




NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 1994

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

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

SPECIAL MEETING PLACE: FORT HOMER HESTERLY ARMORY, 500 N. HOWARD AVE., TAMPA, FLA.

 **PROGRAM:** Our program this month is the most exciting, most interesting, most important and most socially satisfying meeting of the year. This is the meeting that keeps the RFCI afloat. This is the meeting that provides our most new membership, our annual TREE SALE. This is not only the most important meeting, but also the longest. It will start Sept. 30 and 3:00 p.m. and continue til noon on Oct. 3. At some time during these many hours, we need the participation of all available members. On Friday, Sept. 30, at 3:00, we will be placing tables and chairs and unloading trees from suppliers' trucks. This is a very important set-up time and we need all the members who can make this Friday afternoon. Saturday morning, Oct. 1, the doors will open at 8:00 for participants. We will be setting up and arranging tables, preparing sample food plates, unloading and distributing plants, setting up signs and displays. We have only from 8:00 til 1:00 when the wild mob rushes in. From 1:00 til 5:00 p.m. will be unbelievable turmoil. After 5:00 a certain amount of clean-up is in order and relocation of trees to prepare for the following morning, but most of this work will be done after 8:00 on Sunday morning for those who can participate. At 1:00 on Sunday, the riot will reoccur and those who can attend will be appreciated. Clean-up after the sale ends at 5:00 is critical and some members should position themselves to assist at this time. For those who are bringing plants to sell, it is important that they be there Friday evening or early, early Saturday morning. Plants must be properly labeled with the plant name, selling price and your name or initials for identification. All of the instructions for the members have been printed in the September newsletter and it behooves participating members to read through them once again. Although some members will work all 4 days, we don't expect everyone to contribute that wholeheartedly. But your participation will be appreciated and well rewarded.

What's Happening: September-October, 1994

by Paul Zmoda

Recently I have been aware of, and thoroughly enjoyed a fruit "new" to me- the date. By new I mean ones that were not store bought. *Phoenix dactylifera* is a palm which will grow in this area and provide an ancient staple year after year. The date palm is quite rare in the Tampa Bay area, so finding one old enough to bear fruit is an outstanding experience.

The fruit contains a single seed, although seedless varieties are known. The tree will take many years to be able to flower, however, they are dioecious, meaning there are male as well as female trees. Your best bet is to remove suckers at the base of known female trees and grow these. They require a fairly good supply of water to the roots and do best when the weather is extremely hot and dry. 110°F is not too hot, and best of all, they easily survive down to 10°F!

Another good thing is that this palm may be pollinated with male flowers of others in the genus *Phoenix*, such as the more common Canary Island Date Palm. The fruits are held in large clusters and attain incredible sugar levels while becoming ripe (up to 82%). I find that when the large, yellow fruits fall to the ground, they are ripe. They do have, at this point, an astringent character that renders them hard to eat. If you simply put them in the freezer, and then thaw them out and cure for one day, you will have sweet, tender and delicious dates to eat. Drying is the traditional method, but with our humidity and their sugar content, they tend to spoil very quickly.

New plantings are the miniature Guava "Dube" and the fall vegetable garden, with heavy emphasis on oriental stir-fry greens such as China Flash and Darkri cabbages as well as radishes of all sorts.

Raffle: September

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Chinotto Sour Orange	Zmoda	Diane Chamberlain
Pineapple	Roy Gear	Diane Chamberlain
Pineapple	Roy Gear	Burhenn
Avocado (3)	Roy Gear	???
Longan	Roy Gear	?
Pumpkin	Charles Novak	Heath
Pumpkin	Charles Novak	Bernu
Papaya	Charles Novak	Papaya
Tamarind Paste	Susan Lavenstein	?
Flame Flower	Heath	Al Jean
Pineapple	Heath	J. Murrie
Grape	Heath	Nancy McCormack
White Mulberry	Heath	Phil Brown
Ice Cream Banana	Phil Brown	Al Jean
Unknown Banana	Phil Brown	Walter Vines
Mysore Raspberry	Phil Brown	Bernu
Passion Fruit	?	Nancy McCormack
Passion Fruit	?	Rome Vaccaro
Passion Fruit	?	Burhenn
Small Pots (30)	Janet Conard	Phil Brown
Small Pots (8 sets of 30 each)	Janet Conard	????????

New Members

Geraldne & Charles Carlton 9230 Hall Road, Lakeland, FL 33809 (813)858-1331

Mitchell Kalogridis P.O. Box 2464, Winter Haven, FL 33883 (813)422-6868

Debra Noto 3401 Heiter Street, Tampa, FL 33607 (813)877-6890

Gertrude Pierre P.O. Box 5371, Spring Hill, FL 34606

Bill & Mercedes Rodriguez 4547 Hallamview Lane, Lakeland, FL 33813

TREES

We need trees for our fruit park planting. We have planted two persimmons, one pear, one jelly palm, four bananas, four figs, one white mulberry, one pomegranate, four citrus trees, one carob, and one downy myrtle, all donated by Bob Baker and Bob Heath. Now we are looking for more donations and below is a list of trees we need. Trees need to be 3 gallon size and grafted or air layered where possible. We are looking for the following:

Pear trees	Cashews	Carobs
Plum trees	Feijoas	Loquats
Persimmon trees	Catley guavas	Chestnuts
Avocados	Kei apples	Citrus
Jujubes		

Anyone wishing to donate trees, please see Bob Heath, or call him at his home, 289-1068.

Recipe of the Month:

Carambola Custard Pie (Lillian Stark)

- 1 baked pie crust or cookie crumb crust
- 4 cups Carambola puree
- 4 TBS. cornstarch
- 1 cup sugar (more or less, depending on sweetness of fruit)
- 1 TBS. lime juice (more or less, depending on sweetness of fruit)
- 1 or 2 eggs

Wash carambolas, slice and remove seeds. Discard any brown spots. Place in a food processor and chop; leave some small pieces, do not over process. Mix sugar and cornstarch and stir into the fruit in a large saucepan. add the lime juice only if the fruit is very sweet, and has minimal tartness. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Stir the eggs in a small bowl or cup. When the fruit mixture is hot, stir about a half cup of it into the eggs and then add the eggs to the pot. Keep stirring; don't let the bottom burn. When the mixture boils, continue to cook and stir a few more minutes. The mixture should be thick. Remove from the stove and let cool. Pour into the prepared pie shell and chill until firm (overnight). Decorate with carambola slices just before serving.

Freezer Fresh Fruit Sherbet (Lillian Stark)

- 4 cups fruit puree
- 2 cups sugar (more or less, depending on sweetness of fruit)
- 1 TBS. lime juice (more or less, depending on sweetness of fruit)
- 1 can evaporated (NOT sweetened condensed milk)
- 1/4 cup sugar

This can be made with almost any fruit; we have recently used this recipe with guavas and carambolas. Guava puree was prepared using a juice processor machine. The product is a thick raw puree free of seed. Carambolas were prepared as for the custard recipe above, but they were pureed to a finer consistency for this recipe. Place one cup of the fruit puree in a saucepan. Add the two cups of sugar and cook, stirring constantly, until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat and cool slightly. Mix in the remaining fruit and transfer to a shallow baking dish (we used an 11 X 15" brownie pan). Cover with plastic wrap and freeze. The next day place the can of evaporated milk in the refrigerator, along with a large mixing bowl and beaters from an electric mixer. When ready to make the sherbet, pour the cold milk into the cold bowl, add the 1/4 cup sugar and whip until peaks form. Meanwhile, remove the pan of frozen fruit from the freezer and using a knife carefully cut the puree into chunks about 1-2" square. Add the fruit to the milk a little at a time, while beating with the mixer. Work quickly; do not allow this to thaw out any more than necessary. When the fruit and milk are well mixed, transfer to containers and freeze until firm.

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To our favorite hosts, Janet Conard and Al Roberts, for providing such a lovely place for our annual pot-luck luncheon. Janet & Al have been our host for this event for a number of years now and have made it look so easy. However, we all know the amount of effort that goes into setting up ones home to receive 60 guests, and to provide real silverware and cloth napkins (with lovely handmade fruity napkin rings!) for everyone. The homemade fruit ice cream was delicious too. Thanks again, Janet & Al.

And thanks to everyone who came and provided such a bounty of delicious food. (Of course, we were all rewarded for our efforts by being able to eat what everyone else brought.)

The Pawpaw, *Asimina triloba*

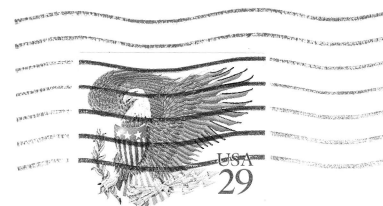
by Arnold L. Stark

The pawpaw, *Asimina triloba*, is a member of the Annonaceae which grows as far north as New York and Michigan, and as far south as northern Florida and Texas. It is a native large shrub or small tree, usually less than 40 feet high (often smaller), with a trunk diameter of 6 inches or less. The pawpaw grows in rich, moist woodlands. Its leaves are large, simple, smooth-edged and spindle-shaped. The fruits, ranging in size from about 2 to 6 inches in length, are irregularly cylindrical in shape and begin to turn yellowish when ripening. At this time, they become soft to the touch, and can be picked to complete ripening indoors. Eating one leaves you with no doubt of its kinship to its tropical relatives, and a good one is as good as a sugar apple. The pulp is like a sweet yellow custard, and contains a good number of large, dark brown seeds. Slightly under-ripe fruit has a slightly bitter undertaste, and when over-ripe the bitterness increases to a distinct after-taste. Even so, the fruit is quite good. At the right state of ripeness it is delicious!

Although this species does not grow naturally as far south as our area, there is another species, the dwarf pawpaw, *A. parviflora*, which does grow in central Florida. The fruit of this species is much smaller, and much seedier, but the small amount of pulp is edible, and reminiscent of its larger cousin.

The pawpaw is a fruit tree well worth our attempts to grow it. Some of us have made the attempt, but usually with northern trees which don't adapt too well. Southern trees should fare better, and thus the reason for our recent trip to Georgia. We brought back fruit, seeds, seedlings, and cuttings, with high hopes for their successful propagation. If we could establish a population, engage in some vigorous selection to hopefully eliminate all traces of bitterness, we would have a fruit with few rivals. Some experimentation may prove it to be a useful rootstock for *Annona* species, or it may even be possible to do some crossing and produce a cold-hardy sugar apple. Only time will tell.

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