



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 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 @ 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, AUG. 9

PROGRAM: J.D. WILL BE OUR SPEAKER AT THE AUGUST 9 MEETING. HE IS EMPLOYED BY A soil development company in Tampa which provides the top soil for D.O.T. road right-of-ways and overpasses. They produce compost on a large scale in the development of the topsoil. He will be discussing soils and how to improve and maintain them in our gardens. He will also be discussing some unusual experiments they are performing with plant growth and soil additives. So what is J.D.'s name? We don't know; he just likes to be called J.D. We will also be fortunate enough to have a great tasting table and raffle. (see map on page 98-49 for meeting place)

GINGERS by Russell Adams, Gainesville Tree Farm

At our July meeting we enjoyed a magnificent slide presentation of some of the beautiful ginger inflorescence of the Tropics. Inflorescence and flower bracts of gingers from South America and the Far East rain forests were so impressive that some of the members have decided to set aside an area in their yard just for gingers. Russell brought a number of plants with him and several members are now the proud owners of some magnificent ginger species. We have descriptions of the gingers currently being grown by the Gainesville Tree Farm and a list of prices for Spring 1998. Anyone interested in this information may contact Bob Heath for copies thereof.

Gingers are a large group of exotic plants with an unmistakably tropical appearance. Many are surprisingly cold hardy, however, thriving outdoors as far north as USDA Zone B (*Hedychium*). They may be evergreen in warmer climates (*Alpinia*, *Hedychium*, *Costus*), although frost will damage or kill the foliage of most gingers. Some are deciduous (*Curcuma*, *Globba*, *Kaempferia*), needing a resting period even in the Tropics. Most gingers complement their exotic foliage with beautiful, often fragrant flowers. Gingers range in size from tiny ground covers (*Kaempferia*) to giants best used as background plants (*Alpinia*, *Costus*, *Hedychium*). Gingers prefer moist, fertile soil and are generally considered to be shade plants. Many will thrive in full sun provided they have adequate moisture. They are remarkably free of most diseases and pests that plague other perennials. This, combined with their easy culture, exotic foliage and tropical blooms, make gingers the most exciting crop on the market today.

Alpinia: Evergreen plants with sturdy foliage to 15'. Leaves are produced in one plane to give it a stair-step appearance. Inflorescences are usually terminal. Dark green or variegated leaves make all alpinias attractive foliage plants, but especially in hardy species where flowers are sometimes inconspicuous or unreliable. Some with showy inflorescences, commonly used as cut flowers, are limited to frost-free areas (Zone 10B).

Hedychium: Butterfly Ginger. As a group these are the most cold-hardy gingers. Many originate in the Himalayas and will grow and bloom in the Atlanta area. The inflorescence is a terminal panicle of green bracts. Each bract will produce from 2 to 7 orchid-like flowers. The flowers, up to 4" across, usually are extremely fragrant and come in colors ranging from pure white through yellow to peach and orange/red. Hedychiums may be small plants (15" in the case of *H. muluense*) or soaring giants over 10' tall (cultivar 'Pink V'). Height of Hedychiums is somewhat dependent on light intensity, as is abundance of bloom. They begin blooming in Gainesville in mid-June and continue until frost in the fall. In warmer parts of Florida and Texas, they are evergreen and everblooming.

Kaempferia. Peacock Ginger. Kaempferias are a group of low herbaceous perennials usually less than 1 foot tall with large almond-shaped leaves, striped or mottled, ranging from purple to green. Usually with violet to white flowers, some bloom for a short period before the foliage appears in the spring. Others produce a wealth of flowers throughout the growing season (to 6 months). Kaempferias prefer shade and are dormant in winter.

(continued pg 98-47)

What's Happening

July-August 1998

by Paul Zmoda

I took a ride out to the Hillsborough County Extension Office grounds the other day to see what's happening there. Cattelya guavas and figs were suffering from past lack of rainfall, but other fruits are spectacular at this time.

The Chinese jujubes have a nice crop coming along this year. The Gulf Gold plums are sweet and delicious a month later than mine are. The feijoas have lots of small fruit on many branches and a fine crop is expected, especially if something is done about the scale insects this season. I was disappointed to see that both the Carob and the Chè shrubs have not borne any flowers or fruit as of this writing, despite their size.

A load of Kei Apples (*Dovyalis caffra*) is ripening, dropping and rotting on the ground. These old world fruits are quite tasty; their flavor seems to change as one eats them from tangy to sweet and back again. This drought tolerant shrub is armed with dangerous thorns and would make a good barrier planting to ward off intruders. The female plants only bear fruit in the presence of the males, so keep that in mind if you choose to grow them.

We cooked some fresh catfish filets using leaves of the Curry Tree (*Murraya koenigii*) thus: In a frying pan with a bit of hot canola oil, fry the stripped off leaves until they become crispy. Don't burn them. Remove the leaves and then cook the fish in the oil, covered, until done. The fish is done in only a few minutes, so be careful not to overdo it.

Remove fish from the pan to a serving platter, sprinkle the fried leaves over the filets and add the gravy from the pan. The flavor was outstanding and we will cook this again soon, as we really enjoyed our meal.

We've observed a few rare Zebra Swallowtail butterflies depositing eggs on some of our Annona trees, notably *A. muricata*, *A. squamosa* and *A. atemoya* 'Geffner'. This attractive insect normally chooses *Asimina* spp. (Pawpaw) on which to lay eggs so that I can see there is (a) native pawpaw around here somewhere and (b) the chemistry of these annonas is fooling the butterfly. Pawpaws are closely related to these trees, all being in the Annonaceae family, so I can understand why this might occur. No larvae were found on *A. squamosa*; some early instar larvae disappeared from *A. atemoya* 'Geffner'. Fully grown, beautiful, green caterpillars were actively feeding on *A. muricata*, leading me to speculate that this soursop tree may be a successful rootstock for *Asimina* species here in Florida.

Note: In our last newsletter, it was stated that propagation of Sapodilla by cuttings is not satisfactory. I have found, to the contrary, that cuttings will root readily and produce nice trees in short order. The varieties 'Tecal' and 'Hayse' are claimed to be superior new cultivars.

New plantings: Tamarind, Pitomba, *Hyalocereus* cacti and sweet potatoes.

Raffle: July 1998

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Loquat (4)	Lanny Brooks	???
Sago Palm	Vic Peyron	Ron Shigemura
Sago Palm	Vic Peyron	?
Pineapple	Heath	?
Cherry of the Rio Grande	Heath	Jane Bouchard
Rose Apple	Heath	Polly Shewfelt
Soursop	Heath	Doug Harwood
Banana	Heath	?
Papaya	Heath	Doug Harwood
Mulberry	Heath	Art Hedstrand
Ginger (<i>Costa spicata</i>)	Heath	B. Keaton
Inga- Peru	Stark	Nancy McCormack
Inga- Peru	Stark	Sally Lee
Inga- Peru	Stark	?
<i>Garcinia dulcis</i>	Stark	Ron Shigemura
<i>Garcinia dulcis</i>	Stark	Jerry Amyot
Blackberry Jam Fruit	Stark	Heath
Sugar cane (2)	Cheryl Drew	Buster Keaton
Blue Porter Weed (2)	Penny Fitzmoyer	V. Reddicliffe
Candle Stick Cassia (2)	Penny Fitzmoyer	?
Rouge plant	Penny Fitzmoyer	Mike Chura
Fresh Emilio Roses	Penny Fitzmoyer	?
Pinecone Ginger	?	Susan McAveaty
Governor's Plum	Charles Novak	Art Hedstrand
Topu Topu	Charles Novak	Jerry Amyot
<i>Oncoba spinosa</i>	Charles Novak	Jerry Amyot
Avocado seedling (2)	Zmoda	?
tube of "natural" insecticide	Zmoda	?

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.

continued... It helps all of us know who is trying to grow what.

Costus: Spiral Ginger, Spiral Flag. Dwarf to large (15') erect twisting stems give the genus its common name. Flowers may either be large and crepe-like with frilled margins, produced from a collection of small bracts, or stiff and tubular, emerging from large suppressed bracts which form a colorful waxy "cone". In either case, flowers are produced singly or in small numbers from terminal inflorescences for a period of several months. Spiral flags generally prefer partial sun.

Curcuma: Hidden Lily. Somewhat similar in appearance to short-stalked bananas, curcumas have broad, paddle-shaped leaves that are somewhat pleated. Inflorescences may be terminal, peering just above a whorl of leaves or on a leafless lateral stalk. Bracts form showy "cones" varying in color from greenish to pink, red or orange. Flowers are yellow to white, emerging from bracts in sequence, starting at the base and spiraling upwards. The bloom cycle usually lasts from 4 to 6 weeks for each inflorescence, though bracts will remain colorful for much longer, some to 12 weeks. Blooming season varies by different species. The first bloom in Florida is as early as May, with later bloomers beginning in September. Plants are dormant in winter. Most curcumas thrive in partial to full sun. They range in height from 2' to 7'.

From the President
Charles Novak

The Mango Festival at Fairchild Tropical Garden was enjoyable. We had the opportunity to taste mangos prepared many different ways; including mango lasagna, mango fritters, and mango bagels.

Russell Adams gave an interesting and informative program on Gingers. Now, I appreciate my gingers more and am inspired to dedicate an area just for planting gingers.

The board has voted to participate in another Citrus Celebration the second week of January, 1999. We need your help to make this event a success. More details to come.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers.

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
December 13	Christmas/Hanukkah Social

Again, please return any club library books. We hope to have the library available at the September meeting. Remember, we are looking for books that you would like to donate. Please bring them in.

The following are a few internet addresses that may interest you:

<http://www.algy.com/herb/SEEDBOARD/index.html> - Herb Seeds Exchange

<http://banana-tree.com/aboutus.htm> - About The Banana Tree

<http://www.asiatour.com/thailand/e-02trav/et-tr188.htm> - Fruit of Thailand

<http://www.mobot.org/MOBOT/education/feast/index.html> - A Tropical Feast

http://www.aitcom.com/newsgroups/EXOTIC_SEEDS.htm - Exotic Seeds Newsgroup

<http://b-and-t-world-seeds.com/Download/index.htm> - B & T World Seeds

<http://www.ftg.org/> - Fairchild Tropical Garden

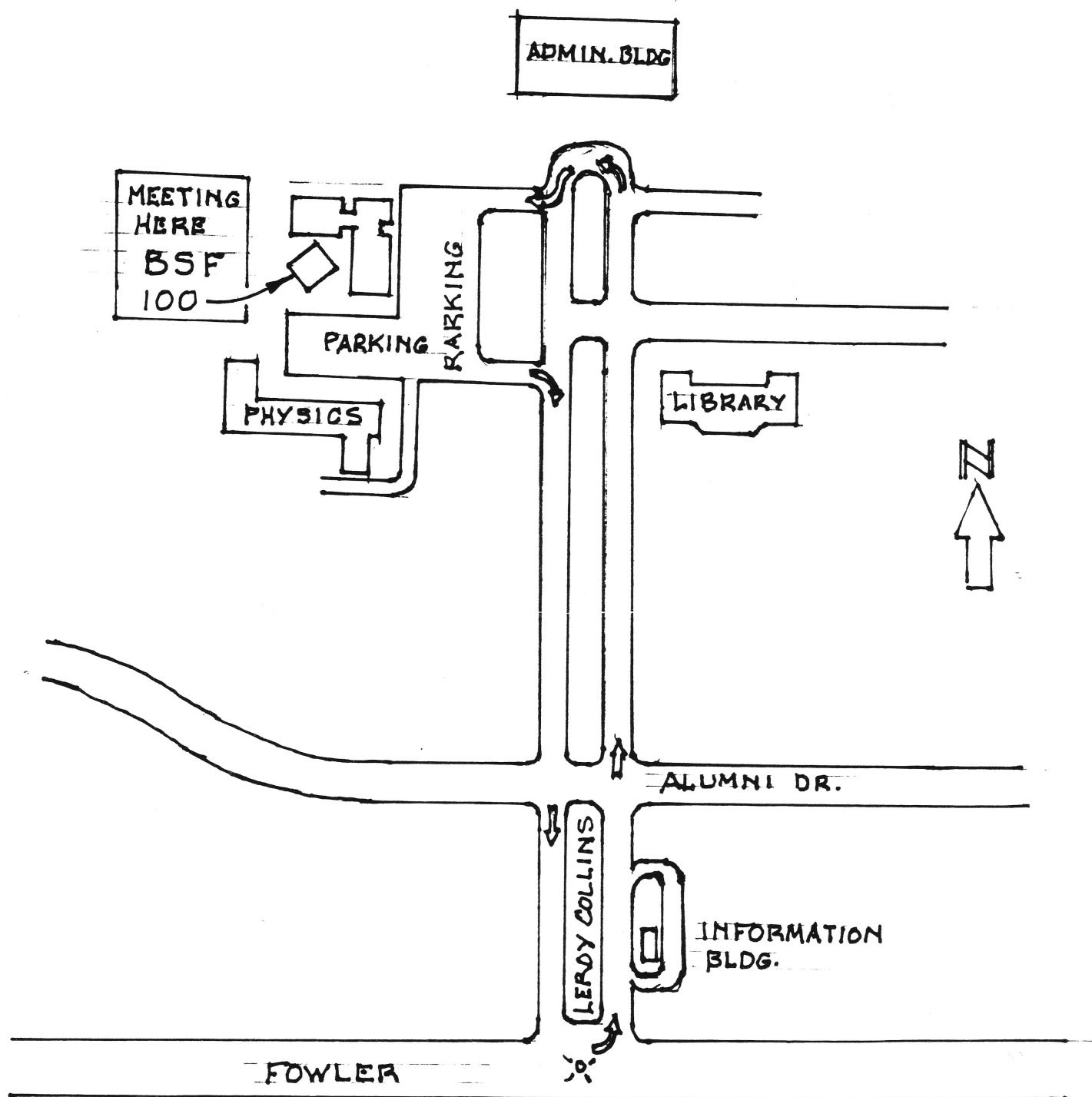
<http://www.hht.com/bus/horns/Articles/fgmenu.htm> - Green-Thumb Forum

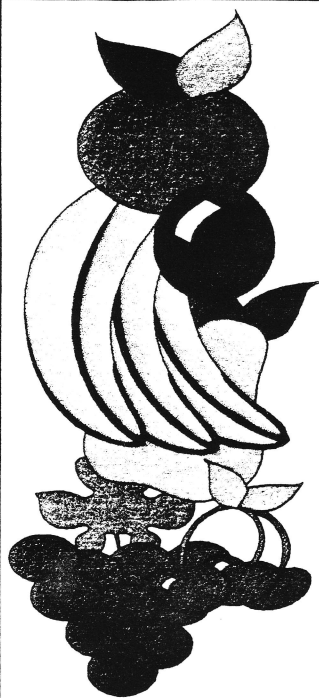
<http://guide-p.infoseek.com/Titles?col=WW&sv=M1&lk=noframes&qt=Australian+Plant+Seeds> - Australian Plant Seeds

<http://pom44.ucdavis.edu/pawpaw.html> - Pawpaw Index

<http://www.crfg.org/> - California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.

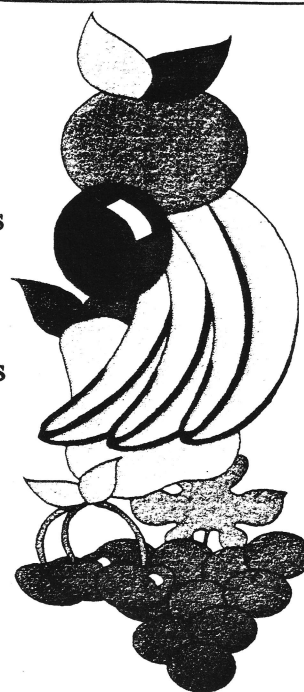
There will be a board meeting after the August club meeting.



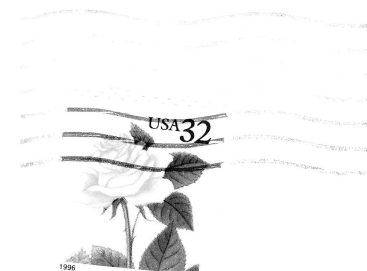


Tasting Table: July 1998

Novak: Mango Upside-down Cake,
Figs, Key Lime Cookies, Banana Nut Cupcakes
Shewfelt: Watermelon, Cattleya Guava
Beth Reddicliffe: Chocolate Cake
Nancy McCormack: Fig Bars
MaryAnn & Paul Branesky: Pancet, Mint leaves
Pat Jean: Cherries
James Lee: Fig Cake
Londa Amyot: Mango Crumb Cake
Lillian Stark: Limeade
Ron Shigemura: Mango Cake



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