



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2001

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

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PRESIDENT: BOB HEATH

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

NEXT MEETING: FEB. 11

MEETING PLACE: UNIV. OF SOUTH FLORIDA, Bldg BSF 100

PROGRAM: GRACELYN ADAMS, DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY CANNERY, WILL BE ADDRESSING US at this meeting, sharing her knowledge of food & food processing. The cannery, a small building owned by Hillsborough County, provides space and equipment for groups and individuals to process produce through canning, which in this case uses jars instead of cans. The cannery is also developing a community garden behind the building and Gracelyn, a master gardener, is also in charge of this. Our own Polly Shewfelt of the Gleaners is a board member at the cannery and is closely involved in the relationship between the gleaners and the canners. This should be an interesting program and very informative for those who have fruit & vegetables to preserve. We will also enjoy our monthly raffle & tasting table.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jan-Feb 2001

by PAUL ZMODA

It's pruning time for deciduous fruit trees. After most of the leaves have fallen you can cut back branches, twigs and vines that don't belong in your well-managed orchard. Pruning is a necessary function which ensures not only the health of your trees, but promotes larger fruit & more reliable cropping. Each type of fruiting tree and vine, be they stone fruits, pome fruits, grape vines or nut trees, requires an approach to pruning in important, yet differing ways. If you are hesitant of cutting your prized specimens, don't be afraid to ask our many knowledgeable members how to prune. There are many good books available which address this topic; most general fruit growing books have lots of advice on the subject. No matter what, you must prune your deciduous fruit plants or risk having unmanageable, tangled growth and small crops of unhealthy fruit.

When winter approaches, I make sure to move indoors my most valued and rare potted specimens. Then I can enjoy the cold weather. Those cold snaps may be uncomfortable to us, but some fruiting trees require low temperatures to begin the fruiting process. Recognize also, that quite a few trees that we grow here will tolerate much more cold than we are liable to experience. I've never heard of any pomegranates, feijoas, kumquats, grapes, olives, Rio Grande cherries, mulberries and many others, when dormant, being injured by our local winters.

New plantings: Chinese and Italian vegetables and herbs.

The following items were left at the CITRUS CELEBRATION:

Small Metal Bucket

Knife

Round metal tray

"Adolf Grimal Estate"

There is a one of a kind tropical fruit collection consisting of three acres on Big Pine Key called the "Adolph Grimal Estate". Mr. Adolph Grimal spent a good part of his life, over 40 years, building this rare farm and tropical fruit collection. He also spent a good portion of his life savings bringing good soil from the mainland down to the property to supplement the existing meager soil. Since the Keys are dry and don't get the rain that the rest of the state gets, Ha!Ha!, Mr. Grimal also spent years designing and digging 2 large cisterns and 4 ponds to catch and hold water to be used to irrigate these rare trees and plants.

After a lifetime of enjoying the fruits of his hard labor, Mr. Grimal passed away several years ago. The property was left to his relatives in Michigan. They tried to manage it from that far away, but found that it was not working out, so they contacted Larry Shatzer who, with his wife Sherry, owns Our Kids Tropicals, Nursery & Landscape in Winter Garden, about purchasing it. Larry contacted a friend who purchased the property with the intention of restoring it to the beautiful garden it previously was, in honor of Adolph Grimal. They have been working since a couple summers ago restoring and cleaning it up.

Hurricane "George" left his nasty mark on the property by overturning trees and making a real mess of things.

Clean-Up at the Adolph Grimal Estate

The RFCI has received the following note from Larry Shatzer:

We are planning an annual clean up party on Feb. 16th - 18th and are inviting anyone interested in coming to join this fun weekend working toward the restoration of the Adolph Grimal property. There will be areas on the property to camp if you would like to camp for free, or if you would prefer to stay in a motel, we can give you the names of some nearby. We are going to try to get some discounted rates for those who would like to stay elsewhere. Make your reservation early as the Keys resorts fill up quickly. We have decided to hold this year's clean up in February due to the fact that it is cooler and not as hot as the one we held in May. Also last year it was close to Mother's Day and Graduation and a lot of people could not come that had expressed a desire to attend. We achieved most of the heavy clean up, but a property of such magnitude requires a lot of attention, as the estate was neglected for many years. We will be having a cookout and clean up "party" on Sat. night, so plan to come down and enjoy a fun weekend in a beautiful place with a significant place in the Tropical Fruit world! This is an excellent opportunity to meet other tropical fruit growers from around the state. Please call to confirm if you plan to be a part of this weekend in February, so we can plan for space and food for Sat. night. We will be there the 15th - 18th for anyone who would like to come down early.

We also would welcome any donations of fruit trees and/or rare exotic plants from your collections to add to this wonderful place. Some of the plants that we are looking for are: varieties of Mamey Sapote, rare Eugenias, Jaboticaba relatives like cambuca, new carambola varieties, extra large Key limes, Sweet Lemons, Pummelos and other unique tropical fruiting plants. You too can have a signature on this historical collection. We are planning to display name tags of common and botanical names along with the person's name who donated the plants. Any fertilizer or nutrients like milorganite, Ironite, etc. are welcomed. Feel free to bring any of your hand tools to use as well.

Our overall plan is to have this as a unique botanical garden open to the public, with group tours available, as time will permit. Any help you can give to help this unique collection and make Adolph Grimal's dream a reality will be appreciated.

Any contacts concerning confirmation of attendance or any other questions - please call 407-877-6883 or email at Ourkidstro@aol.com.

Thank you and we look forward to sharing this experience with you in Feb. 2001.

Larry & Sherry Shatzer & John Antony, Owners, Adolph Grimal Estate

DIRECTIONS

Once you have driven onto Big Pine Key you will drive a few miles through native key deer habitat - mangroves - then you will start coming into the business section of the island, & you will go to about the 4th street on the right- Cunningham Lane. The Big Pine Motel will be on the right corner of the street - turn right at the Big Pine Motel on Cunningham Lane and drive 2 blocks to the last fenced property on the left, 258 Cunningham Lane.

If you have never been to the Florida Keys this will be a good chance to experience the beauty of the Keys - Big Pine Key is only 3 miles from Key West. There are native key deer and iguanas on our property & throughout Big Pine Key. Be sure you watch the speed limit signs, as this is key deer territory. A local beach at Bahia Honda State Park is within a 10 minute ride. Groups of club members are also welcome - let's make it a PARTY!!

Neophyte Errors #1

by Sherman Dorn

I am a relative newcomer to gardening (6 or 7 years), to Florida (4 years), and to the RFCI (coming up on one year), and all the articles in the newsletter talk about this success or that interesting variety. It's time for some utterly stupendous failures!

First, I need to talk about the evils of grass. No, not THAT grass, for any aging hippies reading this. I mean turf. I have, for some years, replaced chunks of grass in our quarter-acre suburban yard with various planting. Our first year here, I tore out a bunch of grass and replaced it with a clump of Surinam cherry bushes (okay, so what else is new for a neophyte rare fruit aficionado?) and just left them in a mulched bed, surrounded by the remaining turf in that quarter. More recently, I've used the cardboard-and-mulch method of instant grass replacement for Brazos blackberry, Mysore raspberry, Meiwa kumquat and Satsuma mandarin. (We rare fruit "virgins" pick up the lingo pretty quickly). A few weeks ago I decided to transplant poor, sad looking day lilies that I had assumed had suffered from being right alongside our driveway. I dug the trench in another bed, had a pot of water ready to soak the roots, and started digging up the day lilies. What do I find entangled in the roots? Grass roots! I had not realized that our neglected bahia grass had become so tough that it could get to all the nutrients and moisture better than the day lilies. This certainly explains why the Surinam cherries have produced quite poorly (and why the roses in the same bed haven't done much better).

Well, the day lilies are doing much better in their bed, separated from the evil Dr. Grass by a concrete sidewalk. I've now mulched over much more grass near the kumquat and mandarin (no, not next to the plants - I do read the material the extension office folks provide for us at <http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu>). I've even taken a shovel (I have no spade yet) to "cut" a line between my plantings and the grass. But now I wonder how far down grass roots can go, whether they can break through concrete and whether they can strangle us in our beds at night.

I KNEW I never should've read to our lawn that copy of "The Little Rhizome that Could".

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was shirt sleeve weather when I left the house Sunday morning for the Citrus Celebration but Theresa insisted that I take a windbreaker. There was also mist in the air and a little light drizzle at times. After a while the wind began to pick up and the temperature began to fall. I got to the Gardens at U.S.F. about 7:30; by 10:00 I felt like I was freezing to death. We were very busy early in the morning but in the early afternoon the crowd began to diminish, and by 3:00 in the afternoon the few attendees still remaining could hardly be called a crowd. We had quite a bit of citrus left over and a considerable amount of baked goods, all of which was offered to members who were willing to take it.

All in all, so far, this winter has been fairly kind to me. I live in the vicinity of Dale Mabry & Kennedy where temperatures are consistently 5 to 10° higher than where most of our members live. So far I've had leaf damage on bananas and papayas and some of the more tender tropical fruiting plants in certain locations. However, my mango, black sapote, white sapote, carambolas, sapodillas and eggfruit have shown no signs of leaf damage. At this point with only one more month of winter to go, I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

Theresa and I have been seriously collecting fruiting plants for about 20 years and what we find today is that there is almost always fruit to be picked and eaten at almost any time of the year. These days we're eating carambolas, papayas, passion fruit and juicing out several varieties of citrus. Our white sapote is in flower and putting on little fruit. Our early avocado tree is just beginning to break out with flower buds. Our carambola trees have little green fruit and full grown ripe fruit on the trees, which means we'll be eating carambolas for another couple of months. No wonder we're so healthy.

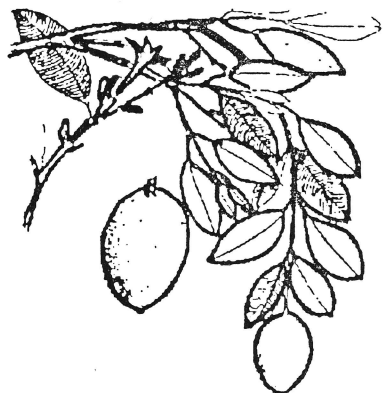
The following is a list of scheduled programs and speakers:

Feb 11	Fruit & Vegetable Canning by Gracelyn Adams
Mar 11	All About Strawberries by Craig Chandler, who works at the Dover Strawberry Research Center
Apr 14 & 15	USF Spring Plant Sale
May 13	Gene Joyner

The following varieties of Pummelo were obtained from the Citrus Arboretum in Lake Alfred, FL. The Paul Branesky family sampled each variety and the following are their comments about each variety.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Comments</u>
NAKON	WHITE	DRY BUT SWEET
SHA TIAN YOU	WHITE	SWEET, ALL RIGHT
PANDAN	PINK	SEMI SWEET, VERY DRY
RED SHADDOCK	RED	SIMI SWEET, DRY
CHINESE	WHITE	JUICY, TART
PUMELO	WHITE	DRY, NO TASTE
SIAMESE	WHITE	SEMI SWEET, JUICY
LARGE PINK	PINK	NOT SWEET BUT HAS A GOOD TASTE
JAVA RED	BLOOD RED	JUICY BUT SOUR
HURADO BUTAN	PINK	SWEET, JUICY, EXCELENT
LIANG PING YAU	PINK	DRY SEMI SWEET
SIAMESE SWEET	WHITE	JUICY, SEMISWEET
KAO PHUANK	WHITE	JUICY, NOT SWEET
HYBRID PINK	PINK	SEMI SWEET, DRY
C. GRANDIS	WHITE	SWEET, JUICY
SWEET SIAM	PINK	SWEET, JUICY
OSCEOLA	WHITE	SEMI SWEET, FAIRLY WET

A GUIDE TO TROPICAL FRUIT TREES & VINES (continued from last month)

25. *Hancornia speciosa* - Mangaba

A medium-sized tree native to Brazil. Fruit is the size of a plum, red with thin skin and sweet flesh with one seed. Pulp is eaten fresh, made into sherbets, jellies, and wine. Plants are started from seed.

26. *Tabernaemontana elegans* - Toad tree

Small evergreen tree or shrub from India. Leaves are dark green and ribbed. Fruit resembles a toad and has carrot-like flavor. Cuttings are used to propagate plants.

FAMILY - AQUIFOLIACEAE27. *Ilex paraguariensis* - Paraguay tea, Mate tea

Shrub or small tree to 20 feet, native of Brazil. Leaves to 5 inches long. Flowers in axil of leaves. Fruit is red or reddish-brown and less than 1/4 inch in diameter. Dried leaves are used for tea. New plants are started from seeds or cuttings.

FAMILY - ARACEAE28. *Monstera deliciosa* - Ceriman

Evergreen vine from Mexico used as an ornamental and also for its fruit. Leaves measure 2 feet or more in length, are leathery and perforated. Flowers resemble large calla lilies, white in color and waxy. Fruit is the size and shape of an ear of corn which matures in late summer or fall - some 14 months after blooming. Fruits are edible, having a pineapple-banana odor and a sweetish taste. New plants are started from seed.

FAMILY - ARAUCARIACEAE29. *Araucaria araucana* - Monkey puzzle

This Chilean tree attains a height of 30 or more feet. Its evergreen tiered branches are weirdly shaped, thus giving the tree its common name. It is quite cold hardy and may be grown from North Carolina southward. Leaves are leathery, glossy and sharp-pointed. The green, pineapple-sized pod contains many seeds that are boiled and used for food in Chile. Plants are started from seed.

30. *Araucaria bidwillii* - Bunya-Bunya pine

This Australian relative of the Monkey Puzzle grows to a height of 100 feet or more. Leaves are sharp-pointed - similar to Araucana. Native aborigines use the edible nuts for food. New plants are started from seed.

FAMILY - BIGNONIACEAE31. *Parmentiera edulis* - Guajilote

Spiny, Mexican tree to 30 feet tall. Oval leaves are winged - similar to citrus. Greenish-yellow flowers are about 2-1/2 inches long. Its yellowish-green fruit is 4-6 inches long and 1-2 inches wide - resembling a cucumber. It is eaten raw or cooked, but the quality is poor.

FAMILY - BIXACEAE32. *Bixa orellana* - Annatto, Achlote, Lipstick tree

Small tropical American tree to 20 feet. Leaves to 7 inches long. Pink or rose white flowers are 2 inches across. Reddish-brown capsule, about 2 inches long, is covered with soft spines. Seeds are coated with a thin, waxy, bright red finger-like structures (aril). Dye from these seed arils is used for food coloring. Red dye from seeds is used for paint by Indian tribes. Plants are propagated from seed and by cuttings.

FAMILY - BOMBACACEAE33. *Ceiba pentandra* - Kapok

Large deciduous tree to 100 feet or more from the East Indies. Base of trunk spreading with spines along the entire trunk. Leaves to 6 inches long. Flowers appear before leaves with yellowish or white petals. Cotton-like fiber surrounds seeds. Young leaves are cooked and eaten. Plants are started from seed.

34. *Durio zibethinus* - Durian

Large tree from southeast Asia. Leaves to 7 inches long. Flowers yellowish to greenish-white to 2-1/2 inches long. The greenish-yellow fruit with hard spiked rind is about 10 inches long with white flesh and strong aromatic odor. Aril is eaten fresh, preserved or dried. Seeds are boiled or roasted. Plants are started from seed.

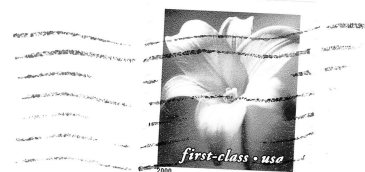
35. *Pachira aquatica* - Gulana chestnut

Central American tree ranging from 15 to 60 feet, depending on growing conditions. Compound, palm-shaped leaves may be 12 inches long. Flowers are greenish or yellowish-white with many white filaments, purplish above and red anthers, giving the entire flower a shaving brush appearance. Fruit is a brown, woody 5-celled capsule up to 12 inches long and 5 inches wide. Fruit can be eaten raw, but is usually roasted - tasting somewhat like chestnuts. Young leaves and flowers are cooked and used as a vegetable. Plants are propagated from seed or cuttings.

36. *Quararibea cordata* - South American sapote

Medium to large evergreen tree, native to South America. Leaves are dark green, roundish and nearly 2 feet wide. the large fruit has thick skin and the sweet fibrous flesh is orange-yellow, containing 2 to 5 seeds. Fruit is eaten raw. New plants are propagated from seed.

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