



NEWSLETTER

99-73

NOVEMBER 1999

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

EDITORS: BOB HEATH, THERESA HEATH, CHARLES NOVAK, LINDA NOVAK, JIM LEE, SALLY LEE

PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK

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

NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 14

PROGRAM: CARVING FRUIT FOR TABLE CENTER PIECES AND MAKING FRUIT SALSAS WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF PAUL CARIDEO'S PRESENTATION AT OUR NEXT MEETING. Good use of our fruit is probably equally important to growing fruit and this should be a very interesting program, which will be followed by our usual mouth-watering tasting table and of course our monthly raffle. Please prepare for our Christmas Social in December. See "From the President". Details shall appear in the December newsletter.

Happy Thanksgiving



WHAT'S HAPPENING
OCT-NOV 1999
by Paul Zmoda

While inspecting our orchard on October 1st, my wife asked, "What happened to that tree?" I assumed she was pointing to a tree in the next yard; but no, it was our Fuyu persimmon. Several of its larger branches were dry looking and bent over, some on the ground. At first, I thought someone had vandalized it with pruning shears. After a closer look I told her we had been attacked - by an insect! The dreaded twig girdler (Oncideres cingulata) had been there. Our almond tree was found to be similarly damaged. We have never sustained such destruction before and found it hard to believe that a one inch beetle could lop off branches a half inch in diameter.

The adult apparently noticed that our trees seemed to be an ideal nursery for her young. Judging from all the holes bored in the nodes of those branches, she must have had a great time laying her eggs within. We excised a good many larvae and disposed of all the infested pieces at once. I surmise that the twig girdler life cycle goes thusly: female beetle lays eggs in a suitable branch and then gnaws the branch, lower down, almost all the way through. Any breeze at all snaps it off. Larvae develop in sapwood while on the ground and then enter the soil to pupate. Adults emerge later to look for more fruit trees to disfigure.

This pest is shockingly severe; if it finds your grove, you will not like the bad news. Since the female lays her eggs before chomping off the branch, I doubt if any stomach poison will prevent damage. Maybe to further branches, though. You should burn or get rid of all associated branches to prevent future beetles.

New plantings: chickasaw plum, chinquapins 'Herschel', various persimmons, Ginkgo biloba, palms, grumichama, Arbutus unedo hybrid and fall vegetables.

Wae Nelson gave us a dynamite presentation on preserving our genetic plant heritage. He apologetically said his talk was not directly related to our interest of fruit trees, since Seed Savers Exchange is primarily involved in vegetables. Actually, we have that same problem of losing varieties of fruits. People are continually writing articles in Pomona (North American Fruit Explorers) about some terrific old apple, peach or plum they remember from their earlier days, and fervently requesting sources of bud wood.

Recently, among my notes, I found a drawing of a wild persimmon which I noted as having an excellent flavor. The size was large, the shape long. It was growing at 408 Pryor Street in Brooksville. The other day on returning from Brooksville, I wondered if it were still there. I decided to do a little fruit exploring by driving through the old neighborhood. The second street I turned onto was Pryor Street! I recognized the place at 408 Pryor Street after 20-odd years. In the back yard was a large gum tree, but no persimmon.

Why hadn't I grafted that fine persimmon years ago onto some stock at home? I lost a piece of genetic heritage. I am so anxious to find a place so I can preserve native persimmons: Eustis RR, Banana River (3 clones), St. Cloud (long fruit, keeps like a date) and any new finds.

We as fruit hobbyists bear the responsibility of preserving rare fruit.

Recently a Florida Nurseryman's Association floated a list of trees which they want to discontinue propagating because of their obnoxious characteristics. Among them was the guava. Guava is obviously no problem in the freeze zone where we live, but I remember huge stands along Lake Okeechobee years ago. In those huge stands or in some grower's yard are valuable genetic resources, soon to be lost.

Did you read that recent item from Science Magazine in which they did DNA testing of some of the highly esteemed French wine grades? In at least two of the favored cultivars, one parent was a nondescript grade that was in such disregard that the industry had relegated it to the grade scrap heap. Fortunately there are some vines still in existence. We have no idea how these genes combine to make marvelous offspring.

Do your part - be a fruit explorer. Rescue a useful variety or even that dog if you're hybridizing! Share it. Our history of fruiting plants is selection from the wild. Don't lose another 408 Pryor Street.

WANTED: I've done quite a few yard visits, including some really memorable persimmon ones in Mississippi and Georgia. The primary reason I joined Manatee RFCI is their yard visits. They are a tremendous asset in learning and just one tip can make the trip worthwhile. Not only do you learn from the owner, but there is a synergy established with visitors sharing experiences in fruit growing, favorite varieties or bums. I urge you to offer your yard for a visitation, whether postage stamp or estate size - it's the quality of what we may learn, not just the quantity of trees that's important. Please call or contact Charles.

I am in need of a yard to visit for my write-up in the next newsletter. Please contact me for that. Art Hedstrand, 33456 Cortez Blvd, Ridge Manor FL 33523. Thanks!

From the President
Charles Novak

A huge "Thanks" to all club members who contributed all or part of their weekend (October 9 & 10) to help with the Fall Plant Festival at the USF Botanical Garden. Our area draws a large number of people. The display of fresh fruit, the colorful posters, the tasty fruit juices and the large number of 'rare' and 'not so rare' fruit trees are of interest to most everyone. We have some citrus trees that will be available to members at the November 14 club meeting. The club gave club T-shirts to all members who helped at the sale. For those who were unable to help at the Fall sale, you will receive your T-shirt when helping with the upcoming Citrus Celebration and/or Spring Plant Festival at the USF Botanical Garden. You should help at least one day in order to obtain one of our new T-shirts.

A REMINDER: January 15, 2000, is just around the corner and we will need your help with the Citrus Celebration. **I really need someone who has some spare time during the day to help me with the organizing of the Citrus Celebration.** Please, Please, someone volunteer to help!! Call me at (813) 754-1399. As I work full time I cannot give the time required to make all the arrangements for the Citrus Celebration.

Paul Carideo is scheduled to do a presentation on the decorative carving of fruits and the making of salsas using fruits-an appropriate topic for the upcoming holidays. You may be inspired to create some interesting displays for your Holiday table.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers:

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|-------------|---------------------------|
| November 14 | Paul Carideo Fruit usage. |
| December 12 | Christmas/Hanukkah Social |
| January 15 | Citrus Celebration |
| February 13 | Tom Economou |

Club members Burns and Cathy Creighton have generously invited the members of the Tampa Bay Rare Fruit Council to their Mizelle Creek Farm (in Lithia, FL) for the December 12 Christmas/Hanukkah Social. More details and directions at the November club meeting and in the December newsletter. Please plan to attend the social. We always have wonderful food and a good time.

There will be a board meeting after the club meeting.

Wae showed us some slides of pollinating squash plants. Squash develops both male and female bloom. The female flower has the preliminary fruit at the base of the flower. In the slide the worker was taping shut a flower that was expected to open the following morning. This is to prevent pollination in the morning by bees. The same is done to a male blossom. The next day he merely opens the flowers and pollinates the female flower with the male. After the female flower is pollinated it is taped shut again or the petals may be completely removed so the bees will not find the flower. Then the female fruit is marked with the male that is used to cross it. Thus the purity of the resulting fruit is known.

Wae showed us slides of a squash called the Mandan which gets its name from a tribe of Indians who lived in the Dakotas. It's a very important squash to the breeders because this squash will produce fruit in less than 3 months. It's being crossed with other squash to try to develop rapid fruiting with better squash varieties. Another squash is a tri-color which was an important squash at the turn of the century; now as far as Wae knows the only place to get seeds is from a company in Italy. Wae had several slides of squash including one with a great variety of many different kinds of mostly winter squash, all sizes and shapes and colors.

Wae also had a variety of slides of watermelons, likewise different colors and shapes and different colored flesh, red, yellow and white.

With the next slide we went on to the procedure of crossing and saving corn seeds. Corn is a grass, an unusual grass, because it separates the pollen, the tassel, from the pollen receiver, the silk on top of the ear of corn. It is one of the few grasses that is commonly hybridized. They plant the corn in rows with different varieties, 2 rows of one variety and 2 rows of another variety. Then they cut off all the tassels of one variety. From the other rows they collect the pollen in a bag. In the corn plant every individual corn silk goes to an individual kernel of corn so each silk in the corn has to be fertilized individually by one or more grains of pollen, which travels

down the silk to the location of the kernel, which can then develop. So Wae suggested that for home use, not to plant corn in a single row, but rather in a plot or block. Since corn is wind pollinated, no matter which way the wind blows, some pollen will drift in the right direction. When the ear of corn begins to emerge and before the silk is showing, a bag is placed over the ear to prevent pollen from getting to the silk, so they've protected it from random pollination. Now at the proper time they can sprinkle on the appropriate pollen and re-bag the ear. With this procedure they know what the cross is and that it is genetically pure.

Wae had several slides of some beautiful peppers and several different varieties of eggplant, one called green banana; another, an Italian eggplant, white egg, Casper, which is a slightly larger eggplant, some long purple Asian eggplants. It's amazing the variety that exists in this family in colors, shapes and sizes.

Tomatos. Wae says that around the seeds in a tomato is a gelatinous mass. It turns out that this is where the tomato flavor is and why store bought tomatos taste like cardboard, because they've been bred to not have that soft mushy stuff in them to make them ship better. In the same manner, the cherry tomato which is the easiest to grow, the most disease resistant, the most cold hardy and the most heat tolerant, has the highest quantity of that gelatinous material around the seeds. So whatever kind of tomatos you decide to grow, also grow cherry tomatos for the best flavor.

Wae explained how they separate the seeds from the tomatos for seed saving. The seeds are squeezed out and allowed to ferment. In the fermentation process that gelatinous material around the seeds breaks down. Two things happen. One, we get rid of the gelatinous material. Two, the viable seeds sink and those that are not viable will float to the surface which are then scooped off with the scum. Then the seeds are washed and dried and ready for packaging. Likewise the fermentation process cuts down the disease pathogens that attach

to the seeds. That is a benefit that we have; we can grow things we can't get in the stores and there are lots of tomato varieties that are not available anywhere but at Seed Savers.

Wae showed us slides of a great number of different tomatos, all ripe and in a variety of colors, even green. One of them was called a pepper tomato because it looks like a pepper and the leaves on the plant look like pepper leaves. There are also tomato plants that are called potato leaf because the plant looks like a potato plant.

Also we saw slides of different kinds of lettuce and slides of all kinds of peas and beans.

Wae had slides of the Seed Savers farm, an abandoned farm of about 24 acres in Iowa. The pond and a two story house and an old barn were already there. They obtained a loan from Mott Corp. (Mott Applesauce Co.) They asked some members of the Seed Savers to contribute to cover the loan and paid it off in 6 years. The barn itself was very bad; you could see right through the roof almost anywhere. The barn was of heavy timber construction and there are very few timber framers around. Secondly, it's a real problem getting timber. Up in the northeast corner of Iowa and the southeast corner of Minnesota is an Amish community that concentrates on timber framing. Also, they have the timbers available

in their own forest and the sawmill to cut the timbers. The Amish designed the timber construction, improved the construction of the building, did all the heavy timber work, including the new roofing. Wae showed us slides of the barn before and after; what an amazing change. They now use it as a large meeting room. They have dances and receptions, a summer camp-out and a fall carnival there. For the local communities the farm has become kind of a focal point for the area.

Seed Savers is not involved in saving animals or flowers. There are organizations who save flower seeds. There's one called Antique Breeds Conservatory that saves animal species, mostly domestic; chickens, cattle, goats, sheep, etc. One of Seed Savers major concerns is apples. When the colonists arrived in America there were over 3000 named varieties of apples. We don't grow any of those today. So what is being grown today: Granny Smith, Red Delicious, Winesap, Jonathon and Rome and maybe a few more? Actually there are thousands of varieties but you can't find them. They're growing here and there on old homesteads and such places. So Seed Savers is going around and collecting them.

Wae ended with pictures of the farm: beautiful, progressive and filled with promise; and the suggestion, "Join Seed Savers, plant seeds."

MEMBERS' CORNER

WANTED 55 gal. plastic drums with lids, 1 to 25.
Jim Wood (727) 856-6767

WANTED Tomato cages, any size, any condition, any quantity. Also large plastic barrels. Charles Novak (813) 754-1399

FOR SALE Murray 22 inch 3.5 HP power mower; clean, good condition. Adjustable wheels. \$50.00 Edith Freedman (813) 884-1144

FREE PLANTS - 4 large guava plants; 4 large hardy kiwi plants; 50 citrus root-stock plants. Charles Novak (813) 754-1399



Recipe: PUMPKIN PIE

A really good pie that goes well with Thanksgiving.

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 9 inch pie shell | 1/2 tsp ground cloves |
| 1 cup sugar | 1-1/2 cups cooked pumpkin, |
| 1/2 tsp salt | mashed or pureed |
| 1-1/2 tsp cinnamon | 1/2 cup milk |
| 1/2 tsp ginger | 2 eggs, slightly beaten |

Preheat oven to 425°F. Prepare the pie shell. Combine remaining ingredients in a large bowl and beat until smooth. Pour into prepared pie shell. Bake for 10 minutes, then lower the heat to 300°F and bake for about 45 minutes or until filling is firm.



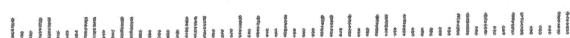
Happy Thanksgiving

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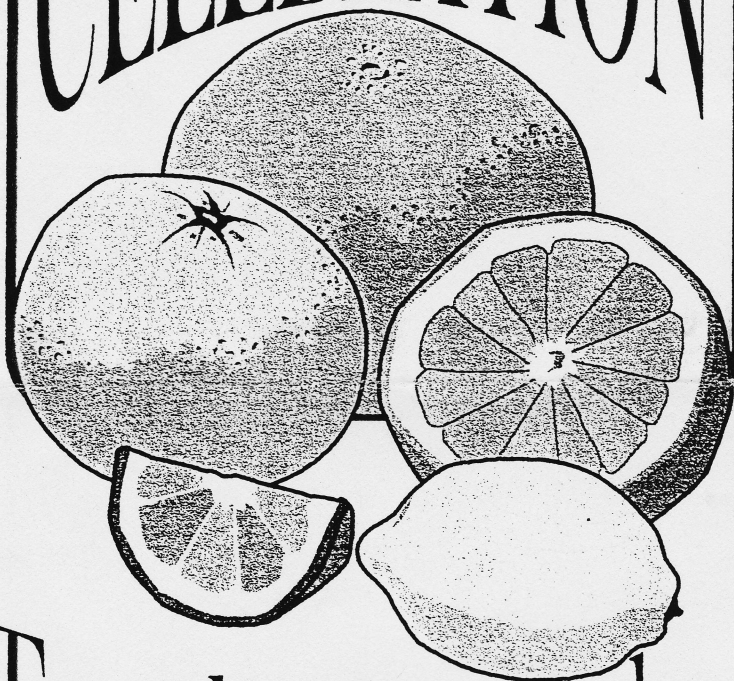
P. JUDSON NEWCOMBE
314 DEER PARK AVE.
TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617



The Tampa Bay Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council International

Presents the third annual

CITRUS CELEBRATION



**Fruit Tasting,
Food & Juice Samples**
in our covered
tasting area

Children's Play Area

Workshops: Learn
how to grow healthy,
productive citrus trees

Tree Sales-
Oranges, Lemons,
Pommelos & many
Rare Varieties, also
**Herbs, Books, rare
Seeds, Bananas,
Azaleas and Tropi-
cal Fruit trees**

Admission: \$2
Adults,
\$1 Seniors & Students,
Children under 12 free
Free Parking

"Taste before you buy"

Saturday, January 15, 2000

9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

at the USF Botanical Garden

A wide selection of citrus & other fruit trees will be available for tasting and purchase. The USF Botanical Garden is located at Pine & Alumni Drives off Bruce B. Downs, just north of Fowler Avenue. For more information call (813) 754-1399 or (813) 974-2329.

Proceeds benefit the USF Botanical Garden and the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council International

USF **University of
South Florida**
Botanical Garden