



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2002

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

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PRESIDENT: JIM LEE WEBSITE: www.rarefruit.org (Charles Novak)

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

NEXT MEETING: JAN. 13

MEETING PLACE: UNIV. OF S. FLORIDA, WESTSIDE CONFERENCE CENTER (WCC) SEE MAP PG. 02-03.

PROGRAM: WE LOOK FORWARD TO A GREAT PROGRAM THIS MONTH, JAN. 13. JIM MERCER WILL BE talking about persimmons, one of the great fruit of the world. Jim Mercer goes a long way back with out club, all the way to the beginning. He was a charter member, one of about a dozen. Jim had a nursery in this area back in those days and contributed much to our budding club. For many of those who knew Jim at that time and haven't seen him in several years, this will be a chance to renew our acquaintance and profit again from his knowledge.

We will be meeting at a new location on USF campus hereafter. See the map on page 02-03. The space is bigger and will afford us more room for our raffle and tasting table.

From the President

Jimmy Lee

I would like to wish everyone a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Our Holiday Social was a great success. We had about 125 people in attendance. THANKS again to Burns & Cathy Creighton for hosting this event again at their beautiful home. A big THANK YOU to everyone for bringing the delicious food and wines; also, for the plants and gifts for the free raffle.

In the past we have held the Citrus Celebration in January, but this year we are planning to have a Citrus Celebration/Fruit Tasting event at the Florida State Fair on February 10. Please plan to help with this event. We will need help with the preparation of the fruit and please donate any extra citrus and tropical fruit that you may have (please wash fruit before bringing fruit to the fairgrounds).

Jim Mercer will speak on 'Persimmons' at the January meeting (new meeting location - USF Westside Conference Center).

Scheduled Programs:

January 13: Persimmons by Jim Mercer

February 10: Citrus Celebration/Fruit Tasting at the State Fair

March 10: Winemaking (Tentative meeting location-USF Botanical Garden)

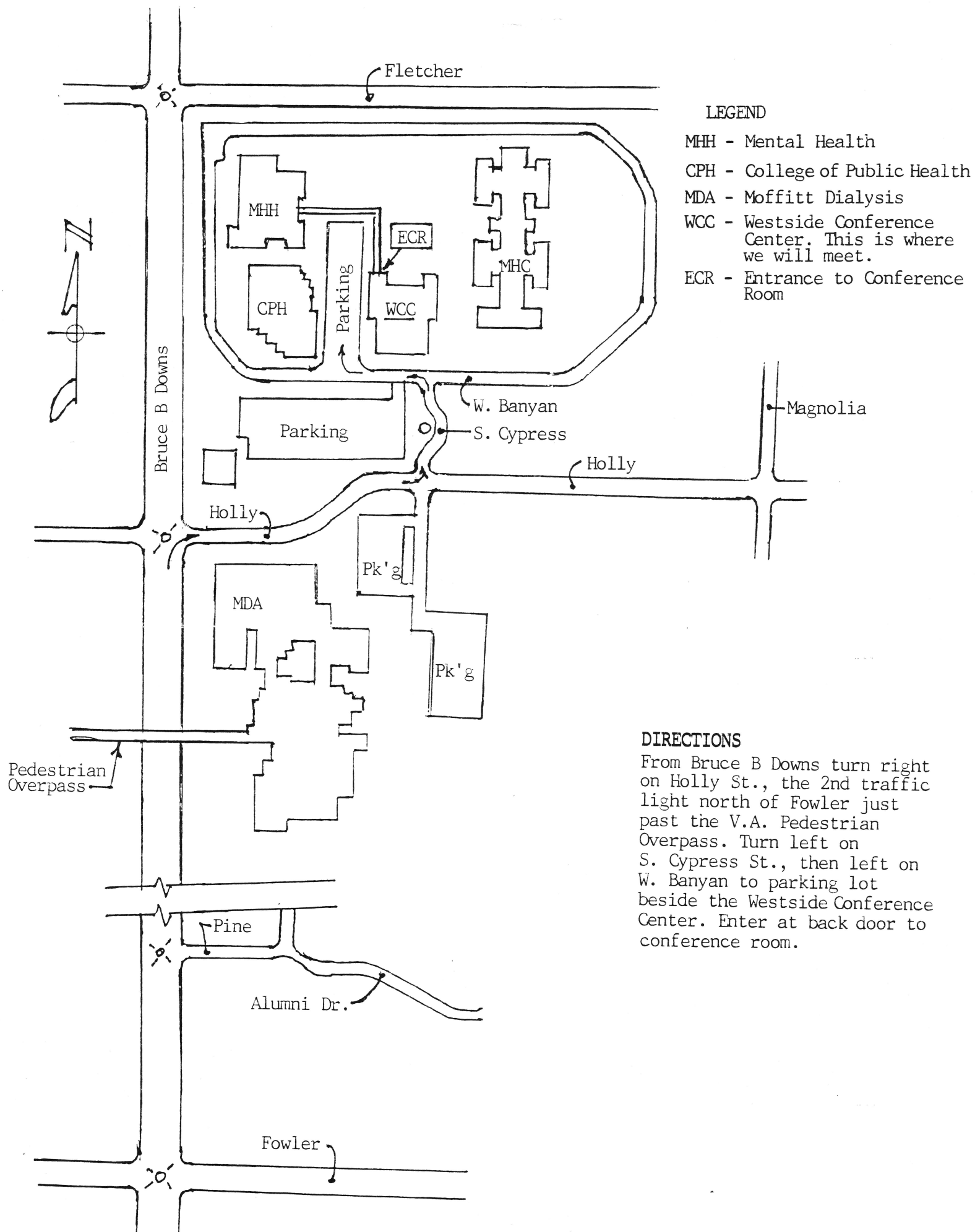
Wanted: Photos of fruit (in digital format) taken by club members for the club website. Club members are invited to write articles on fruit and/or their fruit growing experiences for possible posting on the website.

Grafting Knives & Grafting tape are available for purchase by members who would like to graft their own plants.

We still have MYCORRHIZAE available in quart jars to provide a symbiotic relationship with plant roots. See "Mycorrhizae - the Latest Horticultural Breakthrough" in the September newsletter

DECEMBER PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Aloe	Heath	?
Passion Fruit	"	?
Papaya	"	Ellen & John Irwin
Chaya	"	Weekley
Sea Grape	"	Ed Musgrave
Lady Finger Banana	Lee	?
Orinoco Banana	"	Beth Rediccliffe
Flower Banana	"	J. Murrie
Roger Pumpkin Banana	"	?
Granadilla	"	?
Yellow Passion Fruit	"	?
Soursop	"	?
Avocado	"	?
White Sapote	"	J. Burch
White Guava	"	Verna Dickey
Pineapple	Branesky	?
Plum	"	?
Dewberry	Zmoda	Vern Reddiccliffe
"	"	?
Pineapple Pie	Jan Conard	?
Calamondin Cake	Al Roberts	?
Cherry	Cheryl Drew	Weekley
Aloe	Jim Burch	?
Raspberry Jelly	Susan Reed	?
Tabebuoa Tree	Beth Reddiccliffe	J. Cimafranca
Japanese Plum	"	Bob Courtney
Rosemary	Paula Hughes	?
Guava	Pat McGauley	?
Papaya	J. Cimafranca	?
Duhat	"	Sean McAveety
Heliconia	Weekley	?
Papaya	"	?
Dwarf Banana	"	?
Pineapple Plants	Roberta Harris	Jan Conard
3 Kent Mangoes	S.F. Saceda-Bigelow	Silvia
Papaya	"	?
Thornless Blackberry	Thom Scott	Zmoda
Longan Seedling	"	Bob Dickey
Mango	"	?
Pineapple	"	Esmenia A.
Cherry of Rio Grande	?	?
Surinam Cherry	?	Susan McAveety
Neiwa Kumquat	Club	Rose Terenzi
Banana Bread	?	Dan Bigelow
Siamese Pumelo	Club	J. Cimafranca
Begonia	?	Walter Yoblonski
Orange Berry	?	Jocarol Smith
Navel Orange	Club	JoCarol Smith
Fruit	?	Lorraine Walsh
Stained Glass	Pilot	Ed Walsh
" " Angel	"	S.F. Saceda-Bigelow
Muffins	?	Al Hendry
Bromeliad	Verna Dickey	Thom Scott
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Stained Glass Fish	Pilot	Pat McGauley
Bake Item (2)	"	Pat Jean
Pink Lemon Variegated	Club	MaryAnn Branesky
Navel Orange	"	Paul Branesky
7 Citrus Trees	"	Al Roberts



A VISIT WITH JANET CONARD

by ART HEDSTRAND

Janet's home is in a neat older neighborhood with lots of California-style bungalows which have charming front porches with large columns. The property is a lot on Henry Street just north of Hillsborough Ave. & a block from the Hillsborough River. The house faces south on the east-west Henry Street.

Proceeding west from the house entrance there is a large clump of 'Del Monte' banana plants in the inside corner of the house. This area contains numerous ornamentals: 4 o'clocks, ginger, hibiscus and a large yesterday-today-tomorrow which was outstanding in bloom in the spring. There's a nice Gulf Gold Plum pruned to an open vase shape - from Paul Zmoda about 3 years ago. It has borne a large quantity of nice fruit.

Continuing on in front of the house, we find an Angel's Trumpet, large red and black Surinam Cherry bushes, Rose Apple & Pond Apple (which needs to be grafted over to a good Annona cultivar).

Doubling back to the driveway at the front fence we find a nice Celeste Fig, sour orange (probably Seville) which Janet uses in her culinary endeavors, & a Siam Sweet pommelo. Al Roberts & Janet both prefer the latter to Hirado Butan. Next is a guava, several red mallows (hibiscus) from Bemis Gordon, a yellow fig from the father of Lou Panella, the Seattle Mariner's manager, and in the SW corner a loquat acquired from Dale Mabry/Lambright area.

Proceeding north along the west fence there's a large pommelo of unknown pedigree, just loaded with fruit; evidently its flavor is not particularly exciting. (At the tasting table of the Tropical Fruit Club of Central Florida on Nov 19 there was a sampling of a white pommelo and a pink. The white was dry as sawdust & just as exciting, while the pink was moist, sweet & flavorful. I noticed this wide variety in quality of cultivars at the Citrus Arboretum. In a telephone conversation with the Director of the Arboretum a couple of years ago, he said 'I don't want any more pommelos!' A friend member of the Springhill RFC has an outstanding cultivar at his home in

Inverness - probably the best cultivar I've tasted. He bought it at a USF plant sale but doesn't know the variety name.) (Nurserymen do a lousy job of cultivar identification.) (As a postscript, a month after picking, I tasted one of Janet's pommelos. It was moist and a little grainy with a mild sweet flavor - pretty good; definitely not in the obnoxious quality category. Which reminds me that the Asian community insists that you must allow pommelos to age several weeks before eating. Janet picks her favorite Siam Sweet & has it for breakfast - excellent! She scoffs at the aging idea.)

Further on are: a guava (possibly Miami Supreme), remnants of a Java plum which Al attempted to eradicate, cherimoya seedling, a large & 2 smaller guavas, Kahala longan, unknown small tree that looks similar to mango, & an air-layered Brewster lychee of good size. A beautiful red passion vine runs on the fence & next is the neighbors' pink grapefruit which hangs way over the fence for free fruit! Following is a large Fuang Tung carambola, 3 non-bearing bananas, a 'Golden Star' carambola (Al's descriptive name), & a Raja Puri banana in the NW corner.

Proceeding east we find 2 sugar apples, a large group of Brazilian bananas on the west side of a shed and a chaya. This banana cultivar has been disappointing for Janet: it grows very tall & produces very little. I agree with Al on the chaya - anything which requires throwing out the cooking water a couple of times to prevent poisoning is a waste of time & probably has no resultant nutritive value.

There is a large white Marsh grapefruit & a Keitt mango, which latter has recovered nicely from last December's freeze.

Along the south side of the shed are a double yellow Allemanda from a cousin in Tice, an Atemoya, red Roselle Hibiscus, a mango from Ron Hensley (I believe Mollika) & an Arkin carambola.

East of the shed are a tart carambola, Shell ginger, newly transplanted Ses-2 loquat, ginger, canna, Mahoi banana, an unknown fig variety, sugar apple, Huamoa plantain, unknown bananas, recently transplanted Sanguinelli Blood Orange, sapodilla, Siam Sweet pom lo, and in the

NE corner of the lot unknown banana varieties.

South of a driveway providing access across the north side of the lot are a large wild persimmon, evidently a root sprout from a nearby Kaki persimmon which had nice fruit in October, a raisin tree (*Hovenia dulcis*) from Bemis, Seijo persimmon, Red Navel orange, calamondin, white sapote, woolly leaf white sapote, unknown variety nectarine, red grapefruit, mombin, honey murcott, pitomba, 5 ft. Puncan mandarin, small everbearing Key lime, & a 4-5 ft. loquat full of blooms! This latter was acquired by Johnny Montano from Frank Cupello, who brought seeds from Spain.

We have arrived at the porch on the east side of the house where there is a grouping of unknown bananas. Proceeding back east are a grumichama, seedling loquat, large Queen Palm, *Minneola tangelo*, (at NE corner of porch), Tsu Maili Asian Pear from Bemis, nice loaded white Navel orange, an old grapefruit, and at the east side fence *thunbergia* (purple flowered) vine, pine cone ginger, red pommelo, and a pair of medium sized 'tangerines'. These were tagged as Ponderosa Lemon and Budd Blood Orange, so I think they are probably the Cleopatra rootstock following a bad freeze.

In this area east of the porch are many trees including Hirado Butan pommelo, small jaboticaba, large Valencia orange, variegated Valencia orange, Ugli tangelo, calamondin, a nice yellow fig and youngster, & a nice Fuyu persimmon next to the Hirado Butan pommelo at the east fence.

Heading back west there's a large grapefruit which is sweeter than the other grapefruit, black Surinam cherry (Ray Jones claims 'the best'), Barbados cherry, Sweet Lemonade (now's that for a name!), dwarf Temple tangor, Nine Pound lemon (definitely big), & Meyer lemon. The Barbados cherry had some pretty fruit that sort of looks like crab apples, tart but edible. This is also known as acerola, which is found in some Vitamin C formulations. Careful reading of the label will tell you 'with acerola'. I expect it is too labor

intensive to harvest and process acerola fruit even though it is an excellent source. I believe corn is the major source of the Vitamin C of commerce.

We next zig-zag back to the east fence where there's a large yuca or cassava, ornamental pomegranate, banana & sea grape in the SE corner. (Cassava has an edible, starchy white-fleshed root of minimal nutritional value, but interesting. In Depression days, native Floridians consumed the yuca and it was used extensively to make starch for the housewife to starch men's shirt collars. Banana expert Clyde Stephens of the Orlando Tropical Fruit Club related that he asked old relatives why they no longer grew yuca: 'Oh, that's poor man's food.' They didn't want the stigma of being associated with their poor Depression days!)

We head back westerly from the SE corner to find a large red Surinam cherry hedge on the south fence line with Confederate jasmine further west (great fragrant white flowers in the spring). Janet and Al cut the Surinams back severely after the severe drought and they have grown back profusely. There's another Barbados cherry, spectacular and huge Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia*) with really showy yellow flowers which also have a nice fragrance. This area between driveway, south fence & porch contains a Thousand Finger banana, *Monstera deliciosa* on old grapefruit stump, a beautiful specimen of Cherry of the Rio Grande about 12 ft high, Meiwa kumquat, Buddha's Hand citrus, Day avocado, a caimito just south of the porch and a 15 ft jaboticaba. This latter didn't produce much this year because of the drought (they love water), but I have seen the plant looking as if it had snowed on it, with thousands of white flowers. Al Roberts says it is really difficult to harvest the grape sized fruit which form on trunk & branches because this tree is so dense. Jaboticaba is definitely a candidate for espaliering to produce a flatter growth form for easier harvesting.

Al Roberts actually conducted this tour, with a few questions to Janet as to specific variety names. Janet was very busy (as is her nature) making a large batch of chocolate coated cookies for her then upcoming Thanksgiving dinner.

I asked how she had become such an avid

collector of tropical/subtropical fruit plants: Walt Hines of Lakeland introduced her to the Tampa Bay RFC around 1982 and she started out with carambola and Anna & Ein Shemer apples.

Janet has created a yard full of interesting plants with minimal grass area, which is admirable. It's always a pleasure to tour the yard to see what's fruiting. Thanks so much for the tour, Al & Janet - I love you both.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dec 2001-Jan 2002

by PAUL ZMODA

This unseasonably warm, late fall finds us extremely busy. Many evergreen shrubs got sheared and pruned. Most of the grapes have been pruned as they dropped their last leaves. The ground beneath every tree was first weeded by hand to clear soil one to two feet away from the trunk. Round-Up weedkiller was next applied to stop any competing ground covers further out to a distance of 4 to 6 feet from the trunks. As a final treatment, each tree received a liberal application of horse manure/sawdust to cover an area beneath it out to 8 feet or so. Banana plantings each received half a wheelbarrow of manure in addition to the usual daily dose of kitchen scraps (peelings, egg shells, leftovers, tea bags and spoiled fruits and vegetables).

Cherries of the Rio Grande needed malathion sprays for thrips. All citrus got a thorough drenching with chelated minerals/metals to help with deficiencies. Figs, persimmons and mango got a copper spraying to control any fungus or ball moss present.

Pomellos are picked as needed. If aged on a table for several weeks before eating, they become juicier but the flavor remains the same in my opinion. Our large Orlando Tangelo tree is giving us a huge crop this year - some branches are cracking from the weight! We juice these citrus often. What a delectable treat.

Many of the potted Annonas are getting upgraded to larger pots. Root-pruned and reset into a rich mixture of potting soil and peat moss fortified with Ironite, dolomite, fertilizer and super phosphate, they should be happy for 2 to 3 years.

The grafted White Sapote 'Homestead' is flowering and setting fruit for the first time now. After 4 years in-ground, our Japanese Persimmon 'IZU' suddenly died. It had shown symptoms of blistering bark on the trunk and branches. Jim Mercer says it is a virus possibly carried through the rootstock and IZU is very susceptible.

Free horse manure can be obtained in the Valrico/Brandon area - call (813) 661-1096.

Fruit Tree Pruning Demonstrations

When: Jan. 20, 2002 - one week after regular meeting

Where: Home of Paul & Luisa Zmoda

11009 Riverview Drive, Riverview FL

1/4 Mile East of intersection of Rt. 301 & Riverview Drive

(813) 677-5985 or 932-2469

It's pruning time for deciduous trees & vines. It's necessary and not hard to do. Pruning promotes bigger, better and healthier crops. Learn how by watching. Two classes 12 noon & 3:00 p.m. We can only accomodate 20 people at each class. Bring paper & pen and your questions. Covered will be: plum, peach, apple, muscadine & bunch grapes, persimmon, mulberry. Learn about proper tool selection and when and what to prune. Car pooling is recommended. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the regular meeting on Jan. 13.

The Market Stand. CITRUS, Part I

Family: Rutaceae Genus: Citrus Species: Various

Christopher Columbus introduced oranges and lemons to Haiti in 1493. His actions changed the face of the world and ushered in a new era in the long history of citrus cultivation.

The oldest documented member of this group is the citron, Citrus medica - Jewish coins dated 136 BC bear this fruit's image. Although its origin is unknown, S.E. Asia is generally regarded as the homeland of most Citrus species. Citron seeds have been found in Mesopotamian excavations from 4000 BC. Yet, despite this antiquity, the United States public is largely unfamiliar with the citron even though it is the most common citrus ingredient in their holiday fruit cake.

The words citrus and citron come to us from the Greek "kedros", meaning cone of the cedar. In the Jewish faith, Moses had specified that the cedar cone be used in their Feast of the Tabernacle but at some point it was replaced by the citron. The Palestinian Greeks of the day dubbed it the "kedromelon" (cedar apple). "Kedros" was latinized to "cedrus" which became citrus and later citron. Due to this primacy, it should not be surprising that for many years most Citrus species were classified as cultivars of Citrus Medica.

Now we recognize oranges, lemons, limes, tangerines (Mandarin oranges), calamondins and pummelos as separate Citrus species. The kumquat is in the allied genus Fortunella. Hybridization of some of these species gave us tangelos, tangors, grapefruit and many others. In all there are hundreds of named varieties.

Today citrus are among the most abundant fruits on the globe and the orange is said to be the most widely cultivated of fruit trees. This rise in popularity can be attributed to its many favorable esthetic, aromatic and gastronomic qualities.

Surely citrus must have been grown in the fabled Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The sight of their shiny evergreen leaves contrasting against their brightly colored fruit or fragrant white flowers is a delight to the eyes; and the multi-dimensional aromas of their various parts a pleasure to the nose. However, as a result of the (sub) tropical nature of citrus, it remained a curiosity and a much desired commodity to Northern Europeans for centuries. Only royalty could afford to showcase their cultivation. The products so rare that their use was restricted to medicine and for very special occasions. To a child of those times, a Christmas gift of a single orange was a treat to be cherished.

The beauty of citrus is truly more than skin deep. From the sweet spicyness of Mandarins to the pungent pineyness of limes, perhaps no other genus of fruiting plants expresses so many pleasingly diverse shades of flavor revolving around a central theme as does citrus. The chemistry that is the basis for this effect is both simple and complex.

All citrus are composed of water, sugar and acid (mostly citric), together with lesser amounts of pulp, minerals and a large assortment of organic molecules.

The balance between sugar and acid creates the range of tastes. Overlying and supplementing these tastes are a wide variety of aromas derived from certain components among the volatile organic fraction. Many of these aromatic chemicals are common to all citrus and define their characteristic smell; others are unique. Consequently it is the exact blend of these substances that permits the perception of a flavor as citrus and also distinguishes a particular type.

Similarly, most differences among citrus species can be traced to their organic constituents. For example, lycopene is responsible for the red color sometimes found in pummelos, whereas that color in blood oranges comes from anthocyanin, a nearly universal plant pigment. Lycopene has been recently touted for its antioxidant property.

It is abundant in tomatoes. In fact, citrus fruits have long been appreciated for their exceptional nutritional content. British sailors were called "limeys" for the limes they were required to carry aboard ships to prevent scurvy. All are an excellent source of Vitamin C and good source of K . Most are fair sources of Ca , folic acid, inositol, flavonoids and some B vitamins. Those orange in color have Vitamin A.

Finally, it should be noted that modern agriculture, transportation and food processing contributed greatly to making citrus a household staple. Pasteurization and frozen concentration are especially significant to this success. The United States has become the leading producer and consumer of all citrus products combined. Clearly, this Old World transplant has flourished in the New World.

-- Thom Scott

NEW MEMBERS:

Lloyd Maliner
Winter Haven FL

Janet & Larry Cohen
Plant City FL

Max Strotz
Zephyrhills FL

Sherri Carden-McDonald
Kihei HI

MEMBERS' CORNER

WANTED: Japanese Persimmon Tree: 'Honan Red'. Call Paul Zmoda 813-677-5985.



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