



NEWSLETTER

98-33

JUNE 1998

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 THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 2:00 PM.

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, JUNE 13 1998

PROGRAM:

Our meeting (which would normally be on June 14 at the University of South Florida) is being replaced with a field trip to West Palm Beach on Saturday, June 13. This will be an exciting trip to embrace the excitement of Gene Joyner's unbelievable acres and to explore the Mounts Botanical Gardens. Participants will meet at the clubhouse on Pruett Road at 6:00 a.m. Saturday June 13, where we will board a chartered bus to West Palm Beach. The bus will be air conditioned and be provided with facilities. Eat breakfast before you come to the clubhouse and bring your lunch. The total trip should take about 12 hours and we should be home by 6:00 in the evening. Cost for the bus is \$10.00 per rider, paid in advance. Call Carol Brooks @ 926-9887 and send your check to 16006 Westview Circle, Odessa FL 33556. The check should be made out to RFCI. For those who might like to drive down and/or carpool, we will meet at Mounts at the County Extension Service on Military Trail.

From the President Charles Novak

As always Gene Joyner gave an enjoyable and inspiring presentation at the May meeting. The slides showed the tremendous amount of time, dedication, labor and the love of plants that went into creating Gene's Unbelievable Acres. He is to be admired for all that he has accomplished. If you have not signed up for the Saturday, June 13, bus trip to his Gardens, please do so as soon as possible. There are only a few remaining seats. If you would prefer to drive your own vehicle you can meet us at Mounts Botanical Garden. We should arrive there at about 10:30 a.m. See map for location. Please bring your lunch as we will be eating at Mounts. This will allow more time to tour the Gardens. If the bus is full, please carpool. (SEE PAGE 98-37 FOR MAP.)

Note: This trip takes the place of our regular June club meeting.

The club is also organizing and coordinating a trip to the 6th Annual International Mango Festival (Sat., July 11) at Fairchild Tropical Garden in Coconut Grove, FL (near Miami). We will carpool for this trip. Tentative schedule: Drive down on Friday the 10th, enjoy the Mango Festival Saturday morning and tour the Gardens in the afternoon. If it can be arranged, tour the Kampong Sunday morning and return home Sunday afternoon. The Kampong was the home of Dr. David Fairchild. It is eight acres of tropical plants of all varieties, with many tropical fruits. If you like mangos, this is your chance to taste many varieties. Those of us who attended the Festival last year had a great time. If you are interested in going on this trip, please let me know before July 6.

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The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers.

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| June 13 | Field Trip by bus to Gene Joyner's Unbelievable Acres Botanical Gardens. Cost: \$10.00 per seat. |
| July 11 | Trip to Mango Festival at Fairchild Tropical Garden. |
| July 19 | Regular club meeting. Tentative speaker: Jeff Butler, Gainesville Tree Farm-Growing gingers. |
| September 13 | Jody Venn - Growing edible mushrooms. |

Note: Starting with the July 19 club meeting we will be meeting at another location at USF-more details in the July newsletter.

What's Happening

JUNE

By Paul Zmoda

Our new citrus orchard is fully planted and is establishing itself nicely. Many of the young, grafted trees are proving to be quite precocious; they are blooming and setting fruit. At such an early age (less than two years old), I will enjoy the scented flower show briefly and then prune them all off. I don't want the trees spending any energy on fruit production at the expense of branch and leaf growth. There will be a day when I can allow the fruit to develop, but not this year.

The grapes are all doing well: some muscadines, such as 'Ison', 'Carlos' and 'Hunt' are so vigorous that we'll get to sample some grapes this season. The 'Tari Burgandy' bunch grape is also proving to be a strong vine and has several bunches of berries developing.

If you grow grapes, you will be training the new plants rather often. Direct new cordons, or arms, along the horizontal trellis and pinch off all other sprouts as they appear on the main stem.

We have three cultivars of feijoa (*Feijoa sellowiana*). All have produced at least one flower. I hand-pollinated these with each other in the hopes of producing "guavas" that can be evaluated on the basis of taste and size. After one week, almost

100% have dropped their petals and stamens only, leaving the primordial fruits. I hope they develop further. The fruits found on the feijoa shrubs at the County Extension grounds (courtesy of member Bob Heath) are very delicious and of fine quality.

Several tropical guavas are budding and setting fruit and so is the downy rosemyrtle, which at first glance appears to be a feijoa. The 'Golden Dorset' apple has set 4 fruits, but I have allowed only 2 to remain, due to the young age of the tree. The 'Anna' apple aborted all 5 flowers without a single take.

In the vegetable garden, we are enjoying the pole bean from Switzerland: 'Lanfrauen'. It grows very quickly and produces green beans flecked with purple. They are so tender and good. 'Anasazi' beans are excellent table fare also as stringbeans, but are superb as dried beans later on. Rutabagas are a nice crop-yellow and taste like mild turnips. We ate many 'Wando' peas, but they are done now. We'll miss them until next fall. Green and purple varieties of kohlrabi are tender and crispy-a healthful addition to any meal.

New plantings: American Beautyberry, ginger, allspice, figs "Negronne" and 'Alma' and chayote squash.

Gene Joyner, an Extension Agent in Palm Beach County, and a long time friend, gave us a guided tour of his "unbelievable acres" with beautiful slides. His slides took us back 28 years to a time when he first bought the two & a half acres that today are his horticultural gardens. Part of his job as an Extension Agent is working with the commercial tropical fruit growers. There are a number of growers with groves in the area, mangos, lychees, longans and carambola groves, so he gets a chance to sample fruit and help them with their problems. It's a pretty nice job to go out and work with tropical fruit and get paid for it.

At his home, he has a little bit of everything, over 170 different kinds of fruiting trees. The site was a cow pasture when he bought it and sported only 2 pine trees which still grace the landscape. But now some of the fruiting trees which he planted then are dwarfing the original pines. These are what he calls the canopy of his rain forest. In addition to fruiting plants, he has an extensive collection of ornamentals, flowering trees, a lot of foliage and a greenhouse with many tender ornamental plants. His greenhouse is 40' x 20' where he propagates cuttings and has plants for display; orchids, begonias, hanging baskets, this sort of thing.

He planted a sausage tree at the front of the garden which always attracts a lot of attention with its huge sausage-like fruit hanging from the limbs. People always ask whether they can eat them, but unfortunately, they are very hard and woody and are grown strictly for the seeds.

He showed us a slide of what the property looked like when he bought it, pasture land; he plowed it under. The soil throughout the whole property is sugar sand, very coarse and grainy. Once he got the grass plowed under, he started planting; first his tropical fruiting trees and then some of the canopy trees. His slides showed the landscape devoid of plants with the exception of the two pine trees, flat, covered with pasture grass until he plowed it, and nothing but sandy soil. Gene planted Australian pines around the perimeter to act as a hurricane buffer. The pines were not over 24" when he planted them; now they are about 120 feet

tall with trunks over 2 feet in diameter. The canopy trees which he planted are now over 80 feet tall, sporting jungle vines, bromeliads and orchids. He also put over 3000 feet of hedging around the edge of the property, also to act as a windbreak.

The slides showed some more of the tropical fruit trees as he was planting them and what they look like today, up to 50 feet tall.

The house was built in 1973 and his slides showed the progress of construction. So all the plants around the house and the landscaping went in after the house was built, although today they look like they've been there for 50 years.

The citrus grove he planted starting in the fall of 1970 was done with standard citrus trees like one may buy at the local nursery, common citrus that was maybe 3 feet tall. The slides show that the trees were planted on mounds 10" to 12" above the grade because he intended to bring in top soil and fill in between the trees later, which is what he did. Within 6 months he had filled in with good top soil. Between the trees he planted centipede grass, which developed into a very nice lawn. After it was established, he kept it as a lawn for a number of years. As the trees grew the clean circles around the trees kept growing as the canopy developed. After about 10 years the grass strips became so tiny that it wasn't worth the trouble to maintain it as a lawn so he just eliminated the grass and went to a solid mulch. In order to avoid the extensive mulching that would be required, he selected Boston fern as ground cover. It looked great in among the trees but the problem was that whenever a fruit fell you could never find it. The Boston fern didn't prove very practical because if you were picking fruit and dropped one, you could spend 10 minutes looking for it; so today he's got nothing but mulch among the citrus trees. Because the trees are planted very close together, he trims them twice a year, cutting the tops and sides to be sure they get sufficient light.

Gene has 95 different varieties of citrus, though several are multi-grafts with as many as 13 different grafts on a single tree. Between the trees Gene is growing some vegetables such as cherry tomatoes,

and boniato and variegated pineapples.

A slide taken in front of the house in 1973 showed the landscaping at that time with coconuts, ponytails, a little pond which didn't show in the slide, a little herb garden and other things he's added.

His gardens are registered with the National Wildlife Federation so it is now an official back yard wildlife sanctuary. Also, the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs has certified the grounds as a butterfly sanctuary. Gene has eight bird feeder stations around the property so there's always a lot of birds feeding. He's also put up nesting boxes for screech owls and woodpeckers. In the beds around the trees he has planted a lot of foliage plants and ornamentals to get some nice leaf color and textures, blood lilies, canna lilies, begonias, the Persian shield with purple leaves with silver markings. In the manner of the rain forests in South America he has bromeliads, orchids, philodendrons growing on the trunks of the trees.

Gene gets 3 to 5 truckloads of mulch a week so he spends three or four days spreading the mulch to keep up with the trucks. One of the drivers who works for Asplund tries to make sure Gene gets a load of mulch almost every day. It takes him a couple of hours to move each load so that's what he does in the evenings and sometimes for an hour or so before

he goes to work. In some areas his mulch is almost three feet deep.

For the first seven or eight years all his plants had to be watered with hoses because he couldn't afford to put in an irrigation system. But when he had saved up enough money, he bought all the pipe and fittings and put it all in himself. He dug about 2500 feet of ditches for the pipes and installed all the pipe and fittings and did all the backfilling himself by hand. It was a massive job for one man but at least now he doesn't have to worry about whether it's raining or not. With the flip of a switch, he can irrigate his entire planting.

Gene does a lot of TV shows; he has a twice-a-week program with one of the local television stations and they do a lot of their shows out there in his garden, and of course many groups and clubs visit often. Also, the master gardeners from the Extension Office conduct field trips as well. We enjoyed numerous slides of the gardens, the foliage plants with their interesting leaf colors and structures, and many flowering plants (orchids, heliconia, gingers, bromeliads, frangipanis, sunflowers and a large number of flowering trees, numerous hibiscus and blood lilies and birds of paradise), as well as the fruiting trees and bird feeders and nesting boxes. He says he goes through about a 50 pound bag of birdseed every week, but he figures that's insurance to keep the birds from eating his fruit.

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The Fruit & Spice Park, Homestead, FL, announces Bill Whitman Day on Sunday June 7

Bill has made many contributions to the field of Tropical Fruit Cultivation in Florida,
and has introduced many varieties that we have all grown to enjoy.

A Kohala longan will be dedicated in his honor at 1:00 PM, followed by a Park tour
and a slide presentation of his travels.

For additional information, call Chris Rollins at 305-247-5727

FROM YEEHAW
JUNCTION

U.S. 95

FLA. TURNPIKE

MILITARY
TRAIL

EXIT
(TOLL BOOTH)

P.G.A. BLVD. - #786

HOW TO GET THERE:

FROM YEEHAW JUNCTION GO SOUTH ON THE FLORIDA TURNPIKE, EXIT AT PGA BLVD., S.R. 786, PROCEED EAST ON PGA BLVD. TO MILITARY TRAIL, TRAVEL SOUTH ON MILITARY TRAIL FOR APPROXIMATELY $10\frac{1}{2}$ MILES TO MOUNTS, WHICH IS DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.



$10\frac{1}{2}$ MILES \pm

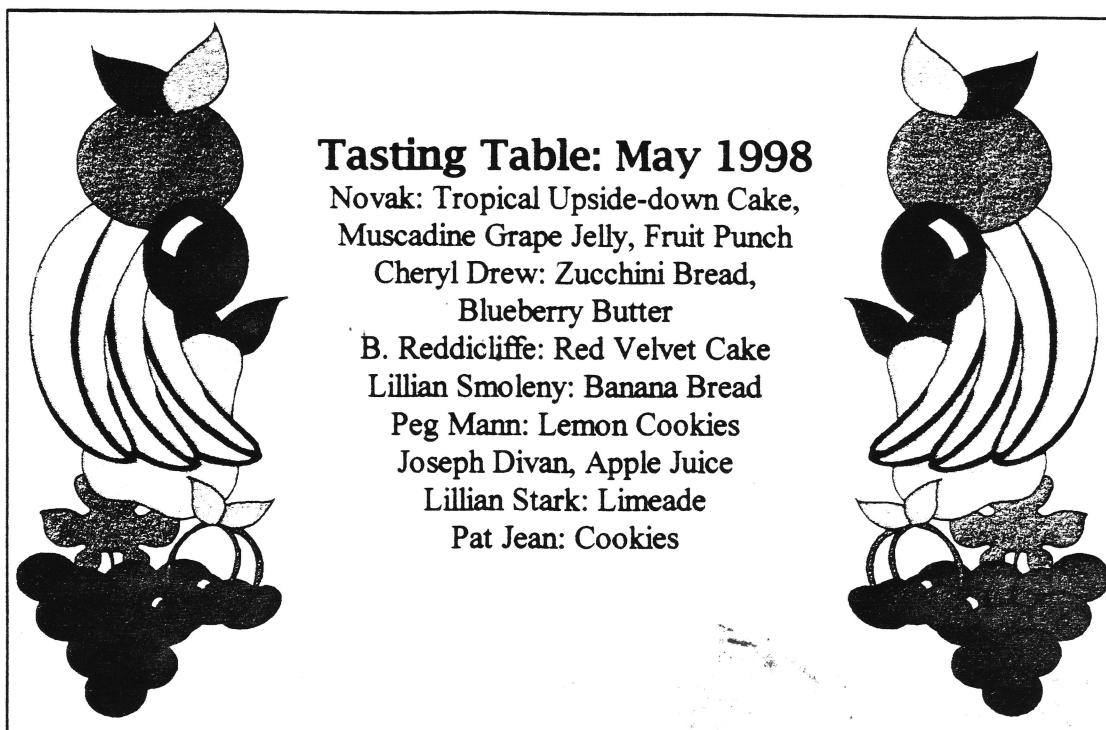
MILITARY
TRAIL

FLA.
TURNPIKE

MOTOR
VEHICLE
DEPT.

MOUNTS

PALM
BEACH
AIRPORT



Tasting Table: May 1998

Novak: Tropical Upside-down Cake,

Muscadine Grape Jelly, Fruit Punch

Cheryl Drew: Zucchini Bread,

Blueberry Butter

B. Reddicliffe: Red Velvet Cake

Lillian Smoleny: Banana Bread

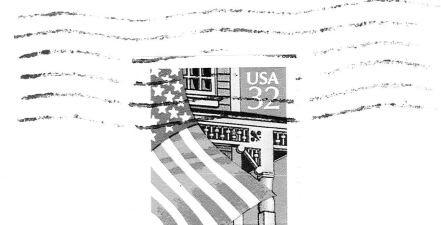
Peg Mann: Lemon Cookies

Joseph Divan, Apple Juice

Lillian Stark: Limeade

Pat Jean: Cookies

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

P. JUDSON NEWCOMBE
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