

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 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 @ 2:00 pm.

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 10

MEETING PLACE: UNIVERSITY OF SO. FLORIDA, Building BSF100

PROGRAM: WHEN GROWING FRUIT TREES, HERBS & VEGETABLES, ONE OF OUR GREATEST CONCERNS IS PEST CONTROL. The number of diseases and insects we have to contend with can sometimes be pretty discouraging. Dave Palmer, of the Pesticide Retail Nursery & Landscape Co., will fill us in on pesticides and pest control. This should be an informative discussion and certainly of benefit to all of us who are attempting to grow edibles. Join us September 10 and let's enjoy an important discussion and our tasting table & plant raffle.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Several members of the Club have a friend who raises rabbits. Every 5 or 6 weeks on a Saturday morning we visit our friend and clean out under the rabbit hutches. Our only cost is our time and energy shoveling the rabbit manure and filling our buckets. On each occasion we fill somewhere between 80 and 100 five gallon buckets. This ends up in the planting soil around trees, in flower beds and in compost piles. It is an excellent soil amendment and will not burn the roots of plants. We need a couple more shovelers who might be interested in this free fertilizer. If you are interested, call me at 289-1068 in the evening or weekends.

In each newsletter we have a Members Corner which has mostly been used for things that members wish to sell. However, members may use it to search for things they might like to buy or for comments or suggestions they'd like to bring to the attention of the club members. Feel free to call any one of the editorial staff to make use of the Members Corner.

We brought a lot of seeds back from south Florida from the Mango Festival. I, for one, unfortunately failed to label the seeds and planted them all in one big container. Now I'm digging them up and planting them in individual containers and Lord only knows what they are. After they get a little older, perhaps we can recognize most of them and label them.

Following is a list of scheduled program speakers in advance for the next few months:

- Sept. 10 Dave Palmer of the Pesticide Retail Nursery & Landscape Co. will be speaking on pesticides and pest control.
- Oct. 14 & 15 USF Fall Plant Sale.
- Nov. 12 Sydney Park Brown on Fertilizers.
- Dec. 10 Christmas party & covered dish lunch.

At the September meeting we will have passes for the USF Fall Plant Sale in October. Those who intend to work at the Plant Sale may pick up tickets at this meeting. For those who cannot make the meeting but intend to work at the Sale, call me and we will mail you the tickets. USF Sales are great social events. Look for details in the October newsletter.

CONTAINER GARDENING by BERT BRADISH

Bert brought a brochure on growing fruit crops in containers from the University of Florida and a brochure on plant containers for distribution to the membership. The University of Florida brochure discusses potting soils, the condition of the roots and plant to be potted, how to set the plant in the container and also discusses the sunlight requirements, temperature and water requirements of different types of plants, as well as the fertilizer suitable for potted plants. It discusses pruning and the fruitfulness of fruiting plants growing in containers. The brochure also lists fruit crops which can be grown in containers as follows:

Avocado Banana Barbados Cherry Capulin Carissa Carambola Cocoplum Cattley Guava Ceylon Gooseberry Coffee Grumichama

Guava

Imbe Jaboticaba Kei Apple Limeberry Miracle Fruit Monstera Naranjilla Papaya Passion Fruit Pineapple Pitomba

Surinam Cherry Calamondin Key Lime Kumquat Lemon Limequat Tahiti Lime Blackberry Blueberry Fig

Strawberry

Bert had a great number of slides showing a variety of different containers and plants growing in them. Most of the slides showed ornamentals growing in various sized pots, but everything from flowering plants, herbs, vegetables and fruiting trees can be grown in pots of various sizes.

The first slide showed styrofoam containers in small sizes which are excellent for starting plants. They are very economical but have a relatively shrot life compared to the black plastic pots and ceramic pots.

She showed us some pictures of window boxes and hanging baskets which are good for flowering plants, herbs, some vegetables and strawberries, but are hardly suitable for growing trees. She also had slides of home made pots made of concrete poured in a mold or molded over a form, which makes a very heavy, long lasting pot. Peat moss can be added to the concrete mixture to lighten the weight and also to give a different appearance to the surface. Home made concrete pots should be allowed to age in the weather to leach out the alkaline component of the concrete before plants are placed inside.

She also had slides of whiskey barrels cut in half to be used as pots, and they do make very attractive containers in the landscape. The disadvantage is that they don't tend to weather well. The steel hoops that hold them together tend to rust and the wood, if it's setting on the ground, tends to rot and get termite eaten. If one wishes to use wooden half barrels, one should paint the iron hoops with Rustoleum and apply a wood preservative to the outside of the wood and set the barrel up off the ground on blocks. Also be aware that the barrel should be provided with several drainage holes. Before adding a potting soil to the pot, Bert suggests providing a couple inches of gravel, plastic screening and use a good potting soil.

The heavy plastic barrels that they ship fruit in, olives, peppers, that kind of thing, make a much more long lasting container than the wooden ones. The plastic barrels cut in half and provided with drainage holes are much more economical than the wooden barrels and cost anywhere from \$2.00 to \$5.00 when you can find them.

Bert had several slides of the half barrels planted with vegetables, bushes and small trees. They are extremely excellent for fig trees, blueberries and other fruiting

trees of a similar size, but one needs to put them where they intend to stay before filling with soil because they are very heavy and without a hand truck and a couple of extra hands cannot be moved.

Another advantage of these large pots is that the soil level is raised up where it's easier to work with than with trees planted in the ground.

Another good container that is exceptionally cheap is the discarded styrofoam ice chest. They come in a variety of sizes and when they have been mishandled and no longer usable as an ice chest, holes can be cut in the bottom and they will last several years as containers for vegetables, herbs and bushes.

AUGUST PLANT RAFFLE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Banana .	Heath	Susan Reed
Pineapple	11	?
Passion Fruit	11	?
Papaya	11	Jocarol Smith
Roselle Jam	**	?
Surinam Cherry	**	Susan McAveety
Rangoon Creeper	11	Mary Driver
Eugenia Confusa	11	?
Mango Atafio	Paul Branesky	Elsa Soto
Jar Tomatoes	Polly Shewfelt	?
Pasaflora Quadrangularis (4)	Angelo Montagino	?
Cherimoya	Sherman Dorn	?
Tabebuoa Ipe (pink)	B. Reddicliffe	Marv Hymes
Wonder berry	11	?
Poke berry	11	?
Pride of Barbados (3)	Jim Stout	?
Bilberaia Bromeliad	Judith Hall	?
Guava	Pat McGauley	Jocarol Smith
Papaya	Weekley	Susan McAveety
Malaysian Dracaena	J. Cimafranca	?
Philippine violet (3)	-11	?
Blueberry (5)	Charles Novak	?
1 gal. bag germinating mix	11	•
Surinam Cherry	Sal Russo	,
Kei Apple (2)	II	.
Papaya	George Riegler	?
Annona grafted	11	9
Cold hardy avocado	Lee	I Cimafaanaa
Loquat	11	J. Cimafranca
Roselle (2)	11	Voima Dialian
Candle bush	11	Verna Dickey
Candle bush (3)	II Doorboom	?
Banana Pysang Rajd	V. Peyton	• 2
Banana - ornamental		Staci Reed
Aloe Vera	11	2
Aloe Vera		• ?
3 papaya pots	Mary Driver	Verna Dickey
Poinciana tree	?	vertia Dickey

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Aug-Sept 2000 by PAUL ZMODA

From time to time I write about pome fruit and stone fruit. These two groupings refer to fruits of plants in the Rose family, Rosaceae. This botanical family is huge, containing many edible fruits with which we are familiar, such as: strawberries, apples and rosehips (the fruit of the rose bush).

Pome or stone? That is the question. To place one of these fruits in either category, one needs to examine the seed arrangement. With a specimen held stem end up, cut it on a horizontal plane - through its equator so to speak. Do you find a ring of seeds? These are the pome fruits. Included in this group are pears, quinces, apples, medlars, hawthornes and others.

Should your fruit enclose a single very hard seed, it is most likely an appropriately named stone fruit. Examples are: nectarines, cherries, apricots, plums, peaches, etc.

Both categories have similar five-petalled flowers and frequently, serrated leaf edges.

We had some tasty natal queen pineaples this year. We discouraged raccoons from getting them before us by spraying cheap, hot pepper sauce around the plants every few days.

Our "moon and stars" watermelons really turned out well. The largest weighed in at 38 pounds and was sweet and juicy.

Wild mushrooms are making their expected summer showing. We dehydrated these selected boletes for later use. Italians call them cepes; Alessi's imports dried ones that taste very similar.

I gave our 8 year old tamarind tree a good dose of super phosphate earlier in the year and this week (8/8) I noted its first flowers. They resemble tiny orchids in yellow and shades of brown.

New plantings: kwaimuks, malabar chestnut, noni, pimientos, eggplants, tomatoes and cucumbers.

TASTING TABLE: AUGUST 2000

Novak: Apple cake, Muscadine upside-down cake, Passion fruit jam & crackers, Juice Lee: Vegetable stir fry & noodles, Assorted nut breads, Fresh rare fruit tray. Pear nectar

Marge Peyron: Pear crisp

Lillian Smoleny: Fresh pineapple

Pat Jean: Walnut cookies

Stark: Limeade

Steven Branesky: Durian wafers Pat McGauley: Fresh Papaya

Thom Scott: Pineapple chunks Vern Reddicliffe: Snickers cake

Nancy McCormick: Assorted muffins

Amyot: Strawberry rollup with cream cheese Polly Shewfelt: Presidential dessert Paul Zmoda: Moon & Stars watermelon Rose Terenzi: Strawberry cheesecake Myren Branesky: Jackfruit buttered cookies Paul Branesky: Tropical fruit Ice cream Musgraves: Banana pecan oatmeal cookies Beth Reddicliffe: Cherry Streusel Supreme

THANKS to all who contribute to the tasting table. Each person who donates to the tasting table may receive a ticket for the plant exchange.

BEMIS' LEGACY

by Art Hedstrand

Some members expressed interest in obtaining budwood from Bemis Gordon's collection. Here is the problem: very few trees are tagged at this time. Faye said I could look through his record books sometime in the future when she felt up to it; that's understandable. I do not know whether he made location maps of plantings or updated them when trees died.

Two years ago I asked Bemis about his pear research. He said <u>none</u> of them were worthwhile. He showed me the two best or acceptabel ones. One had to be picked at precisely the right time to allow it to ripen. The other had some fault which I forget. Bemis gave me a sample of each: the precise ripening one was umimpressive; the faulty one was good! I don't know the names or location of them.

Shortly after Bemis' passing, my son Allan and I swingbladed into his pear planting in an attempt to identify cultivars. I was there primarily to taste test. Allan has several pear cultivars and a keen sense of observation. The LeConte usually has no calyx; the Carnes is apple shaped. The trees had few fruit to evaluate and none really ripe. I ought to go back & check them again but I don't relish another batch of chiggers. Allan tentatively identified Carnes & LeConte. One tree was tagged 'Suwanee' but the few fruit weren't ripe.

There's a fine Baldwin at Bemis' upper daylily circle. I don't know why he didn't mention it to me - Baldwin is a fine dessert pear. There's an unknown at the shed which dropped all its few fruit at one time. I thought it quite good, similar to Baldwin in creamy mellowness. The shape is similar to Baldwin but the stem is thicker just above the fruit.

There are a couple of Orients which are loaded but they rot readily on the tree.

There are several columnar Asian pears but only two had a couple of fruit: Kosui and Shinseiki. The former was relished by us - sort of spicy sweet. The Shinseiki was more acid and less flavorful.

You have to try cultivars in your area. This is what Bemis Gordon did. He was a

plant explorer par excellence. Unfortunately central Florida is pushing the envelope for pears too far south.

Just because Bemis has a pear collection doesn't mean the whole collection is worth perpetuating. I once asked Bemis why he didn't write a book. He answered "Let them figure it out themselves." At first blush that sounds callous, but what he intended was "you can read books, you can follow experts around, however the fun is in the doing" - that was his point.

We all procrastinate - I had been intending to visit Bemis for the past 2 years but never got a 'round tuit'. If you know a knowledgeable old plant person, go visit him and learn which cultivars perform well, and especially which bomb out. If you're not up to that, recommend any old expert to me and I'll write up a yard visit. We need to communicate more - the newsletter is specifically for that. If you don't like to write, contact me and I'll write for you.

The purpose of a fruit club is to share information: which varieties do well and which repeatedly fail. This is not to say don't experiment: you may have a method which produces success and the other gardener may have a brown thumb!

I personally was very disappointed when I trudged through the Bemis jungle. Very few apple trees; no fruit. No plums except a couple of half dead potted specimens in the bamboo area - no fruit. He was looking for a plum rootstock which had longevity. If that's what the plum thickets are, he may have that, but they root sprout like crazy. The fruit is refreshing.

Bemis' favorite north Florida apple rootstock may be a good stock but it root suckers like crazy and is thorny to boot.

Bemis' grapes had all escaped into the trees: virtually no fruit. Grapes must be controlled on a trellis and heavily pruned for good production.

There's a row of nice feijoa bushes but I haven't checked them out as I don't care for the fruit. It's a great landscape plant and the flower petals are delicious.

I don't know where Bemis stood on mayhaws. This is a thorny, native, southern U.S. bush with acidic fruit which is touted for its excellent jelly. I don't eat sugar and I only like fruit that you can eat out of hand so this is of no interest.

There are about 4 small persimmons, a couple of which have fruit which I hope to save for Faye - she loves persimmons. Also a (late) Ormond. About 25 years ago he had several nice trees near the big daylily trench - several with misidentified names. He had Korean, Ormond, Sheng, Hanagoshu, Gionbo and Triumph. He lost all of them due to borers. The damage was not in the roots, but up in dead limbs which Bemis didn't prune. You must prune dead limbs or the borers will take over.

There are some large loquats which I procrastinated in taste testing in the past couple of years. Years ago I tried them and they were good size but not impressive. There's also a white mulberry and a red

mulberry which I haven't evaluated.
Mulberries are highly variable - I
tried many around the Brooksville area
this spring; some winners, lots of
losers.

Bemis has 22 avocado trees which I just evaluated. A few are not bearing this year. He had told me he had the Topa Topa, but in March he told Allan he had 4 cultivars. Two trees have green-skinned fruit, the rest black. The shape ranges from pear shape to long necked. One or two or quite small. I rated 4 trees as good. I just checked 2 of those and they had heavy duty rot after 3 days. It seems as if the fruit keeps better on the ground under the tree than in a cardboard flat or even in the fridge. In the fridge they also rot, but it takes longer!

CONDOLENCES...

It is with deep regret and heartfelt sorrow that we offer our condolences to the families of two long time members who passed away recently.

Frank Pupello, a member for over 10 years, died Friday, August 4 at St Joseph Hospital. He is survived by his wife Joy, a son Dennis, a stepson Derek, two daughters, Linda and Sandra, a stepdaughter Tammy, and a brother Tony, to all of whom we offer our condolences.

Bemis Gordon of Spring Lake, a member since our first meeting in December 1978, died Saturday August 5 He is survived by his wife Faye, a daughter Marianna, a brother Eugene and a sister Virginia, to whom we offer our deepest condolences.

Both of these members were loved by those in the club who knew them, and will be sorely missed, not only as friends, but also for the contributions they made to our group. May they both be in our prayers.

Members Corner

WANTED: Fruit/budwood/seeds of hardy or miniature avocados. Fruit/budwood of unusual Orienal or wild persimmons. Art Hedstrand, 33456 Cortez Blvd, Ridge Manor FL 33523. (no phone)



The Value of Organic Matter

Organic matter is the most important material we can add to the sandy soils common in Florida. A good soil in the mid section of our country can contain more than 5% organic matter while our sandy soils often have less than 1% organic matter.

Organic matter or humus in our soils has a tendency to bind loose sandy soils while it will make stiff clay soils more open and porus. Organic matter increases the water holding capacity of sands. It also makes the soil into a more favorable environment for the growth of plant roots and for the growth of beneficial soil microorganisms., it often supplies certain catalytic agents and growth substances beneficial for plant growth.

Decomposing organic matter renders inorganic elements from our fertilizers more readily available to plants and thus increases soil fertility and the availability of essential elements such as iron, zinc, manganese and others.

Organic matter and clay greatly improve the buffering ability of the soil and thus makes it less likely to damage our plants by the excessive use of artificial fertilizers or by the inadvertent addition of some toxic material to the soil.

On an equal weight basis, humis far exceeds clay in its ability to combine and hold exchangeable bases. Since organic colloids are extremely active, an increase of 1% of organic matter can double the exchange capacity of a soil. The base exchange capacity of a soil is the ability of a soil to absorb and retain a group of elements such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, copper and zinc.. These are known as exchangeable bases.

Organic matter decomposes rapidly and completely in Florida soils. Therefore, we must continually add organic matter to our soils.

Another value of organic matter is that vegetables, flowers, fruit, and landscape plants growing in soils that are high inorganic matter or that are covered with a heavy perminant mulch are less damaged by nematodes than are those growing in soils of low organic content.

Organic mattere in the soil seems to contribute to the reduction of nematodes in several ways. Decomposinng organic matter causes a great increase of soil microbes, fungi, bacteria, and actinomycetes. These are followed by a great number of organisms that feed upon them, including many predatory nematodes, mites, insects and fungi that capture and feed upon parasitic nematodes.

Also the decomposition of some organic materials and green manures have been shown to generate other chemicals that are directly toxic to nematodes and thus decrease their numbers.

(This article was written and kindly given to us for our Newsletter by Lewis Maxwell.)

RECIPE: Lemon & Apple Tart

Bake the tart on a preheated baking sheet to ensure that the bottom of the pastry shell is crisp, not soggy.

8 in. uncooked pastry shell in its pan filling 2 large eggs 1/2 cup superfine sugar zest & juice of 1 lemon 2 Tbsp butter, melted 1 large tart apple

Place a baking sheet in the oven and preheat oven to 400° F.

Make filling: put eggs and sugar in a bowl with the lemon zest and juice. Stir until evenly blended. Add the melted butter and stir to mix.

Peel and core the apple, then coarsely grate it directly into the bowl with the filling mixture. Stir well, then pour the filling into the pastry shell.

Set the tart in its pan on the hot baking sheet and bake for 40 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown and filling is slightly risen and browned. If the tart browns too much before the end of the cooking time, cover it loosely with foil and continue to cook.

Serve warm.

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