994

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 Road (see McDonald School sign). Turn right (EAST). Go one mile. See Clubhouse on left immediately past McDonald School.

PROGRAM: OUR PROGRAM THIS MONTH WILL BE PRESENTED BY BOB MURRAY, who is the owner of Treehouse Nursery on Pine Island, which is a large nursery specializing in fruiting trees; in large part, the tropical varieties. His nursery is our source of exotics for the University of South Florida sales, and also a source for our membership's personal collections. In addition, Bob Murray and his wife Vivian have become friends of several of the club members. Lychees will be Bob's topic and will be accompanied by a slide presentation. This should be a very interesting talk and will present us with a chance to meet an interesting couple who is intimately involved with rare fruit. Also, all those who are able should provide donations to our tasting table & raffle.

## THE MAY MEETING PROGRAM:

We had a question and answer session at the meeting and several members responded with their problems and concerns. One comment concerned trees that seem to flower well but then drop all their fruit. This is a common problem and one that many of us have experienced on many occasions. There are a variety of reasons why plants drop their fruit but frequently, in particular cases, the reason is unknown. Stress can cause fruit to drop; too little water, too much water, a lack of certain nutrients and of course, poor pollinization with many types of fruiting trees will cause them to drop their first fruit immediately after flowering. Charles Novak suggested a spray of gibberellic acid, which is a recommendation of the California Fruit Growers Club. Unfortunately, this is a very expensive product.

Another comment was made about raising dates in this area. Charles Novak had a bag full of seeds, he said enough to plant 40 acres, and indicated that the members should take some of these seeds and plant them because they will germinate and produce date palms. But George Reigler indicated that you probably will never get any dates because they normally develop and ripen during the rainy season, which causes them to mold and rot on the tree due to the high humidity and the wetting every day. As we all know, the date is a desert plant, coming from the dry countries of North Africa and the Middle East. However, they do make an interesting and beautiful palm. And if we should happen to have a very dry rainy season, we might actually get some dates to eat. Or perhaps during the rain you can put an umbrella over your tree.

The problem of the papaya fruit fly was presented to the group and it was the consensus that the only protection of any kind might include bagging the fruit when they are relatively young to protect them from the fruit fly. There is apparently no way to spray the fruit to control the papaya fruit fly population at this time.

A hard freeze such as the freeze of Christmas '89, will eliminate the population in this area. However, they are back again this year for the first time, according to reports from members. The papaya fruit fly is rather large and has an extremely long ovipositor for depositing the eggs deep inside the papaya. Because the fly is large, the maggots likewise are very large and really destroy the inside of even a large papaya. Fruit with the fruit fly larvae inside should be buried or otherwise destroyed to kill all the maggots. This will provide some measure of control in your immediate area.

Discussion of the papaya fruit fly, of course, prompted a discussion of the Caribbean fruit fly, which is a threat to a great number of fruiting plants. Probably every member of the myrtaceae family, which includes the guavas, surinam cherry, pitomba, cherry of the Rio Grande, and jaboticaba. And of course they wreak havoc with the loquats. We are likewise virtually powerless against this insect as individuals. However, the state is very concerned about the Caribbean fruit fly because they do sting citrus fruit and scar the surface and some countries have a quarantine against citrus from Florida because of the Caribbean fruit fly. They also attack the drupe fruit, peaches, nectarines and plums.

A question was raised about the citrus leaf miner and how destructive it is, and is anything being done to control it at this time. The citrus leaf miner is a pest infestation that has appeared in Florida recently. There appears to be some work being done with a predatory fly to try to control the leaf miner, but this is in its early stages at this time. The Agriculture Department indicates they do not believe the leaf miner will be as destructive a pest as was first thought. But it was brought to our attention by some members that the leaf miner not only mines the leaf but it sometimes goes into the stem and the bark of trees, which causes more extensive damage than only mining the leaf. We can expect to see the spread of the leaf miner to other relatives of the citrus family, as well as into some ornamentals. The damage done by the leaf miner tends to defoliate the trees somewhat and reduces fruiting capacity, which may not be of great consequence to the home gardener, but can be disastrous to a grove owner.

The question was raised about a caterpillar or worm that is eating one member's tomatoes and tomato plants. Lewis Maxwell indicated the pest can be controlled with Thuricide. As an aside to this, Mr. Maxwell suggested that we all stick to Thuricide, oils and soap for control of pests because these items are not dangerous to the parasites that control some of our worst pests, such as aphids and scale insects.

Another problem concerned the purple passion fruit. The individual vine in question has flowered in the past and put on fruit but lately it has been dropping its flowers and not fruiting. Paul Zmoda, our passion fruit expert, indicates that this is the time of year when the purple passion fruit does drop its flowers and fails to fruit, but just be patient and that will change. He recommends not adding nitrogen at this time; phosphate would be a better additive, and maybe even better would be potash.

\* \* \* \*

#### FRUIT & SPICE PARK

Charles Novak gave a short report on the Fruit & Spice Park, which is in the process of repairing some of the damage caused by Hurricane Andrew, and making various and sundry other changes to the park. Charles visited the park on his recent trip to the area and was able to get a number of cuttings from some of the better trees at the park to put in his mist bed. What's interesting is that they have received a grant to replace all the trees that have been destroyed by the hurricane and they're taking out many trees and are looking for mature trees to transplant and they are attempting to group their trees by species a little better, rather than the haphazard arrangement they used in the past. They advised Charles that anyone interested in taking cuttings or making air layers is perfectly welcome to come to the park and utilize the fruiting trees that are being moved or removed. So anyone interested in this procedure should contact Charles Novak for further details.

## What's Happening

May-June 1994

by Paul Zmoda

I said I would include information derived from the *California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.* publications, hereafter simply "CRFG". One member has a Hayden Mango which, every year, would set only a few fruits during the forty degree weather of March. These subsequently dropped off. A Mr. David Wallace offered a solution: prune off all the flower buds before 10 percent of them have opened. You're thinking - how can I get any fruit that way? Well, the tree is supposed to form new flowers, only this time it will be a month or so later, when the temperatures are warmer and more favorable. In addition, a Mr. J. A. Samson reports that a foliar spray of 1% potassium nitrate applied to mangos may induce blossoming 10 to 14 days later. The member used both techniques together and claims he actually had to thin out his enormous crop! I'm left wondering if these methods might work on other fruiting trees.

My Gulf Gold Plum is having a very productive fruiting season. Despite constant fruit thinning, it still suffered a broken limb due to excess weight. I must thin them even more. Sugar Apples and Rollinia are flowering profusely. The sap beetles are working the flowers and I've been using an artist's brush daily, but the Rollinia is not setting fruit yet. The yellow Passionfruit, *Passiflora edulis flavicarpa* is undergoing it's second blooming event of the year. This should yield a nice, early crop in about 45-60 days.

At our last meeting, a member asked how to get a Barbados Cherry to set fruit. My year old tree flowered too, but hadn't yielded anything until I decided to try a product called "Tomato Bloom Set II" by the Green Light Company. It's active ingredient in 0.005% p-chlorophenoxyacetic

acid, and was used according to direction every two days. Soon young fruit were seen!. It worked for me. This product should be used very carefully, as it is not recommended for anything except tomato plants. Gibberellic acid is also said to be effective on Barbados cherries, but be very careful with this too. As this shrub gets older, they should set lots of fruit on their own - see the plant behind the Hillsborough County Extension Office to see what I mean.

I got to taste the fruit of the Rose Apple (*Syzygium jambos*), courtesy of Janet Conard's beautiful specimen. It was pale yellow, about 2 inches long, and has a hollow space inside holding the seed. The flesh is crunchy, refreshing, and having the most exquisite flavor - just like rose perfume! Delicious.

New plantings include: a Fragrant Granadilla (*Passiflora alata* "Biggee Red") and the Blackberry Jam Fruit (*Randia formosa*).

OLD NEWS: Our May meeting was well attended, but there were only five contestants (participants?) in our Seedling Identification Contest. Those five members seemed to be very interested and enjoyed themselves. They also won prize plants: First prize, a Mountain Soursop went to Arnold Stark, who ran away with his correct answers. Nancy McCormack did very well for a second place, and received a "Cate" Macadamia Nut air layer. The third place winner was Monica Brandies who got a Colombian Blackberry cutting. In fourth place was MaryAnn Campbell with a standard Pomegranate for her effort. Richard Hunt collected an Ice Cream Bean seedling for fifth place. "Good Job" to the winners.

## HOME WITH THE HEATHS

It has been an exciting spring at the Heath residence, as I'm sure it has been at some of our other members' homes. Plants are fruiting well this spring and mine are no exception. In early spring, for the first time, we have eaten *Garcinia tinctorias* after waiting nine months for the fruit to develop and ripen from flowering. The fruit grew to about 1-1/4 inch in diameter and two inches long. They had one large seed, a soft melting flesh, tart and sweet, very delicious.

Our mango tree has set a bumper crop and they are getting rather large already. The limbs are bending under the weight of the fruit and we need to prop them up so the mangoes will not be lying on the ground. Four of our seedling carambolas have fruited for the first time this spring and one of the four is exceptionally good. We have named it "Pot of Gold". Our satin-leaf tree, a gift from Herb Hill as an air-layer, set fruit this year for the first time and the fruit is presently ripening. We are looking forward to tasting them soon. Our five-year-old pitomba fruited this year for the first time, only two fruit, but that was enough for Theresa and me each to have one. This was a fruit that we had not experienced before and we were very satisfied with the quality. Our Ruby Red guava fruited this year for the first time and this is the first time I've picked guavas off my own tree since I was a child. Our Costa Rican guava, or cas, is flowering profusely at this time but is not setting any fruit; perhaps next year. Our Indonesian guava, supposedly seedless, has set three fruit and they're growing well. Before they get much larger, I need to bring the tree into the greenhouse or bag the fruit to protect them from the Caribbean fruit fly.

Papayas have been coming thick and fast and we have an over abundance. It's almost difficult to keep up with the consumption thereof, but we're making a valiant effort with pies, papaya nut bread and eating out of hand. Our Cherry of the Rio Grande bore more heavily this spring than normal and we had a feast. Our old avocado tree is covered as usual, and we look forward to their ripening in July. We also have a seedling avocado that has set fruit this year for the first time. This is the "Young" avocado which never grows much larger than a chicken egg. It has a black skin when ripe and has a very high oil content. The skin is very thin and tastes of anise. It is cold hardy down to 18 or 20°F.

Two of our eggfruit trees are flowering at this time and we have our fingers crossed, hoping they will set some fruit, as we are both particularly fond of the canistel. And presently we are awaiting the ripening of two stalks of bananas. One of the trees we got from Gene Joyner in West Palm Beach, and the other is a Rajapuri which we got from Bill Ryland. Our white sapote has fruited this year for the first time since the '89 freeze when it was considerably damaged. We have just begun to enjoy the fruit which is just beginning to mature. Our black sapote is setting fruit for the second year. This is a graft which we obtained from Armando Mendez three or four years ago.

We had considerable flowering of our persimmon trees this year but at this time, we seem to only have seven fruit developing. All the rest of the flowers dropped. This was kind of disappointing. But we had some other disappointments to go along with it. Our grumichama flowered heavily and dropped every flower without fruiting. Our three imbes all flowered this year but I believe they are all female and as a consequence we got no fruit set. The downy myrtles are in flower at this time and are quite pretty with their bunches of pink flowers. Our rose apple, which is an air-layer from my son's tree, flowered this year for the first time but failed to set any fruit. My son's tree, however, is fruiting. We did eat fruit this year for the first time from a bush that is a relative of the surinam cherry and cherry of the Rio Grande, and looks very similar to both. However, we have no name to tack onto this pretty little tree. And, of course, all our citrus trees are developing their fruit at this time, as usual.

## Raffle: May

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Name	John Bell	Mabel Galbreath
Name	John Bell	?
Lotion Ginger	Walter Vines	S. Brewer
Lotion Ginger	Walter Vines	Susan Lavenstein
Lotion Ginger	Walter Vines	Monica Brandies
Sausage Tree	Charles & Jerry	Kimberly Hunt
Surinam Cherry	Heath	Susan Lavenstein
Chaya Spinach	Heath	J. Brewer
Tree Basil	Heath	Susan Lavenstein
Jaboticaba	Heath	Phil Brown
Egg Plant	Heath	Monica Brandies
Guava	Heath	Debra Noto
Papaya	Heath	Debra Noto
Brazos Blackberry	James	N. McCormack
Brazos Blackberry	James	Sue Tate
Apple Bananas	B. Reddicliffe	S. Brewer
Barbados Papaya	B. Reddicliffe	J. Brewer
Aloe Plant	B. Reddicliffe	Samm
Cactus (Night Blooming)	B. Reddicliffe	Heath
Cactus	B. Reddicliffe	MaryAnn Campbell
Passion Fruit	MaryAnn Campbell	Phil Brown
Brown Turkey Fig	Samm	Sue Tate
Guava	Samm	B. A. Hawkins
Beets (2)	Samm	?
Celery	Samm	Monica Brandies

## Tasting Table: May

Stark: Fig bars, Guava Juice, Tamarind Juice, Canned Pears, Cups, Plates

Walter Vines: Ruby Red Guava Shells

Joan Murrie: Orange Drop Cookies

Diana Mills: Watermelon

B. Reddicliffe: Peanutbutter Cookies, Brownies

Sue Tate: Cheesecake Pie

## PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS:

The climatological information presented at the May meeting will be included in the next newsletter.

JOKES....

What game do cucurbits play? Squash!

What does a policeman walk on as he makes his rounds? A beet!

## NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Please be thinking about our only major fund raising project at the Armory, Saturday and Sunday, October 15th and 16th.

The following positions need your help:

- Set up.
- Floor people with plant knowledge to help the customers with plant selection.
- Cashiers to help check out purchases.
- Check approval.
- Help with taking plants to customers' cars.
- Book sale.
- Fresh fruit & tasting table.
- Membership table.
- Clean up.

Start now to get your edible plants ready for the sale. Make money for the club and for yourself!!

We would like your personal input so we can make the next sale a rousing success!

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REMINDER: Tee shirts and caps for sale.

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