



# NEWSLETTER

98-39

JULY 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 EACH MONTH @ 2:00 p.m. (THIRD SUNDAY THIS MONTH)

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, JULY 19 (THIRD SUNDAY INSTEAD OF 2nd)

PROGRAM: Our program July 19 will feature Jeff Butler of the Gainesville Tree Farm. He will be talking about gingers, edible varieties & ornamentals, their culture and appreciation. Some of our members have met Jeff, as he was at the USF sale and had quite a display of flowering ginger plants. Gingers provide us with some of the world's most beautiful flowers. This should be an interesting presentation and will be supplemented by our tasting table and plant raffle.

MANGO FESTIVAL AT FAIRCHILD GARDENS: Members are invited to attend the Mango Festival at Fairchild Gardens in Coral Gables on July 11. Gates open at 9:00 a.m. and there will be mangos, mangos, mangos & the exciting Gardens to explore, plus several programs of interest. Several members will be driving down on Fri., July 10, and carpooling is recommended, or members may make their own transportation plans. There are motels available for those who might want to spend Fri. or Sat. night in the area. We suggest calling Doria Gomez, 969-2778, in Tampa, or making your own reservations if so desired. Doria is a travel agent, a relative of Carol Brooks, who arranged our bus trip to West Palm Beach. Also see the message from the president on page 98-41.

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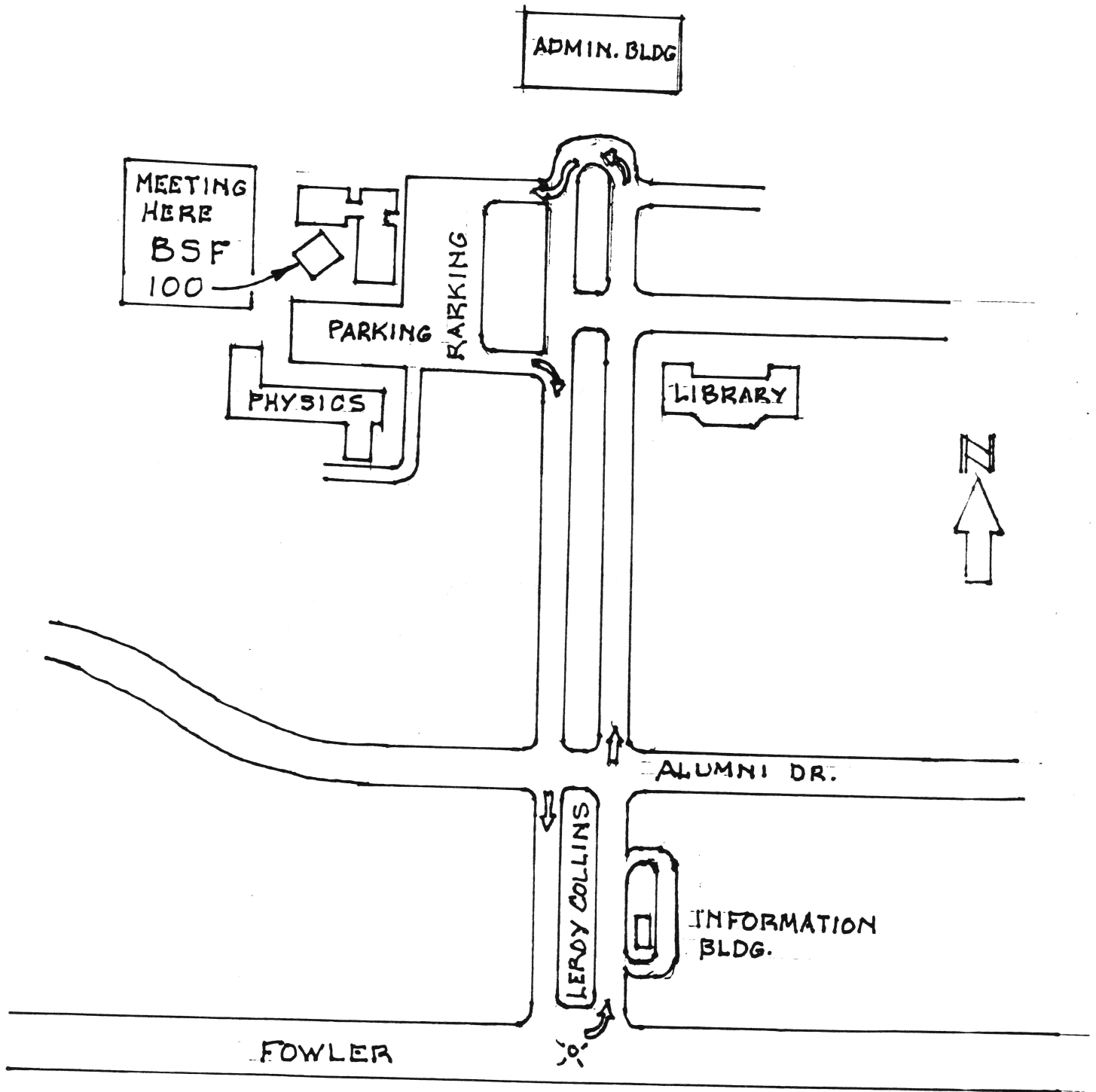
## MY NOT VERY UNBELIEVABLE 1/4 ACRE

by Bob Heath

With the mild winter and early rains my plants got off to a great start and are treating us to their bounty, lots of loquats, surinam cherries, custard apples and carambolas early in the year. Now we're eating papayas, jaboticaba, avocados and rose apples.

The best is yet to come: We counted 29 mangoes on our mango tree yesterday and we have three stalks of bananas and six pineapples presently developing. Also, our jaboticaba is putting on another crop and the carambolas on all three trees are about an inch long and growing rapidly. Our pitomba bush is just now putting on little fruit for the 2nd year in a row, one of our egg fruit trees is covered with blossoms and is supporting one half grown fruit. We also have one persimmon on our small persimmon tree. The birds got almost all of our spring crop of mulberries except for a few which we managed to grab. Muscadine grape vines are covered with small fruit and we just ate one lone Garcinia tinctoria which took almost a year to ripen. Our lychee tree has lots of little pea sized fruit developing at the moment and the passion fruit vine is flowering. Our sugar apple, custard apple and soursop have flowers but no fruit set at this time. The Jerusalem artichokes are in flower with their pretty yellow daisy-like flowers and we harvested the first tubers today.

We put up 14 half-pint jars of prickly pear jelly and eight half-pint jars of kei apple jam in the past 2 months and we still have enough kei apples for more jam. Our casabanana vines, planted from seed this spring, are growing rapidly. They are small yet, but are growing at 6 to 8 inches per day.



DIRECTIONS TO NEW MEETING LOCATION

From the President  
Charles Novak

The trip to Gene Joyner's Unbelievable Acres was enjoyable and inspiring. You have to admire him for all the work and love he has put into his place. The bus was great; with a lot of room and a working air conditioner (more than I can say for my home air conditioner on that Saturday). Thanks to Carol Brooks for the bus arrangements. A great job!

Please note: The club meeting in July has been moved to a new location at USF (see map) and also a new date (July 19). The date change is due to the trip to the Sixth Annual International Mango Festival (Saturday, July 11) at Fairchild Tropical Garden in Coconut Grove, FL (near Miami). Schedule: Drive down on Friday the 10<sup>th</sup>, enjoy the Mango festival Saturday morning and tour the Gardens in the afternoon. If you like mangos, this is your chance to taste many varieties. Members 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. Note: A tour of the Kampong will have to be scheduled for a later date.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers.

July 11	Trip to Mango Festival at Fairchild Tropical Garden
July 19	Russell Adams - Growing Edible Gingers
August 9	J.D. - Soils and Sonic Bloom - Soils Recycled
September 13	Jody Venn - Growing Edible Mushrooms
October 10 & 11	USF Fall Plant Sale
November 8	Sharon Garrett - (Tentative) Citrus Plant Specialist

The old clubhouse has been sold to a club member family. At the July meeting the club treasurer will report on the club's finances.

Please! Please! If you have any club library books, return them at the next meeting. We are doing an inventory of the club books in order to reorganize the library. Also, If you have any books that you would like to donate, please bring them in. Let's form a useful library for all club members.

Question: Should the club participate in another Citrus Celebration? If so, we need to start planning. Please express your opinion to me or one of the other board members.

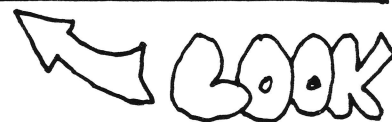
The club's lawn mower is for sale. If you are interested, the selling price will be determined by the board at the July board meeting.

I want to thank all the members who contribute to the tasting table. If you have a favorite fruit recipe, please prepare it and bring it in for the tasting table.

There will be a board meeting after the July club meeting.

**NEXT MEETING...**

Because the second Sunday in July conflicts with the Mango Festival at Fairchild's Tropical Gardens, we have elected to change our next meeting to July 19 at the regular 2:00 p.m. time. The meeting will be at a new location (see map on page 98-40) at the University of South Florida. The new meeting location should be an improvement over the previous meeting place at the University lecture hall. The new meeting place provides ample parking and restrooms within the same building.

**LAWNMOWER FOR SALE. . .**

Now that we have sold our meeting house on Pruett Road we no longer have a need for the Dixie Chopper lawnmower which served us so well keeping the grass mowed on the 2 acres. Our lawnmower, which is a commercial cutting machine, is available to the highest bidder. Anyone interested in seeing the lawnmower or buying it may contact Charles Novak.

**Raffle: May 1998**

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Papaya	Heath	Reddicliffe
Jaboticaba	Heath	Ron Shigemura
Velvet Apple	Heath	?
Rose Apple	Heath	Ron Shigemura
Star Apple	Heath	Steven Branesky II
Pineapple	Heath	Ron Shigemura
Eugenia confusa	Heath	Lanny Brooks
Ambarella	Heath	?
Lemon Grass	Heath	Lanny Brooks
Jelly Palm Jelly	Heath	?
Annona	Novak	T. Siot
Annona	Novak	Peg Mann
Annona	Novak	K. Warren
Annona	Novak	?
Blueberries	Novak	Sheri Page
Surinam Cherry	Phil Brown	?
Loquat	Phil Brown	?
Stover Grape	Phil Brown	Lillian Smoleny
Cherimoya	Stark	Paul Branesky
Wampii	Stark	Lanny Brooks
SunChuShaKat Mandarin	Stark	Giovanni Deabate
Sago Palm	Vic Peyron	J. Baker
Sago Palm	Vic Peyron	Phyllis Johnson
Rosemary	Cheryl Drew	Sheri Page
Oregano	Cheryl Drew	Nancy McCormack
Apple Banana	Ricky Maseda	Stark

**ARE YOU A "?"** *Please...please...please print your name on the Plant Exchange List when you bring a plant and when you get a plant. It helps all of us know who is trying to grow what.*



## THE SAPODILLA

(adapted from Jan. 1984 Newsletter)

The Sapodilla, Manilkara sapota (synonyms, Manilkara achras and Achras sapota) is a member of the family Sapotaceae. It is native from southern Mexico to Venezuela and is now found around the world between the 30th parallels. It grows best at medium to low elevations and is tolerant of a wide range of conditions, dry and wet, although it prefers a short dry season. It tolerates strong winds and may be grown close to the sea. It is adaptable to many soil types, but it prefers well drained, light to medium textured soils of acid to neutral pH.

The Sapodilla tree is a handsome slow-growing evergreen reaching a height of 40 to 60 feet in Florida under favorable conditions. It usually has a dense spreading canopy of dark glossy green leathery leaves.

Propagation is mainly by seed, but seedlings may take 8 to 12 years to bear fruit, if ever. Some never fruit due to pollen sterility. Also, seedlings are often inferior in fruit quality and productivity, so it is best to propagate superior varieties vegetatively. Cultivars propagated by grafting or cuttings should fruit in 2 to 4 years. Propagation methods practiced successfully include cuttings, marcotting, inarching, cleft, splice and side grafting, and shield budding. In Florida conditions, however, side veneer grafting is the best method; air layering (marcotting) and rooting of cuttings have not been successful here. Sapodilla seedlings are used as rootstocks here, but other species have been tried elsewhere.

Named varieties include "Prolific", "Brown Sugar", "Modello" and "Russell". Mature "Prolific" trees will bear 4 to 6 bushels of good quality fruit in a normal year, but productivity for the other varieties has not yet been determined. The fruit may be round or egg-shaped depending upon the variety, and 2 to 4" in diameter. "Russell" is among the larger varieties and "Prolific" averages about 1/2" smaller. The skin is brown and scurfy, the flesh brown with a smooth to granular texture, and the flavor rich and sweet. There may be from 0 to 12 shiny black hard seeds about 3/4" long, which separate from the flesh readily. Because no change in fruit color occurs at ripening, it is difficult to know when Sapodillas are ready to pick. For home use they may be gathered when of good size and easily detachable from the stem with little flow of latex. At this stage, fruit will complete ripening within a few days. They are not edible until quite soft, as unripe fruits contain tannin, making them unpleasantly astringent.

Sapodilla fruit are used primarily fresh, out of hand. As a dessert fruit, it is improved by chilling before eating. Other uses include a drink made from the juice, which may also be boiled down into a syrup. The mashed fruit may be added to breads and pancakes. A jam can be made from it or it can be combined with citrus in marmalades.

The latex obtained from the bark of the tree is called chicle and for many years was the principal ingredient of chewing gum. This was then an important industry in Mexico and Central America. The tree also furnishes an extremely hard and durable wood.

To this date there are no significant disease problems with the Sapodilla. A rust fungus which sometimes attacks the leaves can be controlled with copper sprays. Oil sprays will control scale insects which leave black sooty mold on the leaves. The major pest is the Caribbean Fruit Fly which will destroy the fruit in which it leaves eggs. There is no control for this problem.

Because of its handsome appearance and tolerance of neglect, the Sapodilla tree is a highly recommended ornamental for landscaping in south Florida. The delicious fruit is an added bonus. It is worth a try in protected locations in central Florida.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jun-Jul 1998

by Paul Zmoda

It's been so hot lately that I have to force myself to do anything outdoors. My most pressing chore is keeping plants well watered, especially the potted ones which can dry to death in a few days. This happens faster with plants that are outgrowing their containers and are in need of repotting. Newly repotted fruit trees don't require water as frequently. I would repot more often but, unfortunately, our compost pile cannot keep up with the demand to supply new potting mix. I may try using mulch wood as a potting mixture since it may be obtained free from the Hillsborough County brush recycling center on Falkenburg Road in Brandon. If I do go this route, I will expect to use higher amounts of nitrogen fertilizers to counteract that which gets used up by decomposing wood.

Bananas are growing and producing very well since they didn't have to start over from scratch as they must do when frozen by a cold winter. (I love that el Nino.) We ate some delicious, white-fleshed, Tropic Snow peaches. We got only six, this being the first productive year. Upcoming seasons will hopefully allow us to stuff ourselves silly. All the persimmon trees are pushing out lots of fast growing branches and are looking good. I got to taste a nice little pinkish berry from a shrub that I thought was a Pitomba (*Eugenia luschnathianus*). Pitomba fruits are yellow so this mislabeled specimen is likely to be one of the Stoppers (*Eugenia* spp.) but not Simpson's Stopper, which I am familiar with.

I bud grafted a couple of Chironja onto Pummelo root stocks, which I prefer when planning to grow citrus in wetter areas. Chironja is a hybrid of a grapefruit and a sweet orange and originated in Puerto Rico. It is said to be very nice.

New plantings: Cas guava, passion flowers, Ilama, peanuts, sweet potatoes, amaranth & yams.

Note: I am having no luck at all getting bitter melon seeds to sprout. If anyone has good seed or a plant, please call me. 932-2469. Thank you.

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