



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1996

**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 JANUARY 14, 1996

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. . . . This month our speaker will be FRED BORN, who joined our club at
the October Sale in 1995. He and his wife, Barbara, live in Crystal
River where they grow an extensive variety of Figs. And figs will
be his subject. This should be an interesting and informative
meeting as figs are one of the fruiting plants better suited to
growing in this area.
In addition, we will have our regular plant raffle and tasting
table. Please contribute.

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December's meeting was filled with all the joy of the season: good food, good friends, fun,
and meaningful discussion. The quantity, quality, and variety of foods brought to the
pot-luck lunch was extraordinary: smoked turkey, dressing, many kinds of salads and
vegetables, meatballs & chili, casseroles, cheese, rolls, fruits, pies, cakes, cookies, punch, tea, and
home-made wines. Attendance was high and conversation sparkled. Members brought in some
of their interesting and unusual fruits for display. Instead of our usual monthly plant raffle, we
had a number of door prize plants which are listed below with the lucky winners:

- * Black Sapote Juanita Diaz
- * Sharp Blueberry Diana Mills
- * Coffee David Mitchell
- * Izu Beth Reddicliffe
- * Cattleya Guava Janet Conard
- * Chayote Jud Newcombe

All members also participated in a serious discussion about our club's financial situation. Many
varied suggestions were offered. There will be further discussion by the board of directors on the
response to some of these suggestions at a special directors' meeting on January 8, 1996.

Unfortunately, the mailing date of this issue of the newsletter does not allow us to include the
results of that meeting. However, you will hear all about it at the next regular club meeting (so
don't miss the meeting on January 14!). Things are looking up, thanks in part to the suggestions
made at our December meeting.

Your newsletter editors, Bob, Terry, Arnold, and Lillian, wish each of you a happy and fruitful
New Year. May 1996 see all your gardens and homes filled with a bountiful harvest of joy.

COLD HARDY RARE FRUIT by Bob Heath

In the past most of our club members have been devoting their time to acquiring, cultivating, propagating and learning about those rare fruiting plants from the tropics. But, because of our weather conditions here in central Florida, many of these tropical plants do poorly. Placing any of these plants in the ground is a real gamble, and pot culture is not very satisfactory for many. Likewise, most of us cannot afford the expense of a large greenhouse. For these reasons, several of our members are taking a close look at fruiting plants native to this latitude of 28 degrees. Three club members, Gerald Amyot, Roy Greer and Charles Novak, are trying to grow a fruit new to this area. (See "Fruit Information" by Charles Novak in this issue.)

I am presently experimenting with several more temperate fruiting trees which may or may not produce well in this area, but which I have judged to be worth the effort, in the hopes of finding a new fruiting plant for our members. The Yellowhorn (*Xanthoceras sorbifolia*) is a small tree from China growing to 20 ft. It produces attractive shiny foliage and flowers like small white and cream clusters that develop red centers as they age. It bears a nut that tastes very much like macadamia.

The Sumac (*Rhus typhina*) is a beautiful bush with light green foliage and red berries in cone shaped clusters. The juice makes an excellent lemonade-like drink and can also be used to make jelly and jam. The Medlar (*Mespilus germanica*), a fruit widely grown during the Middle Ages, is still found in many European countries today. The fruit vary in size from golf balls to tennis balls and should be put on a shelf to "blet" or ripen for a month or two, after they mature rock hard on the tree. They have no chill requirements and may do well in this area.

Goumi (*Elaeagnus multiflora*). This is a handsome shrub that produces a cherry-sized red berry which is good fresh, and when made into jam, tastes similar to cranberry sauce. The fruit ripens in early summer and the plant is a nitrogen fixer.

European filbert (*Corylus avellana*). This tree is grown in the Mediterranean area and produces a nut similar to the American filbert or Hazel nut, only somewhat larger. They are reputed to require less chilling hours than the American Hazel nut. Hopefully, they will produce in this area.

Fruit Information:

by Charles Novak

There are three club members, Gerald Amyot, Roy Grear and myself, who are trying to grow a new fruit in this area. The fruit is called "Akebia" (the *Akebia quinata* variety and the *Holboellia coriacea* variety). The plant is a beautiful and unique, fast-growing vine with lacy foliage. They are evergreen in our area and are native to Asia. Small fragrant flowers bloom in May. It bears an attractive, edible 3 to 4 inch long sausage shaped purple fruit. If we are able to grow and produce fruit, we will make plants available to other club members. If you are growing any unique, fruit-bearing plants, please let me know so I can put the information in the newsletter.

What's Happening

December 1995-January 1996
by Paul Zmoda

This time of year is perfect for transplanting dormant, cold hardy trees such as pecans, chestnuts and other nut trees, pears, apples and other pome fruits, peaches, plums and other stone fruits, figs, grapes, pomegranates and many others.

There are a few things to consider when doing this. Preventing distorted root systems is one: knock off the container and inspect the roots. Frequently, plants held in containers too long will result in roots circling the perimeter of the pot ("pot bound"). If this ball of roots is not pruned before planting, the roots will just grow larger and strangle the plant. I use a worn-out pruning shears on roots. Cut off the misshapen roots and any that are dead.

Dig a hole about twice as wide as the root ball, but **less deep** as the container. Why? Because the tree will settle later and more importantly, growing roots grow outwards and down, but not upwards where the delicate feeder roots should be - just beneath the surface of the soil. To

accomplish this it is OK to leave some roots exposed, for more will grow later on in the proper places.

Now pre-wet the planting hole with several gallons of water and let the water soak in. Place the tree into the hole and carefully put soil around the roots. When the hole is about half-filled, water again very well. Allow the water to soak in once more. Then place the remaining soil up to the ground level. Build a ring or dam of soil around the planting hole. This is important because you need to water profusely for one week, and the ring of soil will keep the water near the tree. During the second week you should water every two or three days and by the third week you may water every seventh day or so.

Pruning branches to "balance" the root system is no longer recommended, for the tree will shed what isn't needed. A *light* pruning to shape the tree is fine. **Do not** fertilize until new growth is sprouting in the spring.

❧ Donor Honor Roll ❧

Charles and Linda Novak
George Riegler
Robert and Lillian Wente
Burns and Cathy Creighton
Antone and Constance Ferreira

Our thanks to these members who have generously made monetary contributions to our club

Correction: in the last month's newsletter, an error occurred for the phone number for the Gleaners organization. Member Polly Shewfelt's correct phone number is: 689-8621.

Club Information:

by Charles Novak

The club wishes to thank George Riegler for his generous donation. This will be a great help with our club expenses. A special "thanks" to Gerald Amyot for providing the two delicious smoked turkeys at the last meeting and first annual Christmas party. Also, thanks to all the members who brought all those tasty dishes that we all enjoyed so much. At the January meeting, we will be dedicating one of our fruit trees in memory of Herbert Hill.

BIG TREE SALE

The weather outside is frightful
but our sale will be delightful.
Before March makes its show,
let them grow, let them grow, let them grow.

Be sure to start preparing for the big Annual Tampa Bay RFCI Plant Sale. Remember to reserve the March 30-31 weekend for this fantastic event!

TAMPA BAY RFCI
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SEFFNER FL 33584



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