



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2001

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: MAR 11

MEETING PLACE: UNIV OF SO. FLORIDA, BLDG BSF 100

PROGRAM: WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD THIS MONTH TO A VISIT BY CRAIG CHANDLER, WHO WORKS AT THE DOVER STRAWBERRY RESEARCH CENTER. HIS PRESENTATION "ALL ABOUT STRAWBERRIES" SHOULD BE VERY INTERESTING & INFORMATIVE. APPARENTLY A LOT OF RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED ON STRAWBERRIES IN FLORIDA, BOTH FOR COMMERCIAL PLANTING & FOR HOME GARDENS. PERSONALLY, I HAVE HAD POOR SUCCESS WITH GROWING STRAWBERRIES & WILL WELCOME A LITTLE INFUSION OF KNOW-HOW. ALSO WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO OUR GREAT PLANT RAFFLE & EXCEPTIONAL TASTING TABLE.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Feb-Mar 2001

by PAUL ZMODA

Three-month-old pommelos taste great! A 'Sweet Siam' pommelo that I picked on October 24, 2000 was eaten in late January 2001. It was juicy, sweet and delicious after aging it for 3 months. I've heard that this improves the fruit, but I'd like to compare a freshly picked pommelo next year to see for myself if there is any noticeable difference. This wonderful pommelo was from a special tree that I budded over 4 years ago. The scions were given to me by a good friend and expert fruit grower, Mr. Robert Stone. "Bob", as he was known to many, was a very generous and knowledgeable member of the Rare Fruit Council in Sarasota/Manatee Counties. Bob passed away in February and will be missed terribly by those who knew him. He will live on, however, in my "memorial" pommelo tree.

I top-worked (grafted) some 'Redland' and 'Dade' white sapotes onto my newly sprouting 'Homestead' tree which is about 15 feet tall now. The budwood was donated by Charles Novak. For insurance (should those grafts fail) I also grafted onto my recently air layered trees, in case I need these cultivars later to try again. This maneuver is what I call "parking". You park budwood to store or hold it, alive, on one tree while waiting for suitable rootstock(s) to become available later on.

Our peaches are loaded with blossoms. This year promises to be a good one for the peach crop.

New plantings: Nemaguard peach and water oak.

P.S.: I am researching olive trees and have e-mailed growers in Australia and California. There seems to be no reason why olives (Olea europaea) cannot be successfully grown here. Does anyone know of any olives fruiting in Florida? Let me know, please. Our e-mail address is: LIR1123@AOL.com

CANNING by Gracelyn Adams

Gracelyn Adams works at the Hillsborough Community Cannery, a joint project of Hillsborough County and Bethel Mission. The County owns the building and all the equipment, and Bethel Mission pays the operator, Gracelyn Adams. The cannery is located in Wimauma where it has been since 1988. It offers a variety of services, one of which is the methods involved in preserving food in jars. Gracelyn brought a variety of preserved foods in different sized bottles, fruit such as mangos & pears, vegetables such as peas & corn.

The needy may use the facilities for free; others have to pay 2½¢ a half pint, 5¢ a pint or 10¢ a quart for processing, all of which seems to be a good deal. They have pea shellers which are available at \$1.00 an hour and bulk food facilities for preparing larger quantities of food. They also provide know-how in freezing & drying, food preparation instructions & also cooking lessons. They are starting a community garden to teach people to grow their own food. They also work with the gleaners (our Polly Shewfelt) which distributes excess produce to needy people. The cannery also has a commercial juicer which is available to the public for juicing citrus in large quantities. With this juicer you wash the fruit & toss it in; juice comes out one side & the pump and skin comes out the other. They also have facilities to pasteurize the juice which will preserve it almost indefinitely.

To give out to those interested in canning, Gracelyn had several pamphlets & books that help in understanding canning & the process of preserving produce in jars.

She offered a brief history of canning. Before the process of canning became available, people dried foods, smoked meats & fish and salted meat to preserve it. Actual canning began during the 18th century in France during the Napoleonic Wars. In 1795 a French scientist recommended the use of jars to store food by sterilizing the food & jars and sealing them against outside air to keep out bacteria, molds & fungus. This is the principal used today in canning. The process was a trial & error method because they were not aware of the bacteria, molds & fungus that cause spoiling of food.

But in the early 1800s preserving food in jars by heating & sealing became a universal procedure. It wasn't til 1860 that Louis Pasteur explained the secret; hence the name pasteurization. Gracelyn also had a variety of older jars & canning containers with different methods of sealing the jars and also mentioned the use of parafin wax as a sealant.

It was the Kerr Co. that developed present canning jars which are so popular among home canners, using a flat plate with an embedded rubber ring and a screw cap to hold it in place until it seals. On a commercial level the rubber ring is embedded in the screw cap as a one-piece assembly which we are all familiar with when we open food preserved in jars.

Gracelyn had a pamphlet on canning tomatoes, which was the first thing she learned to can. She had a lot of tomatoes available at that time and made a lot of tomato sauce which she preserved by canning and freezing, and used a lot of the sauce in feeding her kids. She had some tomato recipes and several marmalade recipes available as handouts to the members.

Gracelyn explained the major points in canning: washing & sterilizing the jars & lids in boiling water, boiling the product and adding it hot into the hot jars and sealing with the lids & screw caps. Alternately, cooling the product & jars and adding the product to the jars, screwing on the lids loosely & sterilizing the jars & product in a pressure canner. Gracelyn advised that hygiene is very critical in canning. Fruit & vegetables should be very clean and it is important that one be clean and wear clean clothes. Likewise, cutting boards, counter surfaces and tools must be sterile. She indicated that there are many bacteria, such as E coli, molds & fungus, that may be in existence on the food. These are not normally a problem in properly preserved food unless an air leak exists in the lid or a crack in the glass. The lids provided with a canning jar are so designed to indicate a leak. As the produce cools, the lid crickets down so the pressure in the center of the lid produces no reaction. If the container leaks, pressure at the center of the lid will produce a snap as the lid crickets downward under finger

pressure. If the container is not sealed, the food should be discarded as it is unhealthy, even dangerous to ingest. Go outside & bury it. Also, the top rim of the glass jar should be cleaned well before the lid is added & screwed down.

Gracelyn gave us several reasons why we should can food: at harvest time we frequently have much more produce than we can eat at that time, so canning, freezing or drying offers a means of preserving the food til it can be eaten later, & in an emergency you'll always

have some canned goods available. Also the food that you can yourself is frequently more nutritious and tastes better than what you purchase in the stores. Also, your home canned food is without the preservatives and other chemicals that are added to commercially canned food. Likewise, the quality of ingredients added to the product in home canning is always of the highest quality, which is more than can be said about commercially canned products. And last but not the least of which is the saving in the pocketbook and the sense of pride you get from showing people what you produced and the gratification when you are able to give to a friend the products of your garden and labors.

FEBRUARY PLANT RAFFLE

PLANT NAME	DONOR	WINNER
Sea Grape	Heath	Janet Conard
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Rose Apple	"	Verna Dickey
Aloe Vera	"	?
Eugenia Confusa	"	?
Fig	"	Judy Cimafranca
Loquat	"	?
Nopales Cactus	"	Joseph Divan
Roselle Jam	"	Kent Helmick
Mushroom Culture	Zmoda	Ed Musgrave
Spider Cactus	Branesky	?
Roselle Concentrate	Lee	?
Papaya Preserves	"	L. Long
Mustard Greens	"	?
Canna Lilly	"	?
Cassia Tree	"	?
Orchid Tree	"	Judy Cimafranca
Kiwi Fruit	"	Lillian Smoleny
Garcinia Xarthocyails	Charles Novak	Maryse Lamon
Loquat	"	?
"	"	?
Avocado	"	?
Fruit Basket	Lee	?
Bag Lee Tangerine	Linda Novak	?
Giant Passion Fruit	George Riegler	?
Chayote (White)	"	T. Scott
Carambola Jelly	Janet Conard	?
White Sapote	"	?
Honey Mustard	Linda Long	T. Scott
Surinam Cherry	Don Long	Mann
Lemon Grass	"	?
Chinese Plum	Maryse Lamon	?
Orchid Tree	"	B. Reddiccliffe

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

March is our time for changing of the guard. After our March meeting we will inaugurate a new Board of Directors and new officers. I will step down as president and someone will take my place, a process as old as time itself. We are looking forward to new blood, new ideas and new adventures. Our next year should be one where we broaden our scope, make new friends and associations and extend our cooperation with other rare fruit organizations, the University of South Florida and the Florida State Fair, and increase the influence of our website. Let this be a legacy for our new president and board of directors.

Perhaps it is time for our club to get involved in tissue culture, naked cell research and perhaps, the publishing of something even more involved than a cookbook (which, incidentally, was a very successful endeavor). All we need is a grant to finance such endeavors.

All of our board members and potential board members need to be at the March meeting. There will be a board meeting after the regular meeting to elect officers.

Following is a list of scheduled programs and speakers:

Mar 11	Craig Chandler - "All About Strawberries"
Mar 24 & 25	University of Tampa Greenfest (We are not involved in this function but it is an interesting affair and well worth attending)
Apr 8	An educational meeting to learn grafting, air layering & hand pollinating by our club experts
Apr 14 & 15	USF Spring Plant Sale (Easter Egg Hunt for kids on the 15th, which is Easter)
May 13	Gene Joyner
Jun 10	Bus trip to Echo in Ft Myers

Neophyte Errors #2

by Sherman Dorn

Your upwardly-failing rare fruit friend here, with his conviction that it's time for us gardening failures to have some space in the newsletter! This month I need to talk about Zombie Rootstocks or "Where Did That Thing Come From?"

The story starts with our bearded anti-hero buying a suburban home with his lovely spouse in a section of Carrollwood that used to belong to Bearss Farm. There are two Hamlin orange trees on the property, and the one on the south side of the house gives plenty of medium, juicy fruit. The north-side tree, however, gives some thin-skinned juice fruit and some thick-skinned fruit (very tart). Obviously, prior owners let growth from the rootstock become a branch with leaves and fruit. (The same joker was probably the one who let a Chinese tallow tree 10 feet from the foundation grow 40 or 50 feet high.) What to do? We juice the sour oranges the first year and put them to good use. (Frozen in ice cube trays, they make great additions to 7Up, Sprite or similar sodas.)

Then the tree has the audacity to produce MORE sour fruit the next two years. I guess we just encouraged it. In any case, we realize we need to figure out which branches produce the sour oranges. Slowly, through careful observation, record keeping and the ancient art of Finding the Rootstock Branches by Thorn, we figured out which one and cut off the offending hand - uh, branch.

We cannot talk, though, having (I think) produced our own Zombie Rootsock Carambola. Heck, we could've done it more cheaply from seed.

Board of Directors: The listing of candidates for the Board of Directors will be presented at the March meeting. Additional nominations may also be presented from the floor. Directors will be elected at the March meeting by a majority vote of the general membership present and voting, for a one (1) year term. Directors will assume their respective offices immediately after the March meeting. The Board meets monthly or at such times deemed necessary. The Board is responsible for the policies, finances and direction of the Chapter.

Candidates for the Board of Directors:

Paul Branesky	James Lee	Al Jean
Bob Heath	Sally Lee	Pat Jean
Marilyn Weekley	Jon Kolb	Janet Conard
Vera Dickey	Susan McAveety	Beth Reddicliffe
Charles Novak	Sal Russo	Judy Cimafranco
Linda Novak	Thom Scott	Tim Stout

Tasting Table: February 2001

Lees: Jelly rolls, Fresh fruit tray, Roselle juice

Novaks: Loquat upside-down cake, Tropical cheesecake, Tropical fruit juice

Branesky Family: Chicken with green papaya, pepper leaves, ginger, & spices
Fresh strawberries

Rose Terenzi: Orange Cake

Musgraves Escalloped Pineapple

Starks: Lemonade

Lillian Smoleny: Orange Oatmeal Cookies

Sharon Pilot: Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies

Vern Reddicliffe: Strawberry Boston Cake

Shane & Mayra Smith: Valentine Cookies

Janet Conard: Cookies

Manns: Starfruit

Thom Scott: Grapes

Maryse Lamour: Orange Nut Bread

THANKS!! Please continue to donate to the tasting table. It is a very important part of our meetings. Remember to ask for your free plant exchange ticket.

MEMBER'S CORNER:

For sale: Macintosh Performa 6116CD Power PC Computer \$50.00
Several hard drives and CPUs, etc. (IBM compatible) \$50.00
EPSON ES-800C Scanner \$25.00
Charles Novak (813) 754-1399



STATE FAIR EXHIBIT: Our exhibit won Third place again at the Florida State Fair Plant Society Competition. The requirements are: the exhibit be artistically designed to display the species in which the society specializes and the exhibit be maintained at a high standard of quality for the duration of the fair. I want to thank Jon Kolb, Jim & Sally Lee, and Bob Heath for helping Linda and me to set up the exhibit. Also, thank you to all the club members who stayed at the exhibit to talk to the public about growing fruit. Many questions were asked and answered. Charles Novak

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DUES (\$18)
ARE DUE THIS MONTH

Check your mailing label, if there is a RED mark on it, your membership expires at this time. Please pay at the next meeting or be sure to mail your check to the following address before April 1, 2001 (Check payable to RFCI):

RFCI
Charles Novak
2812 North Wilder Road
Plant City, FL 33565-2669

WEBSITE: Be sure to check out our website at: www.rarefruit.org
Also, recommend the website to others. New information is being added regularly. Any suggestions and comments are welcome.
Charles Novak: (813)754-1399 or c.novak@worldnet.att.net

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