



# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2002

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

EDITORS: BOB HEATH, THERESA HEATH, CHARLES NOVAK, LINDA NOVAK, JIM LEE, SALLY LEE

PRESIDENT: JIM LEE

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

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

NEXT MEETING: MARCH 10

MEETING PLACE: UNIV OF S. FLORIDA, WESTSIDE CONFERENCE CENTER

PROGRAM: OUR MARCH 10 PROGRAM WILL FEATURE ONE OF OUR OWN WALTER YOBLONSKI, a former winery owner, will present a comprehensive view of wine making, both commercial and domestic. Excellent wine may be made from fruit other than grapes: citrus, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, elderberries, bananas, plums, you name it. This should be especially interesting to those who are making wine or would like to, as well as those of us who used to but don't anymore. Our meeting will be in a tent at the USF Botanical Gardens because the area where we met in January is being repaired. We shall also enjoy our marvelous tasting table and raffle, so all you bakers & plant growers bring your donations.

NOTE: We will provide the tent & tables. However, we do not have chairs so if you would like to sit down, please bring a chair. If you have some folding chairs or stack chairs and can bring more than one for yourself, please do so for those people who cannot bring a chair or forget to do so.

## **FRUIT TASTING EVENT AT THE FLORIDA STATE FAIR**

As Jimmy Lee stated in the President's message, the Citrus and Tropical Fruit Tasting event at the Florida State Fair was a big success. Preparations started several weeks before February 10. Arrangements were made to obtain as many varieties of citrus and tropical fruit as possible for sampling by the public. A trip was made to the Citrus Arboretum in Lake Alfred to obtain some common and not-so-common citrus for the Display table. Citrus was picked (and washed) at several different locations; including at the homes of club members. Brooks Tropicals (Miami) generously donated several boxes of tropical fruit. We had approximately 60 varieties of fruit and four tropical fruit juices (mango, guava, guanabana and passion fruit) available for sampling. On Sunday our club members (they are great!!) arrived early to set up and begin preparing the fruit for sampling. It was very hectic but we opened to the public at 10 A.M. and closed at 4:30 P.M. Approximately 1,000 enthusiastic people took advantage of the opportunity to sample the fruits-many of which they had never seen or heard of. We received many positive comments. Many people were happy to sample the variety of fruit before purchasing a tree for their backyard. Some discovered the name of the variety of citrus already growing in their backyard. In addition to the fruit sampling we had a fantastic display of Citrus and Tropical fruit for the public to view and to ask questions about. Also, citrus trees and tropical fruiting plants were available for purchase.

Although this event took a considerable amount of time and effort on the part of club members, it also was a time of camaraderie and getting to know one another better. Thanks to all the wonderful and dedicated members who helped with this event!!!!

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

Feb-Mar 2002

by PAUL ZMODA

I feel like an expectant father! Our big, Colombian Soursop tree has developed another fruit. Oh boy. I inspect this tree often and didn't notice it until it was three inches long - bright green, spiny and healthy looking. The last one was an even 8 pounds; maybe the fresh repotting of the tree will allow this one to get even larger.

I bought some pecans at a Valrico fruit stand to eat. I planted a dozen and they are sprouting. When they are of the proper size I plan to graft onto these root stocks scions of our 'Moreland' pecan - a thin shelled variety which is self-fertile. This will allow grows to have a single tree without having a second, pollinator tree nearby.

Top grafted pomello buds are sprouting out nicely along with the flushes of new growth on the entire tree.

All fruiting trees and grapes got a big dose of fertilizers (10-10-10 and/or 16-4-8). Four days later we experienced an inch of rain to wash it in. Just what was needed.

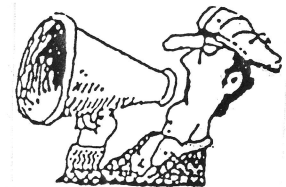
Our older 'Meyer' lemon tree produced an estimated 400 lemons this year. The supply seems endless as I pick bag after bag to give away or use ourselves. We make gallons of lemonade, some of which I let sit to begin fermenting. Lemon beer results - a fizzy beverage that is cool and refreshing.

New plantings: Olive 'Ascolano', beets and Chinese broccoli.

## MEMBERS' CORNER

WANTED: 2 gallon potting containers. Paul Zmoda

NOTICE: Our phone number in the directory may be incorrect. It should be 813-932-2469 and 813-677-5985. E-mail [L/R1123@AOL.com](mailto:L/R1123@AOL.com)



For Sale: Citrus Fruit: Honeybell, Pummelo (pink & white), Navels, Valencia, Hamlin, Orlando tangelo, Pink grapefruit and Star Ruby grapefruit. \$6 bushel.  
Judith Hall (813)971-6439

## \*\*\*MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DUES (\$18)\*\*\*

### DUE THIS MONTH

**Please check your mailing label. If there is a RED mark on it, your Membership expires March 31. Please pay your dues at the next meeting or mail your check to the following address before April 1, 2002. Make check payable to: Tampa Bay RFCI**

**Mail check to:** RFCI  
Charles Novak  
2812 N. Wilder Rd.  
Plant City, FL 33565-2669

## From the President Jimmy Lee

As the year of my club presidency comes to a close, I must step down and make way for the new to be elected president. It has been a busy and eventful year: We had our annual Spring & Fall Plant sales at the USF Botanical Garden. We participated in the July USF Botanical Garden Tropical Plant Festival for the first time. We chartered a bus and went on a fun-filled trip to ECHO (members learned a great deal about how ECHO is helping third world countries to produce food on very little land). We had a September picnic at the USF Botanical Garden; packed with food, rain and fun. We had a propagation workshop which was most beneficial to our members, especially to new members. Our Holiday Social was held at Dr. and Mrs. Burns Creighton's beautiful farm in Lithia.

On Feb.10 we held our Citrus Celebration/Tropical Fruit Tasting at the Florida State Fair for the first time. It was a big success; a lot of work but fun was had by all the members who helped and the public was delighted to have the opportunity to taste a wide variety of Citrus and Tropical fruits. All those who helped at the fair on Sunday are to be commended for their punctuality and good cheer. Thanks to George Riegler and the Applebys for their generous donation of fruit and to Polly Shewfelt for locating citrus fruit for us. I want to thank my crew of eight for picking fruit at Applebys on Friday, Feb. 8; and especially Verna & Robert Dickey for taking the fruit to the fairgrounds. A big 'thank you' to members who picked fruit at George Riegler's on Saturday, Feb. 9. We had hamburgers, hotdogs, chips, coleslaw, desserts and lots of fun-in addition to picking and washing the citrus.

Our exhibit won "FIRST PLACE" at the Florida State Fair Horticulture society competition. Thanks to Charles & Linda Novak for designing the exhibit and to members who helped set it up and take it down. Also, thanks to the members who manned the exhibit during the run of the fair.

I appreciate the fact that without our hard working members we couldn't have succeeded at any of the above events. Once again, I stress to you that this is your club; you are part of our successes and I hope you will continue to participate in all the events and workshops that are scheduled. I hope you will give your new president all the support that you have given me. Again, I appreciate having had the opportunity to serve as your president. If you are ever in need of my help please don't hesitate to call me at (813) 982-9359. May God Bless You All.

### **Scheduled Programs and Speakers:**

- March 10: Winemaking by Walter Yoblonski (club member and former Winery owner) at the USF Botanical Garden. **Note:** Please bring a chair.
- April 13-14: Spring Plant Festival at the USF Botanical Garden.
- May 12: Gene Joyner of Unbelievable Acres on tropical fruits

### **Tropical Fruit Weekend at the Fruit and Spice Park, Homestead, FL, July 12, 13, 14.**

A meeting of different fruit clubs from around the United States. Includes tours, lectures, picnic, banquet, workshops, tree sales and trades, free seeds and cuttings. Mango morning at Fairchild Garden on Saturday. Registration \$50 per person. Phone: (305)247-5727

**[www.co.Miami-dade.fl.us](http://www.co.Miami-dade.fl.us)**

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

Virginia Barthelemy	Tampa, FL	Eric & Sue Ruge	Spring Hill, FL
James & Jeanette Edson	Tampa	Susan Vaisey	Thonotosassa, FL
Catherine Tuckerman	Thonotosassa	Patricia Mead	St. Petersburg, FL

A Warm Welcome to our new members. We hope to see you at the March meeting.



### State Fair Exhibit

**Good News!!** Our exhibit won First place at the Florida State Fair Plant Society Competition this year. The exhibit is required to be artistically designed to display the species in which the society specializes and be maintained at a high standard of quality for the duration of the fair. The judging committee consists of one representative from each society entered in the competition. A judge does not judge his society's exhibit. Judging is based on a point system – our exhibit received 80.125 points out of a possible 100 points. Winning first place is an honor as all the plant society exhibits were very nicely done. Each society receives a set-up premium of \$200. First place receives an additional \$250 and the blue rosette.

A special 'Thanks' to club members Charlie and Kathy Crowley for their donation of fruiting plants for the exhibit. They looked GREAT! A big 'Thank You' to Jon Kolb, Thom Scott, Paul Branesky, and Jim and Sally Lee for their help in setting up the exhibit; to Walt and Karin Yoblonski and Jerry Springer for helping to dismantle the exhibit; and to Jim and Iris Stout for their donation of bamboo for the raft and hut. The stalk of Praying Hands bananas donated by George Riegler was admired by many. I'm sure everyone enjoyed the time spent manning the exhibit and talking to the public about rare and tropical fruits. The public is always interested in the display of fruit and ask many questions. *THANKS to all!!*

*Charles Novak*

**Board of Directors Election:** 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 must be willing and able to make a significant commitment of time and energy to the club and attend a majority of the board meetings. 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.

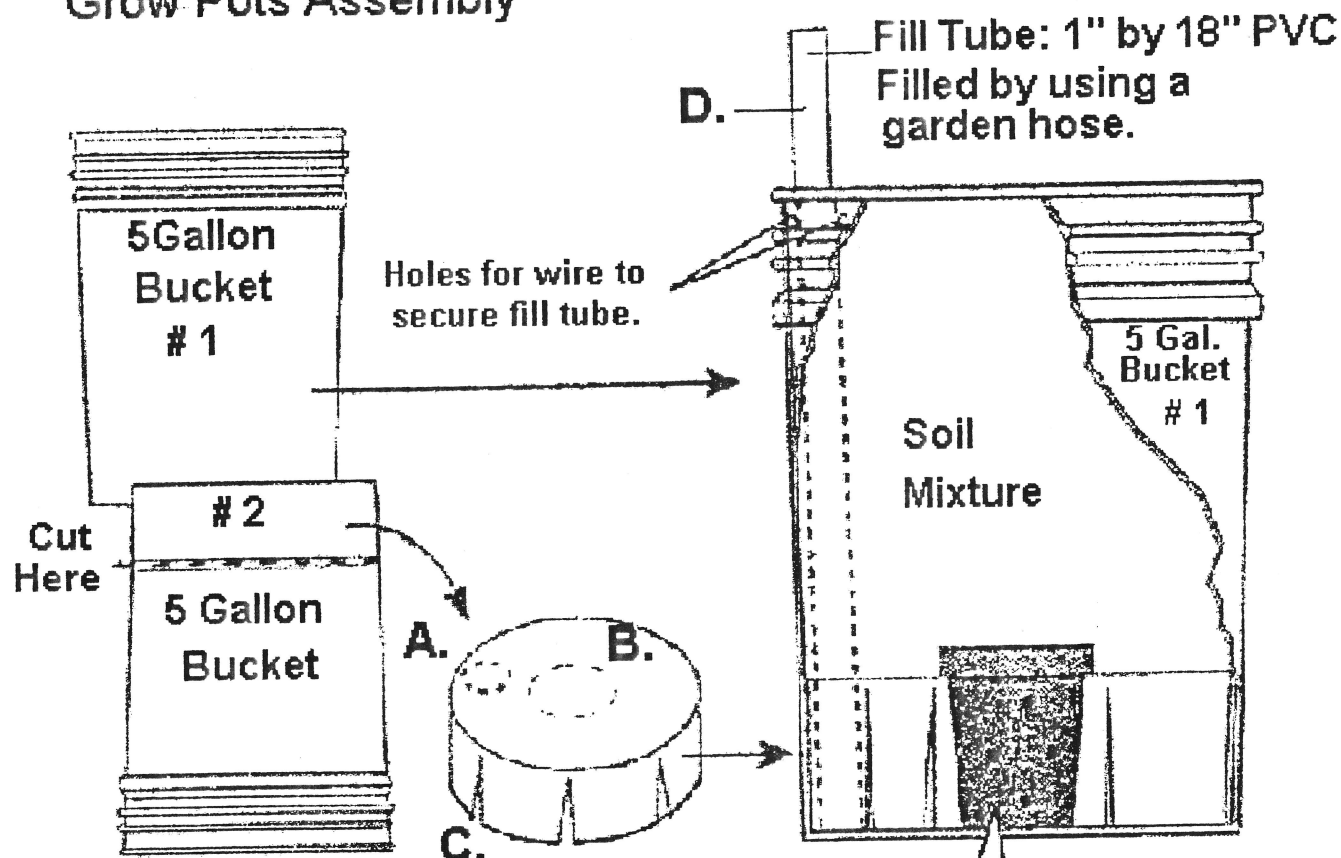
#### **Candidates for the Board of Directors:**

Bob Heath	Paul Branesky	Judy Cimafranco
Jim Lee	Sally Lee	Jim Stout
Charles Novak	Linda Novak	Jon Kolb
Marilyn Weekley	Verna Dickey	Jerry Amyot
Susan McAveety	Thom Scott	Walt Yoblonski
Neil Leonard		

Please plan to attend the March meeting and vote for your Board of Directors. All Board of Directors meetings are open to the entire membership and we encourage members to attend and participate in the discussion of issues.



# Grow Pots Assembly



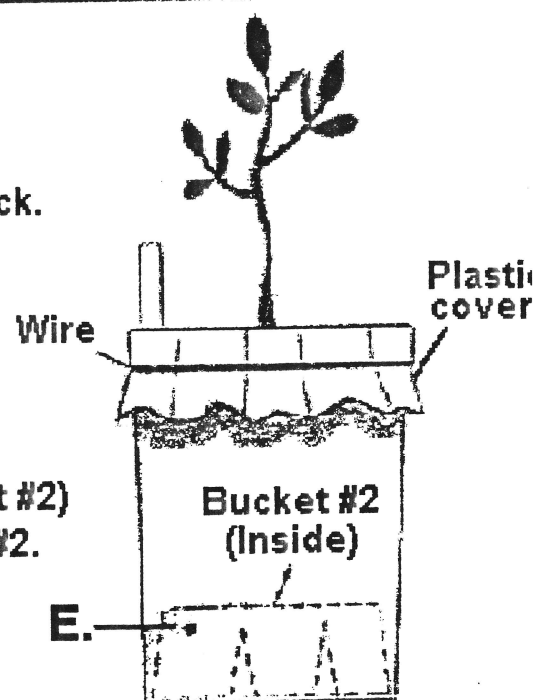
## Water Reservoir:

Cut 5 gallon bucket #2 off half an inch shorter than the 3" plastic pot wick.

- Drill a 1" hole (close to edge) in bottom of bucket #2.
- Drill hole for wick. Hole should be smaller than the top diameter of the 3" plastic pot wick.
- Cut slots in bucket #2 (length of side) to allow the bottom to slide down inside bucket #1.
- Insert Fill tube through 1" hole in bucket #2 securing to bucket #1 with wires.
- Weep hole: Drill  $\frac{3}{8}$ " hole (near top of bucket #2). Hole is drilled through both buckets #1 and #2.

## Final Steps:

- Fill bucket #1 with soil mixture pressing soil firmly into the 3" plastic wick pot.
- Secure plastic cover with wire. Cut an X in middle of the plastic and insert a plant.

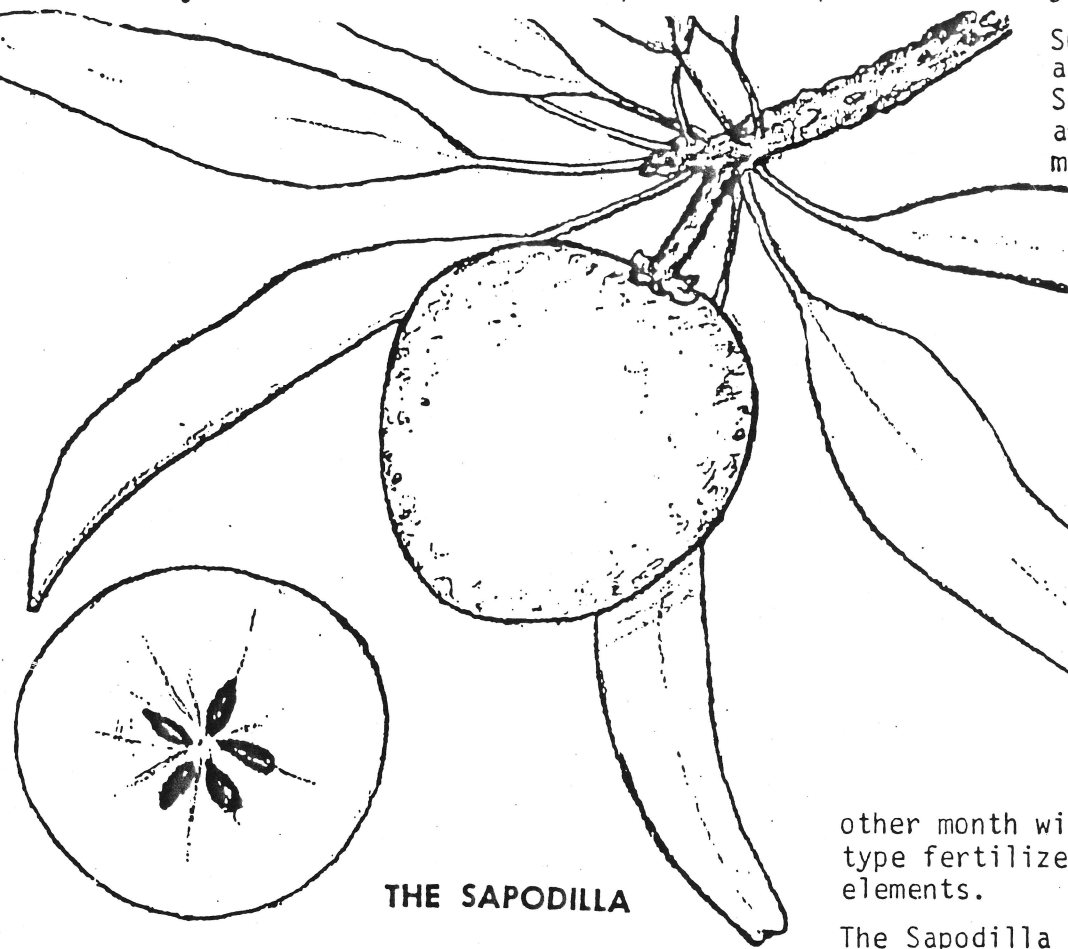


TROPICAL FRUIT OF THE MONTH - SAPODILLA - By Bob Heath

That the sapodilla will grow and fruit in central Florida can be attested to by several of our members who presently are enjoying the tasty brown fruit. Sapodilla is a member of the Sapotaceae family. You may find it listed as Manikara Zapota or Achras Sapota. In its native habitat in Central America and Mexico, it is a large slow growing evergreen tree, as is the Mamay Sapote, a near cousin. The tree is highly salt tolerant and adapts to a wide range of soil types and growing conditions. However, it is tropical and should be protected against temperatures below 30°. For this reason we recommend growing the trees in a container or in a location where they may be protected and can easily be covered.

A grafted tree will fruit when it is only three or four years old and perhaps four feet high and an inch or so in diameter. It is a dense, beautiful tree with thick glossy green leaves clustered at the tips of the branches. The wood is hard and termite resistant and is provided with a milky sap which is the source of the original chicle chewing gum.

The fruit is slow to develop from the small inconspicuous flowers and will normally reach maturity during the summer months, though some fruit may mature during the winter. The fruit is two to three inches long, oval, brown and scurfy. The flesh may be cream colored to brownish in the different species and normally provided with six or eight hard flat black seeds. It is normal to pick the fruit when it is mature and not allowed to ripen on the tree, as it may fall when mature and be spoiled at impact with the ground.



**THE SAPODILLA**

Suggested varieties are Prolific, Brown Sugar, Dade, Madella, and Russell. The tree may be grown from seed and later grafted from a tree with good quality fruit or air layering may be used to propagate new plants. A grafted tree will normally fruit in three to four years. The leathery leaves vary in size but average three to four inches in length. They are elliptical and frequently pointed, about 2" wide, a dark glossy green on the upper surface and pale green underneath. Young trees should be well nourished and given plenty of water for rapid growth. They may be fertilized every

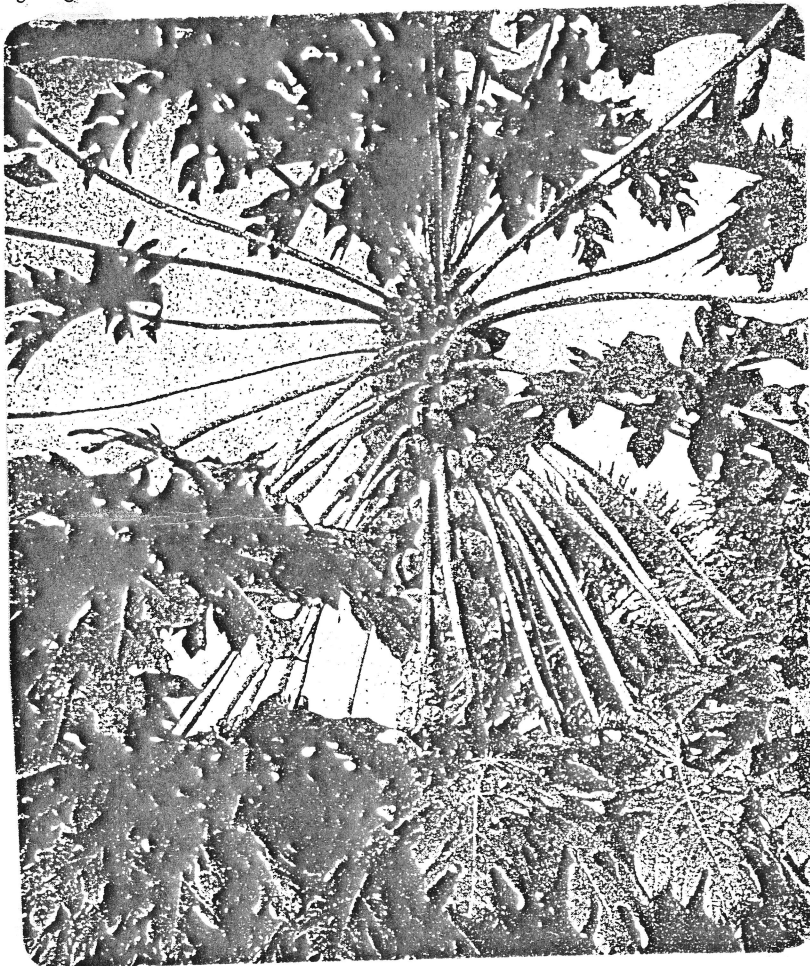
other month with a citrus or fruit tree type fertilizer provided with the minor elements.

The Sapodilla is a desert fruit to be eaten raw or it may be pulped and used

for ice creams or sherbets. Because of the chicle in the fruit, cooking usually results in a rubbery mess. It is reported that the Caribbean fruit fly will attack the Sapodilla but I have not had that problem, although the Caribbean fruit fly is very much in evidence in my neighborhood.

## THE FRUITFUL PAPAYA

When you consider the papaya's delicious taste, rapid growth, easy culture, and its great nutritional values, no dooryard in Florida should be without a few of these productive plants. Every home should include them in their landscaping for use in desserts and vegetable dishes. The fruit is at its best if allowed to remain on the tree until it's turning yellow, at which time it can be placed on the kitchen counter to fully ripen. There are many varieties of papaya and it is remarkable in variations of size, color, fragrance and flavor. Some rival small watermelons in shape and size while others are almost round and 3" to 4" in diameter. The flesh at maturity is a rich orange color with a smooth melon like consistency and from 1/2" to 2" in thickness. The fruit has a large cavity usually filled with numerous round gray-black seeds the size of small peas and enclosed in a gelatinous aril. The seeds



can be easily scooped out with a spoon and may be discarded, although some people are known to eat them in salads or with the pulp of the papaya. Cooked in a sugar syrup, the seeds of many varieties assume an interesting nutlike flavor.

The fruit in its full ripe stage may be eaten as a breakfast fruit served with a little lemon juice or cooked into many delectable desserts. It combines especially well with the more acid fruits like pineapple and citrus and works very well as a fruit milk shake with bananas, peaches or many tropical fruit, or cut up and cooked with the same seasoning used for a peach pie or an apple pie, or blended with milk, eggs & spices for a custard pie. It freezes well and lends itself to making sauces, butters, preserves and sweet spiced pickles prepared when unripe and still green in color. Papaya may be used green (perhaps to save the fruit from an impending freeze), cooked

with bacon & onions like a summer squash or grated as a slaw salad.

Papayas are an excellent source of Vitamin A, a good rich source of vitamin C and a fair source of riboflavin and some vitamin B1.

Papaya trees may be male, female, bisexual, hermaphroditic or neuter, but one cannot tell the sex of the trees until after they begin to produce flowers. The trees are heavy feeders and grow rapidly in rich moist soil, although too much water will tend to rot the roots. From seed it will normally take over a year to produce fruit so the plants need to go through the first winter in a greenhouse or otherwise protected from the cold so they may fruit the next summer.

## PAPAYA PIE

3 cups raw papaya chunks (very ripe)  
 3/4 cup sugar  
 1/4 tsp nutmeg  
 1/8 tsp salt  
 1/4 tsp allspice  
 1 Tbs flour  
 1 Tbs water  
 butter

Peel, seed and cut papaya into bite size pieces. Fill unbaked pie shell with papaya. Cover with mixture of sugar, spices, salt & flour. Add water and dot with butter. Drape top crust over the pie. Crimp or flute the edges and cut four or five vents in the top. Bake at 425° F for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 350° F & bake 30-40 minutes more until top is browned.

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## PAPAYA CUSTARD PIE

2 cups stewed papaya  
 1 cup brown sugar  
 2 eggs slightly beaten  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 3/4 tsp ginger  
 1 tsp cinnamon  
 1/2 tsp allspice  
 2 cups milk

Bake a large pie crust in hot oven about 8 minutes. Blend papaya and mix with sugar, eggs, salt & spices. Add milk, stirring to keep mixture smooth. Pour into partially baked pie shell and bake in 350° oven for about 45 minutes or until firm.

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RFCI Tampa Bay  
 4109 DeLeon St  
 Tampa FL 33609



**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

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 TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617