



# NEWSLETTER JANUARY 1995

**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 THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING. . . . JANUARY 8, 1995.

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 is bound to be  
full of fun and frivolity.  
A pot luck luncheon, a very good time  
(Ain't it a shame, we couldn't think of a rhyme).  
Before leaving home, just fill up the pot  
It could be cold, or it could be hot.  
Show up at one, instead of at two,  
Bring salad, dessert, or maybe some stew.  
It's your chance to ask plant questions that baffle  
And of course, we'll have our usual raffle.  
No speaker is scheduled, but there's plenty to do,  
We'll talk of our plant sales, bring an idea or two.  
(or three or four....)  
If your green thumb you want to empower,  
Join us at this Social Hour.



## New Members:

Dolores & Herb Canter 2516 Pemberton Creek Drive Seffner, FL 33584 (813)654-1760  
Lambert Hoyt 1302 Lorie Circle Brandon, FL 55310 (813)685-5319

## *Thank You Thank You Thank You*

To all our members who have given so generously of their time this past year to make our  
meetings so enjoyable (and delicious) and to those who have worked so hard to make our garden  
begin to grow.

## Recipe of the month: Candied Pummalo (Shaddock)

Remove the peel from the fruit and cut it into quarters. Clean off all the "pulp" (that is, the part  
you normally eat!) Soak the quarters overnight in salt water (1 tsp salt per cup of water). The  
next morning squeeze out the quarters to get out most of the rind. Boil the pieces for about 5  
minutes in fresh water. Drain well. Mix one cup water with 2 to 2½ cups sugar. Boil the peel in  
the syrup until the liquid begins to thicken. Remove from heat and coll. Drain the peel, cut into  
strips or shapes, roll in sugar and enjoy.

## Exciting Times:

by Charles Novak

If you missed our last two club meetings, you also missed the announcement about macadamia nuts being available from Hawaii. For the members who placed orders, the macadamia nuts should arrive sometime during the first part of January 1995. We were all hoping for arrival before Christmas, but due to the holidays, shipping was delayed. There are still about 180 pounds available. The club is offering the nuts at cost. The cost is \$1.00 per pound plus shipping. The exact price cannot be determined until after arrival but will be less than \$2.00 per pound. Also available are macadamia nut crackers. The nut crackers cost \$6.50 each, an excellent price for a cracker that can crack the very hard macadamia nuts. There are only a few crackers available. If you would like either macadamia nuts or a nut cracker, contact me in the evening at (813) 754-1399.

## Exciting Plants:

by Charles Novak

If you have citrus trees, you have Citrus Leafminer. The University of Florida and the State of Florida have collected three parasitic wasp species in Australia and released them in Florida to control the Citrus Leafminer. The wasps attack different stages of the Leafminer. We can only hope that the new wasps can do the job. Only time will tell. Remember, the next time you kill wasps you may be killing wasps that are working for you. Note: All wasps are helpful in controlling other pests.

## What's Happening

December, 1994 - January, 1995

by Paul Zmoda

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Every time the temperature threatens to drop into the 30's, I get anxious. Many of you get that way too, no doubt, for we have those cold-front-blues. My greenhouse's plastic skin is now complete once again. Space inside will be limited to very rare and tender plants. Others will have to ride the winter out in the yard, under large trees. I have an 8½ foot tall, potted soursop (*Annona muricata*) that must be protected from temperatures of 40°F or lower. My greenhouse is only 7 feet tall. Rather than lop off the top again this year to make it fit, I opted to find a taller greenhouse. It is now snug inside a 9½ foot model across town. Should you also have unwieldy specimens, try contacting private nurseries to "babysit" them for you.

On December 18, Charlie and Kathy Crowley of the Bradenton RFCI hosted their annual picnic/open house in Sarasota at their 20 acre spread. They have worked very hard to prepare a personal collection of edible plants, trees and vines. The couple now operate their nursery of edibles and oddities there also. I was very impressed to see how they have used one area for a "tropical rain forest", another for a huge citrus area and another for a nice *Annona* collection, etc. They have passion flowers even I couldn't identify! Call them at (813) 751-1015 to chat and arrange to visit their ever-changing landscape.

I believe in gardening the organic way as much as possible. I do occasionally use insecticides to help me out (flea beetles are murder on the Brassicas this year). One important aspect of gardening is having good soil. Adding compost is indispensable toward improving fertility and water-holding capacity. My composting method is what I call the "Linear Loaf" method. A 25-30 foot length of ground holds 3 "loaves" of working compost. The first is a steaming, layered heap of grass clippings, leaves or straw, manures, fire ashes, etc. The second is a weekly-turned mass of dynamic, moist, brown "stuff". At the far end is a fertile, dark mound of organic riches, fit for making potting soil to nurture my tropical fruit seedlings or older, potted trees. Any excess goes into the vegetable garden. When the ripened, end loaf is used up, a fresh pile is begun in its place. By then the second pile is coming of age. This is a practical cycle which works well for me.

## Raffle: December 1995

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Ruby Red Grapefruit (2)	B. Reddicliffe	?
Cactus (night blooming, white)	B. Reddicliffe	Dolores Canter
Cactus (star)	V. Reddicliffe	J. Murrie
Bromeliad	V. Reddicliffe	Sally Starr
Bromeliad	V. Reddicliffe	Fran Wagenseller
Carambolas	J. Newcombe	Gene Wagenseller
Carambolas	J. Newcombe	German Diaz
Surinam Cherry	E. Freedman	B. Reddicliffe
Surinam Cherry	E. Freedman	J. Murrie
Grapefruit	Janet Conard	German Diaz
Grapefruit	Janet Conard	?
Tangerines	Al Roberts	J. Murrie
Tangerines	Al Roberts	?
Passion Fruit	Heath	Kimberly Hunt
Pineapple	Heath	Nancy McCormack
Cherry of the Rio Grande	Heath	German Diaz
Cherimoya	Heath	B. Reddicliffe
Fig	Heath	German Diaz
Tree Basil	Heath	Sally Starr
Spanish Lime	Phil Brown	?
Java Plum	Phil Brown	Walter Vines
Mysore Raspberry	Phil Brown	Frances Wagenseller
Pineapple, Abaca (2)	Walter Vines	German Diaz
Pineapple, Abaca	Walter Vines	B. Reddicliffe
Chayote	J. Bell	German Diaz
Chayote	J. Bell	Bob Heath
Pineapple slips	Zmoda	?
Horseradish Tree	Zmoda	Walter Vines
Pummelo	Charles Novak	Al Hendry
Java Plum	Charles Novak	Gene Wagenseller
Java Plum	Charles Novak	Sue Tate
Java Plum (2)	Charles Novak	?
Banana, Orinoco	A. Bojar	Walter Vines
Carambola fruit	?	Betty Morris
Ponderosa Lemon	?	Lillian Smoleny

## Tasting Table: August 1994

Beth Reddicliffe: Wild Blueberry Muffins

Sue Brewer: Fruit-Cocktail Cake

J. Newcombe: Carambolas & Yogurt

J. Murrie: Christmas Cookies

Janet Conard: Banana Cookies

Al Roberts: Orange Juice

Paul Zmoda: Passsion fruit/Carambola

Walter Vines: Guava Paste

Lillian Wente: Raisin Puff Cookies

Sherry Baker: Fudge, Banana Chips

Kimberly Hunt: Fruit Salad

Sue Tate: Fudge & Cream Cheese Cookies

Nancy McCormack: Cream Cake, Muffins

## TOM ECONOMOU WITH FRUITS FROM SOUTH FLORIDA

As usual, Tom had a table covered with exotic fruit which he had collected from the Fruit & Spice Park and other places in south Florida for our enjoyment. He indicated that he and Al had just come back from Mexico where they had attended a meeting of the Inter-American Society of Tropical Horticulture, which is a group of horticultural scientists who meet once a year somewhere in the Tropics. Many are from the University of Florida and other agricultural stations throughout Central and South America. This past meeting was in Mexico; next year it will be in Colombia, and the year after that, Brazil.

Tom indicated that he enjoys presenting this program because he believes it gives people an opportunity to see the fruit they have read about and may be trying to grow. He said he probably had nothing on the table that someone in our club was not growing at present, but that we had several visitors at the meeting who were not familiar with the fruit that was displayed.

He held up a branch of loquat blossoms which he had picked at the Starks' home the evening before, to indicate a fruit very familiar to most of our members, a fruit which bears in late winter and spring. The loquat is a hardy subtropical fruit tree and grows even up into Georgia. It is definitely a dooryard fruit and is grown almost exclusively in non-commercial settings. He also had some ginger and yellow passion fruit which he brought from the Starks'. The yellow passion fruit is one of a large group of fruiting vines that are grown extensively throughout the Tropics and Florida. It is grown commercially for juice and as a dooryard fruit. There are over 600 different varieties of passion fruit.

Next Tom showed us one of his favorites and incidentally, one of mine also, the canistel or egg fruit. It is called the egg fruit because of the similarity in color and texture to the boiled egg yolk of a chicken egg. The flavor, however, is completely different from an egg yolk, being very flavorful and sweet and pleasant to the mouth.

Next, Tom showed us the sapodilla or chico sapote. The trees, the sap of which is used to make chicle, or chewing gum, produce a white, sticky sap that may be cooked down into the familiar chewing gum, or chiclet. The sapodilla is a Mayan fruit and was cultivated by the Mayan Indians long before the Spaniards arrived. Tom says he likes to consider it a native of Florida since it's been here so long. The sapodilla is a very delicious fruit, very sweet, but it will not ripen on the tree. It needs to be picked after it reaches maturity and allowed to soften before eating. It has an exceptionally high sugar content and is very delicious. Outside, the fruit is brown and scruffy and remains that way even after it ripens. There is not color change and one can only tell when the sapodilla is ripe by feeling it to see if it is soft.

The black sapote or chocolate pudding fruit is also a native of South America and is another of Tom's favorites. The black sapote is a close relative of the persimmon (but unfortunately, it does not sport the persimmon's cold hardiness), despite the fact that the persimmon is an Asian fruit and the black sapote comes from South America. Also, unlike the persimmon, the black sapote remains green as it matures, although it has a slight color change to a lighter shade of green. However, like the persimmon, it needs to be very ripe and soft to be enjoyed. Inside, it looks like chocolate pudding but has a distinct and pleasant flavor all its own.

The mamey sapote resembles the sapodilla on the outside appearance but is usually considerably larger and has a different texture and flavor than the sapodilla. The mamey sapote will ripen on the tree and can be checked for maturity by scraping a little of the scruffy brown surface. If the fruit is ripe or ripening, the underside will be red or pink. The fruit takes 12 to 14 months from fruit set to ripe fruit, so when you see them forming, you know you have a long wait. For flavor, some people have described it as a sweet sweet potato.



Tom had a leaf of the *Monstera deliciosa* but not the fruit, which is very delicious. The leaves of the monstera get as big as wash tubs and have holes and open areas in the leaf, making for a very beautiful plant. The plant grows vine-like, producing roots at each node. The roots can attach to the bark of a tree and allow the vine to climb into the upper portions of trees. The fruit grows to about 6" or 8" long and 1-1/2" in diameter and consists of many segments around a central core. The fruit ripens an inch a day and is eaten in this manner, about an inch a day. The plant is most often grown as an ornamental.

The wax jambu produces two major crops each year and a few fruit in between. So on a large tree you can usually find some fruit growing at any time during the year. It is a pretty tree and the fruit are also very pretty, being various shades of pink, pear shaped or round. It is sweet but has very little flavor.

Loofah is the vine that grows the loofah sponge which is sold in stores and is used for bathing. It's a rampant vine that produces a fruit from 12" to 18" long and 3" in diameter, which, when it is mature and dried out, may be cracked open to produce the sponge which is brown but can be bleached to a lighter color. The fruit may also be eaten as a squash when it's 4" or 5" long. Bigger than that, it becomes tough and woody.

The bael fruit, also known as the orange marmalade fruit because the pulp somewhat resembles orange marmalade in flavor and consistency, comes from India and Ceylon where it is prized. It has a hard shell and needs to be opened with a hammer but the pulp is very pleasant and is used in making drinks and sherbets.

The star apple or cainito, comes from Central America and the West Indies. There are two types, one purple and one light green, with only a minor flavor difference. It is called a star apple because when it is cut in half, the seeds form a five-pointed star around the center. It is a very delicious fruit, very pretty, and the tree is very striking with dark green leaves on the upper side and velvet reddish brown on the underside, which is very striking in a breeze.

Another fruit which Tom showed us is the antidesma, or bignay. It makes a very wonderful wine and a wonderful jelly. The flowers are borne on terminal spikes and are followed by small red fruit, turning almost black when fully ripe.

Tom had several citrus varieties that he brought from the Starks' residence and a guava that was spreading its aroma around fairly well, which is certainly one of the qualities of the guava. Tom had an excellent specimen of the carambola, a fruit that we're probably all familiar with, and that grows very well in this part of Florida. It's very prolific and will bless you with a bumper crop in just a couple years. The fruit makes a delicious jelly, a good wine and an excellent fruit drink. It is wonderful in salads and as a dessert fruit, cooked in a syrup. It is a versatile fruit which we should all be growing.

Tom indicated that the *Spondias cytherea* is also known as the ambarella, and is called the golden apple in Central America where it is used to make a delicious drink. The fruit is orange-yellow in color, 2" to 3" long, with a thick skin like a mango. The flesh is also a pale yellow color, very juicy, with a flavor suggesting an apple.

The chayote is a member of the squash family and grows on a rather rampant vine. There are several varieties and the most common are green and white but it is also available in a dark purple form. It has a very mild flavor and is used as a vegetable alone or in soups and stews.

Tom also had a limb of the allspice tree with deliciously fragrant leaves like perfume. One can rub the leaves with his fingers and the fingers will smell of allspice for hours. The tree also produces the berries that are used for seasoning and are very delicious eaten fresh, although there is virtually no pulp.

He showed us the lipstick tree or achiote. The fruit is not eaten but strangely, it produces a red dye and yellow coloring, once used for coloring oleo and for coloring Spanish bean soup and yellow rice.

Tom also had the sugar apple, which is a member of the Annona family, a delicious segmented fruit about the size of an apple or orange, very sweet (hence the name sugar apple), custard like with many seeds, and like many things we try to grow, tender to the cold.

Tom also showed us slides taken on his many trips to Central and South America and to England and Holland. Markets, old Spanish buildings, flowers in England and Holland, and much interesting scenery.

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#### A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

I hope all of you will plan to attend our "Working Pot Luck Luncheon". Please note the time change . . . 1:00 p.m. Please bring food and your thinking caps. We need ideas on making our Tree Sale more enjoyable and profitable. Some of the changes already suggested: Fruit samples for all plants sold; a salesperson for each separate group of plants; a special table for unusual plants; a Spring Sale; more members selling their own plants; advertise differently. Hope to see ya there, at 1:00. There will be a Board of Directors meeting following the raffle.

Sherry

#### CELEBRITY SPEAKER FROM BRUNEI...

Bob Tee, a reknowned horticulturist living in Brunei in the Far East, will be in Tampa March 3rd & 4th. He has consented to speak to our group on Friday evening, March 3, or Saturday afternoon, March 4. This is tentative at this time and will require moving our regular meeting time from March 12 to accommodate his schedule. More on this in later newsletters.

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