



NEWSLETTER

JULY 1995

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

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

PRESIDENT: PAUL ZMODA

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: JULY 9, 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 WILL BE ON PASSION FRUIT, PRESENTED BY OUR VERY OWN PRESIDENT, PAUL ZMODA. (Paul is our local authority on passion fruit.) The passion fruit is a prolific vine, producing a versatile and delicious fruit. This should be an interesting and informative presentation. We will also have our tasting table and plant raffle, so please contribute.

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THE AMAZING MIRACLE FRUIT (*Synsepalum dulcificum*)

The miracle fruit we know is in the Sapotaceae family and comes from tropical West Africa. There are at least four other African fruit in the *Synsepalum* group known as miracle fruit. It's definitely a tropical tree and has been widely introduced into the tropics of the world. We can grow it here by confining it to a potted existence. It remains a small shrub or tree, although in the tropics in the ground, it may reach 18 feet in height. It may be propagated from seed or cuttings and may produce fruit in four years from seed. It produces a small red berry about 3/4" long with a sweet, somewhat insipid, flavor in a small amount of pulp surrounding a large seed. But it has the amazing ability to temporarily deaden the sour taste buds in one's mouth, causing tart and sour fruit to taste sweet. Efforts to exploit this striking effect on perception of sour flavors and development of artificial sweeteners have not been successful but are continuing.

It is one of my favorite fruit and a plant that I would recommend to everyone who likes fruit. I don't recall when I first met this little gem, but I do remember that I was impressed and determined to have one for myself. It is a prolific bearer and fruits several times each year. At our house we use it extensively in eating tart and sour fruit, such as passion fruit, carambolas, citrus and several others we are currently growing. Before the miracle fruit I always ate grapefruit in a bowl with a special spoon to remove the sections, liberally doused with sugar. Today I eat a miracle fruit before I eat the grapefruit and, amazing, no sugar. Before eating carambolas out of hand, in goes a miracle fruit and the carambola becomes a dessert fruit equal to any other. When our passion fruit vine gets into high gear during the summer, my wife and I eat a dozen or more every night, but first we eat you-know-what, and passion fruit pulp becomes delectable. Lemonade needs no sugar and neither does key lime pie.

If every family in the United States had a miracle fruit tree, we could cut our sugar consumption in this country in half!!

--Bob Heath

What's Happening

June-July, 1995

by Paul Zmoda

Things are looking real good around here; almost everything is growing well, especially the lawn grasses! I say grasses because I culture a multitude of species depending on the situation they prefer. Bahia is my favorite for sunny, well traveled areas because it looks green without much care and "divots" heal over quickly. St. Augustine types are used in moister, shadier locales. Bermuda grass, though invasive, is a *deep*-rooted type that can penetrate what used to be a packed shell driveway.

I nurture some other wild grasses for their interesting carpet and ability to withstand drought. I personally, rarely water this "lawn" so these grasses have to adapt or be replaced. Precious water is directed to fruiting trees and vegetable gardens instead.

In the mail recently, I received a shipment of seed and information from Hawaii. In the package was a slice of what they call the "kombucha mushroom". Not truly a mushroom, it is a symbiotic colony of a yeast and a bacterium. It is placed in a bucket of substrate made from cooled, boiled black tea and brown sugar. In 7 to 10 days it grows into a thick, floating mat and supposedly gives off many enzymes and antibiotics which are claimed to prolong life, cure ills, and so forth. Discovered originally

in Siberia, it is also claimed to keep people in good health for up to 130 years!

I don't plan on partaking of the spent substrate anytime soon, but I have also heard that it can be useful as a plant fertilizer (said to be rich in Potassium, among other things). Many claims were passed on to me, so I thought would test it on pairs of my plants: one treated and one untreated. I am using:

- Pond Apple seedlings
- Pomegranate cuttings
- Miniature Guava cuttings (Dube)
- Carambola cuttings (Golden Star)
- Passion Flower cuttings (*Passiflora serratifolia*)

I plan to fertilize every 10 days with the substance and watch for any pronounced difference(s). If any one would like to try it themselves, let me know and I will give you an inoculant starter piece.*

New plantings are "wild" Asparagus, found in a vacant lot, Florida PawPaw seeds, a White Sapote air-layer, *Passiflora alata* "Ruby Glow", a Persimmon cutting I believe to be "Triumph", and Yellow Mombin. Seeds sprouting include an experimental passion flower: *P. Serratifolia* X *P. coccinea*, Tamarind, Passiflora and Annona from Peru courtesy of Dr. Paul Beaver, Custard Apple and Cherimoya.

*{Editor's note: neither the club nor Paul recommends any member eat or drink this substrate; it is made available only for experimental use on your plants.}

New Members:

Edward & Althia Musgrave P.O. Box 31 Mango, FL 33550 (813)689-6139

Buster Keaton P.O. Box 17501 Tampa, FL 33682-7501

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To all the members who participated in the June Plant sale.



Congratulations to member Brent Creighton on his recent marriage to Pamela Hollett.

Exciting Times:

by Charles Novak

Sally Starr has volunteered to help enter fruit information in our Fruit Data Base. Let's give her a round of applause for volunteering. She will need help with all the data to be enter. Please volunteer to help her.

It is the time of year to think about ordering Macadamia nuts in order to have them in time for Christmas. The last Macadamia nuts were delicious. We need a volunteer to head up the collection of names of people who want to place an order and collecting the money. The last nuts cost about \$1.90 per pound - a great price. This year's price may vary some from \$1.90, but I do not believe by very much.

Questions & Answers:

by Charles Novak

Submit your questions to: Charles Novak, 2812 N. Wilder Rd., Plant City, FL 33565.

How to make my fruit tree produce fruit?

1. Girdle around the base of the tree to put the tree in stress. I girdled one of my Macadamia nut trees and my Jaboticaba tree; and the next fruiting season, both put on fruit.

2. Hold water and fertilizer; again, to put stress on the tree.

Note: Stress makes the tree think it's not going to survive, therefore it should produce fruit before its dies.

My Jaboticaba is growing slowly. Anything I can do to make it grow faster?

With the correct amount of water, moist soil, warm days and night, and plenty of fertilizer, a Jaboticaba can grow several feet in a year. The soil should be rich and slightly acidic. Mulch should be added to help keep the soil moist and the roots at the temperature Jaboticabas prefer.

Jaboticaba require constant moisture and should never be allowed to dry out. Jaboticaba seeds produce a plant that is true or close to the parent.

TROPICAL AGRICULTURAL FIESTA '95

Southern Florida Tropical Growers, Inc. and Metro-Dade County Park and Recreation Department are proud to present *TROPICAL AGRICULTURAL FIESTA '95*. This annual South Florida event is Dade County's showcase of fresh produce, plants and trees. The Fiesta is held at the Fruit and Spice Park, 24801 S.W. 187 Avenue, the weekend of July 15 and 16, 1995.

Booths under tents will display and sell tropical fruit trees, vegetables, fruits, drinks, flowering plants of all kinds and other ornamentals as well. There will also be fruit tasting and lectures on grafting and gardening techniques.

A \$2.00 donation is requested at the admission gate, \$1.00 for children ages 6-12. Children under 6 are free. Parking is convenient and free. Relax in the Park.

Tasting Table: June 1995

Tony Ferreira: White Sapote Slices, Raspberry Cake

Charles Novak: Macadamia-Coconut-Banana Cake, Fresh Blueberries

Al & Betty Morris: Cantaloupe & Honeydew chunks

Margaret Zoehrer: Oats in a Jam (Raspberry)

Edith Freedman: Cake

Pearl Nelson: Pineapple Juice

Walter Vines: Berry Juice

Sherry Baker: Brownies

Kass Scott-Rivera: Tea, Fruit Salad

Lillian Smoleny: Oatmeal Cookies

Pat Jean: Cookies

Al Roberts: Papaya Juice

Lillian Wente: Cookies

Nancy McCormack: Muffins

Janet Conard: Banana Pudding

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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