



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1999

**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: FEBRUARY 14 1999

MEETING PLACE: THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE SAME LOCATION AS THE SEPT. MEETING @ THE UNIVERSITY OF S. FLORIDA. THIS WILL BE OUR USUAL MEETING PLACE FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT YEAR. (SEE MAP ON PAGE 10)

PROGRAM: AT OUR FEBRUARY MEETING SANDIE MULROONEY WILL PRESENT A PROGRAM WHICH SHE CALLS "WEED & FEED". Her Weed & Feed program, in this case, is not some way to have a beautiful lawn. Rather, she will be discussing the weeds that we are cursed with in our gardens and plantings, plus fertilizers and their advantages and benefits to plant nutrition. This should be an interesting discussion but will probably not be of much help in raising a classic lawn, which most of our members are not concerned about anyway. We will have our regular tasting table and raffle, so please contribute and come join us for a great social and instructive event.

WHAT'S HAPPENING JAN-FEB 1999 by PAUL ZMODA

We got some cold weather the other day. It was 26°F under the big oak trees near the house and I speculate down to 24° or so out in the open. This cold snap passed quickly, the air warming rapidly after sunrise. Our plants look either fine or terrible depending on their locations. Under the protective canopy of the old oaks there was no frost and not a single leaf was damaged. Out in the exposed part of the yard, where frost did occur, we lost all tomato and pepper plants. These grew side by side with onions, broccoli and flowering radishes, none of which suffered at all. When are they going to locate the cold-hardiness gene in the Brassicacae and splice it into tomatoes? I'll be the first customer to purchase a tomato plant that won't fold up at those kinds of temperatures.

All the bananas merely lost leaves and began growing new ones at once. Many shrubs lost large amounts of leaves and twigs, but are expected to survive. I believe the curry tree and the red stopper are dead but we kept extras in pots. Those and other tender trees were placed on the carport which we have enclosed with plastic sheeting for the winter. We got it all finished just in time.

I found a bale of straw and have been busy experimenting with pink oyster mushrooms to see how best to grow new crops with it. We got a half dozen nice large Shiitakes. I braised these with onion, garlic and broccoli for a quick dinner. We finished off the last of the passion fruits. The large fragrant granadilla (which had many heavy crops this year), the fruity and sweet 'Possum Purple' (an edulis type self-fertile but just not many fruits) and finally, the yellow flavicarpa, tasty as always.

I've got almost all of my deciduous fruit tree pruning done by January 20. All grapes, apples, pears, peaches, persimmons, plums, olives, mulberries and figs got their yearly trimming after going dormant. I enjoy pruning and always look forward to it. I've saved the pieces cut off the grape vines. These I'm treating to propagate new vines.

New Members

Rose & Gerald Bell 19005 Cedar Lane Lutz, FL 33549 (813)948-8884
 Nancy Bryant 6011 Forest Cane Lakeland, FL 33811 (941)648-2559
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 Joe & Kathy Calabro 10711 Gallop Place Tampa, FL 33626
 Rosanna & Steve Carson 9024 Breland Drive Tampa, FL 33626 (813)926-1199
 makani@mindspring.com
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 Ross Culpepper 1073 Meadowood Pt. Rd. Lakeland, FL 33811 (941)701-7073
 Verna & Robert Dickey 2114 Fairfield Ave. Brandon, FL 33510 (813)685-1055
 DeBorah Hamilton-Ford 16321 Heron Hills Springhill, FL 34610 (813)856-7408
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 Alice Miller 1906 E. Linda Street Plant City, FL 33566 (813)719-7199
 George & Rita Moreau 14188 Fennsbury Dr. Tampa, FL 33624 (813)968-8200
 Michael & Vanessa Oney 5605 Watson Road Riverview, FL 33569 (813)681-4805
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 Frank & Rosalie Vans Evers 6428 Black Dairy Road, Seffner, FL 33584 (813)626-2855
 Donald Van Kampen 9865 Arrow Drive New Port Richey, FL 34654 (727)868-5639
 Mickey Walker 31 Palm Forest Drive Largo, FL 33770 (727)585-9051
 Paul Wagner 10207 Thicket Point Way Tampa, FL 33647 (813)994-3092
 Robert & Nora Wong 226 S. Tessier Dr. St. Petersburg Beach, FL 33706 (727)367-5436
 James Wood 12137 Fairwinds Rd. Hudson, FL 34669 (727)856-6767
 wood_jim@hotmail.com

Attention Members:

Please remember to send notification to the club (313 Pruett Road, Seffner, FL 33584)
 when you have a change of address, telephone number, email, etc.



From the President
Charles Novak

Thanks to You Our Second Citrus Celebration was a Success!

If you were any part of the Citrus Celebration give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done. What a great group of people we have in our club! All I can say is "Thanks! Your time, labor and donations are greatly appreciated".

The trip to George Riegler's home to pick the citrus for the Citrus Celebration was interesting and a lot of fun. Over 20 members showed up to help pick and wash the citrus. Thanks, George, for the citrus fruit and for treating us to the delicious hotdogs and hamburgers. George's many varieties of citrus provided the majority of the sliced fruit for the public to sample.

Also, thanks to Modesto Arencibia for the grafting demonstrations. Each of his demonstrations drew a tentful of interested people. We signed up 27 new memberships at the Citrus Celebration and we look forward to meeting everyone at the Feb. meeting.

We should have a financial report at the next meeting.

We would like to plan another club field trip, picnic or other fun activity. The following are some suggestions I have received:

- A two-day bus trip to the Mango Festival (near Miami).
- New club shirts to all members (at a reduced amount).
- A bus trip to ECHO in Fort Myers.
- A grafting and plant workshop and picnic with the club providing part of the food.
- A bus trip to Selby Gardens in Sarasota.
- Another bus trip to Gene Joyner's Fantastic Acres In West Palm Beach.
- A bus trip to taste Paw Paws (near Palatka).

If you have a suggestion please let me know.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers:

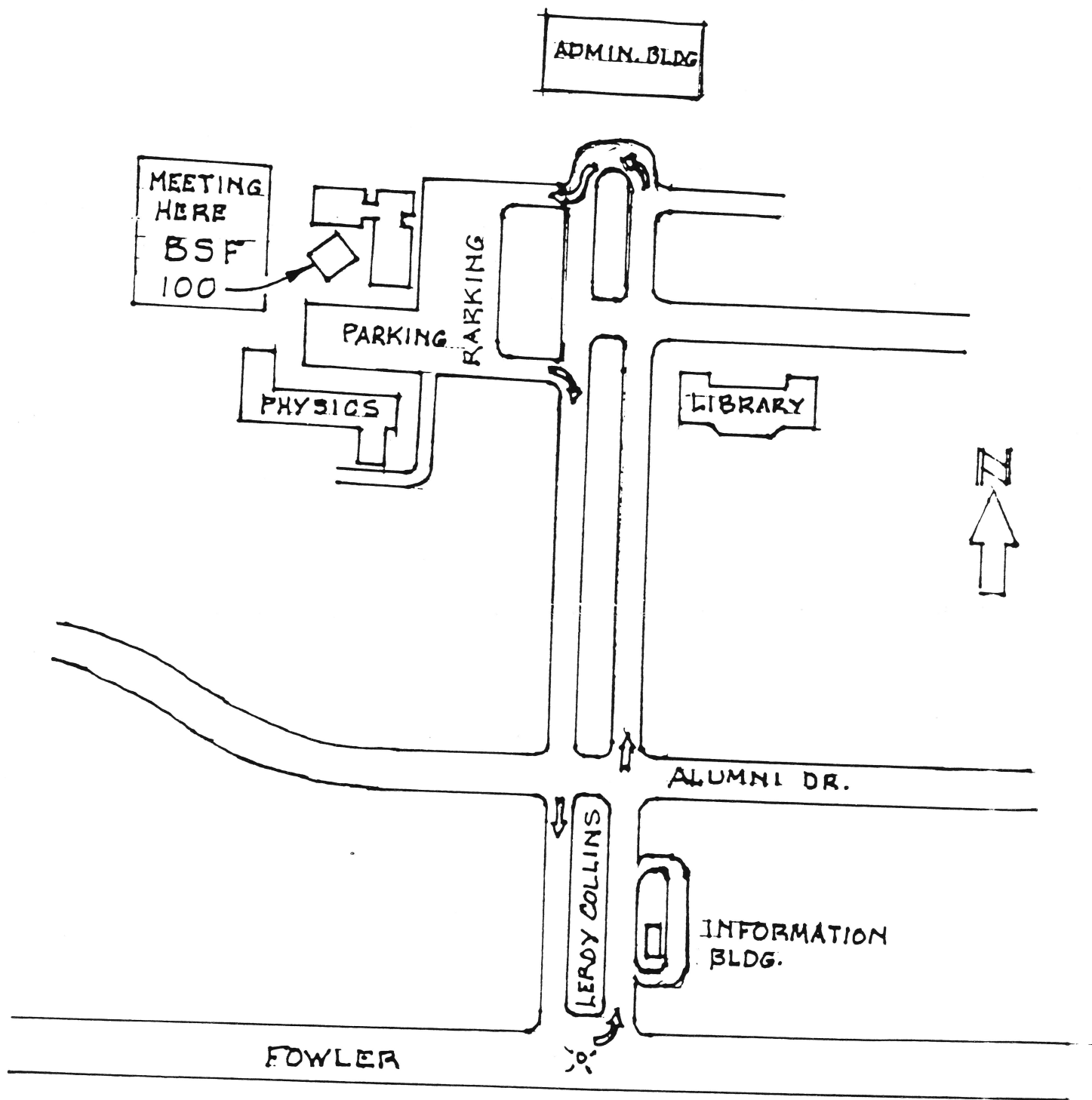
February 14	Sandie Mulrooney - Weed and Feed Program
March 14	Dr Grosser - Growing Citrus Cultures
April 10-11	USF Botanical Garden Spring Plant Sale
May 9	Gene Joyner

Thanks to everyone who signed up to help at our State Fair exhibit. You will enjoy talking to the people who view our exhibit. If you see we are running low on club information please contact me at (813) 754-1399 or Lillian Stark at (813)621-4987. Also, there will be coupons for new memberships to receive a free fruit tree at the March club meeting. The coupons are to be mailed in with membership dues. Please tell potential new members about our club.

Club Board elections will be held in March. If you are interested in being on the Board please contact Al and Pat Jean at (813) 973-3619.

Arnold Stark is our new Seed Chairman for our Seed Exchange. Please start saving your extra seeds and give them to Arnold.

There will be a Board meeting after the regular February meeting.



THE VALUE OF PLANTING FRUIT SEEDS

by Arnold L. Stark, Seed Chair

Nearly everyone of us who are fond of growing tropical fruits are equally fond of eating them. With few exceptions, most of us have our favorites. (Tom Economou from Miami, who has been a regular presenter to the Tampa Bay RFCI, claims his favorite is whichever one is at hand.) Within each of our favorite fruit types there is often a particular variety which we choose over all others.

This favorite variety is propagated vegetatively. If it were not for the ability to produce new plants via cuttings, air layering, tissue culture, and, especially, grafting, there would be no favorite varieties of a given fruit, only a hodgepodge of trees all belonging to the same species but distinct from each other in one or more characteristics, often including the quality of their fruits.

But where do these cherished varieties come from? There are 2 main ways in which they develop: through bud sports and from seedlings.

Bud sports arise from established trees, when a branch appears bearing fruit (or other characteristics, e.g., leaf size, shape or color, thornlessness) different from the remainder of the tree. This occurs when a bud meristem cell undergoes a genetic mutation which is passed on to all of its descendent cells which, in turn, produce the new branch. If these new characteristics are deemed superior to the old ones, then the aberrant branch is used to propagate new plants vegetatively.

Bud sports occur in all types of fruiting trees, but are more commonly encountered in some than in others. A good example of trees which frequently produce bud sports is citrus. Thus, on an orange, lemon, lime, or grapefruit tree of a standard variety, a limb may appear which has variegated leaves, thornless limbs, cold resistance or fruit which is larger, sweeter, acidless, seedless or different in color. The naval orange was discovered as a bud sport on a seeded orange tree, and the cara cara (red navel) was a bud sport of a standard navel.

However, most new fruit varieties are produced by growing seedlings, and selecting those of the best quality. Sometimes these seedlings are produced through a concerted effort of breeding varieties together and then selecting those having the most desirable characteristics. The Arkin carambola was developed in this way. A breeding effort may even involve the hybridization of two or more different species. Probably the best examples are again found in citrus: thus we have many varieties of tangelos (= tangerine x grapefruit), tangors (= tangerine x orange), limequats (= lime x kumquat), citrangequat (= citron x orange x kumquat), to name a few. Another example is the atemoya (= sugar apple x cherimoya), which many favor as the best of the annonas.

When species are successfully hybridized, the offspring may show a huge diversity of characteristics ranging from all of those of one parent, through various combinations of both parents, to all of those of the other parent. Thus, a cross of a tangerine and grapefruit has produced tangelos as different as the Honey Bell and the Ugli (= Unique) Fruit. When this type of cross is made, the results may be very different from what is desired. (A college biology professor relayed a story to me of an attempt by a Russian geneticist to produce the perfect food crop in which the entire plant is edible. He crossed a cabbage with a potato, expecting to get a plant which was cabbage above ground and potato below ground. He did succeed in his cross, but the offspring he obtained was potato above ground and cabbage below ground! As this was anecdotal rather than referenced, I don't know if the story was based in fact, but it illustrates my point well.)

Many excellent fruit varieties have been produced through the chance production of seedlings which may appear under or near an established tree from rotting fruit, or after fruit consumption by an

animal, including humans. A little old lady in Australia through an apple core in her yard and a few seedlings grew there. One of those seedlings produced the first Granny Smith apple!

Herein lies the main message I wish to convey to you. Whenever you are enjoying a bounty of fresh exotic fruit, **DON'T JUST TOSS THE SEED(S) IN THE TRASH!!!** Instead, plant them. Reserve a place in your yard for growing seedling trees. Share the extra seedlings with your friends and neighbors. Give them to other RFCI members. You may produce the next 'Arkin Carambola' or 'Granny Smith Apple'!

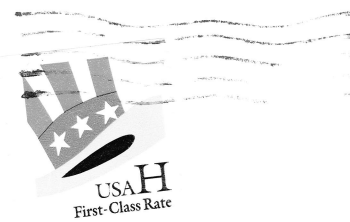
In our yard, we have an orange tree which produces large, juicy, sweet oranges which are nearly seedless. We use the fruit to make gallons of delicious, beautifully colored juice as good as that of Valencia oranges. And the fruit ripens nearly two months sooner than our valencias do. This tree grew from a seedling I found growing next to a campsite in the woods about 20 years ago.

To grow fruit from seedlings takes a good deal of patience. A citrus seedling may take 10 years or more to bear fruit. However, there are exotic fruits which don't take any where near that length of time. Cashews often flower within a year, papayas a little longer. Most of the *Eugenia* species, passion fruits and annonas, among others, take only three to four years to bear fruit. The rewards can be well worth your patience.

Growing seedling trees doesn't require as much room as you would need for the varieties you favor. You can grow them in relatively crowded conditions. Since many won't meet your expectations they would only be grown until they begin fruiting, and then can be removed, while those you wish to keep growing and producing can be moved to a permanent location.

There is something extremely satisfying about eating a fruit picked from a tree you have nurtured since germination. Besides, wouldn't it be great if everyone favored a fruit variety named after you?

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