



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 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: BOB HEATH

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

NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 13

MEETING PLACE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA, Building BSF100

PROGRAM: CONTAINER GARDENING is critical to many of our members for various reasons. Some plants, like figs & blueberries, seem to grow better in containers, and those cold tender plants can be grown in containers to be moved indoors during the winter freezes. Container gardening also has other benefits, all of which will be discussed by Bert Bradish, a master gardener at the Extension Service, at our next meeting. Container gardening frequently requires a little different approach and she will be discussing these idiosyncracies. We look forward to what should be an interesting discussion and also to participation in our tasting table & raffle. Mark your calendar and see us there.

TROPICAL FRUIT FESTIVAL AT SUNKEN GARDENS

A huge THANKS to all the clubs members who showed up to help at the Sunken Gardens 1st Annual Tropical Fruit Festival July 29 & 30. Again, our club members did a SUPER job. The event was a great success and our members did a fantastic job preparing the fruit tasting plates. We prepared and sold over 1000 fruit plates. The Manatee RFCI, Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society & our own club purchased and donated as many types and varieties of rare and tropical fruits as we could get our hands on. Our members spent many hours peeling and cutting up this fruit, but we could not keep up with the demand. There were several times when people were waiting for plates to be assembled and placed on the table. We ran out of fruit both days and had to hastily purchase it from local grocery stores and Oriental markets. There were about 1500 people on Saturday and 2500 on Sunday who attended the event. We also sold tropical fruit juices & fruit ice creams. The weather was great on Sunday but Saturday was stormy during the early afternoon. We should all be very proud of our club. We worked very hard but we had a good time, too. It's always interesting and rewarding to talk to the public about growing rare and tropical fruits. The profit from the tasting plates will be divided equally among the three clubs.

If you were unable to attend the Tropical Fruit Festival, you missed a great event. There were fruit trees for sale, guest speakers (Bob Heath, Monica Brandies and Charles Novak from our club), Calypso, steel drum and Reggae music, wildlife presentations, children's crafts, Grandma's petting zoo and much more. The presentations covered new mango varieties in Florida, growing tropical fruit in containers, edible landscape, air layering tropical fruit trees, grafting tropical fruit trees, growing tropical fruit trees in the Tampa Bay area and growing herbs with tropical fruit. These topics seemed to be of great interest to the public.

Sunken Gardens is now owned by the city of St Petersburg and the staff is really working hard to make the Gardens a wonderful place to visit.

Again, thanks to all members who worked at this event. Each of you should be proud of the job you did. Great members! Great Club!!

Charles Novak

A Visit with Althia and Ed Musgrave

by Art Hedstrand

Althia and Ed live in Mango in eastern Hillsborough County, near Hwy 60/I-75. Ed said their land is $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, which probably is a quarter slice of a 10 acre parcel. The house is situated far back from the road and the entire parcel is a natural park, mostly live oaks with a few 'water' oaks.

Most of their specimen plants are small, many in pots. Outside of the (south) front fence is an old native Chickasaw plum (tart fruit). The front fence is lined with bougainvillea in which Ed has interplanted Surinam cherries.

In this front area are a holly from North Carolina, jaboticaba, large purple crinum (with green foliage), jujube, Butia palm, a nice Sago palm each side of the driveway, guava, white sapote, yellow Cattley guava and feijoa.

The driveway arcs from center over toward the west line, with pineapple plants lining the west side. There are over 50 plants, including some north of the house. In the triangle area are a kumquat, calamondin and Gulf Gold plum.

East of the driveway in the middle front yard are numerous bromeliads and ferns, of which Ed is particularly fond, a grape leaf passion fruit which is a native plant with tiny fruit, Monstera deliciosa climbing up an oak and green chayote vines in a pot.

The driveway makes a loop past the front of the house and connects back to the entrance. Adjacent to this loop is a nice specimen Eugenia of unknown type. It's about 10' tall but hasn't fruited.

In the northern part of this middle front yard are established citrus in full June bloom: two oranges which alternately bear and a tangerine. Ed is trying the spectacular fern Aglaomorpha coronus in a hanging mode as well as in the ground. The leaves are over 3' long and can reach 6'.

Between the driveway loop and front of the house are an Itchikikeijiro persimmon and a dead fuyugaki, victim of the drought. We hope the rootstock will survive so it

may be re-grafted. Adjacent is a nice avocado which Ed grafted from a relative's tree. It's about 10 ft tall at 3 years old and should bear purple fruit of about a pound; Ed thinks it's a Brodgen. East is a papaya and a large loquat of large fruit, some seedless.

The east fence is covered with wild muscadine grape vines which bear only a few berries per bunch. Near the fence are some unusual plants with purported edible roots (snake plants). They have mottled light green/dark green stems and a huge flower that smells like chicken manure! The southeast corner of the house is completed with an ornamental red banana with small seedy fruit.

Crossing back to the west side, there are many cassava plants along the fence, a Topa Topa avocado, yellow and strawberry papayas and a huge purple passion vine hedge. There's a smaller yellow passion vine in there somewhere! After leaving two paw paws and a tree cactus, we cross over behind the house to a large jungle of Surinam cherries and one Barbados cherry. The Surinam has a lot of the light red fruit coming mature up over the roof! There are gloriosa lilies, blood lilies, malanga in water (they like it - Ed), bush morning glory, Passiflora Quadrangularis from seed from the Christmas party, and rangoon creeper.

Directly behind the house Ed dug some deep pits, lined with plastic and filled with some compost-like material to overcome nematodes, for fig plants: Conadria, Alma, Black Jack (?), Kadota and Brown Turkey. He showed me a small 3' tall Brown Turkey fig which was 30 years old!

Continuing on: Silver Bismarckian palm with a triangular cross section trunk, seedling Fuang Tung carambolas, large flowering/fruiting Sri Lanka carambola (sweet, few seeds), tamarind, wild soursop, white or red fruited annona, tree tomato (insipid flavor), jak fruit, sapodilla, luffa gourd (ok to eat when young), Macadamia integrifolia, a Macadamia with a lost tag, yellow mombin, strawberry papaya, orangeberry and chaya.

A nice vanilla orchid is in a greenhouse

area against the south wall of the garage. Ed claims that planting cassavas around papayas deters the papaya wasp which makes maggots. There are pink pear guava, Discorea alata yam, French peanut tree, Cardboard palm and Florida palm. Also edible ginger, La Lot herbs, garcinia, three Japanese raisin trees, rose apple, Cherry of the Rio Grande, bunchosia, sugar apple, bignay, Ceylon gooseberry, wood apple, pond apple, noni and Macadamia.

Some of these plants are in a nursery area further north. There is also an immense wild muscadine of about 6" diameter trunk completely covering a water oak.

In the far north end of the property, Ed is trying some guavas and pond apple. There are many Carolina jessamine vines which have cheerful, yellow trumpet flowers in early spring and with the marvelous Johnson's baby powder fragrance; and lots of a small native paw paw which doesn't fruit.

Ed says his place is a warm area, and the many live oaks afford several degrees of frost protection.

This is an extensive collection in a pleasant park setting. I love the neat ferns! Thanks very much, Althia and Ed.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jul-Aug 2000

by PAUL ZMODA

We've been rejoicing with each and every rainfall we receive. The trees have responded splendidly with either lots of new growth, flowers or both. Many citrus trees are blooming again, but this time with a vengeance. The columnar, Peruvian cereus cacti are making their giant flowers which open at night and produce a magenta colored tasty fruit in short order. The Surinam cherry fruits are more succulent this time around and our acerola is making its first fruit.

We've been having fun with our crop of popping sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*). Four months after planting, the plants which resemble corn at first glance, were topped with a heavy mass of golden seedheads. When I determined that they could ripen no further, I cut them off and hung them in a dry place to fully cure. After winnowing a handful free of their chaff, I tossed them into our popcorn popping pot with some oil and made a nice little bowl full of popped grains which are really delicious! We will also try some sprouted, and if we can find a suitable grain mill, we may attempt to make flour.

New plantings: basil, passion flower, peppers, cushaw squash and achoccha.

Members Corner

FOR SALE: 5 ft. beautiful, white, crepe myrtle flower trees. \$6.00 ea.
8 to 9 ft. loquat trees in 15 gal. containers. \$20.00 ea. Will deliver and install within reason. Please call Fred Sexton(nights) 813-684-6004.

WANTED TO BUY: Fruit of avocados, white sapote, figs, mangos, papayas, grapes. Art Hedstrand, 33456 Cortez Blvd., Ridge Manor FL 33523 (no phone)

FOR SALE: Enclosed trailer - good condition, 5' x 8', \$850.00.
Outboard motor - 5 hp, \$125.00.
Charles Novak (813) 754-1399.



The Myrtle family is a very large family of plants. We are all familiar with ornamental myrtles such as the crape myrtle, a beautiful plant in the spring and summer, but looks like Charlie Brown's Christmas tree in the winter. It drops all of its leaves. Fortunately, most of our fruit bearing myrtle plants do not drop their leaves in the winter. They are quite attractive, make an excellent landscape plant as well as producing marvelous edible fruit. For landscaping, most of the fruiting myrtle plants provide us with trees that are small, easy to manage, lend themselves to pruning, are colorful and stay green all year long.

One plant of the myrtle family that always captures peoples' attention is the jaboticaba. It is a small tree that produces an abundance of fruit on the trunk and large limbs. Ray offered several slides of the jaboticaba flowering and fruiting. In flower the limbs and main trunk look like they're covered with cotton. When ripe, the limbs and trunk are covered with black berries the size of a large muscadine grape. Frequently they grow as a multi trunked tree, which allows one to keep the plant as a shrub. The fruit resembles a large muscadine grape in flavor and texture. It has a thick skin and small seeds like a grape. It is excellent for eating out of hand, makes marvelous jellies & jams and an excellent red wine which rivals any red wine produced in the world. The jaboticaba grows in the swampy areas of Brazil, needs a rich soil and lots of water and does very poorly in droughts. The name jaboticaba actually embraces four species of very similar trees & fruit, Myrciaria cauliflora, Sabara jaboticaba, Jaboticaba de campinas and Myrciaria jaboticaba. The jaboticaba is cold hardy down to around 24°. From seed it takes normally 5 to 7 years to fruit, although if it is properly cared for, well watered and fertilized, it will produce fruit earlier. Also bear in mind that jaboticaba fruits more than once a year, maybe 3 and 4 times. It is very prolific. From flower to fruit only takes 30 days.

The guava presents us with a wide range of fruit and is probably one of the most popular fruit in the myrtle family.

Guavas are a world class fruit when you have a good one and a bad one isn't that bad. The guavas come in a range of sizes from about dime size all the way up to a small grapefruit. The guava called a "Blitch", a tree of which is growing down in Fruit & Spice Park, Ray says is the biggest one he's ever seen. It was big but it was awfully sour. It's one they use for making jams & jellies. The better guavas are medium sized: the pink ones and the whites which include the Indonesian seedless. The seedless guava is an excellent fruit about the size of a tennis ball with absolutely no seeds and a delicious melting flesh. It is certainly a dessert fruit. Ray has a bearing tree. He showed us several slides of various types of guavas, the flowers and buds, immature fruit and ripe fruit. Guavas are easy to grow from seeds and will fruit in 2 to 3 years with proper care.

We also enjoyed slides of the rose apple, the water apple, the wax jambu and the Malay apple and the beautiful flower of the Malay apple. Unfortunately, the fruit are not rated at world class. They are good thirst quenchers and have a crisp texture. The flavor is mild without much tartness and not a lot of flavor, although the rose apple has a smell and taste like rose water. While the flavor is not that great, the plants all put on a beautiful show when they're in flower.

Ray displayed the cherry of the Rio Grande in several slides. It is an excellent fruit on a tree that can grow up to 100 feet tall. The tree is rather slow growing and takes several years to bear from seed but it produces an excellent cherry-like fruit. The tree normally flowers in March and if it's not too windy & cold, it will normally set fruit and hold it. But they need to be well watered, which is part of the problem in March, and they also need full sun to set fruit. The cherry of the Rio Grande is very cold hardy. The Surinam cherry is a fruit that we're all familiar with and is another member of the same family. They are usually grown from seed and a lot of them are not such good quality but when you get one that is of good quality, you will swear by it, not at it. Ray had a slide of the black Surinam cherry in his own yard. The black is a

sport of the normally red Surinam cherry and is usually of better flavor. The one in Ray's yard is exceptionally black, exceptionally large and exceptionally good in flavor. Surinam cherries normally flower only once per year and that's in June. They set their fruit and that's it til the next year. Ray's tree is ever bearing. It fruits 4 or 5 times a year depending on the rainfall and sun. Perhaps we can get Ray to give us some seedlings, which may or may not come true, or provide us with scion wood.

Ray's next slide was what he called a marvelous landscape tree, the grumichama. It's a beautiful dark green plant with beautiful flowers. It may be kept pruned as a bush or may be allowed to grow into a tree, although it is not very large, maybe 15' tall. It normally flowers in early March and we can be eating fruit in April. The grumichama, another gift from Brazil, is an excellent small fruit and tends to be pest free. The fruit tastes mostly like a Bing cherry. It has no bitterness and is aromatic. Ray considers it one of the most underrated fruit available and praises it highly. He had several slides of the trees in his yard.

He showed us a slide of what he says is a special fruit. The reason he called it special was because it was grown from a seed he got from Brazil. He had established contact with a gentleman down there, told him he was looking for seeds of rare fruiting trees. He wrote back and said, "You'll probably be happy to know that I am a gator, as you are." He got his Masters at University of Florida. He sent the seeds to Ray with the comment that "Most people are not very fond of the *Eugenia uvala* because it is so sour. But this variety is an excellent fruit." He wasn't joking. The fruit tastes like a mango, an apricot & a passion fruit all combined into one

fruit. It took 5 years for it to fruit the first time and has fruited every year since, but reluctantly, only a few fruit a year. It really needed cross pollination and Bob Stone, who retired from the club and moved backup north, sold his own sour uvala, which was a seedling that had fruited. So this year Ray had quite a few fruit with good cross pollination. He had a couple of slides which he showed and indicated it is an excellent fruit and very cold hardy down to the low 20's, but he indicated it was very difficult to propagate by grafting, air layering or cuttings. George Riegler was successful one time in grafting it to a Surinam cherry which is also growing in Ray's yard. The flowers are very tiny and it's hard to hand pollinate because of the fragile parts. It can't be done with a camel hair brush. From the slides we could see that the mature fruit is somewhat larger than a golf ball, had a single relatively small seed inside and provides quite a bit of fruit to eat.

Ray showed us slides of another fruit that's very rare, although they're growing it quite a bit now in Miami. It is the *Eugenia stipitata*, grown from seed that Ray got from Peru where they use it for making juice. Paul Beaver says that if you ever drink this juice, you'll never want to drink orange juice again. It's so delicious and very high in Vitamin C. Ray's tree produced fruit after only 3 years, which is quite impressive. The tree is not particularly pretty, it tends to be leggy and weeping, but the fruit is as large as a tennis ball. The fruit is very sour tasting but the smell is absolutely delicious, almost addictive in its attractiveness. Ray removes the 2 or 3 little seeds, cuts the fruit up into pieces in a bowl and adds cream and sugar to subdue the sourness, and enjoys the flavor which is excellent, and the smell which is also excellent.

Membership Directory

The new membership directory is available with all the RFCI members' telephone numbers, addresses and e-mail addresses. Copies are free to members. If you would like a copy, pick one up at the club meeting in August or call Charles Novak at 813-754-1399.

JULY PLANT RAFFLE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Mountain Soursop	Bob Heath	J. Cimafranca
Papaya	" "	?
Red Passion Fruit	" "	Marv Hymes
Abacca Pineapple	" "	Janet Conard
Eugenia Confusa	" "	?
Praying Hands Banana	" "	?
Solanum Diaphelum	" "	?
Miracle Fruit	C. Novak	Staci Reed
Miracle Fruit	" "	Buster Keaton
Genip	" "	?
Jackfruit Family (rare) (2)	" "	?
Loquat Mulberry Jam	Linda Long	Kimberly Hunt
Jack Fruit	Paul Branesky	Bob Heath
Sawpagita	" "	?
Flower Purple	" "	?
White Sapote Seedling	Janet Conard	?
Yesterday Today Tomorrow	E. Musgrave	Bonnie Ward
Pineapple	" "	Mark Todd
Fl. Spinach	" "	Maryse Lamour
Voodoo Plant	" "	Marilyn Weekley
Voodoo Plant	" "	Mark Todd
Voodoo Plant	" "	Maryse Lamour
Surinam Cherry	" "	P. Mann
Kei Apple	" "	Phil Brown
Cherry of the Rio Grande	" "	Maryse Lamour
Voodoo Plant	" "	Pat McGauley
Canna Lilly	Lee	Staci Reed
Roselle	"	Bonnie Ward
Roselle (5)	"	?
Red Sugar Apple	R. Jones	J. Cimafranca
Sago Palm	J. Cimafranca	Susan McAveety
Dwarf Cavendish	Angelo Montagino	J. Cimafranca
Solo Papaya	Bonnie Ward	Don Long
Solo Papaya (5)	" "	?
Mickey Mouse Plant	Susan Reed	P. Zmoda
Mickey Mouse Plant	" "	P. Brown
Thornless Blackberry	Sharon Pilot	Polly Shewfelt
Thornless Blackberry	" "	V. Cash

continued...

JULY PLANT RAFFLE continued

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Heather Shrub	Sharon Pilot	Bob Heath
Guava	Pat McGauley	?
Aztec Sweet Herb	" "	Verna Dickey
Bougainvillea	Jon Kolb	Susan Reed
Sweet White Potato	Maryse Lamour	?
Yucca	" "	?
Guava	?	V. Cash
Porter Weed	?	Buster Keaton
Peppers	R. Maseda	?
Pond Apple	Al Roberts	Linda Long

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

I recently read an article on composting which discussed soil based organisms (SBO's). SBO's are tiny microbes that live in soil. According to research scientist Dr. William C Bryce, PhD, SBO's produce and release into the soil enzymes that sterilize the soil of adverse organisms and help prepare soil to support new plant growth. Without SBO's, lush plant growth would not occur, as the soil would be too contaminated with yeast, molds, fungus, candida and other harmful organisms that are adverse to plant growth. Enzymes produced by the SBO's kill off huge amounts of the harmful elements in the soil. Dr Bryce pointed out that, in addition to the above functions, SBO's also release nutrients and growth hormones which are absorbed through the plants' roots to help stimulate the reproductive cycle in the plant. For example, the growth hormones produced by SBO's stimulate seed maturation and at the same time accelerate further growth of the SBO colonies themselves. As the SBO colonies grow, thanks in part to their own growth stimulating hormone production, their growth increases the amount of hormones available to the plants and the surrounding area, which accelerates further seed development and plant growth. Dr Bryce now believes that the incredible ongoing self stimulating growth process is responsible for rapid growth in plants, as well as for that of animals that consume them, such as animals and humans. According to Dr Bryce, SBO's grow exponentially in organic matter in compost. If this is so, it is obvious that using compost around our plantings is extremely beneficial.

Following is a list of scheduled program speakers as provided by our program chairmen, Jim & Sally Lee:

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|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aug. 13 | Bert Bradish, a master gardener at the Extension Service. She will be talking on container gardening. |
| Sep. 10 | Dave Palmer of the Pesticide Retail Nursery & Landscape Co. He is a commercial urban horticulturist and will be speaking on pesticides and pest control. |
| Oct. 14 & 15 | USF Fall Plant Sale. |

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks and the thanks of the entire RFCI Tampa Bay Chapter for the effort expended by those members who worked at the Sunken Gardens Tropical Fruit Festival. It was an intensive two days and many worked very hard to make this first annual affair very successful. The staff at Sunken Gardens was very pleased with our efforts and we believe they learned a lot about putting on this kind of affair. The consensus is that this will be an annual affair and we will be invited back to participate. Thanks again to all those who worked so hard.

The Society of St. Andrew/Gleaners of Hillsborough County harvests fruit and vegetables from farms when the price drops, and from homeowners with trees and gardens who might grow more than they need. Some of the fruit and vegetables is provided to non profit agencies that help feed the needy and hungry. A large part of the produce goes to the county cannery in Wimauma, is processed into canning jars and then delivered to the Beth El Mission Food Pantry, where it is distributed to feeding agencies, children's homes, church pantries and retirement homes. If you have excess fruit or vegetables which you'd like to contribute to a good cause, or could volunteer to pick fruit or harvest vegetables, especially on weekdays, or might have a truck or SUV to help deliver the produce, call Polly Shewfelt, gleaning coordinator, at 813-689-8621, or bring the produce to a Rare Fruit Council meeting.

Tasting Table: July 2000

Linda Novak: Mango upside down cake, Banana cookies, Tropical fruit salad, juice

Jim & Sally Lee: Fried rice, Applesauce cake, Pears, Fig cake, tea

Jerry & Londa Amyot: Mango pie, Mango almond pudding cake, Mamey Sapote

Paul Branesky: Tropical fruit Ice Creams

Musgraves: Cherry cheesecake

Myron Branesky: Tropical fruit Ice Creams

Steven Branesky: Mango salsa

Lillian Smoleny: Cocconut lemon squares

Maseda: Bananas

Beth Reddicliffe: Chocolate Heaven cake

Thom Scott: Grapes

Peg Mann: Whole wheat pecan crumb cake

Rose Terenzi: Toffee bars

Kimberly Hunt: Peanut butter dessert

Pat McGauley: Rough lemon candy

Janet Conard: Cream cheese & jello cake

Thanks to everyone for the delicious donations to the tasting table. Each person who donates to the tasting table may receive a ticket for the plant exchange.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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