



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 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

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE 2nd SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH @ 2:00 pm.

NEXT MEETING: OCT. 10 & 11, 1998 @ U.S.F. (SEE PROGRAM BELOW)

PROGRAM: The USF PLANT FESTIVAL is scheduled for our regular meeting date, the 10th & 11th of October. Consequently, our scheduled program for October will be participation in the USF Fall Plant Festival. All members are invited to participate and bring plants to donate or to sell. Parking is free this time but admission is \$1.00, which the Club will reimburse workers and participants in the sale. This is an interesting affair and well worth the \$1.00 admission. Likewise, it is a social event as well as a money maker for the Club. There will be no tasting table nor plant raffle this month. But we desperately need workers. There will be NO Armory Sale next Spring so let's make this USF Sale our big one. Please join us.

THE RFCI WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE USF PLANT FESTIVAL ON OCT. 10 & 11, 1998. This is an important fund raiser and all members are invited to attend, to assist in the Sale, to sell plants, to enjoy the camaraderie and to visit other groups.

Our participation will begin about 1:00 Friday afternoon, Oct 9, setting up tables, arranging plants and posters, til about 6:00 pm.

On Saturday, Oct. 10, the Gardens will be open from 7:00 a.m. til 9:00 p.m. for our final preparations. Price for admission is \$1.00, reimbursed by the Club.

The front gate will close at 9:00 a.m. Saturday and Sunday, and participants will have to enter by the side south gate after the front gate closes.

From 7:00 a.m. til 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, traffic will be one way, in the front gate and out the side gate. The Festival will end at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, and only after 4:15 and 3:15 p.m. respectively, will we be allowed to bring vehicles in to remove plants or re-supply.

Parking for participants not bringing supplies or plants is across the street from the front entrance to the Gardens.

The USF Botanical Gardens takes 10% of our gross sales; the remaining 90% will be split 70/20 between the participant and the RFCI, so mark your plants accordingly, remembering that you get 70% of the selling price, less taxes.

We have provided a list of RFCI workers to the Gardens. Only those on the list will be allowed in before the Sale begins. If you are refused admittance, someone from our group will vouch for you to gain your admittance.

New Members:

David, Melody, Breean, Brendan Bergen 8005 Valrie Lane Riverview, FL 33569 (813)671-7880

Lani & Winston Williams 6613 Whiteway Drive Tampa, Fl 33617 (813)980-0012

(e-mail: WorldPub@earthlink.net)

MUSHROOM CULTURE by Jody Venn

Jody began his presentation by passing out to us a pure culture in a petri dish growing on agar, which is the way they receive all their cultures. The one circulating was a common Oyster mushroom. The small culture costs \$15.00 or \$20.00 depending on the variety, but may be expanded and in a matter of a mere 8 weeks may produce up to 2 tons of mushrooms. It is just amazing how it can be expanded. The other hand-out was grain spawn, which is the next step up from the culture.

His first slides were of his farm which is very small but adequate, and a slide of their kitchen which also serves as a prep room for their lab. We saw their pressure cookers which substitute for commercial autoclaves. This is where they sterilize all their media. This is where everything starts in the mushroom growing process. Everything starts from the pure culture in the petri dish grown under sterile conditions, either from a laboratory or from the wilds. So if they're going to make more agar to grow more petri dishes of fungus, or if they're going to produce spawn which is analogous to seeds, everything needs to be sterilized in the process.

The media is sterilized for about 20 minutes at 250° and 15 pounds pressure. Jody showed us a slide of his sterile work hood which is provided with air through an absolute filter that traps 99.9% of all contaminants over 0.3 microns in size. Everything within the hood is sterilized including his hands after he washes and sterilizes them.

They take a small piece of culture or tissue from the petri dish and put it in moistened rye grain in a mason jar where it grows throughout the grain. This is what they call mushroom spawn. It looks like mold in the grain. A lot of things can be done from this stage. One can take the spawn and put it into additional jars of moistened, sterilized rye grain to allow it to grow. Then one can put that into yet more rye grain to expand further. If it is Portabella spawn it may be broadcast in compost to grow the mushrooms, or if one is growing Oyster mushrooms, put it in straw. By doing this spawn expansion, one can actually go in 6 to 8 weeks from that one petri dish to harvest 5,000 to 6,000 pounds of mushrooms. It's absolutely

amazing the power of this expansion.

Jody and his wife have a small facility and people are amazed at the amount of mushrooms they generate out of their small lab which is maybe 10' x 10'. He says they literally grow tons of mushrooms each year. He showed us a bag of sterilized sawdust, a nutritious medium for mushrooms, into which the grain spawn may be put. After receiving the spawn, the bag of sawdust is heat sealed to preserve the sterilized conditions.

Next was a slide of the pink Oyster mushroom which is a beautiful, vibrant mushroom and one of the easiest to grow that they are producing. To grow this mushroom the spawn is sprinkled around into chopped straw, sterilized by immersion in hot water at 170° which kills most, but not all contaminants. After adding the spawn they stuff it into bags, close up the bags and perforate them. In 10 to 12 days bouquets of floral pink mushrooms emerge. The pink Oyster mushroom is very popular, beautiful, but very perishable. Their shelf life is short so shipping is very nearly impossible. This gives them a kind of opening in the local farmers market.

Jody showed us a couple of slides of his greenhouse. It's 16' x 32' and provides an area where they can control the humidity, temperature and carbon dioxide level, which is very important when you're growing some of the oddball species. They also have an electrostatic filter for cleaning the air because the mushrooms they grow in the greenhouse are very subject to contamination. Nobody is allowed in the greenhouse unless they have changed their clothes, taken a shower, cleaned their fingernails and gone through a foot bath.

Next we saw a slide of a Shiitake mushroom grown indoors. The medium it's grown on indoors is a combination of hard wood, sawdust, molasses, gypsum and wheat bran that has been sterilized and then compressed to make a log, which is then inoculated with grain spawn. He also showed us how they culture Shiitake mushrooms outdoors. Shiitakes are probably the most common gourmet mushroom. They're available in most supermarkets. Jody grows them on oak logs, which is

the traditional way for thousands of years in Korea, China and Japan. He uses oak logs about 4" to 6" in diameter and 2' to 3' long, and drills 30 to 40 holes in the logs about 1-1/2" deep. After all the holes are drilled, they fill an inoculator with Shiitake mushroom spawn and inject a little cylinder of the inoculate into each hole. The hole is then sealed with hot wax. In the winter time the wax seals almost immediately over the hole. That keeps the moisture in and keeps fungus and other contaminants out. Since the logs will be placed outside, it also keeps the squirrels out. The little varmints like nothing better than to dig the inoculate out of the holes. The logs are then placed in what they call their laying yard, which is simply where they lay the logs.

After being inoculated with the spawn, the logs have to set for about a year to incubate, a long wait to begin to see one's first crop. After about a year of incubation, the logs are then placed in a soak tank with ice water for 24 hours. What this does is simulating what happens in nature. In nature after a big rain storm in the winter, the humidity rises and the temperature drops as the cold front comes through. After 24 hours in

the water, the logs are taken out and stacked up like logs in a log house. Then in 3 or 4 days the mushrooms begin to come out, which we could see on the next slide; beautiful, big, meaty, thick Shiitake mushrooms. He says he gets \$8.00 to \$12.00 a pound for the ones like we were looking at. That's expensive, but a lot of work goes into producing each pound of mushrooms.

For those trying to grow Shiitake mushrooms or oyster mushrooms, additional advice can be obtained from Paul Zmoda, who's been growing them for about two years. He has to leave his logs lay out in the woods and let nature take its course, which means he may get 3 or 4 crops during the winter when a cold front comes through, wet and cold, and the log sends out a crop. The individual logs may last 4 or 5 years before they run out of nutrients.

It is a myth that mushrooms are nutritionally void, though the common button mushroom is probably the least nutritious available. Oyster mushrooms, for example, have between 17% and 34% protein; Shiitake also has a lot of protein. There is also a fair amount of Vitamin C in Oyster mushrooms. The nutrition of mushrooms has not been scientifically studied to a great extent, but as they are being studied, scientists are finding unexpected nutritional and medicinal qualities in a variety of mushroom species.

Tasting Table: September 1998

Novak: Banana Bread Sandwiches.
Honeydew & Cantelope Melon, Punch
Banana Sour Cream Cake

George Riegler: Oriental & Hybrid Guava, Apple Banana

Steven Branesky II: Lemonade

Beth Reddicliffe: Chocolate chip cookies

Myren Branesky: Starfruit

J. Newcombe: Carambola, Banana and Cashew Mix

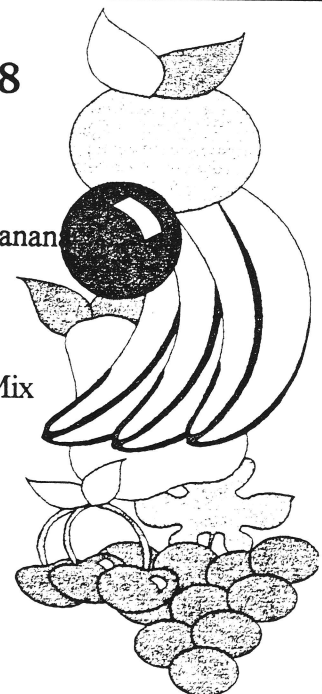
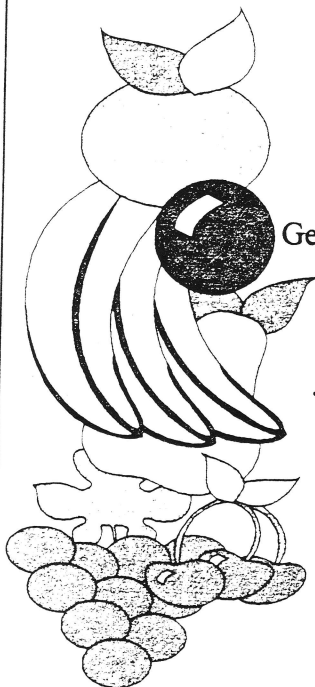
Angel Branesky: Bananas & Sugar Apple

Lanny Brooks: Red Guava

Lillian Smoleny: Pineapple Pears

Sally Lee: Guava Squares

Pat Jean: Lemon Squares



From the President
Charles Novak

Are you and your plants ready for the Fall Plant Festival at the USF Botanical Garden? The board voted to change the split that members will receive from the sale of their plants. The split for the sale on the 10th and 11th of October is 70/20/10: 70 percent for the seller, 20 percent for the club and 10 percent for USF Botanical Garden. Please plan to help with the sale. Also, it is your chance to sell some of your plants before winter gets here. Remember, a check will be mailed to you if you cannot be there on Sunday, October 11. You can bring your plants to the Garden on Friday afternoon, October 9th, or Saturday morning, October 10th, before 8 am. We will be giving demonstrations on plant propagation (grafting) at the plant sale.

Jody Venn's program on Edible Mushrooms was very interesting. Maybe I will develop a taste for Mushrooms yet. He may have some edible Mushrooms for sale as the USF Fall Plant Sale.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers:

October 10 & 11 USF Fall Plant Sale

October 24 Work picnic at Gerald Amyot's home (Please sign up at the USF Fall Plant Sale)

November 8 Greg Krawczyk - (Tentative) Papayas

December 13 Christmas/Hanukkah Social at Janet Conard's Home

December 19 Sharon Garrett - (Tentative) Trip to Citrus Arboritum in Winter Haven (More details to follow.)

January 16 Citrus Celebration

We need books for our library. Please help make our library a success by donating a plant book.

I need your help with scheduling new speakers and programs. If you have any suggestions for programs and/or speakers for next year please let me know so I can make arrangements. Most of next year is still open. The months that are booked are: January, April, May, October, and December. Also, I'd appreciate suggestions for field trips next year.

I have a CD with a lot of useful garden information. If you have a computer with a CD drive I will make you a copy of the CD if you will supply the recordable CD. Recordable CDs cost about \$2 at Comp USA. The CD was given to me at a Plant Show in Orlando.

Raffle: August 1998

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Box Fruit	Ricky Maseda	Maryann Branesky
Red Guava	Ricky Maseda	Susan McAveety
Star Apple	Heath	Paul Branesky
Rose Apple	Heath	Paul Branesky
Pineapple	Heath	Sally Lee
Papaya	Heath	Beth Reddicliffe
Surinam Cherry	Heath	J. Murrie
Eugenia confusa	Heath	D. Harwood
Banana	Heath	Steven Branesky II
Rangoon Creeper	Norwood Smith	?
Maracuya	C. Novak	Phil Brown
Velvet Apple	C. Novak	?
<i>Syzygium coolminiaum</i>	C. Novak	P. Fitzmoyer
<i>Syzygium coolminiaum</i>	C. Novak	D. Harwood
<i>Syzygium coolminiaum</i>	C. Novak	Bob Heath
Loquat (2)	Paul Branesky	??
Injin Mango	Paul Branesky	?
Banana (Lady finger)	Bob San Luis	Ron Shigemura
Banana (Lady finger)	Bob San Luis	Jon Young
Banana (Lady finger) (4)	Bob San Luis	????
Mango	Bob San Luis	P. Fitzmoyer
Mango	Bob San Luis	Sally Lee
Papaya	Joe Divan	Evelyn Moya
Loquat (3)	Lanny Brooks	???
Guava (Pink)	Lanny Brooks	P. Fitzmoyer
Guava (Pink)	Lanny Brooks	Lillian Smoleny
Guava (Pink)	Lanny Brooks	Polly Shewfelt
Orinoco Banana	Vic Peyron	?
Flowering Aloe (2)	Vic Peyron	??
Pineapple	Vic Peyron	Thomas Scott
Privet Cassia	P. Fitzmoyer	?
Porterweed (2)	P. Fitzmoyer	??
Fuschia scullcap	P. Fitzmoyer	?
Guava & Loquat	James Lee	?
Avocado	James Lee	Polly Shewfelt
Macadamia	Jan Conard	Paul Branesky
Cocoa	Phil Brown	?
Star Apple	Phil Brown	Kim Hunt
Cherry of the Rio Grande	Phil Brown	P. Fitzmoyer

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.

Please also label the plant with it's name & your name.

What's Happening

by Paul Zmoda

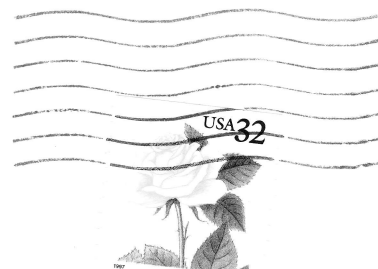
{Paul has sent the editors a note saying he would not be able to submit his usual column this month, and possibly next, because of preparation for his impending wedding. He sent along a book review which he had previously written. Well Paul, we will miss reading your always interesting column and look forward to its return. Congratulation of your upcoming nuptials.}



Book Review: *Uncommon fruits worthy of attention, a gardener's guide*, by Lee Reich 1991, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc, 273 pages

This book is a valuable addition to your library because it covers fruiting plants that you don't often see mentioned elsewhere. There are chapters on quite a few fairly obscure species that are more temperate than semi-tropical, but many are adaptable or even possibly native to our growing region. Mentioned are PawPaw, medlar, Maypop (a wild passionfruit), Raisin tree, Jujubes and many others. The book is chock-full of information in varieties, cultivation advice, history and practical uses of each fruit. There are chapters on pruning and propagation, including grafting. The few illustrations are pen and ink drawings, accurately rendered.

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