



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 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 AT 2:00 pm.

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 12

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

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKER IN SEPTEMBER WILL BE THE PUBLISHER OF FLORIDA GARDENING MAGAZINE, WAE NELSON. This magazine is Florida's own home gardening magazine and has been a success in a very difficult field, magazine publishing. Wae will be discussing a very important subject, an organization that is of critical importance in this day and age, namely the Seed Savers. This is an organization we need to know more about and is certainly one of great interest to our group. We wish to thank all those who bring plants for our raffle and goodies for our tasting table. We look forward to a great supply of both at our next meeting.

Condolences...

It is with heartfelt sorrow and deep regret that we offer our condolences to Millie Kraujalis for the recent passing of her husband Ed.

Ed has been active in our tree sales for several years with plants from the Far East such as mangosteen, rambutan and many others. He will be missed at our tree sales and by those who are interested in the fruiting trees from the Far East.

MEMBERS CORNER

For Sale: Snapper 32" cut riding mower, electric start, new battery. \$175.00
call Lanny Brooks @ 813-926-9887

For Sale: Cast iron Franklin stove, complete, like new. \$75.00
call Bob Heath @ 813-289-1068

Wanted: Grocery store plastic bags for customers' plants at the fall Tree Sale. Bring to the Sept. meeting or early on the days of the Oct. sale.

Wanted: My favorite Florida persimmon at Banana River has fine tasting fruit of 2" diameter. Can you top this?? Art Hedstrand, 33456 Cortez Blvd, Ridge Manor FL 33523 (no phone)

PERU by Arnold Stark

In his opening remarks Arnold mentioned Paul Beaver and his Amazonian expedition tours and the lodges they had in the Peruvian Amazon. After having been to Costa Rica twice with his students, he knew that the Peru trip with Paul Beaver was the next step. So his latest trip with his students to the Peruvian Amazon, from which he returned just 2 weeks ago, is what he will be talking about in this presentation.

The place they visited, the lodge of the Amazonian expedition, adjoins the La Reserve Comunal Tamshiyacu-Tahuayo, a community reserve of some 800,000 acres. It has among the highest species diversity of any protected areas in the Americas. It has the highest diversity of mammals, including primates, and flowering plants in the world. It's an area where three tributaries of the Amazon come together. There are a number of villages and many individual homes belonging to people referred to as Riberenos - people of the river, who are adapted to the annual flooding of the river. And we're talking about a huge amount of water.

When they were there the first time in April, it was at the height of the rainy season and the river had flooded to over 30 feet above its normal height. The natives are the caretakers of this reserve and are in the process of being taught how to preserve the area and develop the native resources as a sustainable economy, rather than the process of wiping out everything within sight. This involves the Rainforest Conservation Fund based in Chicago.

Arnold and the students are interested in natural history and were there to see as much wildlife as they could. As with most young children, his students are interested in reptiles and amphibians. Arnold had slides of the Amazon tree boa, a small vine snake, some boa constrictors, both immense and small, 30' long and 2' long, anacondas, several beautifully colored poison frogs and several beautiful lizards, iguanas and caymen.

He also showed us slides of many multi-colored birds, macaws, parakeets and toucans, and the coatzin, the only bird with claws on its wings, and beautiful beetles and butterflies.

Also, we saw slides of several types of monkeys, a tapir and sloths; and many slides of the beautiful and unusual vegetation, a water lily whose pads get up to 6' in diameter, heliconia of several different kinds in bright red and yellows, a red flower that looked like a pair of lips, several different kinds of bromeliads, some beautiful passion flowers, some interesting pineapple plants, several varieties of bananas and plantains, even one growing with its feet completely submerged in water (this, of course, would kill most bananas), ambarellas, coconas, similar to the naranjilla and used mostly for making juice, avocados, the breadnut, which is a seedy variety of breadfruit, rheedias, several annona varieties, sugar apples, Malay apples which are called mamey by the locals, coconuts and other palm fruit, including the aguaje, which is an important commercial fruit in the area.

COSTA RICA by Charles Novak & Jimmy Lee

Charles started with a synopsis of their trip to Costa Rica with two other of our club members, plus a lot of rare fruit members from south Florida. He gave the trip to Costa Rica a rating of 5 or 6. They did not spend a lot of time visiting the fruit trees of the area, which was a negative as far as Charles was concerned. The country itself was beautiful. Jimmy made a comment about the meals in Costa Rica and Charles added that every meal seemed to be black beans & rice. It became so continuous that "even a hamburger from McDonald's would have tasted good." He said when you have black beans & rice at every evening meal, you soon start

craving for almost anything else. If you go to the local restaurants in the area, Charles said he can guarantee you'll have black beans & rice and plantains.

Right after they landed in Costa Rica, they were herded onto a bus (air conditioned like a Greyhound, well appointed and new) in which they went up to one of the volcanos, many of which are presently active. Charles had slides of the volcanos and the beautiful plants and foliage in the area. He wanted to bring back seeds of everything they saw and he did bring back a lot of them, but many plants did not have seeds so he was tempted to break off limbs to bring back, which Charles has been known to do. Jimmy indicated that Charles is so dedicated that even at 1:00 in the morning, he was still cleaning seeds.

Charles showed us a slide of a beautiful flower of a tree they call the poor man's umbrella because the leaves on this plant get up to 7' across, bigger than an umbrella. In the slide we saw Jim trying to get under the leaves because he said Charles was too rich to be called a poor man and Jimmy said he would meet the criteria. Their guide took them through the volcanic rain forest and they were amazed at how fast and luscious things are growing. The soil and the weather are ideal for plants.

They had slides of an active volcano. We could see them looking down into the volcano from which smoke was rising. It last erupted in 1973. Up there on the mountain it was very cold and coming from our warm weather, they were both freezing.

There were lots of carambolas growing in the area and Jim was busy trying different ones, but he complained they were all pretty sour, probably just random seedlings. There were more beautiful flowers than exotic fruit and the slides indicated this, but one tree that really fascinated Charles was a hardwood papaya tree. The papaya tree was very large and sported a lot of papayas but the guide indicated it was a hardwood tree, so I guess even a papaya can develop hard wood.

They also went on a river cruise and saw a lot of white faced monkeys and other animals and lots of different kinds of birds, but very few fruiting trees on the river. They saw a lot of different kinds of hummingbirds and many iguanas, particularly behind the restaurants where the iguanas were dining on the restaurant scraps and garbage.

They took some pictures of churches and noted that the people are very religious and crime is almost non-existent. It's safe to walk by yourself into the markets and on the streets.

They visited a hot springs and really enjoyed it because the water was so warm up in the mountains. The water is heated by the volcanos and as one climbs up the mountain, the water gets hotter and hotter to a point where it's unbearable. A little further up where Charles was standing, he could see the lava flowing. Jim told him he better be moving along if he didn't want to get burned. He had a couple pictures of the volcano actually exploding, which were very interesting.

From there they went to a research center where they are attempting to collect all the germ plasma of coffee beans and cacao and many other kinds of fruit trees. They saw some lychee trees 60' to 70' tall but unfortunately, there were no lychees at this time. However, there were some rambutans and this was a first time tasting of rambutans for Charles.

Charles had a slide of a jakfruit tree and he commented that Costa Ricans hardly know what to do with jakfruit; they don't eat them. The tree was loaded but "who cares?" In these gardens they are collecting all of the varieties they can find of the annato, or lipstick tree. Some were really beautiful with small pods and others were huge. Charles thought that the small podded plants would be nice

dooryard fruit for Florida but unfortunately, the seeds he collected were not fertile. He bought a soursop at a market for about three & a half dollars American which was a first for him again. He indicated it was an absolutely huge fruit and very good for eating out of hand. It's also used for making good juice and ice cream.

RAFFLE: August 1999

Plant Name	Donor	Winner
Carambola Jelly	Janet Conard	
Key Limes	Steven Branesky	
Key Limes	Paul Branesky	
Grape	Zmoda	Lee
Mora/Colombia Blackberry	"	Delores Davis
Bauhinia	Ted Matthews	
Brazilian Guava	Stark	Jocarol Smith
"	"	
Inga - Peru	"	Phil Brown
Ubos (Mombin)	"	Paul Zmoda
"	"	James Davis
"	"	
Naranjilla	"	Jocarol Smith
Lucifer's Torch	"	Mary Grettenberger
Feijoa	"	Art Hedstrand
Annato	"	Susan McAveety
"	"	Janet Conard
"	"	Susan Modica
"	"	
Mexican Pineapple	T. Scott	Angel Branesky
"	"	Myren Branesky
Java Blue	Ricky Maseda	Kent Helmick
Java Blue	"	Mary Grettenberger
Orinoco	"	
Iholene Red	"	
Tall Brazilian	"	Mary Grettenberger
Beauty Berry	Heath	T. Scott
Papaya	"	
Pineapple	"	
Rangoon Creeper	"	
Passion Fruit	"	Bonnie Ward
Caladium Lily	Lee	Mary Grettenberger
Purple Flower	"	
Four O'Clock	"	Delores Davis
Wonder of the World	"	Kent Helmick
Variegated Arrowhead	"	
Purple Bush	"	
Grapefruit	Maria McCourt	
Pineapple	Lillian Smoleny	Art Hedstrand
Annato	Stark	Sal Russo
Annato	?	Al Roberts
Soursop	?	Kent Helmick
"	?	Ed Musgrave
Surinam Cherry	?	Cheryl Drew
Key Lime	?	"
Bauhinia Purpurea	?	Joseph Divan
Annato	?	"
Pepper	Lee	Stark

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Aug-Sept 1999

by Paul Zmoda

This hot, moist weather is perfect for planting and growing palms. There are several which you can grow in central Florida for their beauty and as a food source. Most do best in full sun with a soil that is well drained but not necessarily rich.

My favorite is the jelly or Pindo palm. This blue-green plant is often used in landscaping and has distinctive, recurved fronds. The fruit forms in clusters during the summer months and appears orange and yellow. When these are allowed to ripen completely, they can be very delicious, reminding me of pineapple, strawberry and apricots.

The Queen palm is a pretty, nonspined palm whose fruit tastes like bubble gum although the flesh is fairly thin. A wet, rich environment makes this "tree" really grow tall fast.

Date palms can grow huge and spiny. A female can produce lots of sweet, tasty dates when pollinated by a separate male palm. Date palms stand freezes well.

Peach palms are a bit of a challenge to grow. They are frost sensitive and require moist soil. My friend, Roy Work, has a nice one, maybe 20 feet tall, and it's blooming now in the Clair Mel area. The fruit is starchy and sweet - a nutritious staple crop in the tropics.

Coconut palms will produce here only if attention is paid to the growing site. It should never freeze so this species should be planted near the Gulf of Mexico or a large body of fresh water for winter protection. There are successful ones at St. Pete Beach which produce coconuts.

Canary Island date palms are freeze resistant, large and spiny. The fruit is smaller than regular dates but is very good nonetheless.

Our State tree, the cabbage palm, makes lots of small fruit. These are date-like in flavor but are a lot of work to eat.

Muscadine grapes are ready to harvest now. There are so many varieties to choose from. Every fruit grower should find room for at least one vine. When selecting a single vine, be sure to get one having perfect flowers unless you have wild types growing nearby.

I've harvested our tobacco crop and have it hanging in the garage to cure. This is to dry the large leaves until they become brown and aromatic. Curing is different from ageing, which takes time to develop better flavor and lose harshness. Ageing may take many years like wines.

Carambola (star fruit) are fruiting well now; this looks to be a great crop. Grafted trees begin to produce immediately while seedlings of unknown quality might begin to fruit only after 5 to 8 years or more.

Used Pots for Sale

The Sat., 8/14/99 Tampa Tribune section 465 had this ad: "Plant containers, 1 gal., \$5.00 for 100. Jim 752-8305." Sounds like the same Jim, off Route 39 in Plant City, from whom I bought pots (for \$0.07 ea). He also had new & used black nursery cloth on which to set plant pots and something for potting - maybe Vermiculite. Nice guy. Art Hedstrand

From the President
Charles Novak

I hope everyone who attended the August meeting enjoyed the slide presentations on Peru and Costa Rica. I am looking forward to going on another trip to Central or South America in the not too distant future.

We voted on a color for our new club shirts last month. The color that won by a large majority was Key Lime Green. We hope to have some shirts available in time for the Fall USF Botanical Garden Plant Sale.

We need your help at the Fall Plant Festival at the University of South Florida Botanical Garden (October 9 & 10). Please be willing to help on at least one of the following days:

Friday – Help unload and setup

Saturday – Help cashier, club information and new memberships,
answer questions, assist where needed

Sunday – Help cashier, club information and new memberships,
answer questions, assist where needed, load plants

The Plant Sales are a great opportunity for the club to sign up new memberships. Club members can help to encourage new memberships by attending events, shows and fairs, encouraging young people to develop an interest in growing and producing fruit and by inviting friends and acquaintances to attend meetings.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers:

September 12	Wae Nelson (Florida Gardening 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
January 15	Citrus Celebration

It has been suggested that we arrange tours of the fruit plantings of Club members. If you would be interested in having a group of club members view your fruiting plants please let me know at the next meeting or phone me at (813) 754-1399. If we get enough volunteers we will attempt to schedule tours as often as possible.

There will be a board meeting after the club meeting.

A VISIT WITH JULES COHAN

by Art Hedstrand

Driving through Spring Hill to Jules' and Barbara's home is like crossing waves in the ocean - a continuous rolling land. The home is on a short loop street with a pretty island of native oaks and grass across from them.

A 30' tall Washingtonian palm stands sentry at the driveway entrance; surprising that it grew so tall in just the 10 years since they bought the property and planted it. A huge carefree heirloom pink rose lies along the driveway - usually loaded with flowers.

The property is a large irregular shaped lot with pleasant landscaping in front; one would never believe there's a fruit orchard in the back yard. Fruit tree types are pretty much ecologically scattered - keep the bugs guessing! St. Augustine grass carpets the entire place except for recycled house carpet mulch in squares around individual trees in most cases. The land pleasantly slopes to the north and east, with scattered native oaks - a dense live oak grove, another cluster with a hammock (and a squirrel making it swing!) and numerous individual scrub oaks.

Jules' persimmon collection includes Hachiya, Seijo, Fuyu, Tanenashi, a small "winter", Costata, Hanafuyu, Hyakume, and Izu. Some are bearing; some not. Old reliable Tanenashi has a nice crop and I noticed some Seijos. Ron Lambert (Buckhorn Nursery, Wauchula) recommended Costata over Gailey for a pollinator. [University of Florida claims that a pollinator increases yields. "Mr. Persimmon" Jim Mercer (Chiefland) told me they are not necessary. He has a good nutrition program including a granular fertilizer of a special mix and foliar spraying with chelated trace elements. I think good nutrition is the answer to good production as well as tree health and disease/bug resistance. Years ago in Brooksville we bought Tanenashis from a couple who gardened organically and used fish emulsion foliar spray. They had a large percentage of fruit with thumbs on them, which I attribute to the Gailey pollinators they had.]

Jules says he has 30 citrus cultivars, including large trees of pink, Ruby Red and Duncan grapefruit, Hamlin, Navel and Sanquinelli, Blood Orange, Rangpur lime, Citrangequat, Ponkan, Dancy and Robinson tangerines and a Satsuma, which is a heavy producer.

Among his bananas and plantains is a beautiful clump of Williams Dwarf, Dwarf Orinoco, Praying Hands, Psang Raja, Dwarf Cavendish, Raja Puri, Ice Cream. There were a few flowers and fruit, but Jules says that if they don't fruit by July, they won't make a crop before the winter freeze. This year's January freeze plus La Nina drought slowed things down.

Plums include Ron Lambert's red, yellow and Gulf Red, also a very early specimen from Bemis Gordon. There's a grape arbor with two varieties and a Fry muscadine up into the live oak grove.

Pome fruits include apples - Golden Dorset (made by Jules in Andy Rose's grafting class), Anna and Granny Smith; and pears - Carnes and an Asian. There's an Okinawa peach for root stock and so-so flavor, and a huge specimen of the very early Florida Belle.

Miscellaneous fruits include mulberry (in the greenhouse to keep away from birds!), jujube, large Oliver and an unnamed loquat, Topa topa Avocado which is disappointing so far, feijoa, Cattley guava, guava and raisin tree (*Hovenia dulcis*) which Jules would like to have removed.

Jules recently acquired some Misty, Sharp Blue and Gulf Coast plants from Debbie Troyer to add to his blueberry patch. He will screen this planting for next year to

foil the birds. Strange to relate, he has a fig on the north side of the house which just sits there with no appreciable growth and a Celeste of similar age in the south side yard which is about 10 feet high and fruiting.

When Jules had his heart attack a couple of years ago at Homosassa Flea Market, his trees were loaded up and placed alongside the house. Last year he didn't have enough energy to do anything with them. It's good to see he's recovering and has been working many of these trees into the yard.

Jules has a lot of surplus citrus and some other kinds of fruit trees to sell so check him out!

Way to go, Jules, old friend!

Tasting Table: August 1999

Novak: Guava Nut Bread, Key Lime Cookies, Blueberry Cheesecake, Fruit Punch

Lee: Banana Nut Bread, Pecan Cookies, Lemonade

Aleida Maseda: Grapes and Strawberries

Pat McGrauley: Guavas and Guava Leather

Bonnie Ward: Sour Apple Streusel Cake

Al Roberts: Calamondin Cake

Myren Branesky: Java Plums

Nancy McCormack: Chips

Musgraves: Guava Paste

Paul Branesky: Noni Salad

Mann: Orange, Date, Nut Cake

Angel Branesky: Philippine Chow Chow

T. Scott: Bell Pepper Rings

Lillian Smoleny: Pineapple Chunks

Please remember to list your delectable contributions to the tasting table on the sign-up sheet.
Thanks!

RFCI TAMPA BAY CHAPTER

313 PROETT RD

SEFFNER FL 33584



FIRST CLASS MAIL

P. JUDSON NEWCOMBE
314 DEER PARK AVE.
TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617

