



# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2001

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

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PRESIDENT: JAMES LEE

WEBSITE: [www.rarefruit.org](http://www.rarefruit.org) (Charles Novak)

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 PM. (1:00 PM THIS MONTH)

NEXT MEETING: SEPT 9

MEETING PLACE: UNIV. OF SOUTH FLORIDA Bldg BSF100 (THE SEPT. 9 MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE USF HORTICULTURAL GARDENS.)

PROGRAM: On Sunday Sept. 9, we will be meeting at the USF HORTICULTURAL GARDENS for our late summer picnic. This will be the first of what we expect to make an annual affair at the Gardens, which are being transformed into a showcase. We will not have a speaker but we will have our raffle, grilled hamburgers & hot dogs and a covered dish social with grafting & air layering demonstrations. It will also be a working meeting for some of us, measuring and drawing up the area where we will be planting fruiting trees and locating on the plan all the existing trees, some of which will need to be removed, but most of which will remain. We will set up a large tent and a bunch of tables on Saturday. The official start of the meeting will be 1:00, but we will begin cooking at 12:00 and welcoming our members from that time on. Everyone is invited to bring a covered dish if you wish. The fruit of the month is carambolas, as mentioned in the Market Stand by Thom Scott on page 01-63. If you have carambolas available, you might bring a covered dish featuring carambolas.

Three things to note that are important at this meeting: One, the meeting begins at 1:00; two, there will be a shortage of chairs so bring your own chair if you can; three, parking is on the lot across from the entrance. If you are bringing things to be unloaded, you may drive in, unload and then proceed to the parking lot.

## *Tasting Table August 2001*

Janet Conard	Cooked Green Papaya	Vicky Cash	Persian Limes
Al Roberts	Drop Cookies	Peg Mann	Fruit
Ed & Lorraine Walsh	Eggplant Casserole	Maryse Lamour	Cucumbers
Robin Musolino	Mini Banana Muffins	Musgraves	Escalloped Pineapple
Carl Chapman	Black Celeste Figs	Cora Coronel	Bibingka (pastry)
Rose Terenzi	Zucchini Artichoke Pasta Salad	Pat McGauley	Dried tropical fruits
	Blueberry Crumb Cake Squares	Thom Scott	Grapes
Shane & Myra Smith	Pineapple Supreme Cake	Sally Lee	Lemon Snaps
Linda Novak	Muscadine grapes, Kiwi, Banana-Guava Muffins, Pineapple Cake, Juices	Katy Roberts	Yadon Holy Tea

**THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!** to all who donate to our wonderful tasting table. We really need more items for the tasting table. HINT! HINT! Your donation entitles you to a free plant exchange ticket (one per family, please).

I'm sure everyone enjoyed the program last month by Katy Roberts on Edible Landscaping. There is always more we can learn when it comes to growing edibles.

In response to the many requests by club members for another propagation workshop; and, also, requests for more social activities, our September 9 meeting will be a picnic/propagation workshop at the USF Botanical Garden. **The festivities will begin at 1 P.M.** This will be the perfect opportunity for those interested in learning to graft and air layer their own plants (especially new members) to watch and learn from other club members. Club members who would like to demonstrate their grafting/air layering techniques, please come to this event. Also, bring your rootstock and budwood. We look forward to seeing everyone at the picnic/workshop. Please bring a covered dish or dessert, etc. The club will provide the hamburgers, hotdogs, drinks and tableware.

Scheduled Programs:

September 9: 1 P.M. - Picnic/Workshop at the USF Botanical Garden

October 13-14: USF Fall Plant Festival

November 11: Protecting your tropical fruit trees from freezing temperatures

December 9: Holiday Social

I need suggestions from members for program speakers for next year. If you know of someone who could present a program of interest to club members, please let me know.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### AUG-SEP 2001

by PAUL ZMODA

Our first American persimmon "John Rick" ripened by the end of July. This was one of the three premier fruits on this grafted tree which I had been looking forward to for the past four years. They were soft, seeded and good to eat. Fruit size was about 1.5 inches across. The flavor rivals some Oriental persimmons; I declared it a winner. This North American native tree was found in Urbana, Illinois by J.C. McDaniel in 1963. Of note to you entomologists, this tree is once again host to two larvae of the Hickory Horned Devil moth, an interesting and colorful caterpillar which grows to over 6" long and bears four fearsome looking "horns". They eat only the leaves of the tree and are somewhat rare so I leave them alone.

We are eating loads of tasty Surinam cherries and Natal Queen pineapples, as well as the Muscadine grapes that local opossums miss. My favorites are "Ison" "Summit".

I grafted some "Kerman" and "Peters" pistachio nut budwood onto our established Pistacia chinensis seedling tree. I made lots of air layers on my "Sunrise" carambola, while 10 air layers are ready to pot up. Seedling soursops from last year's 8 pound fruit are growing fast!

Phil Brown and I went on a hike to collect pawpaw seeds, fruits and plants. We found dwarf pawpaw, Asimina parviflora, the fruit of which tastes like banana with a pronounced coconut overtone and A. incarna, a smaller species also found growing in the shady understory of a mature, moist woodland. These species can be extremely difficult to transplant as are others in the genus.

By the time you read this, my wife, Luisa, and I will be in Norway visiting friends. I doubt if we will find any fruit seeds to bring back, but we'll look.

New plantings: Avocado, allspice, hibiscus, white ash.

# The Market Stand: CARAMBOLA

by Thom Scott

Preface: It was suggested at the last board meeting that we could spark more participation in the preparation of our tasting table if we featured a seasonal fruit in our newsletter and tasting table. Since I made the suggestion, I got the assignment of writing an article on a fruit that is abundant in our yards or markets for a particular month of the year. I am not an authority on fruit so I won't write about it in that way. I will share what I know about growing it and what others say. I will research the subject and give my thoughts. I will need your help, both by your suggestions and by the examples you bring to our tasting table.

Carambola    Averrhoa carambola    Family: Oxalidaceae

For many of us, myself included, carambolas are now hanging heavy in our trees, large and green. Some are showing a hint of yellow and will soon be ripe. Carambolas can fruit in Florida 2 or more times a year, and may vary year to year, as to the month of ripeness, depending on growing conditions. Consequently, they are heavy bearers of fruit, yielding upwards of 300 lbs. of fruit or more per year, one of the most productive Florida orchard trees.

In my front yard I have a carambola, Sri Kembangan. I planted it from a 3 gallon pot about 5 years ago. Carambola trees are easy to grow. Mine has grown rapidly. I fear that it's outgrowing the allotted space. They are very attractive trees and are widely grown purely as ornamental specimens. Mine has suffered little from the cold here in North Tampa. I have pruned it into a cascading shape with an open center much as one would prune a peach tree. I feed it like a citrus tree and it seems to like an occasional nutritional spraying. It is, perhaps, the favorite of my orchard. I enjoy its beauty, its fragrance and the taste of its fruit. There is no comparison between the rich taste of a freshly picked, ripe carambola and the blandness of a green store bought one - no wonder they were mostly portrayed as a mere table decoration or garnish.

For all that I appreciate about carambolas, they are not the perfect fruit (none are); they have 2 major shortcomings: first, carambolas, although nearly pest free, do attract fruit flies in droves when hanging ripe on the tree. Any cracked/damaged fruit will rapidly be infested with larvae; secondly, carambolas have a moderately high acid content. They contain several organic acids, especially oxalic acid, one of the strongest of organic acids. (Notice the family name: Oxalidaceae.) The acidity is such that the more acid varieties can be used to clean/polish pots and remove rust stains from white cloth. Some sensitive individuals may experience irritation of the urinary tract from oxalic acid. Although this acid is common in the plant and animal kingdoms, in high doses it is poisonous. I'm not trying to alarm you; just make you aware. After all, many things we eat contain poison in small amounts. Caffeine is one example. Oxalic acid has the ability to bind tightly to and form precipitates with many elements, especially such bivalent cations as  $\text{Ca}^{++}$  and  $\text{Fe}^{++}$ . If this reaction occurs in the urinary tract, the nucleus of a kidney stone forms. Some people tolerate oxalic acid and its salts (oxalates) better than others; kidney stone sufferers should restrict their consumption of carambolas; people on calcium or iron supplements should also be advised.

In spite of these drawbacks, I would encourage anyone interested in growing fruit in this area to plant a carambola tree. I have consumed a couple of pounds of carambolas daily for many days in a row with no ill effect. Eaten out of hand is the way I enjoy my carambolas most and I'm too busy to do much otherwise. I've read, however, that there are many culinary uses for carambolas and, indeed, I've sampled many such dishes at our tasting tables. I hope to try many exciting examples of such home made treats at our next meeting.

## AUGUST PLANT RAFFLE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Surinam Cherry	Heath	Robin Musolino
Yellow Passion Fruit	"	Jim Stout
Abacca Pineapple	"	?
Papaya	"	?
Beauty Berry	"	?
Maringa Horseradish Tree	"	?
Aloe	"	?
Chaya Spinach	Heath	?
Papaya	Lee's	?
"	"	Betty Bruder
"	"	?
Banana Orinoco	"	Roberta Harris
"	"	Goldie Selfe
"	"	?
Blackberry	"	Susan Reed
Avocado	"	Carl Chapman
"	"	Roberta Harris
"	"	Marie Ralis
"	Lee	?
White Sapote Seedling	Janet Conard	Robin Musolino
"	"	Ed Musgrave
Surinam Cherry	Ed Musgrave	Joseph Divan
"	"	Michael Gertinisan
"	"	?
"	"	?
"	"	?
Cherry of Rio Grande	"	Peg Mann
"	"	?
"	"	?
"	"	?
Spinach Tree	"	Jim Stout
Florida Spinach	"	?
Yellow Passion	Ed Musgrave	Jan Elliot
Fresh Raspberry Vinegar	Jan Elliot	?
Seminole Pumpkin	Jim Stout	?
Guava	Pat McGauley	Neil Leonard
Pineapple		?
Lychee	Thom Scott	Steve Harris
Orange Tree	Maryse Lawson	Roberta Harris
Plantain	Susan McAveety	Carl Chapman
Crepe Myrtle	Sharon Pilot	?
Rainbow Pepper	Shane Smith	Sue Peters
"	"	?
Monstera	Neil Leonard	Larry Nieckarz

## MEMBERS' CORNER:

WANTED: Do you know of any hardy avocados that have survived the freezes and are producing? Let's talk!

Also looking for odd or "Heirloom" Oriental persimmons and any exceptional flavored native persimmons.

Art Hedstrand, 33456 Cortez Blvd, Ridge Manor FL 33523



**2001-2002 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES** are now available. If you would like a copy of the new directory (one per family) please pick up a copy at the September meeting or contact Charles Novak (813)754-1399 to have a copy mailed to you.



tea from the leaves.

Elderberries are wonderful. You can make wine, jams & jellies, you can use the flowers in pancakes or make fritters. Elderberries grow in wet areas, along drainage ditches, in creeks and above the borders of lakes and swamps. Katie warned us that they do spread by runners and can become invasive in moist areas.

Florida has 2 plums, the chickasaw and the flatwood. The chickasaw plum likes it high, dry and sandy. It will grow in the sandiest of soil; if it gets too much water and fertilizer, it's not happy. The flatwood plum, however will take more water and a richer soil. Both produce small, slightly tart fruit that turns yellow when ripe and is good for making jams & jellies.

Blackberries. Katie said she wasn't always sure they were worth it when she was picking them until she gets them back to the house, because the vines are so thorny and picking them is not easy. There are 3 or 4 different varieties in Florida, the coastal blackberry, the sand blackberry that grows in the scrub areas, and the dewberry which is recumbent, grows on the ground and doesn't tend to stand up like other blackberries. Likewise, there are lots of blueberries in Florida; several different varieties growing wild, small blueberries, large blueberries, all excellent for pies and other desserts, jellies, jams. If you want to grow them at home, you have to remember they take a very acid soil. They will grow in partial shade or full sun. Katie had slides of several different kinds native to Florida.

The beauty berry or French mulberry is absolutely gorgeous in the fall, as we could see in her slide. The berries can be eaten out of hand if you're desperate, but the best use of them other than being pretty in the landscape, is in making a gorgeous jelly.

The oaks and hickories have edible nuts, the live oak being the sweetest acorn with the lowest level of tannic acid, which is what adds the bitter taste to acorns. The tannic acid can be boiled off from the acorns by grinding them up

and then boiling the meal to make a flour that can be used in baking. There is one variety of live oak that has nuts sweet enough to eat directly off the tree at Becket Lake Nursery in Clearwater.

Sumac is used to make what they call Indian lemonade. To make lemonade from the sumac, you need to pick the berries and not wash them. There is a fuzz on the berries that gives it the lemonade flavor, so if you wash them, you wash off the tart lemon flavor. Cook them and serve them sweetened; it's pretty tasty.

Gopher apples are like candy to gophers and turtles. It is an edible fruit but it doesn't have a lot of flavor. The leaves look like oak leaves but the plant grows close to the ground in dry scrub areas. If you have a dry area where you need a shrub to grow, try the gopher apple.

Pawpaw. Katie had slides of a lot of different pawpaws that grow in Florida. The first one she showed was the flag pawpaw, *Asimina obovata*. It grows in dry areas and produces an edible fruit. It is probably the best of the pawpaws that are native to central Florida.

Prickly pear. The fruit is wonderful but the pads can also be eaten. You have to de-thorn the pads as well as the fruit. The prickles can be cut off the fruit and pads or pass the fruit or pads briefly through a fire in a metal basket to burn the thorns off. Or a lot of the prickles can be washed off with a jet of water. The fruit make an excellent jelly or a great drink. The pads can be added to soups and stews or stir fried with other vegetables or used in omelets.

The Spanish needle is one of Katie's favorite plants & she has it all over her yard. It's one that people work so hard to get out of their yard. It's a great nectar plant for butterflies and the whole plant is edible. You can eat the petals of the flower in salads. It adds a nice white touch. Also you can cook up the leaves and stems as a pot herb.

## MYCORRHIZAE - The Latest Horticultural Breakthrough

### by BOB HEATH

The word comes from two words: mycorr, meaning fungus; and rhizae, meaning root. Mycorrhizae is a root fungus, actually many different kinds of fungus. It exists in a symbiotic relationship with the roots of plants. It's estimated that 99% of the plants of the world have this mycorrhizal association. It may have been around for millions of years but it is something relatively new and extremely exciting to the world of horticulture. It is due to this symbiotic relationship that the plants of the forest grow and prosper. Due to this beneficial association, the roots are able to absorb a much greater proportion of minerals and water than they are able to on their own. The fungus, in turn, gets 35 to 40% of the photosynthates that are its food, created by the plant's normal process of photosynthesis. We learned years ago that to plant pawpaw seeds and achieve success, we needed to mix some of the soil from underneath a bearing pawpaw tree with our potting soil before we planted pawpaw seeds. Also, some years back, Charles Novak received a load of seeds from many of the plants of Brunei, sent to us by Bobby Tee. Several members planted the seeds in our best potting soil and nurtured them as they came up and began to grow. We had several species of durian, two kinds of tarap, mangosteen and others. They grew well up to 6 or 8" and then began to die as the nourishment in the seeds was consumed. Virtually all of the plants died. We can only assume that they were lacking the mycorrhizae fungae they needed. Fortunately the elusive mycorrhizae is now being produced on a commercial basis. All of our tropical fruit trees are endo mycorrhizae. This is the mycorrhizae that actually live inside the roots. In the tropical jungles the mycorrhizae digests the litter which continually falls from the trees, being decomposed and recycled into the trees. It works in conjunction with the roots of the trees and does an absolutely fantastic job. Now we can inoculate the soil of a growing plant, mix mycorrhizae with some soil in a ratio of 1 to 10, push a shovel into the ground and push it forward and put a scoopful in the hole, several holes in the ground around the tree between the trunk and the drip line. For a small potted plant, poke holes in the soil with a pencil and put a teaspoon of mycorrhizae in each hole. When planting seeds mix it in with the potting soil before planting the seeds.

We don't know whether mycorrhizae will be the panacea that will solve all our problems but it looks like it's going to be a great help. We have to do a lot of experimentation on this, one of the newest materials in horticulture now commercially available. After inoculation the fungae grows in the soil and unlike fertilizer, it never has to be added to. Likewise, we do not know how much or how little to use. We do know it is a very small amount. One thing we do know is that results are not immediate like with the addition of fertilizer; the fungus must germinate and grow.

I am presently mixing it with the sphagnum moss that I use for air layering. I should get a much better root production in the moss in the 6 weeks I normally allow for roots to form. I am mixing 1 teaspoon of mycorrhizae with the sphagnum moss per air layer.

Presently I have purchased a 5 gallon bucket of mycorrhizae. It is not cheap, at about \$10.00 per quart. Members who might want to experiment may call Bob Heath at 813-879-6349 office phone, or 813-289-1068 home phone.

**GRAFTING KNIVES and PARAFILM:** There will be Grafting Knives available at the September 9 meeting. Also, there are a few rolls of Parafilm (for grafting) still available. If interested, contact Charles Novak at (813)754-1399.

<b>NEW MEMBERS:</b>	Goldie & Larry Nieckarz	Lutz
	Joe Chieffari	Palm Harbor
	Sophia Gaponiuk	Valrico
	Gregorio Macaraeg	Largo

## A VISIT WITH AL ROBERTS

by ART HEDSTRAND

When Paul Zmoda announced at the August meeting that Al was selling his place, I thought I'd better jump on this right away as I had wanted to write up Al's yard for some time. The place is on Habana Street north of Waters in Hillsborough County. There is about 1 acre around the house with 2 acres in a small lake including a strip of land to the north of the lake. The property is very secluded with large trees, mostly oaks, around the periphery and scattered throughout the lot. I was amazed that some of the tropical fruit trees were able to exist but the trees afford some cold protection, as does the lake.

On the east side of the house facing Habana, there are 2 huge Macadamia trees with 2 large Surinam cherries, 1 black-, 1 red-fruited, framing the entrance. Heading north, we find a small meadows pear, a big navel orange and a large good seedling tangerine.

In the front yard is a big Miami Supreme guava, a nectarine, Siam sweet pommelo, huge tropical apricot (Dovyallis) with sour fruit, a sweet-fruited tropical apricot, 2 mulberries (Giant-Crowley and Stalcup), a small pomegranate and a black mammoth Russian mulberry from George Riegler's. In the northeast corner is a large white mulberry with a bit of jungle before it (possibly the beautiful red passion vine).

Proceeding westward there is a good sized canistel (eggfruit) which I never expected to see in Tampa. I am very fond of eggfruit, particularly the moister-fleshed cultivars. There is a Hirado butan pommelo, a Haitian purple caimito and white sapote. The caimito raised fond memories of Puerto Rico trips - such a great fruit with sort of a proteiny chewy texture. The white sapote started out with golf ball sized fruit but has progressed to baseball size fruit of excellent flavor. Al can't account for the size change. there's a small sapodilla near the house and a Carnes pear (Bemis) near the caimito.

Proceeding west we find a paper shell Macadamia, Brogden avocado (not yet fruiting), carambola, mulberry, wooly leaf white sapote, sweet lemonade citrus, Barbados cherry, nine pound lemon, jaboticaba, Corsican lemon, Fuyu persimmon, a big Brewster lychee, rose apple, avocado, Sargent plum, Hachiya persimmon, black Surinam cherry and wooly leaf white sapote.

Continuing westerly toward the lake is a Pidala tangerine, a tall Barbados cherry, a root stock carambola, a Meiwa kumquat, a big Minneola tangelo, an Escondido mulberry, a cocktail citrus (4 or 5 varieties), a Yemon persimmon, a Malabar chestnut, a Homestead white sapote, a Tice mulberry and a chestnut. Near the lake are feijoas, jaboticabas, plantains and beautiful very large leafed ferns climbing up a tree.

Doubling back east toward the house we find a huge Florida mulberry which Al tapped for 8 gallons of fruit off the garage roof!, a white sapote, an east coast mulberry, a Monstera deliciosa, a Surinam cherry, a muscadine grape, a Java plum, a longan and a honey murcott citrus at the house.

Al has some paths through the jungle north of the house. One had red passion fruit vines overhead, ending with a big winter Mexican avocado with some nice fruit. A side trail yielded pommelo, carambola, Monstera deliciosa in fruit, Brazilian banana, Raja puri banana with flower stalk at only about 4' height, a plantain which produces short fat fruit, Sanguinelli blood orange. Somewhere in this area also were Malabar chestnuts, 3 large Hamlin oranges, beauty berry bushes, tamarinds, bananas, a Fuang Tung carambola, a Himalayan mulberry and a Macadamia of Dana white or paper shell pedigree.

At the sound side of the house is a variegated lemon, a Keitt mango, a big black sapote, a Temple orange and a tangerine. A Rangoon creeper nut has escaped over tree tops - a beautiful flower but vines can become pests.

This is a very interesting property for a fruit lover because of the great variety of plants and particularly for the fact that so many tender tropicals are thriving here. Al has done a great job in assembling this collection.

I hope that some really appreciative people will buy the property, which Al is trying to sell.

Thanks, Al, for the opportunity to view your neat plantings.

## JULY PLANT EXCHANGE

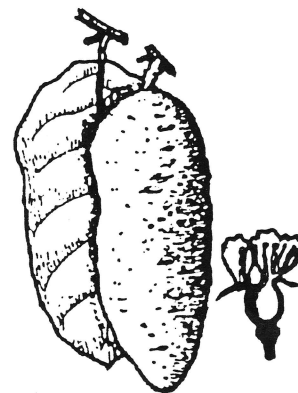
Plant	Donor	Winner
Rangoon Creeper	Bob Heath	Shane Smith
Banana Praying Hands	"	Al Jean
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Yuca	"	T. Scott
Chaya	"	Barbara Rensonie
Passion Fruit	"	?
Beauty Berry	"	?
Papaya	"	Don Haselwood
Bromeliad	F. Roush	?
Plumeria	"	Shane Smith
Oriental Sword Bean (4)	Lee	?
Tomatoes	"	?
Hot Peppers	"	Eldon Payne
Papaya	"	Dottie Ebanks
Grape Seedling	"	T. Scott
Orinoco Banana	"	Dottie Ebanks
Fig Preserves	Novak	?
PawPaw	"	Jon Kolle
Fry Muscadine	E. Banks	Judy Cimafranca
Bromeliad	Verna Dickey	Eldon Payne
Surinam Cherry	"	Robin Musolino
Orchid Tree (2)	"	?
Guyana Chestnut	Rich Parker	?
Pickled Beets	Linda Long	Bob Heath
	Don Long	?
Dwarf Banana	Judy Cimafranca	Pat Jean
Philippine Violets	"	Ilona Bruno
Ladyfinger Banana	Kristina Roberts	B. Reddicliffe
Rose Apple	Heath	Eve Peters
Malanga	Judy Cimafranca	Lanny
Abacca Pineapple	Heath	J. Stonehouse

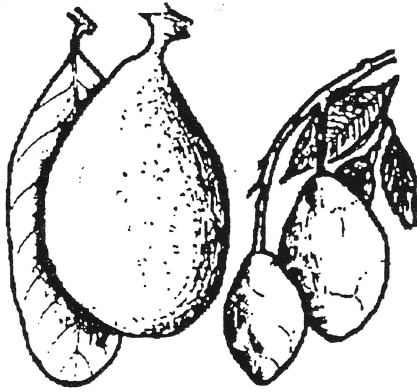
## A GUIDE TO TROPICAL FRUIT TREES & VINES (continued)

### FAMILY - CHRYSOBALANACEAE

#### 48. *Couepia polyandra* - Olosapo

A small to medium-sized evergreen tree from Central America. Its stiff olive-green leaves have a dried-out look. Fruit is green, shaped like a pickle and hanging from its branches. Flesh is soft and sweet, but pulp is semi-dry and of egg-yolk consistency. Plant is propagated from seed.



49. *Licania platypus* - Sansapote

A tropical, spreading tree from the Philippines with a dense canopy. The greenish-brown fruit is about 8 inches long and has a yellowish-orange flesh, containing one large seed. Its sweet pulp is eaten fresh or dried. Plant is propagated from seed and requires 10 years to produce fruit.

**FAMILY - CARICACEAE**47. *Carica papaya* - Papaya

There are about 25 species of this tropical American tree, which attains a height of 25 feet or so. Leaves are evergreen to 2 feet across, pal-

mately lobed and with milky sap. Flowers are yellow, tubular and about 1 inch long. Papaya flowers can be male, female or bisexual. Male flowers are produced on long flower stems. Female flowers are produced on short stems and are few in number. Since plants produce either male or female flowers, plants of each are necessary for fruit production. The bisexual plants contain both male and female flowers on the same plant.

Fruits measure 4 to 20 inches long and may weigh 2 to 26 pounds. Skin is yellow or orange and soft flesh is yellow to orange in color. Fruit can contain few to many small black seeds. Papaya fruit contains an enzyme known as papain. Its milky juice is extracted, dried, and used in chewing gum, medicine (for digestive problems), toothpaste and meat tenderizers. Meat can be tenderized by wrapping it in a bruised papaya leaf before it is cooked. Fruit is used fresh, for salads and juice. Plants are propagated from seed and will produce fruit in 1 year.



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