



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2000

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

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

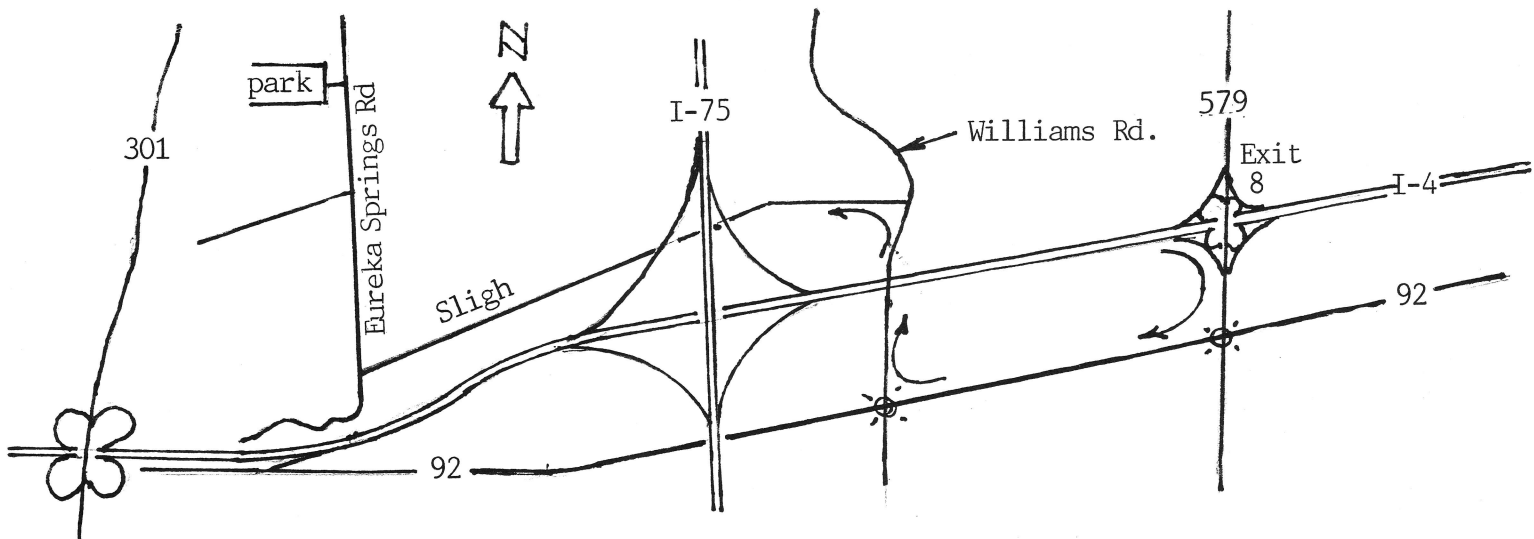
PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK

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

NEXT MEETING: MARCH 12

PROGRAM: TOM ECONOMOU is still suffering with medical problems and had to cancel out again for our monthly meeting. The Board decided this would be a good time to have a spring outing. It was decided to hold our next meeting at Eureka Springs Park and to make it a covered dish affair. The meeting will start at 1:00 instead of 2:00 pm. Bear in mind that we will be meeting and eating in an outdoor pavilion so prepare your food accordingly. Remember also that it is election time for the Board and for the election of officers. The new Board will meet after the meeting to select the Club officers for the coming year. We will not have a separate tasting table but we will have our usual raffle. This is a social event as well as a club meeting. For those who have never explored Eureka Springs Park, this should be an especially interesting meeting.

Parking is very limited and carpooling would be best whenever possible. Parking is not permitted along the street; cars may be ticketed or towed. Also bring chairs as the park does not provide them.



Exit from I-4 at County Road 579 (Exit #8). Go South on CR 579 to US 92 (1 block) and turn right. Go West on US 92 to Williams Road (next light). Go North on Williams Road over I-4 and turn left onto Sligh Ave., which comes up suddenly on a curve. Sligh dead-ends into Eureka Springs Road. Turn right, go North about 1/4 mile. Park is on left.

Please post the flyers!

From the President
Charles Novak

I am happy to report that our club received the Third Place Award for our exhibit at the Florida State Fair. I want to thank everyone who helped with the setting up, the manning and the taking down of the exhibit. We had many compliments on our display (and much interest and many questions). I hope most of our members were able to attend the fair and talk to the public about the benefits of growing tropical fruits.

Important Change: Our March meeting will be a picnic at Eureka Springs Park. Tom Economou had to cancel; so rather than schedule another speaker, the board decided to have a spring picnic (actually spring begins on the 20th). Please bring a covered dish. The club will furnish plates, cups, silverware and drinks. Eureka Springs Park is a unique place. The garden area includes an interesting greenhouse. There is a wooden walkway through a pristine native area of Florida natural woodlands. Please come and join us. See the directions (in this newsletter) for getting to the park. Also, we will elect the club's Board members. It is not too late to submit your name for consideration. If you are interested please contact Albert and Pat Jean (813-973-3619).

Let me reflect over the last 4 years. Many changes have occurred (I hope for the better); from selling the clubhouse to three annual Citrus Celebrations. We have increased our membership and our finances are in very good shape. We really have a 'great' membership and board. Thank you for your support and encouragement. It has been a privilege serving as your President during this period of time. All of us have worked hard to make our club a success. I feel it is time for someone new to serve as President; someone with new and fresh ideas. I hope to continue on the board (if elected) and help with the newsletter. I will do everything I can to assist the new President with his/her duties. Please help our new President make our club even better. Again, **Thanks!** to all of you for the support you have given to me over the last four years.

The following is a list of scheduled programs/speakers:

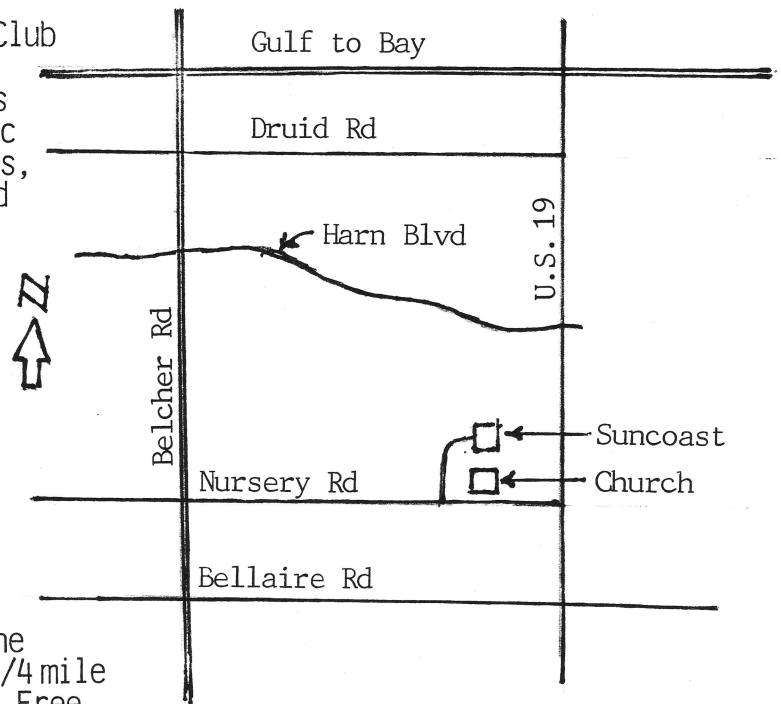
March 12	Eureka Springs Park picnic.
March 25	Suncoast Waldorf Annual Family Gardening Symposium
April 9	USF Spring Plant Festival
May 14	Gene Joyner

The Suncoast Waldorf Annual Family Gardening Symposium will take place at The Suncoast Waldorf Kinderhaus and the School of the Suncoast located at 2476 Nursery Road (1/4 mile west of US Hwy 19) in Clearwater. Time: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. You are invited to bring all your extra plants to sell. The split will be 70/30.

Board meeting and election of officers after the picnic.

SUNCOAST WALDORF ANNUAL GARDENING SYMPOSIUM

On Sat., Mar. 25 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm the Club will provide a booth at the Suncoast Waldorf Gardening Symposium. The Symposium activities will include an organic farmers' market, music and entertainment, plant starts and seed sales, gardening tools and materials, and crafts and cooking demonstrations. Speakers will be discussing water conservation, butterfly gardening, nutrition and organic products, environmental awareness, growing native plants in Florida, growing rare fruit in Florida and herbs and their multiple uses. The RFCI will be selling members' fruiting plants only, as provided by our amateur members as well as any nursery members. This is a first annual affair so we'll be testing the environment. Participating members should be at the booth no later than 8:00 am on Saturday, March 25. The Symposium will take place on the school grounds located at 2476 Nursery Rd. (1/4 mile west of US Hwy 19) in Clearwater, FL. Entry is Free.



FEBRUARY PLANT RAFFLE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Blueberries (5)	C. Novak	?
Pummelo	"	D. Anthony
"	"	T. Anthony
"	"	Kent Helmick
"	"	Pat McGauley
"	"	?
Phosphate Fertilizer	Zmoda	???
Papaya & Sugar Apple	Branesky	?
Mango	Steven Branesky	Nancy McCormack
Loquat	Myren Branesky	Sherman Dorn
Rangoon Creeper	Heath	?
Rio Grande Cherry	"	Sal Russo
Sugar Apple	"	?
Rose Apple	"	?
Star Apple	"	Pauline Chunn
Surinam Cherry	"	Susan McAveety
Eugenia Confusa	"	?
Red Passion Fruit	"	Ron Opat
Yellow Passion Fruit	"	?
Planting Pots	B. Reddicliffe	Shane Smith
Meyer Lemons	Vern Reddicliffe	"
"	"	?
Pineapple Orange Tree	"	???
1000 Finger Banana	Al Roberts	?
Mustard Greens	Lee	Heath
Magnolia Tree	Vern Reddicliffe	Nancy McCormack
Sugar Apple	Pat McGauley	?
Meyer Lemons	"	?
Sage	M. McCourt	?
Loquat	Al & Dottie Ebanks	???
Murcotts (bag)	"	?
Blueberry (2)	?	Ron Opat
1000 Finger Banana	Stan Conrad	Anthony ?
Cainito	?	Judy Cimafranca

WHY A CITRUS TASTING?

by Art Hedstrand

As beauty is in the eye of the beholder, taste is in the taste buds of the taster.

Tom Burford conducts an apple tasting at Monticello each year around Thanksgiving. He was puzzled by the results from year to year. Some things are obvious - weather factors such as drought or excessive rain and number of sunshiny days, etc. Early and late cultivars aren't at their prime taste when sampled midseason. Some late apples take considerable time in storage to develop peak flavor. Tom added to the taster's rating card "Do you prefer sweet or tart flavor?" This helped in interpreting results; a Granny Smith aficionado may not appreciate Golden Delicious's sweetness. The last year that the tasting was written up in Pomona (North American Fruit Explorers), Tom was astounded to find that the previous year's favorite apple was at the bottom of the list!

There was a Mandarin tasting at the November meeting of the Tropical Fruit Club of Central Florida. Ron Patton brought fruit from the Citrus Arboretum and George Riegler brought cultivars from his plantings. I dismissed a lot of the cultivars as bland, unexciting, such as Osceola, Robinson and Ocoee. The Lee was bland, mild sweet; Clementine sweet and good; Daisy more sprightly and good; the Nova balanced sweet-acid and good. George's Satsuma-Clementine hybrid, which was acquired by the Lake Alfred germ plasm folks was good; the sister cross not so good.

I visited George Riegler 12/30/99 with the objective of discussing citrus cultivars. He said the only way he knew to discuss them was to taste them, so off we went, George with paring knife in hand. I asked, "What's your favorite variety?" He replied, "Whatever I'm eating at the moment!" A wise response!

The Satsuma-Clementine hybrid by George was good. Averite Navel is good on Rough Lemon rootstock. An Orlando/Minneola-Clementine cross by George has large, pretty fruit and good flavor.

The State was evaluating various navels for their virus-free program. George rescued several of these for evaluation. I wasn't thrilled by the flavor of these, but they will be grown a couple more years to get out of their juvenile stage. Some cultivars take a few years to become edible; I've read that Ambersweet is an example. The latter is not on George's Christmas card list: it has "no bottom" as my wife describes fruit that has only the high sweet essences, but no balancing lower mineral base. My only experience with Ambersweet was tasting samples from a Ft. Meade grower at Sebring Farmers Market - it beat all the other cultivars by a mile. She said it ripened early and was sweet in September, while still green. Maybe so, but my taste preference in fruits is full ripe. Back to George.

The Mendenhall orange (from Lake Magdalene) is used as an "add back" in concentrate to bring up the sugar and color. Robles and Queen have a similar good market for this purpose. Charles Novak is particularly fond of this cultivar and it is good.

Other varieties tasted: Midsweet (USDA, Cambden Rd, Orlando), Temple, Page (small, good flavor, but not suitable for commercial juice because of its green seed which is bitter if crushed), Lee - good in September, goes flat later; Ray Ruby grapefruit, late navel from Plant Board - found by Fred Gall of Zephyrhills, Sunburst tangerine, Cara Cara red navel, (Dr.) Gardner orange.

Sun Chu Sha mandarin is a small fruit of good flavor (used for rootstock), Robinson mandarin was good. This cultivar dies after about 15 years. The fruit skin gets tight while on the shelf. Sunstar, Ocoee, Nova - good but don't fertilize too much or it becomes pithy.

Miscellaneous observations: Rough lemon makes a pharmaceutical grade oil which is very concentrated. Just a small block of trees is needed to satisfy commercial demand (D.L. Limolene is an excellent cleaner-solvent also.) Libby McNeil Libby used Meyer lemon for juice but it has a lousy oil so they added California peel oil to flavor! George's White Marsh 74-11 is in the State budwood program and is the most planted grapefruit on the lower east coast. George produced a Bearss lemon with no thorns. Honey Murcott is a 'terrible mother' - virtually impossible to get any acceptable offspring in breeding. The Lake Alfred folks claim only one out of 77,000 crosses produces a good orange! (I am still going to try some hybridizing) George has a Nippon kumquat which is large but sour, more so than Nagami. (Rex 'Citrus' by Lance Walheim says Nippon is an orangequat, a hybrid of Satsuma mandarin and Meiwa kumquat.) He has a Nakon pummelo. The long necked Wekiva tangelo is a USDA hybrid with pink flesh and sugar grapefruit flavor (tasted like dishwater at Larry Shatzer's a few years ago). This is a grapefruit-Sampson tangelo cross.

The K-Early (Kaufmann - Grand Island Nursery, Lake County) did not have enough acid and dried out on the shelf, hence its demise commercially. I used to drive all the way to Arcadia to stock up at Frank Peterson's organic grove. They're a family favorite. It's the one tangelo I know of that goes toward the grapefruit in that Mandarin-grapefruit cross. It has the grapefruit bitter principle balanced with the sweet Mandarin flavor. Wekiva is no match (to my taste buds!)

George says Sunshine tangelo is junk - fair flavor, twice orange size (did I goof by buying that tree from Michael?? - he claims Ray Jones says it's the best kept secret!)

Bottom line - lots of confusion as to variety names; only you can determine what is a good citrus cultivar: it's your taste buds.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FEB-MAR 2000

by Paul Zmoda

I've noticed that some fruit trees are beginning to wake up; they are ready to make flowers and fruit. I begin the year's fertilizer program in the order that the trees ask for it. Early starters get the early feedings. I don't fertilize dormant (especially leafless) plants, or at least not with nitrogen compounds. The peaches, almonds and apples want fertilizer in January. Citrus feedings can begin in February - if you notice new growth, they're hungry. As a general rule, I use 6-6-6 or other balanced fertilizers in small monthly feedings on new/small specimens. Go easy on the nitrogen by using 2-10-10 (or others) every three or four months on larger trees. I also add supplements as needed: triple super phosphate can help initiate flowering. Wood ashes provide extra potassium. This can be good for palms, bananas and carambolas.

You should always watch for mineral deficiencies. Plants lacking in iron, magnesium, manganese and other elements won't grow properly; the leaves frequently exhibit yellowing in distinctive patterns. Deficiencies can be corrected by the addition of those elements through fertilizers containing trace elements applied to the soil or by using a foliar drench. Leaves can absorb the minerals and correct the problem in many cases. Be sure to reach the undersides of leaves if you do this.

To properly feed your trees, apply granular or liquid fertilizers evenly in a ring around the trunk out to and just past the dripline. The dripline is the ground directly under the outer edge of the leaf canopy. Do not allow fertilizers to remain in contact with the trunk as there are no feeder roots there. You can seriously damage your trees this way. Pineapples are fed by drenching the entire plant with liquid fertilizer solutions. I use 20-20-20 to promote growth and then switch to a bloom-inducer (like 10-30-20) to get the pineapple to flower.

New plantings: red mustard, arugula, mustard spinach, pac choi, bok choi, Oriental radishes and cabbage.

Tasting Table: February 2000

Linda Novak: Tropical Cheesecake, Lemon Squares, Pummelos, Fruit Punch

Sally Lee: Candied Papaya, Honey Murcott Tangerines, Sugar Cookies, Lemonade

Paul Branesky: Dried Mango and Cherries, Candied Pummelos Rind

Mann: Carambolade, Orange Loaf Cake

Beth Reddicliffe: Orange and Sour Orange Slices

Pat Jean: Durian Preserves on Crackers

Nancy McCormack: Fig Cookies

Al Roberts and Jan Conard: Valentine Cookies

Thom Scott: Jicama

Musgraves: Lemon Bars

Rose Terenzi: Italian Baked Cookies

Sharren Pilot: Orange Spice

Pat McGrauley: Fruit Rolls

As always, a delicious variety of delectables for everyone to enjoy. Thanks a million!

Members Corner

Two free citrus trees - seedlings - may be grapefruit.
5' tall - must be dug. Maria (813) 961-8777



Please post the flyers!

Tampa Bay Chapter RFCI
313 Pruett Rd
Seffner FL 33584



First Class Mail

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

