



NEWSLETTER

MAY 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: JAMES LEE

WEBSITE: www.rarefruit.org (Charles Novak)

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

NEXT MEETING: MAY 12 2002

MEETING PLACE: MEETING WILL BE HELD AT SAME LOCATION AS JAN. MEETING @ THE UNIV. OF SOUTH FLORIDA, BUILDING WCC (WESTSIDE CONFERENCE CENTER). SEE MAP PAGE 02-35.

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKER THIS MONTH IS OUR GOOD FRIEND FROM THE PALM BEACH COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE, GENE JOYNER. Gene's visits to our meetings are always enjoyed by our members, to allow for renewal of long time friendships. Gene is a knowledgeable authority on tropical fruiting trees and will be providing a slide presentation of tropical fruiting plants suitable for growing in the Tampa Bay area. He will also be available to answer questions and identify plants if you have questions that need answers or plants that need identifying. We will also have our tasting table & plant raffle. Please contribute. All in all, it should be an exceptionally interesting meeting, so we expect to see a large crowd. We know it is Mothers Day & we suggest that members bring their mothers or children, as the case may be.

Thank you Thank you Thank you

To all members who worked at the USF Sale in April. Your efforts made it a great success.

NEW MEMBERS:

Allison Archer	Tampa	Joe & Susan O'Rourke	Clearwater
Alberto Berrios	Tampa	Robert Parrish	Tampa
Herman & Lucy Carroll	Valrico	Frank Powell	Tampa
Shaun & Ailie Chung	Odessa	Scott & Katterina Richardson	Tampa
Anne & Lenny Cimador	Land O'Lakes	Rick Sanchez	Tampa
Gabriel Foo	St. Petersburg	Anna Scott	St. Petersburg
Adolfo Fragenas/Cledny	Tampa	Alan Smith	Largo
Francis Hyndman	Riverview	A. Myles Stastny	Spring Hill
Michael Jaster	Bradenton	Susan Sullivan	Odessa
Mikel Kennedy	Wesley Chapel	Elizabeth Swager	Temple Terrace
Michael Lloveras	Clearwater	Bernadette & Jack Villanueva	Tampa
Karla O'Berry	Lacoochee	Marion Smithmyer-Cranmer	Odessa
Mark & Lisa Titzel	Riverview	Robert Urda	St. Augustine

UPCOMING EVENT:

MANATEE RARE FRUIT COUNCIL ANNUAL RARE FRUIT TREE SALE

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2002 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

Manatee Convention Center, 1 Haben Blvd. Palmetto, FL

Free admission, free parking. For information call Larry Rued (941) 722-9550

**From the President
Jimmy Lee**

The USF Spring Plant Festival was a success. A huge "THANK YOU" to all the club members who helped with the sale. We had a good time and the weather was nice. We had a total of 21 new memberships. A warm welcome to our new members and we hope to see you at the May meeting. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (813) 982-9359.

On April 20 Charles Novak, Sally Lee and I gave grafting and air layering demonstrations at the USF Botanical Garden. Approximately 40 people (including some of our club members) attended the workshop. Everyone was very interested in learning to propagate his/her own plants.

Our scheduled speaker for the May meeting is Gene Joyner. He is one of our favorite speakers and we have always enjoyed his tropical and rare fruit presentations. We always have a large turnout for our Mother's Day meeting. To all Mothers – we wish you a Happy Mother's Day.

As I am also the Program Chairman, please let me know of anyone you think could be a prospective speaker at one of our meetings.

Scheduled Programs:

May 12: Gene Joyner of Unbelievable Acres Botanical Garden
June 9: Monica Brandies on Herbs
July 13 & 14: Tropical Plant Fair at the USF Botanical Garden

GRAFTING KNIVES: The Club has grafting knives available for purchase by club members who would like to graft their own plants. Contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399 or see him at the next meeting.

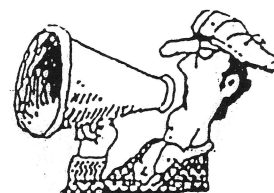
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DUES (\$18): Please check your mailing label for a red mark. The red mark indicates your membership expired in March or April. Please pay your dues at the May meeting or Mail your check by May 25 to the following address. Make check payable to:
Tampa Bay RFCI and mail to: Charles Novak

2812 N. Wilder Road
Plant City, FL 33565-2669

If you feel this notice is in error or you have questions, please contact me at (813) 754-1399 or email me: c.novak@worldnet.att.net. Thanks! Charles Novak, Membership

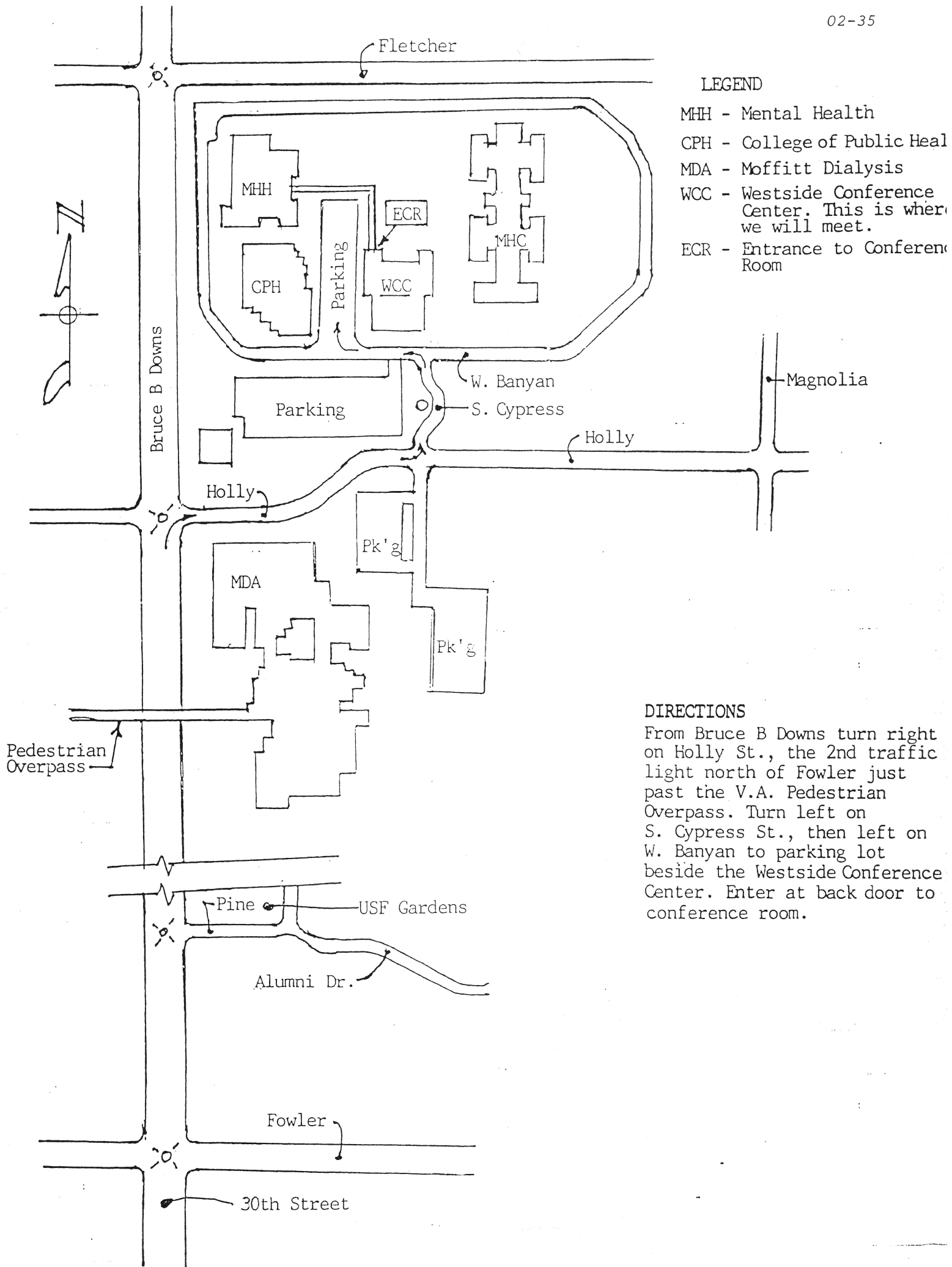
MEMBERS CORNER

NEEDED: 1 gallon pots any quantity. Bring to meeting on Mothers Day or call Sally Lee @ 982-9359 for pick up.



OBITUARY

Sadly, we report that one of our most active members recently passed away. Art Hedstrand was very active in the club, attending sales and other functions and offering a wealth of knowledge on fruiting plants. Art also wrote articles for the newsletter, visiting some of the most interesting gardens of several of our members and describing their plantings. He will be missed for his pleasant demeanor, his interest in fruiting plants and his articles in the newsletter.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

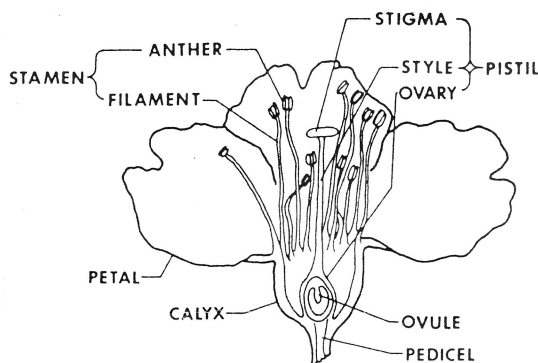
APR-MAY 2002

by PAUL ZMODA

It sure is satisfying to watch our fruiting plants produce flowers, for without flowers there can be no fruit. For example, when our plum trees' buds open and entire trees turn white with blooms, I cannot describe the feeling I get knowing this miracle is sure to lead to plums - and lots of them - or does it?

How many of you growers have witnessed flowers on your specimens and not had a single fruit develop to ripeness? Most of you, I'd bet. Let us explore some of the reasons you didn't get fruit.

To begin, most plants' goal is to produce seeds which ensure future generations. The fruits of the plants are a part of the seed-producing process in most cases. Plants often will not produce flowers for several seasons. They simply are not mature enough to make reproductive tissues which can lead to fruit. The maturing process requires well developed root systems, adequate leaf surface areas, enough sunlight energy and proper climate to make fruit (and more importantly) seeds.



PERFECT FLOWER (DIAGRAMMATIC)

Some species have male and female flower parts on each tree. These monoecious plants produce flowers which are "perfect", that is, have pistils and stigmas. When the male pollen finds its way to the female stigmas, pollination occurs. This will lead to fruit - but not always.

Some trees are designed by nature to not accept their own pollen. This is called self-incompatibility. Self-fertilization does little to ensure genetic diversity which is a must if the progeny is to adapt and survive hard times. A different, unique member of

their own species is required to cross with, before fruit may be formed. Diverse genes are very important here; making air layered, cuttings or grafted trees will not remedy the situation since all of the propagated plants are genetically identical. Seedlings are required which are almost always genetically unique. It is for this reason that I try to raise two seedlings at a time of unknown trees in case they turn out to be incompatible.

Other trees may be dioecious. This means separate plants carry either male or female flowering plants. Some female dioecious trees will produce a few (in some cases seedless fruit) on their own but I recommend a male to complement her.

Some trees require lots of sunlight energy to activate the seed-producing systems. So planting in shade can inhibit fruit production. Also pollination can be dependent on the presence of the proper pollinators. Pollinators might be bees, flies, birds, beetles, bats, wind or other factors. We humans have learned to take the place of absent pollinators by utilizing brushes and other tools.

New plantings: soy beans, dwarf pawpaw, bananas, okra.



WHY I GROW GUAVAS (My Life Long Love Affair)

PATTI McGAULEY

Guavas give me that warm fuzzy feeling of any true soul food. I love guavas. Squirrels love guavas too. For years the interloping furballs would share their feast, but not so much anymore. Paul admits to doing what I am considering. (More on that later.)

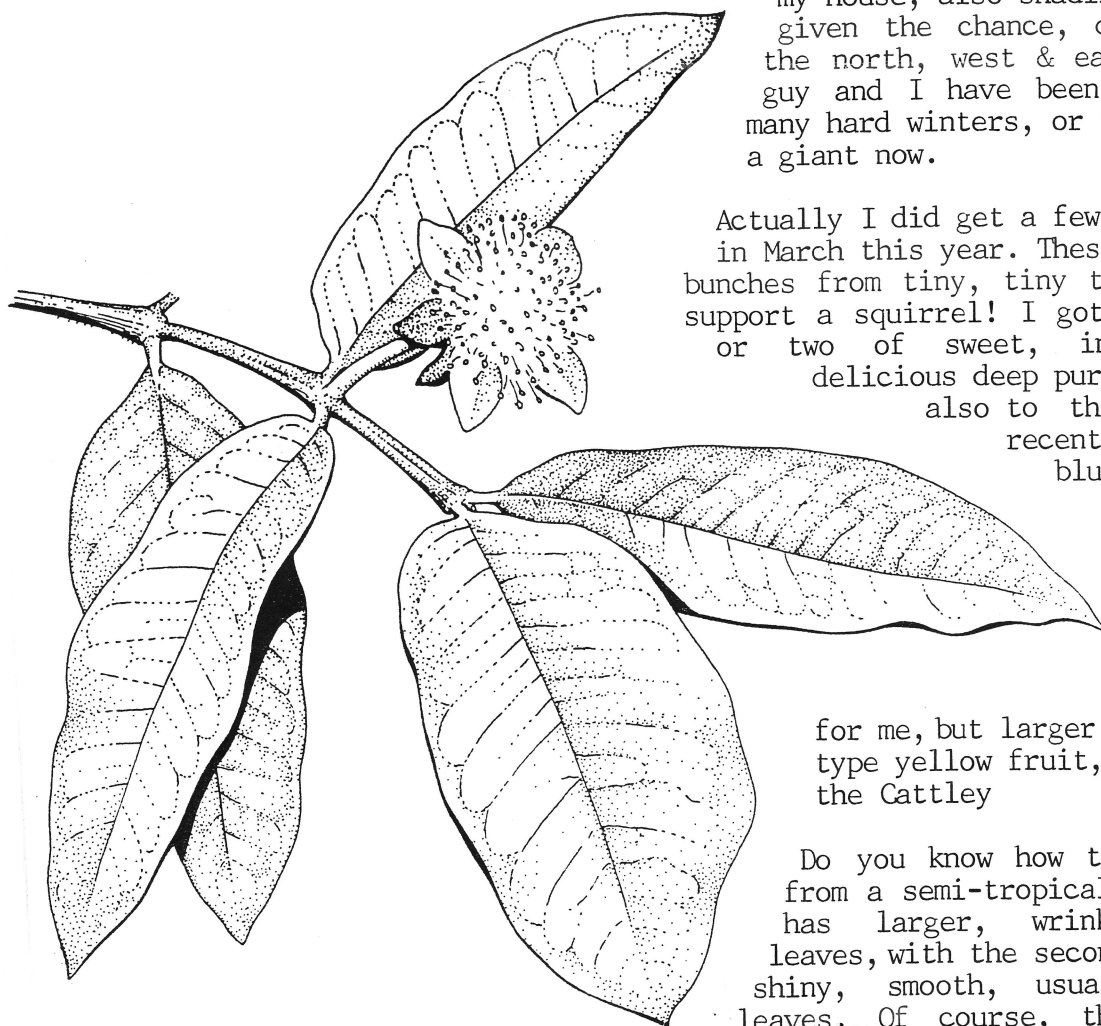
Fruits appearing to be naturally squirrel proof in my yard are many: Carambola, cherry varieties (Surinam & Barabdos), miracle fruit, papaya, pineapple, beauty berry, passion fruit, mango, longan, banana and most citrus varieties, as are pigeon peas and monstera. However, if "guava" is to be found in the name, the fruit becomes squirrel fodder. Last year they ate nearly my whole crop, even the hard, green unripe fruits being nibbled/ruined or totally devoured by the beasts. Their newest trick this year is to snip off feijoa (aka pineapple guava) finial branches with the beautiful, delicious blossoms, and drop them to the ground, some nibbled, others intact. Why they do it is a mystery to me, but then I have yet to learn to think like a squirrel.

Bob says they are just bushy tailed rats. I have a few other names for the cute little monsters. Mostly I just want them to share. At this point, I'm thinking of an air rifle or maybe a bazooka. Maybe I'll just yell for actor Bill Murray to do his "Caddyshack" trick. Raving aside, on looking back at the list of squirrel safe fruit, it is not nearly as bad as I had thought before actually documenting. It seems that at this point only my GUAVAS are in danger from the greedy ones.

There is a really big yellow guava tree shading a window of my home office. The tree is big enough for an adult to climb, and is centered outside the back wall of my house, also shading the roof & when given the chance, dropping fruit on the north, west & east sides. The big guy and I have been together through many hard winters, or it would really be a giant now.

Actually I did get a few strawberry guavas in March this year. These delights grow in bunches from tiny, tiny twigs too small to support a squirrel! I got to eat a handful or two of sweet, intensely flavored delicious deep purple fruits, thanks also to the oddness of our recent winter. A Burma blue guava (also a semi-tropical) just outside the other office window has set a few small buds. No, it does not produce blue fruit for me, but larger than usual Cattley type yellow fruit, much earlier than the Cattley

Do you know how to tell a tropical from a semi-tropical guava? The first has larger, wrinkly matt-finished leaves, with the second bearing smaller, shiny, smooth, usually darker green leaves. Of course, the cold hardiness



differential is self-explanatory.

A big pink pear shaped guava has not yet shown buds, and neither has the red, my favorite out-of-hand fruit in its season, is just putting out lots of lush new growth. Also no sign of buds yet from a yellow Cattley. There are lots of other guavas here, both tropical and semi-tropical, of unknown parentage, having volunteered to live here, and since none of them have borne fruit yet, are still in the happy surprise category.

I really goofed in not acting quickly enough to get one of Jimmy's big white guavas at our recent sale at USF Botanical Gardens. Perhaps he has more.

One of my earliest memories is of grandmother Maggie's kitchen loudly redolent with cooking guavas. Now guava aromas are definitely an acquired taste according to my grandfather Marvin who was mad for the finished product but would leave home while his tasty treat was being prepared. Sometimes as he ducked out the door, he would quip over his shoulder, "If we had a cat it would work itself to death covering up that stuff."

We girls would happily wash and chop up sinks full of aromatic ripe guavas that we had just picked in the back yard. Then grandmother did her magic. Soon there would be hot cooked fruit pulp dripping through a cheesecloth bag for the clear red jelly to come. For some of the larger fruits, she would cut them in half, scoop out the seedy middle and gently simmer the halves in sugar syrup with a bit of lemon juice and zest in long curls, to be served later as an elegant dessert of guavas and cream cheese served proudly on her best china. If Uncle Bill had made the trip to Ybor City, there would even be real toasted Cuban bread to devour with the family favorite. Sometimes he would bring a box of tender guava pastries, to be had only in Ybor City.

On extremely special occasions, Uncle Bill would treat us to the most elegant restaurant in Ybor City - The Columbia. We would dress in our finest Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, be greeted by a valet and finally be ushered into the main dining room, the one with the huge stage all across one side. Here we were

treated to unbelievably good multi-course Spanish meals, always ending with a simple flan or guavas & cream cheese and always accompanied by cafe con leche. Then I was truly a princess. We saw fada singers, flamenco dancers; glorious music and constuming that I was secretly convinced was all a glamorous setting just to celebrate the guava. Perhaps that was not so silly after all, considering that Mama Guava now reigns supreme at every Guavaween celebration.

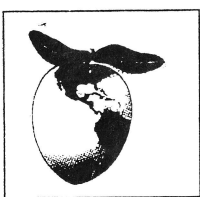
Oh, yes. I must tell you about Mama Bartlett's giant guava tree that shaded the east side of her tall Victorian house. I remember my leggy young husband clambering about it to pick the precious fruit, since she firmly believed that for any fruit to be eaten, it had to be plucked from its source, not simply harvested from the ground where it had fallen. Somehow gleaning was equated with sin. Her hand-picked guavas made a heavenly pinkish-golden jelly of which there was never enough, as I remember. Our Janet's guava jelly is to die for.

Most civilized folks had a cherished carefully tended guava or two tucked somewhere in their yard; and all were amazed at the wild guavas growing heedlessly in many vacant lots. Of course these untended trees were usually rather small, but still yielded treasure to those of us who knew the location & when to arrive to gather fruit of various sizes, shapes & colors. This is another reason I grow guavas. They are forgiving and will grow, if not thrive, in spite of me.

Guava paste, that sticky semi-firm, sliceable confection brings up another whole set of mouth-waterings. A big slice of guava paste with a slab of cream cheese and some crackers makes a repast fit for the queen I know myself to be when savoring this taste bud delight. Have you tried Linda's great guava juice?

A lovely trick of the guava is re-seeding itself, perhaps with the help of a few feathered friends. However it is done, there is a continual supply of little seedlings scattered hither & thither about my yard, usually near the base of another tree as though a guava-loving critter had temporarily perched just above. These are the little guys I lovingly dig up & pot and often take to RFCI meetings or sales.

(CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)



TROPICAL FRUIT WEEKEND

RARE FRUIT 2002 CLUB CONFERENCE

Dear Tropical Fruit Grower:

Our Tropical Fruit Clubs around Florida, California, and elsewhere need to communicate and share resources. In order to encourage this, the *Friends of the Fruit & Spice Park* is producing another annual "Rare Fruit Conference."

Previously seven of these events were held in Florida and one was presented in California. Each conference has featured a program of speakers on tropical fruits, a series of field trips, a banquet, a barbeque and discussions of cooperative activities among our clubs.

In the past, these meetings were very well received and a lot of fun. This year it will be held at the Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead, Florida on July 11, 12, 13 & 14, 2002. All clubs are invited to attend. Members will be charged a \$50.00 registration fee. The fees will be used to supply speakers with airfare, meals for registered participants and hospitality supplies. We have speakers coming from around Florida, California, Brazil and Thailand. I would like to suggest each rare fruit club also donate \$100.00 or more to help us bring new speakers to the conference from distant areas. This will allow us to pool our resources and bring in speakers that have not been heard. This year the keynote speakers are Dr. Charles Clement and Mr. Michael Ferrero.

Advanced registration will be extremely helpful. Registered participants will visit local nurseries and experience a field trip to rare plantings on the Keys. Also included in the four-day event are visits to packinghouses, guest speakers and a plant exchange. Guests will be treated to a B.B.Q, rare fruit tasting and a banquet during our travels.

Try to attend this exciting event! Call or write me with any suggestions for this conference. This program is for expert to beginner.

Sincerely,

Chris Rollins
Fruit & Spice Park Manager

REGISTRATION FORM

Tropical Fruit Weekend

Rare Fruit Conference, July 11-14, 2002

Fruit & Spice Park
24801 SW 187 Ave.
Homestead, FL 33031

tel: 305-247-5727, fax: 305-245-3369, email: fsp@miamidade.gov

Name: _____ Amount Enclosed (\$50 each person): _____

Address: _____

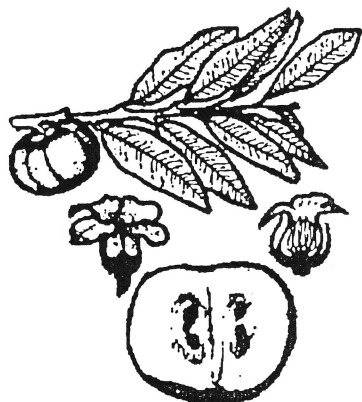
Telephone: _____, Fax: _____, Email: _____

Please make checks payable to:

**Tropical Fruit & Vegetable Society of the Redland
(TFVS)**

FAMILY - EBENACEAE

53. *Diospyros discolor* - Velvet apple, Butter fruit



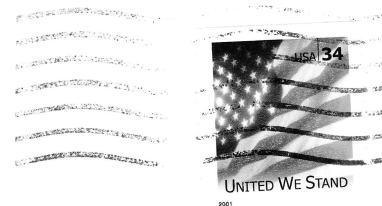
A Philippine tree reaching a height of 45 feet. Leathery leaves are hairy beneath and up to 10 inches long. Male flowers are whitish and in clusters while female flowers are single. Roundish fruit is purplish to orange in color and flesh white to yellowish. Pulp is eaten fresh or preserved. It is sweet and aromatic. Propagated primarily from seed.

RFCI, Tampa Bay Chapter
4109 DeLeon St
Tampa FL 33609

54. *Diospyros ebenaster* - Chocolate pudding fruit, Black sapote



Large tree with black wood with brown stripes and native to India. Leathery leaves to 4 inches long. Male flowers in clusters and female flowers singly. Greenish-black fruit is about 3 to 4 inches in diameter and bitter brown to black pulp. Fruit is eaten fresh, made into jelly or pudding. Plants started from seed and grafting.



First Class Mail

ELIJAH NEWCOMBE
314 DEER PARK AVE.
TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617