



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 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: JUNE 9 2002

MEETING PLACE: SAME LOCATION AS MAY MEETING @ THE UNIV. OF SOUTH FLORIDA, BUILDING WCC (WESTSIDE CONFERENCE CENTER). SEE MAP PAGE 02-44.

PROGRAM: THE PROGRAM THIS MONTH IS OUR OWN RENOWNED AUTHOR MONICA BRANDIES. SHE WILL be talking about growing herbs in central Florida, a subject which is of vital interest to many of our members. Monica is very knowledgeable on this subject which we should find very interesting. Also at this meeting we will have our fabulous tasting table and our exciting raffle. Bring something to the meeting and socialize.

From the President Jimmy Lee

I'm sure everyone enjoyed the May meeting as much as I did. Gene Joyner's presentation on tropical fruits for this area was both interesting and informative. We had a great turnout-approximately 110 members, friends and family. We hope to take another club trip to Gene's Unbelievable Acres Botanical Gardens later in the year. The tasting table was filled with delicious dishes to sample and there were many plants donated to the plant exchange. A sincere 'Thank You' to all who donated food and plants.

The Hillsborough River State Park is having a Plant and Flower Festival on June 8 (10am-2pm). The club will participate by setting up an information and membership display. Members are invited to come to the Plant Festival (admission to the Park is waived for this event). If you have never been to the Hillsborough State Park (or have not been there lately), this would be a good opportunity to check out the campsites, picnic facilities, swimming pool, fresh-water fishing area and nature trails. The Park is located at 15402 US Hwy 301 N. in Thonotosassa.

The USF Botanical Garden's Tropical Plant Festival will be July 13 & 14. We are planning to participate again this year. If you helped with this event last year then I'm sure you remember how busy we were. In addition to helping people select their fruiting plants we prepared several hundred sample plates of fresh fruits and baked items; and also served several hundred cups of fruit juices. *We were very busy!* So, all you bakers be thinking about what you will bake and donate for this event. We really need your help! There will be more information in the July newsletter.

Scheduled Programs:

June 9:	Monica Brandies-The growing and uses of Herbs
July 13 & 14:	Tropical Plant Festival at the USF Botanical Garden
August 11:	Tom Economou-Rare & Tropical Fruits

WHAT'S HAPPENING

May-June

by PAUL ZMODA

Thanks to Monica Brandies' advice, I visited a plant nursery in Seffner recently that was worth the trip. It's called Dee's Trees and is located on Taylor Road north of MLK Blvd. I was very impressed with the quality of the fruit trees, most of which are low chill varieties well suited for our area. They carry items I've not seen elsewhere such as plums and peaches and a low chill apricot recently released by the University of Florida. That should be interesting here. I purchased "Tropic Snow", a white peach to replace mine which is declining, and a nectarine called "UF Queen".

Meanwhile, we are eating our own "Tropic Beauty" peaches. At my original home, mulberries set an enormous crop this year. Pineapples and citrus are fruiting well. The pecan has lots of male catkins (flowers) hanging on it. I didn't see any of the smaller female flowers, but we're hoping they are there. This tree has formed a very strong, straight central leader to over 20'. A grumichama is loaded with flowers so the blueberry-like fruit should be along soon. Most exciting is the jaboticaba, flowering sparsely for the first time. Its age is estimated to be 15 years. I've had it planted in the ground for 12 years.

Back at Flatwoods Fruit Farm, the pistachio nut "Kerman" top grafts are sprouting nicely. Last year's top grafts of "Ichi Kei Ke Jiro" persimmon are holding several fruits. "Honan Red" persimmon chip grafts are almost 3' tall now. I've grafted some northern pawpaw onto soursop rootstocks in the hope that they will grow faster. Why soursop rootstocks? A little butterfly told me to! For details, see me at our next meeting.

New plantings: Hibiscus, peach.

Tasting Table May 2002

Conard	Pecan pies	Branesky	Jakfruit, watermelon, cantelope, papaya salad
M. Smith	Pesto salad	Yoblonski	Vanilla pudding and fruit cocktail
Zmoda	Papaya chunks	Stout	Pasta salad, Pumpkin cake
Terenzi	Strawberry cheesecake	Lamour	Oatmeal-raisin cookies
Springer	Green beans	Musgraves	Pina Colada cream cake
M. Dawkins	Guava Jelly	Mann	Jaboticaba fruit
T. Scott	Vegetable slaw	T. Miller	Orange and grapefruit slices
Pat McGauley	Red passion fruit	J. Elliot	Curried beef & new potato salad
Lee	Fried wontons, Strawberry cake		
Novak	Blueberry cobbler, guava-banana nut bread, lemon cake, blueberries, carambola jelly, fruit juices		

And other delicious dishes not listed on the signup sheet. **THANKS!!!** Please remember to list your contributions to our *fantastic* tasting table on the signup sheet located on the tasting table. See Sally Lee for your free plant exchange ticket.

NEW COOKBOOK: As many of you know the council published a cookbook in 1996. We are now in the process of putting together additional recipes for a second edition. We would like to include club members' favorite fruit recipe(s)-tropical fruit and citrus. Please give a copy of your recipe(s) to Sally Lee or Linda Novak at the next club meeting or mail a copy of your recipe to either:

Sally Lee: 11911 Thonotosassa Rd.
Thonotosassa, FL 33592

or

Linda Novak: 2812 N. Wilder Rd.
Plant City, FL 33565

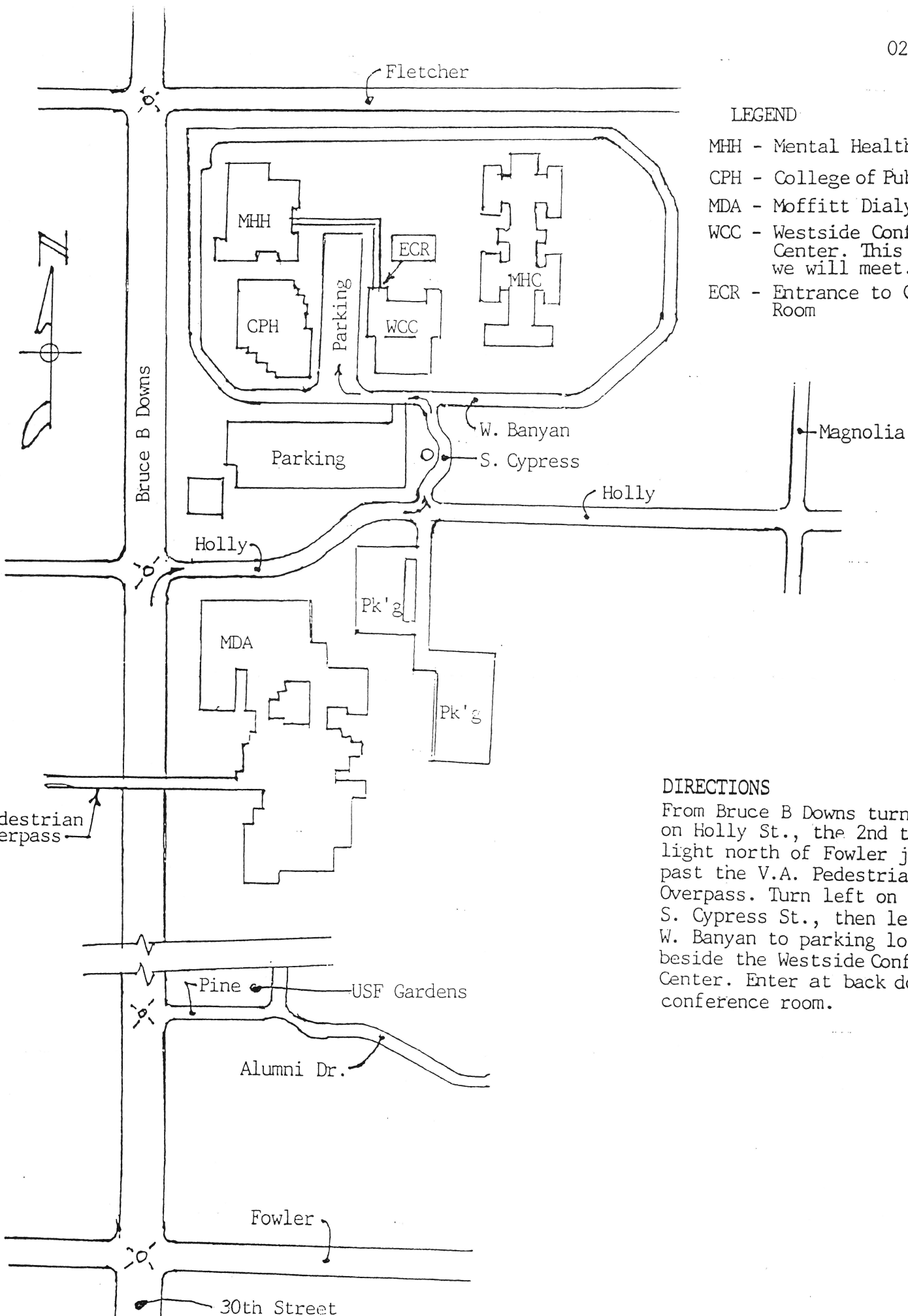
MAY PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Papaya	Heath	?
Rangoon Creeper	"	?
French Mulberry	"	Theresa Miller
Banana	"	?
Passion Fruit	"	?
Pineapple	"	Steve B.
Sugar Apple	"	Marvin Hymes
Rose Apple	"	Paul Branesky
Eugenia Confusa	"	?
Philipene Oregano	"	?
Raja Pura Banana	Roush	?
Jade Plant	"	Janet Conard
Desert Rose	"	Ed Musgrave
Sea Shell Cactus	"	?
Hens & Chickens	"	Staci Reed
Red Papaya	Shane & Mayra Smith	?
Malanga	"	Connie Roush
Puerto Rican Cilantro	"	?
Cachucha Peppers	"	Paul Branesky
Habanero Peppers	"	"
"	"	Steve Bell
Cactus	Hendry	?
Papaya Fruit	Paul Branesky	Janet Conard
"	"	James Davis
"	"	Sally Lee
Mango Fruit	"	James Davis
"	"	Maureen Royal
"	"	Bob Heath
"	"	P. Berry
Papaya	Marvin Dawkins	?
Inga (Peru)	Stark	Fed Roush
"	"	?
2 Pineapple Plants	J. Gibson	?
4 Monstera	Robert Bodycott	?
Red Neo. Bromeliad	Verna Dickey	Karen Kramer
"	"	P. Berry
Papaya	Roberta Harris	Mark Titzel
Aloe	"	Pat McGauley
"	Sally Lee	Steve Bell
"	"	Marvin Hymes
"	"	Theresa Miller
" 3	"	?
Guava	Pat McGauley	?
Rosemary	T. Scott	Lisa Titzel
"	"	Theresa Miller
Marjoram 2	"	?
Mango Seedling	"	Jose Sanjurjo
Longan "	"	?
Recotte Reedia 4	Charles Novak	McDuffie
Jack Fruit	"	Roshan Premraj
Avocado	"	Staci Reed
Pint Blueberries	"	?
Hens & Chickens	?	Ed Musgrave

Fletcher

LEGEND

- MHH - Mental Health
 CPH - College of Public Health
 MDA - Moffitt Dialysis
 WCC - Westside Conference Center. This is where we will meet.
 ECR - Entrance to Conference Room



DIRECTIONS

From Bruce B Downs turn right on Holly St., the 2nd traffic light north of Fowler just past the V.A. Pedestrian Overpass. Turn left on S. Cypress St., then left on W. Banyan to parking lot beside the Westside Conference Center. Enter at back door to conference room.

FRUITING TREES FOR CENTRAL FLORIDA

by GENE JOYNER

Gene indicated that he would start with something simple and familiar before he gets to some of the more unusual plants, so he began with bananas. Bananas can be grown anywhere in Florida; granted that up in the panhandle they get frozen to the ground every winter, but the plant does come back and sometimes people in those areas can get them up long enough between freezes to get bananas. Even across the line in Georgia, Gene indicated that he's heard of people who have successfully fruited bananas outdoors in a protected location. It's fortunate that we have such a large number of bananas and plantains to choose from. Over 100 types of bananas are grown in Florida, so if bananas are your thing, you could have your whole yard landscaped with bananas.

On the first slide Gene showed us the commercial banana, the Gran Naine, which is grown extensively in Puerto Rico and Honduras. It will produce a stalk 3 to 3½ feet long with over 200 individual bananas.

Some bananas are also very ornamental. He showed us the ice cream banana or Java Blue, which has a kind of blue gray color. As they mature, of course, they turn yellow just as all other bananas. The pulp is softer than other bananas with a strong banana flavor that makes it very good for baking breads, muffins & such. A banana with a red skin which always attracts a lot of attention is called the Jamaican Red, a tall variety up to 20' and a dwarf variety only 7 or 8'. The bananas come out a wine red, a color they maintain all the way to maturity. You don't get much indication when they ripen. They are a very good tasting banana with an orangish pulp and up to 7" in length.

The Apple banana is another favorite for dooryard culture. It's a tall banana 18 to 20'. Individual bananas are 6 to 7" long with a thin skin, high quality but without a very strong banana flavor, reminiscent of an apple. It is not a commercial banana because of the skin but as a dooryard specimen it should be rated in the top 3 that are grown in Florida.

The Ae Ae banana has beautiful foliage with white & green stripes on the leaves and on the fruit. Unfortunately, at

maturity it loses the stripes and turns an even yellow color just like other bananas.

The Praying Hands banana is one that gets a lot of attention at shows. Gene had some excellent slides of the banana hands showing all the bananas grown together in one big bunch. It tastes like a regular banana but is unique in the way the bananas grow. Gene recommends cutting the whole hand straight across about the middle of each banana and scooping the pulp out with a spoon. However, only the skins are grown together and each individual banana can be pulled apart from the stalk and eaten individually. At that point the entire hand has to be sealed up in a plastic bag because the adjacent banana is exposed.

The Thousand Finger banana will make a stalk up to 7' long with literally 1000 bananas on one stalk. Unfortunately, they're only about an inch long, little teeny bite sized bananas. Gene's slides showed the whole stalk of bananas with each banana packed like sardines with its neighbors. Individual bananas cannot be removed except at the top end so to eat the bananas, you have to start peeling them off from one end.

The Hua Moa is a big fat banana, also called the beer can banana, because each individual banana is about the size of a beer can. The Hua Moa is grown commercially in south Florida and always attracts a lot of attention at fruit shows. The Hua Moa has a higher starch content than most bananas & is often used like a plantain.

The biggest banana is called the Rhino Horn. They start out almost a foot long when they come out of the blossom and grow from there. The individual fruit will get up to 20" in length & 2½" thick. Obviously one fruit will feed several people.

There are some 5000 varieties of bananas in the world, a big part of which are grown as ornamentals for their large beautiful flowers, several of which Gene showed us in his slides.

Barbados Cherry

The Barbados cherry is a fruit well appreciated for its high Vitamin C content. As a landscape plant it can get 15 to 18' tall, makes a large shrub or a small tree and may also be used for hedging. It's a small cherry like fruit that produces several times a year. Fruit when ripe are brilliant red, about an inch across and have a yellowish pulp with 3 seeds. One fruit has more than your daily requirement of Vitamin C, so in lieu of a Vitamin C tablet, eat a Barbados cherry. The fruit makes good jelly and retains that high Vitamin C. The fruit is used commercially for a variety of fruit juices and Gerber uses it for baby food. The taste ranges from sweet to sour, the sour fruit having the highest Vitamin C and sweet fruit the lowest.

Black Sapote

The black sapote or chocolate pudding fruit comes from Mexico. It's another one that produces a lot of interest. It is closely related to the persimmon and the flowers & fruit resemble persimmon. The fruit looks like a big green tomato when mature and they ripen from Thanksgiving to early June. When they're ripe, they're still green on the outside & inside a rich chocolate color, almost black, with the texture of chocolate pudding. The pulp does not have a chocolate flavor, is sweet, custard like & more like the persimmon flavor. Like the persimmon, the fruit has to be very soft to be ready to eat. They shouldn't be left on the tree too long; otherwise, they will soften and drop and make a large brown splotch on the ground. Pick the fruit when they're still firm like avocados, put them on the counter for about 3 to 5 days & when they get soft like a ripe avocado, they're ready to eat. They're excellent for fresh eating and also make excellent milk shakes & ice cream and can be used in muffins and bread.

Cashew Nut & Cashew Apple

The cashew nut can be grown in central Florida but may need protection at times. Many people grow them as container plants and take them inside during freezing weather. The cashew will fruit in 2 years from seed and Gene says he's seen trees only 18 to 24" with cashews on them, so they don't have to get that big to have fruit. This would indicate that it lends

itself to growing as a potted plant. Gene had a slide of the fruit & nut. The nut hangs from the bottom of the red fruit like the seed on a podocarpus. The fruit is called the cashew apple. It's about the size of a Bartlett pear and is either red or yellow depending on the variety. Each cashew fruit has just 1 nut so we can see why they're so expensive. The trees only reach 15 to 20' as a landscape plant but as a container plant it can be kept at 4 or 5'. The fruit is used commercially for the making of wine in South America. It is also used for pies and other desserts. The nut is surrounded in the shell by a very strong caustic oil so the nut has to be roasted to drive off the oil before it is cracked, shelled and eaten. This is why you'll never see raw cashew nuts, they're always roasted. Gene also noted the fact that the cashew is related to poison ivy. The nuts have to be roasted outside as the smoke is very toxic and should be avoided at all costs.

Carambola or Star Fruit

The carambola is one of Gene's favorite fruit. It comes from the Far East and at present there are 30 to 40 varieties grown in Florida. Gene has 17 varieties in his gardens. He had slides of the carambola in fruit to show the tremendous productivity of the tree. A tree well cared for and properly fertilized will literally put on fruit to break branches. Grafted trees will fruit very young, less than 3' tall on occasion. Gene indicated that some of the newer varieties produce fruit as long as 8", which is an exceptionally good sized carambola. The fruit are very versatile & can be used in a variety of ways. They are an excellent dooryard tree. The fruit also freezes well so they can be frozen and used throughout the year.

Canistel

Canistel or egg fruit is from Central America. The trees look somewhat like mango trees with long slender leaves. The fruit when ripe is pumpkin colored, usually pointed at the bottom end and can be anywhere from 2" to 5", depending on the variety. The pulp is the same color as the outside, pumpkin colored, with 1 big shiny seed. Gene says the flavor reminds him of a sweet potato and if you make a pie egg fruit, it's guaranteed

you'll think you're eating pumpkin pie. It also makes a very good milk shake. A well treated tree can produce heavy crops but it's difficult to tell when the fruit is ripe because it yellows up before it reaches maturity. It will ripen on the tree and if you are not careful, the fruit will fall off, producing a nice big splotch on the grass.

Guava

The guava is found throughout the world in tropical regions. With only a few exceptions, guavas all have yellow skin at maturity and will flower & produce fruit year round unless they are stopped by winter conditions. Fruit size can be anywhere from walnut size up to 4". Flesh color inside is usually pink or white and various shades of pink, some almost red, a very dark pink. Some guavas have a very thin skin and are easily bruised; others have a fairly thick skin which are the ones used for guava shells & other pastry products. The fruit makes a high quality jelly, guava butter, guava candy, guava chews & many other guava products. The guava fruits very easily and starts fruiting when it's only 3 or 4' tall. The seeds are small enough that you can eat the guava whole as a fresh fruit, seeds & all. The Cattley guava, either yellow or red, frequently called lemon or strawberry guava, is frequently used as an ornamental although the fruit is some varieties will get as big as a golf ball. The Cattley guava tree may grow up to 30' whereas the common guava will be about 20'.

Jaboticaba

This is the fruit that, without exception, people who see it for the first time, stand there with their mouth hanging open because of the way it fruits. It's native to the Brazilian swamps, a small to medium sized tree with very small leaves and attractive brown peeling bark. From seed it may take up to 10 years to get the first fruit, although frequently the tree will fruit earlier. When the tree blooms, the flowers cover the main branches and trunk, small white flowers encompassing the branches and trunk like little cotton balls. The blooms only last 1 day. In the morning you find the entire tree is white but the next day all the blooms are gone. In 24 days, if they're pollinated, you

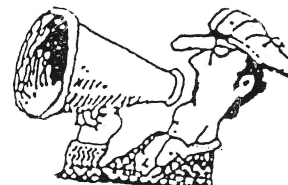
have shiny black fruit decorating the trunk and main branches. The fruit looks like big black muscadine grapes and resembles the muscadine in flavor & texture. Trees produce profusely and frequently up to 5 crops a year, each crop taking only 24 days from flower to fruit. The fruit can be used for juice, jellies or making wine and, of course, are great out of hand. The trees are fairly cold hardy, taking temperatures down to around 25° without any major damage. In Brazil the trees frequently get up to 60'.

Jackfruit

The biggest tree fruit in the world is the fabulous jackfruit. It is from southeast Asia. In India there are documented accounts of 110 pound fruit. In Florida about 60 pounds is the largest recorded. Gene had slides of the jackfruit hanging on the tree. The tree blooms in the winter about Christmas time, producing flowers, and the ripe fruit season is from July thru October. As they ripen, they get a little bit lighter green in color and give off a very strong pungent aroma and get a little bit soft to the touch. During the development period, they are hard as a rock. Inside the fruit has an off yellowish white pulp with 50 to 75 seeds as big as your thumb. The seeds can be roasted or boiled. They're quite edible and taste like chestnuts. You should be able to find roasted jackfruit seeds in the Oriental stores. The pulp around the seeds is very crisp & is eaten as a fresh fruit. The starchy part in the middle is usually cooked as a vegetable. Everything within the outside spiny rind is edible. The jackfruit can make a big tree, often 40 to 50' high. People mostly keep them topped, though. Just imagine trying to wrestle a 40 pound fruit down from 20' up on a ladder, a good recipe for disaster. Gene recommends topping trees out at 15' maximum because you can get just as much fruit and the fruit will develop low, even sometimes touching the ground. Gene indicated he has about 100 trees on his property. The fruit wholesales at \$2.00 a pound, so for a 40 pound fruit, that's \$80.00.

(CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)

WANTED: 2 gallon plastic pots any quantity. Bring to meeting on June 9 or call Paul Zmoda @ 813-677-5985 for pick up.



New Club Directory: A new club directory will be printed in August. If your name, address, phone number, or e-mail address has changed please give the correct information to Charles Novak. Phone: (813)754-1399 e-mail: c.novak@worldnet.att.net

* TROPICAL FRUIT FESTIVAL *

Presented by the

RFCI, Palm Beach Chapter and the Palm Beach County Extension Service

SATURDAY JUNE 29, 2002

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Free Admission and Parking

MOUNTS BOTANICAL GARDEN

531 North Military Trail

West Palm Beach

561-233-1757

www.mounts.org

RFCI Tampa Bay Chapter
4109 DeLeon St
Tampa FL 33609



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TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617

