



NEWSLETTER JULY 1999

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: BOB HEATH, THERESA HEATH, CHARLES NOVAK, LINDA NOVAK, JIM LEE, SALLY LEE

PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: JULY 11 MEETING PLACE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA, BUILDING #BSF 100.

PROGRAM: OUR SCHEDULED SPEAKER FOR THIS MONTH IS DR CAROL ROBERTS, MD. She is a medical doctor with offices in Brandon and Sun City, and will speak on holistic medicine and medicinal herbs for general health development and treatment of specific health problems. She practices standard medicine but is an authority on the whole and entire person in our world environment. This is a program we all need to absorb if we are interested in a full happy life. We can expect again to have the most fabulous tasting table in the business and a raffle that won't stop. Invite your friends to a dynamite program, delicious food and an exciting raffle.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jun-Jul 1999

by Paul Zmoda

We have noticed a marked decrease in insect pest problems on our fruit and vegetable crops as time goes by. To this fact, I attribute the greater diversity of the plantings that we've installed and maintain. In addition to this, we strive to eliminate stresses in our plants and remove those specimens that appear to be unable to thrive. This combination presents to potential pests an array of strong, healthy plants which are able to resist attack better than a monoculture of weakened ones.

Growers of a single type of crop (acres and acres of corn, for example) may end up resorting to spraying programs to keep pest species in check. By growing a mix of dozens of different species together, the need for insecticides can be drastically reduced.

The reason for this is basically that each type of plant can attract certain destructive pests as well as beneficial types. Thus, large mixed plantings attract not only more and varied pests, but also larger numbers of beneficials which may establish themselves and prey on the harmful elements, thereby keeping them in control.

We make it a practice to always leave a few vegetables to go to flower. Parsley, radishes, broccoli and others have attractive blooms which attract a myriad of helpful insects which feed on pollen and nectar but whose larvae are predaceous on pests nearby.

Our "Tropic Beauty" peach yielded three nice fruits to eat. My hybrid annona "Grandson" has set 3 fruit at long last. They are shaped like "Geffner" atemoyas. We hope they are as tasty. I am trying to set fruit on Uvaria rufa, an annona relative. The flowers are bright red and uniquely shaped.

New plantings: yellow mombin, pindo palm, grape, passion fruit, day lily, citrus and cilantro.

From the President
Charles Novak

Even though I have been growing blueberries for over 10 years I learned a lot from the June program. Debra Troyer gave a very interesting and informative program on the growing of blueberries. There were many questions from club members who are currently growing blueberries or are planning to plant them in the near future. If you are not growing blueberries you are missing out on a very delicious fruit.

While on my trip to Costa Rica I hope to obtain some seeds for the club. If you know of any fruits that grow in Costa Rica and would like for me to try to obtain some seeds, let me know at the July club meeting or call me in the evening (after 8 pm) at (813) 754-1399. Please, donate your extra seeds to the club to share with other club members.

The Butterfly House at the USF Botanical Garden Herb and Butterfly Fair (June 12 and 13) was a big success. Several club members helped build the butterfly house. Over 1400 people attended on Saturday and over 1100 people attended on Sunday. There were approximately 1000 butterflies in the tent. I hope you had an opportunity to attend the event.

Our July program should be very interesting with Dr. Carol Roberts speaking on Herbal and Holistic Medicines. We expect a larger than usual audience for this program.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers:

July 11	Dr. Carol Roberts, M.D., Herbal & Holistic Medicines
August 8	Open
September 12	Wae Nelson (Florida Garden Mag.) Seeds Saver
October 9 & 10	USF Fall Plant Sale
November 14	Chris Rollins Director of the Fruit and Spice Park
December 12	Christmas/Hanukkah Social

We are looking for fruit and garden books for the club library. Please donate your extra garden books to our library. If you know of a book you feel we should have in our library, please advise Sal Russo (our library person) at 684-6823.

We also need a program/speaker for August 8. If you have a suggestion please let me know so I can make the necessary arrangements. If you know of someone who would present a program on a topic of interest to club members please let me know so I can begin scheduling for next year.

There will be a board meeting after the club meeting.

BLUEBERRIES by Debra Troyer

Blueberries are an acid loving plant that grow much like azaleas. They have a shallow root system and they like an acid type fertilizer. Blueberries like cold weather. As a matter of fact a blueberry bush needs a certain number of chilling hours to produce a good crop.

The Southern Highbush varieties in Florida were developed by the University of Florida in Gainesville. They have been acclimated to our Florida climate and grow as far south as Immokolee. Debra works with 3 varieties, the Sharp Blue which at present is the mainstay of our commercial industry. The second variety is Gulfcoast; the third, Misty.

The Southern Highbush is a semi-deciduous to deciduous plant. The amount of leaves it loses depends on the amount of cold weather we get during our Florida winters. If there are leaves left at the end of winter they will usually fall off when the spurt of new growth comes in the spring. A blueberry needs a certain amount of cold weather to bloom and produce well. A chilling hour is the amount of time the temperature stays between 32 and 45°.

Southern Highbush varieties start their transformation from vegetative growth to blossom growth during the months of August and September. When the blueberries start losing their leaves in November and December you will be able to see the blossom nodes start to swell. The blossom nodes will seem to lie dormant in their development stage until the middle to end of February when you will see a burst of beautiful fragrant white blossoms. By the end of February the blossoms should be pollinated by bees, after which the flowers will fall off, revealing tiny fruit starting to form, growing larger and larger to the middle of April when we may begin to see the gorgeous blue color that blueberries are named for.

Bees are very important to the pollination of blueberry bushes. The flowers need to be pollinated in order to drop the flower and have the berry start to form. The better pollinated the flowers are, the better quality berries you will get from your bushes.

Blueberries like to be planted in an acid type soil made up of 80% fine pine bark and 20% peat. This provides good drainage and aeration, as well as the acid content necessary for the health of the bushes. Good drainage is very important for a blueberry bush. They do not like wet feet which can cause root rot.

To establish a new planting, your bushes need water every day for the first week and then every other day for another week. After that, water as needed just as you would water other shrubs.

As Debra mentioned earlier, blueberries like an acid environment, which is why we use an acid fertilizer. She likes to use a granular called Blueberry Special-12-4-8. When plants are young do not feed them too much too fast. Start slow and as your plants get bigger and stronger, you may feed them more. Start out feeding your young plant 1 tsp. of granular and gradually increase as the plant gets older and stronger. Feed your bushes once a month from February to October to get maximum growth for the next fruiting season.

The best time to plant blueberry bushes in Florida is in the months of December, January and February when the blueberries are in their dormant or semi-dormant state, before they blossom. If the bush is planted during blossom season, the blossoms should be taken off in order to allow the bush to put on new growth for the next fruiting season instead of trying to put effort into keeping the blooms on after being transplanted. It is also a good idea to cut back a blueberry bush when it is being transplanted no matter what stage it is in. This promotes new growth which is very important to the health of the bush. You may plant blueberry bushes any time of the year, as long as you follow the watering schedule above.

The Sharp Blueberry is a wonderful variety. It has a very large leaf. The bush itself is one of her favorites. It makes beautiful canes from the bottom of the bush. Every year after the first two years of its life, it will put on

about three or four new canes a year, thus making a four year old bush about 4-1/2 feet wide and about head high. That is if you love your bush and take care of it properly. It has a firm, medium sized fruit with an excellent flavor. It is also one of the first varieties to ripen. In our commercial industry it is one of the leaders because the plant is so vigorous and not very subject to pests and disease.

The Gulfcoast is one of Debra's favorites. The bush actually looks like a landscape plant. It has smaller, thinner, darker green leaves and instead of having so many canes it is more like a shrub, dense and full. However, it still canes, it's just different. The flower blossoms come on just a little later than the Sharp but the fruit ripens about the same time. This factor makes it excellent for the fresh

market. It has nice medium to large fruit. Great taste!

The Misty is a majestic type bush. It tends to grow more upright. It does spread through caning. But the canes tend to reach for the sky, making it a slender bush. The leaves on this bush are a lot like the Gulfcoast, dark green and leathery, thin and slender. There is only one drawback to this variety and that is that it tends to over bare when it is young. So it takes more care, to trim off about half the blossoms for the first few years so the plant doesn't get stressed out. But on the other hand it blossoms around the same time as the Sharp, making it an excellent pollinator. And the fruit on the bush is absolutely huge, most of the time about the size of a quarter.

Tasting Table: June 1999

Linda Novak: Choc. Chip Orange Cookies, Guava Pastry, Trop. Fruit Upside Down Cake, Punch

Sally Lee: Orange Bars, Blueberry Cobbler, Lemonade

Paul Branesky: Dried Bananas, Mango and Papaya Tess & Deven Anthony: Cherries

Steven Branesky: Strawberry Blueberry Koolaid Pie Al Roberts: Calamondin Cake

Mary Ann Branesky: Watermelon Chunks

Pat Jean: Lemon Squares

George Riegler and Elaine Sarrasin: Watermelon

Stark: Lemonade

Bonnie Ward: Caramel-Apple Coffee Cake

Nancy McCormack: Chips

**** DONATIONS TO THE TASTING TABLE ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED BY ALL!!**

RECIPE: Kei Apple Pie

Crust for 9" pie	14 oz (400 g.) can sweetened
3 eggs, separated	condensed milk
3/4 cup Kei Apple puree *	1/8 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 325 F (165 C). Beat egg yolks until they are thick and pale. Stir in the kei apple puree, milk and salt. Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry and fold them into the yolk mixture. Pour into pie pan and bake for 40 minutes.

* To make puree, place fruit in saucepan with one inch of water. Cook, mashing from time to time until the fruit falls apart. Put through sieve.

Condolences...

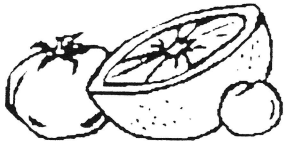
It is with deep regret and heartfelt sorrow that we offer our condolences to Alma Barry for the passing of her husband, Paul Barry, on June 15. Paul and Alma have been members for only a short time but Paul will be missed by those members who knew him.

Raffle: June 1999

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Tomatoes	Polly Shewfelt	Elaine Sarrasin
Red Passion Fruit	Bob Heath	Steven Branesky
Rangoon Creeper	"	Jim Wood
Rose Apple	"	Lanny Brooks
Loquat	"	Judith Allen
Pineapple	"	?
Praying Hands Banana	"	?
Monstera	"	T. Scott
Surinam Cherry	"	Susan McAveety
Cuban Red Banana	Jim Murrie	?
Papaya	Shane Smith	Bonnie Ward
Carambola	"	?
Amorphophalus	?	?
Banana	P. Mann	?
Brazilian Guava	Stark	Art Hedstrand
"	"	James Davis
"	"	Steven Branesky
Philippine Purple Yam	"	Phil Brown
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Lucifer's Torch	"	?
Banana	F. Burhenn	?
"	"	?
"	"	?
Avocado	Norwood Smith	James Davis
"	"	Steven Branesky
"	"	"
"	"	?
Passion Fruit	Charles Novak	P. Mann
"	"	Jim Davis
"	"	Polly Shewfelt
Clerodendron	Nancy Gaspernat	?
Moonflower	"	Theresa Heath
Jack Fruit	Charles Novak	?
"	"	Ron Opat
"	"	Ross Culpepper
"	"	Shane Smith
Century Plant	"	Polly Shewfelt
Naranjilla	"	Steven Branesky
Jaboticaba	Janet Conard	Sal Russo
Dwarf Papaya	Rick Maseda	Art Hedstrand
Cas Guava	"	Judy Cimafranca
Red Banana	"	?
Plantain	"	Nancy McCormack
Abaca Pineapple	?	T & D Anthony
Bottle Gourd	Sally Lee	Stark
Bitter Melon	"	Paul Branesky
Chayote Squash	"	?
Blueberry Plant	Debra Troyer	Sal Russo
"	"	"
Watermelon	George Riegler	Bob Heath
"	"	Jim Lee

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.





**California Rare Fruit Growers
1999 Festival of Fruit
August 27 - 29, 1999 Petaluma, California**

For more information, see pages 27 and 28 plus the CRFG website <www.crfg.org> and next issue of the Fruit Gardener.



Friday, August 27th, Guided Tours

- 9:00-11:00 AM - USDA Germplasm Repository and U.C. Davis Wolfskill Experimental Farm, Winters - Explanation of repository work and tour of both sites; perhaps some fruit tasting.
- 9:30-11:30 AM - McEvoy Olive Ranch, Petaluma - Tour of orchards and processing plant; olive oil tasting.
- 12:00-1:30 PM - Four Winds Citrus Growers, Winters - Tour of their grow-out facility; some plants available for sale.
- 1:00-3:00 PM - Luther Burbank's Gold Ridge experimental farm, Sebastopol - Between 1:00 and 2:30 PM, 30-45 minute tours start whenever enough people arrive.
- 4:30-5:30 PM - Florence's Garden, Petaluma - Garden of a long-time CRFG member; many uncommon plants.

Saturday, August 28th

General Meeting at the Petaluma Veterans Memorial Hall, 1094 Petaluma Blvd. South, Petaluma.

7:30-9:00 AM	Registration	12:30-1:00 PM	Lunchtime speakers
8:00 AM-6:30 PM	Sales/Information area open	12:30-1:30 PM	Chapter chairs meeting
9:00-9:15 AM	Welcome	1:30-2:45 PM	Afternoon keynote speaker
9:15-10:30 AM	Morning keynote speaker	3:00-4:15 PM	3 concurrent speakers
10:45 AM-noon	3 concurrent speakers	4:30-5:30 PM	3 concurrent speakers
noon-1:30 PM	Lunch	5:30-6:00 PM	Tour and dinner information

Topics and Speakers

Asian Pears - Paul Vossen
 Australian Exchange Program - Roger Meyer
 Black Sapotes and White Sapotes - George Emerich with Bob Chambers
 Diagnosing Diseases - Dr. Robert Raabe
 Edible Palms for Northern California - Inge Hoffmann
 Edible Passifloras - Patrick Worley
 Garlic and Hot Peppers - Maria de la Fuente

Grapes for Everyone - Lon Rombough (keynote speech)
 History of Wine Grapes in California - Pam Canales
 Indonesian Fruit - Jeanine Pfeiffer (keynote speech)
 Integrated Pest Management for Apples - Jim Ryder
 Loquats - Patrick Schafer
 Myrtle Family Fruit - Brent Thompson
 Selected Tropical Plants for Northern California - Steve Starns

Plant Sales and Information Tables

Various groups and individuals will sell plants, seeds, and other materials at the Veterans Hall all day on Saturday. Other groups will have informational displays of interest to rare fruit growers.

Sunday, August 29th, Guided Tours

- 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, & 1:00 PM - Sonoma Antique Apple Nursery, Healdsburg - One hour tours of the nursery's growing grounds for antique fruit varieties; also a chestnut grove, flowers, and vegetables.
- 9:30-10:30 AM - Vossen Orchard, Windsor - 80 varieties of fruit in an orchard previously owned by Paul Vossen.
- 1:45-4:00 PM - Arts and Ecology Center, Occidental - A Seed Savers Exchange curator site for rare varieties of food crops, with an organic garden and permaculture demonstration.
- 1:00-3:00 PM - Blueberry/Pepper Test Planting, Santa Clara - 20 blueberry varieties; 85-100 hot pepper varieties.

"Do-It-Yourself" Tours for Friday and Sunday

Create your own tours of arboretums, botanic gardens, CRFG plantings, rare-plant nurseries, wineries, and other fascinating sites! Over 100 possibilities from Healdsburg to Santa Cruz, including special ideas for children. Maps, visiting hours, and other information included in your registration packet; additional planning help available.

A Visit with Johnny Montano by Art Hedstrand

We were rained out at our Saturday morning work party to build butterfly gardens at USF Botanical Gardens. In mid afternoon the weather cleared so I drove out on Tobacco Road to look for a lady to whom I spoke at the spring plant sale about some really good citrus fruit. At one point on Tobacco Road I saw some persimmon trees (Persimmons always get my attention!) and wondered if it could be Johnny Montano's place. I returned and sure enough, it was Johnny's place. Even better, there was someone walking in the yard. I stopped and said, "Are you Johnny Montano?" He said, "Yes" so I told him of my interest in persimmons.

After introductions, we proceeded into the adjacent persimmon patch which is as Dr. Dunstan described his place (now Chestnut Nursery): a 'yungle'! Johnny had been propagating a lot of 'Japanese' persimmons, Diospyros Kaki, and was selling them bare root. He was killing himself with all the work, so he had to back off and let them do their thing. We wandered through the patch and he searched for tags to identify cultivars - Izu, Tanenashi, Hyacume, Giant Tamopan, Smith's Perfect and an unknown that was supposed to be Gumbo. (We all have that problem at times.)

A clump of tuna (Opuntia ficus-indica) is at one side of the persimmons - it is the red-fruited variety which I was delighted to find again.

As we left the persimmon patch we passed some potted Dutch amaryllis - peach and red and other colors. They are huge flowers with vibrant colors. Further along were potted loquats that Johnny had grafted to choice varieties. There is a nice selection of mature dooryard citrus which Johnny brought through the last hard freeze by running sprinklers until the trees turned into blocks of ice. I asked about a bush I didn't recognize - a ficus nematode resistant root stock. (F. glomerata perhaps?)

On the back of Johnny's 10 acres there is a pasture with some nice looking cattle that have Johnny's interest now. A few larger persimmons are fenced in - these are spaced out nicely.

Behind his house is a 'sweet lime' which his mother grew from seed. Johnny gave me the last fruit. I tasted it a couple of days later and it was strange - no citrus taste, not even in the peel, and it was mildly sweet, almost insipid. I need to ask him how his mom used this fruit.

There's a presently unused greenhouse in which Johnny grew orchids. He was disappointed that he couldn't come to Dr. Grosser's talk on citrus propagation by tissue culture because he is interested in that method for orchids in the future. Next to the greenhouse are some tubs containing water plants - possibly for oxygenation in his koi pond? Under a large tree is a collection of bromeliads, another previous interest of Johnny's.

Johnny works six days a week so he doesn't have time to pursue many of his horticultural interests. This is also why you don't see him at club meetings. He does maintain membership as he feels it is important to support us.

Johnny is a barber in Zephyrhills and I really needed a haircut, so the next week I drove to East 54 and Wire Road (Circle K building). He said he budded a root sprout of wild persimmons for a friend, and had poor results. He thinks the plants in the root sprouts rob from one another, and advises against using them. I'll have to rethink this. I've had both good and bad luck with D. virginiana clones. This is in an environment with lots of variable factors - too much shade or too much root competition. Since these are root sprouts, there may not be an extensive enough root system for each individual tree. Perhaps it is better to sever the feeder root on both sides of the sprout so that it establishes its own root system. You do have to be cautious to not bud a tree that has a 'rotating root' - this is where a sprout has

risen off a long root from the mother tree and has not developed side roots to anchor it. I have two large tanenashis in Seminole County that tip right over into the adjacent palmettos when they put on a heavy crop. There is no longer a mother tree in the vicinity, but they still haven't developed any major side roots.

I had a great visit with Johnny Montano and am delighted to have a new friend. If any of you folks in the Dade County/Zephyrhills/Wesley Chapel area need a good barber who can talk knowledgeably about plants (or koi), check him out!

PROFILE YOUR YARD

If you'd like your yard, tiny or large, written up (ref. the Johnny Montano article in this issue), drop me a note with your phone number and address. Art Hedstrand, 33456 Cortez Blvd, Ridge Manor FL 33523.

MEMBERSHIP TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

The year 2000 Directory has been printed but will only be distributed to those members who desire it. The Directory will be available at the next meeting for those who wish a copy. For all others who fail to make the meeting, the Directory will be available by calling Charles Novak @ 754-1399 or Bob Heath @ 289-1068. Please call in the evening from 6:00 to 10:00 or on the weekend.

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