



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1997

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: BOB HEATH
THERESA HEATH
ARNOLD STARK
LILLIAN STARK

PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK

CHAPTER MAIL ADDRESS: 313 PRUETT RD, SEFFNER FL 33584
(including renewals)

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

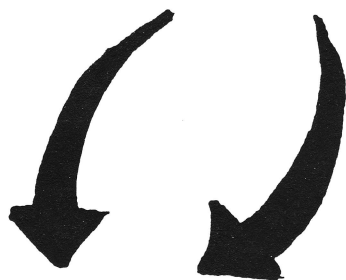
NEXT MEETING: MARCH 9, 1997

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 DOES NOT INCLUDE A SPEAKER BUT WILL PERMIT OUR MEMBERS TO TOUCH BASE WITH OUR CLUB AUTHORITIES ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS. See the President's message, page 97-21. Of more importance, perhaps, we will be planning the final arrangements for the tree sale coming up in two weeks. This is an important meeting concerning the life blood of our club and we look forward to a full attendance. We will also have our usual tasting table and raffle, so please contribute.

New Members:

Betty Fairbanks 11906 Thonotosassa Road, Thonotosassa, FL 33592 (813)986-3632
Kyle Campbell 4417 Walthan Avenue Tampa, FL 33623 (813)882-8403



**Membership renewal dues
(\$18) are due this month.**

**Please pay at the meeting, or be
sure to mail your check to the
club before April 1, 1996.**

Check your mailing label.
If there is a red mark on it, your
membership expires (*what a
horrible thought*) at this time.

**GET READY FOR OUR ANNUAL TREE SALE
AT THE ARMORY ON MARCH 22 & 23**

and

**THE PLANT FESTIVAL AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTH FLORIDA ON APRIL 12 & 13**

**Don't forget: You must have your name on *each* plant
you bring for the Sale.**

BANANAS by Don & Katie Chafin

Katie Chafin opened the presentation by thanking the club for inviting them and by recognizing our own banana expert, Bob Baker. The purpose of their talk, she said, is to share some of the information that they have gained over the years growing bananas and introducing people to the many cultivars that they are growing and to instill the fun and enthusiasm which seems to be overwhelming when it comes to the subject of bananas. They have found that all people from all nations, cultures and walks of life seem to perk up when the subject of bananas comes up.

Their talk covered how to select the right banana for yourself, differences in appearance and taste, propagation methods, how to care for your plants, including planting, watering, nutrition and ventilation and how to recognize typical and atypical diseases. At that point Katie introduced her husband and turned the program over to him.

Bananas are in the Musaceae family, Musa genus. They are a tree-like perennial herb which actually originated in Southeast Asia, probably, to be more specific, somewhere in the area of Vietnam. It is believed that the plantain, or cooking banana, originated somewhere in southern India and it is suggested that the banana is one of the earliest cultivated crops, going back to India in 327 B.C. Banana seedlings traveled through Africa to the Canary Islands and to the Americas via the Spanish explorers. Today there are over 500 named varieties of bananas, most of which are without seeds, although there are some seeded varieties, mostly grown as ornamentals. Don indicated that they have 76 different varieties growing on their property in Homestead. Bananas do not require pollination in order to produce fruit, at least among the seedless varieties. Those that have seeds do require pollination.

In selecting your banana, one should remember that varieties of bananas range at maturity from 4-1/2 feet in height on up to 25 feet or greater. Probably the most common varieties are members of the

Cavendish subgroup. From this Cavendish group we may have seven or eight different varieties, ranging anywhere in height from about 5 feet to 14 feet, the Dwarf Cavendish being the shortest, and the Lacatan being the tallest. Primarily the fruit all taste the same and the main difference in the varieties is their height.

The difference between what we call a dessert banana and a cooking banana is the level of starch and sugar. Dessert bananas are sweeter and the cooking bananas are higher in starch. Chemically, sugar and starch are very closely related. All bananas tend to be high in starch before they ripen. The starch converts to sugar in the ripening process so that even in the plantain, enough of the starch has converted to sugar in very ripe specimens to be reasonably sweet eaten out of hand. However, the mature green dessert banana is still high in starch.

Don recommends planting each separate variety of banana about 10 feet apart from others and to keep each clump confined to four banana stalks, one bearing, one just coming out of the ground, and two in between in development. That way we get fruit every three or four months, barring frost or freezing. By only having four plants, you provide good ventilation, helping to eliminate a fungus problem, and it allows the sunlight to reach the ground around the roots. Also, it is recommended to remove any of the leaves that are 50% yellow or brown. In order to maintain the four plant regimen, it will be necessary to remove excess suckers that come up around the mother plant. With more than four fruit stalks on each plant, they are all competing for nourishment and the fruit will not size up very well.

At this point Don began the slide presentation showing us a multitude of different banana species. Don had a few slides showing the general area of their gardens, which are made up mostly of banana varieties. His driveway is outlined with the Grand Name bananas and the first slides showed a sunrise over some Goldfinger bananas, a recent development from Honduras.

(to be continued next month)

Election Notice

At the March meeting, the membership will elect the Board of Directors; The Board then elects the executive officers to serve for the next 12 months. Directors must be willing and able to make a significant commitment of time and energy to the club. All Board of Directors meetings are open to the entire club membership, and we encourage members to attend and participate in discussion of issues. The nominating committee has selected the following members for your consideration as the next Board of Directors:

Jerry Amyot
Bob Baker
Sherry Baker
Fred Born
Alice Burhenn

Janet Conard
Edith Freedman
Bob Heath
Al Jean
Pat Jean

Charles Novak
Elaine Sarrasin
Arnold Stark
Lillian Stark

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the March meeting. The maximum number of directors allowed by our club's by-laws is 15.

What's Happening

February-March, 1997

by Paul Zmoda

On January 17th, RFCI members Al Roberts, Janet Conard and myself went on a mission. That mission was to locate an old nursery site in Town 'n' Country to see if anything remained of the many fruit trees which used to be found growing there. Off a dead-end street near the southeast corner of Memorial Highway and Hillsborough Avenue, and not very far from the salt marshes of Upper Tampa Bay, we found it. Neglected for years and overgrown with weeds and trees of all sorts was what used to be part of a collection of the deceased owner, Mr. Anthony Pidala.

Mr. Pidala, to my understanding, had quite a variety of fruit trees for sale at his place there, where he also lived in a tiny house. No trace of the house can be found to this day, save for an old electric pole. He planted quite a few trees for his own use and had a large collection of figs as well as citrus, which he was possibly hybridizing.

We found six ancient citrus trees, the grafting unions clearly seen. One is a

seedless pink grapefruit (Marsh?) and is very good. There is a nice mandarin and several satsuma-type fruits. The most exciting citrus fruit found on the grounds is yellow and round, the size of a tennis ball, except it has a bump like a tangelo. Inside it was orange with pinkish streaks. The taste was excellent, juicy and sweet and having what I finally realized was a hint of lemon flavor. We collected lots of budwood to graft later.

Charles Novak provided trifoliate orange rootstock and I hastily grafted all the citrus buds. By the fourth week many were pushing out well. I had also located just one old fig tree which provided many cuttings. These rooted 100% in four weeks, after treating with Dip N Grow liquid rooting stimulator.

It will be interesting to watch all these trees in the coming years as we try to figure out what they are and to feel good about saving what may turn out to be some rare fruits indeed.

Raffle: February 1996

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Red Grapefruit	Fred Born	Walter Vines
Collard plants	J. Murrie	??
Decorative Pineapple	C. Novak	?
Cherry of the Rio Grande	C. Novak	Ricky Maseda
Loquat	C. Novak	Penny Fitzmoyer
Camphor	C. Novak	?
Date	C. Novak	?
bag of citrus	C. Novak	?
Java Plum	Modesto Arencibia	Getrude Pierre
<i>Eugenia confusa</i>	Heath	Phil Brown
Chaya	Heath	Cheryl Drew
Chaya	Heath	Buster Keaton
Pineapple	Heath	Buster Keaton
Pineapple	Heath	?
Cherry of the Rio Grande	Heath	Cheryl Drew
Fig	Heath	Al Jean
Orange Berry	Heath	Hannah Head
<i>Solanum diaphyllum</i>	Heath	Walter Vines
<i>Garcinia tinctoria</i>	Heath	?
Ex-Life hormone	John Bell	?
Cherimoya	Richard Tucker	Winston Kao
Cuban Oregano	Ricky Maseda	Penny Fitzmoyer
Cuban Oregano	Ricky Maseda	Winston Kao
Cuban Oregano (2)	Ricky Maseda	??
Super Dwarf Banana	Ricky Maseda	Beverly Latazano
Super Dwarf Banana	Ricky Maseda	Kass
Super Dwarf Banana	Ricky Maseda	Walter Vines

PLEASE: When you select a plant, print your name in the correct space on the plant donation list. Then we will all know who is trying to grow what and can better learn from/teach each other about these plants.

Tasting Table: February, 1996

Lillian Smoleny: Pumpkin Pecan Pie Bars, Grapefruit Juice

Al Roberts: White Sapote & Surinam Cherry Squares

Sherry Baker: Pumpkin Bread, Lemon Poppy Bread

Nancy McCormack: Carrot Cake, Cherry Pie

B. Reddicliffe: Chocolate Chip Cookies

Janet Conard: Pear Upside-down Cake

Walter Vines: Garbanzo Bean Special

George Reigler: "Advance" Loquat

Kass Scott-Rivera: Pina Colada, Cranberry Tea, Cranapple soda

Linda & Charles Novak: Banana Cookies, Dried Fruit, Banana Upside-down Cake

Richard Tucker (Marjon): Breadfruit, Kiwano, Starfruit, Mexican Redmeat Papaya, Red Bananas, Uglifruit, Crab Apples, Jicama, Cherimoya

Diana Mills: Strawberry Surprises

Helen Drwinga: Strawberry Cake

Arencibia: fresh Tangelo Juice

Marjorie Simkins: Fruit Salad

Musgrave: Banana Pudding

Delores Carter: Brownies

Pat Jean: Cherry Danish

Stark: Lemonade

From the President Charles Novak

Don and Katie Chafin gave an excellent talk on bananas. I now realize the importance of transplanting the pups that are growing around my banana trees. This is what the club is about: sharing and learning.

Our major annual club fruit tree sale is March 22nd & 23rd. I hope you have planned to help with the sale. We really need your help to make this sale a big success. Remember, if you work both days you will be given a plant. For more information come to the March meeting; and sign up to work at the sale.

It's also election time. Please come and vote for this year's club board members. The board members are your representatives for making club decisions.

Also at the March meeting, we will be having an "Ask the Experts" session. Here is your chance to have your questions answered. The following persons will be at the meeting to answer your questions.

Modesto Arencibia: Annonas, Avocados & Grafting
Tom Hughes: Grapes
Bob Baker: Bananas
Paul Zmoda: Passion Fruits
Bob Heath: Carambolas
Monica Brandies: Herbs

Lillian Smoleny: Pineapples
George Riegler: Citrus & Grafting
Fred Strickland: Blueberries
Sue Wells: Lychees
Fred Born: Figs
Alan Smith: Plants of Africa

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers for 1997.

March 9	Ask the Experts
March 22 & 23	Annual Plant Sale at Armory
April 12 & 13	USF Spring Sale - No club meeting at clubhouse
May 11	Gene Joyner
June 8	Vivian Murray - The Treehouse
July 13	Winston Kao
August 10	Larry Shatzer - Our Kid's Nursery - Edible Ginger
September 14	Paul Beaver
October 12	Tom Economou
November 9	Chris Rollins
December 14	Christmas & Hanukkah Social

Trip to the Treehouse Nursery on Pine Island: March 15, 1997 - Leaving clubhouse at 8:30 a.m. If interested in going, call me at (813) 754-1399.

In the spotlight this month is one of our hard working club members: George Riegler for helping the club whenever needed; George drove to Homestead to get the banana plants we exhibited at the State Fair. I also want to spotlight all the members who worked at the State Fair. Thank you! Your help is what makes the club a success.

There will be a board meeting after the club meeting in March. New officers will be elected at the meeting.

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fauna & flora extravaganza

live & extinct volcanoes hot springs bathing

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family oriented join students, parents, teachers

\$1100/person for more information call:

Arnold Stark (813)654-4198 (813)621-4987

Thank You Thank You Thank You

To all those members who set up and staffed our club display at the Florida State Fair:
To the following members for these "free-bees" which they brought to the meeting to share with all of us: Fred Born-pots; Beth Reddicliffe-oranges, grapefruit, and lemons; Brent & Pamela Creighton-grapefruit; Diana Mills & John VanDerHoek-tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, *et. al.*

Kids Wanted:

Do you know of a nice, polite, hard working youngster, over 11 years old? (This is *not* a trick question!) A select few children will be given the opportunity to work at the upcoming tree sale. They will help set plants out on the floor, assist people with taking their purchases to the parking area, and help with the cleanup. Hours will be 9-5 Saturday, 12:30-5:30 Sunday. They will be paid. To nominate a child for this job, or for more information, call Charles Novak at 754-1399. **Do not delay.** Openings are limited, and we must have the nominations by the March meeting.

Good Cooks/Bakers Wanted:

You often bring delicious fruity treats to the meeting tasting table, and everyone appreciates them. Why not also donate some of your creations to the sale tasting plate table? We have usually had only fresh fruit on these plates, but it would be nice to also show the public what delicious things can be made from the incredible edibles we grow.

RFCI, Tampa Bay Chapter
313 Pruett Rd
Seffner FL 33584



FIRST CLASS MAIL

P. JUDSON NEWCOMBE
314 DEER PARK AVE.
TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617

17th Annual FRUIT TREE SALE

2 Days!

Saturday, March 22, 1997 1:00-5:00 P.M.

2 Days!

Sunday, March 23, 1997 1:00 -4:00 PM

2 Days

Ft. Homer Hesterly Armory

500 N. Howard Ave. - Tampa

I-275 Exit 24 - 5 blocks south on Armenia Ave.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING

**Apples
Annonas
Avocados
Bananas
Barbados Cherries
Blackberries
Blueberries
Carambolas
Cherry of the RioGrande
Chinese Chestnuts
Figs
Grapefruit**

**Grapes
Grumichamas
Guavas
Jaboticabas
Kumquats
Lemons
Limes
Longans
Loquats
Lychees
Macadamia Nuts
Mamey**

**Mangos
Nectarines
Oranges
Papayas
Peaches
Pears
Persimmons
Pecans
Pineapples
Pomegranates
Sapotes
Tangerines**

...And many others

Also Rare Herbs and Vegetables

All varieties subject to availability at time of sale.

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER

RARE FRUIT COUNCIL, INT'L. (Inc.)

(A nonprofit organization)

