



# NEWSLETTER

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

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

NEXT MEETING: JULY 13 & 14 (SEE BELOW)

PROGRAM: OUR PROGRAM THIS MONTH WILL BE PARTICIPATION IN THE U S F 2002 TROPICAL PLANT FAIR (SEE BELOW). OF COURSE THERE WILL BE NO TASTING TABLE NOR PLANT RAFFLE. HOWEVER, YOU MAY BRING FRUITING PLANTS TO THE SALE. REMEMBER, FRUITING PLANTS ONLY.

## U S F 2002 Tropical Plant Fair

The RFCI will be participating for the second time in the annual Tropical Plant Fair on July 13 & 14. This sale will be similar to the Spring & Fall Plant Festivals in which we normally participate, except that it will be confined to commercial nurseries and organizations with no club participation with the exception of the RFCI. All of our members are invited to help and are desperately needed to make the sale a success. We will be in a different location than we normally are at the Spring & Fall Plant Fairs, but our area will be roughly the same size. We expect this to be a social event as well as a money maker for the Club.

Our participation will begin around 1:00 Friday afternoon, July 12, raising tents, setting up tables, arranging plants & posters till about 6:00 pm. On Saturday, July 13, the Gardens will be open at 7:00 am for our final preparations.

The front gate will close at 9:00 am Saturday & Sunday and participants will have to enter by the side south gate after the front gate closes. All vehicles must be off the property by 9:00 am Saturday & Sunday. The Festival will end at 4:00 pm on Saturday & 3:00 pm on Sunday.

We will not have ID cards for RFCI workers available at this Sale. Tell the gate that you are an RFCI worker. If you are refused admittance, someone from our group will vouch for you to gain your admittance. Price for admission is \$2.00 otherwise.

Enter the Gardens from Bruce B Downs one block north of Fowler. Turn east on Pine Street & left at Alumni Drive. Go one block to the Gardens entrance on the left.

**New Members:** Sally Hruska      Plant City      FL

## TROPICAL FRUIT EXPO AT U S F

Our club participated in an educational fruit tree expo at USF on June 22. About 25 people attended to hear 4 club speakers and to see and taste an extensive array of tropical fruit. Al Hendry, Jimmy Lee, Charles Novak and Bob Heath spoke on a variety of fruiting plants suitable for central Florida, including avocados, guavas, pineapples, papayas, carambolas, etc., while Linda Novak and Sally Lee prepared fruit drinks and fruit & nut bread for tasting. Attendees showed great interest and enthusiasm despite threatening rain clouds overhead.

### From the President

Jimmy Lee

A big 'thank you' to Monica Brandies for sharing with us her vast knowledge of herbs and their uses. We all enjoyed and learned from her informative presentation.

Our next big event is the July 13-14 USF Botanical Garden Tropical Plant Fair. We will need several members to help on Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> to set up tents and to unload plants. If you are available to help please show up at the Garden at about 2 P.M. If you plan to sell plants, please try to bring the plants to the Garden Friday afternoon before 3 P.M. Members will get 70% of the selling price of the plants so please mark your plants accordingly. Please plan to help with this sale. We will need members to donate some of their delicious baked items thus sharing their creative uses of fruits with the public. In the past many people have requested the recipes of the items on the tasting plates. Please consider including a copy of the recipe(s) you use. If you have any extra fresh fruit please consider donating it for the tasting plates.

The club is in the process of making arrangements for a bus trip in early November to Gene Joyner's Unbelievable Acres Botanic Gardens. Look for more information in the upcoming newsletters.

#### Scheduled Programs:

July 13-14: USF Botanical Garden Tropical Plant Fair

August 11: Tom Economou-Rare & Tropical Fruits

September 8: 2nd Annual Picnic at the USF Botanical Garden

### **BAKED ITEMS AND FRESH FRUIT NEEDED FOR JULY 13-14 USF BOTANICAL GARDEN TROPICAL PLANT FAIR**

The club will have tasting plates available again this year for the public to sample fresh fruit and baked items made with fruit. We were very busy at last year's Tropical Plant Fair and expect a large crowd again this year. The tasting plates and tropical fruit juices were very popular with the public. A lot of people do not realize the many uses for fresh fruit including: eating out of hand, cooking, baking, sauces, salsas, ice creams and sherberts, jellies, jams, preserves, custards, fruit and vegetable salads, fruit drinks and wines. The tasting plates help to inform the public of the uses for the wonderful fruits we have available in this area.

We are asking club members to donate one or more baked items for the tasting plates. Cookies, small cupcakes, nut breads, etc., that can be easily cut and served would be greatly appreciated. Also, any donations of fresh fruit would be very helpful. If you have any questions or need a recipe please contact Sally Lee at (813)982-9359 or Linda Novak at (813)754-1399.

Also, we need volunteers to help prepare the tasting plates and to serve the fruit juices; so please help if you can.

#### Easy Do-It-Yourself Test for Soil pH

To Test for ALKALINE soil:

Add a few drops of vinegar to a tablespoon of dried garden soil. If soil fizzes, it's very alkaline, with a pH above 7.5.

To test for ACIDIC soil:

Add a pinch of baking soda to a tablespoon of wet soil. If soil fizzes, it's very acidic, with a pH less than 5.0.

## **Tasting Table      June 2002**

Cora Coronel	Espasol	Shane & Mayra Smith	Tostitos & homemade salsa
Thom Scott	Watermelon	Sharon Pilot	Cherry/pineapple Dump cake
Musgraves	Lemon Bars	Bob Heath	Papaya Nut Bread
Betty Bruder	Lemon Cookies	Marty Springer	Green beans & potatoes
Sophia Gaponiuk	Carrot Cake	Theresa Miller	Rosemary & thyme bread
Rose Terenzi	Chocolate cake & Pecan pie squares		
Sally & Jim Lee	Blueberry muffins, Pecan rolls, Rice & Stir fry chayote, Pecan crunchy rolls		
Linda Novak	Crunchy Lime cookies, Coconut cookies, Guava nut bread, Banana coconut Pound cake. Fruit Juices		

In addition, there were several items not listed on the sign up sheet. We greatly appreciate these delicious contributions to the tasting table. Your donation entitles you to a free plant exchange ticket-see Sally Lee for your ticket. *Thanks!!*

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

June-July 2002  
by PAUL ZMODA

While waiting for the summer rains to begin we kept an eye on our plants' water needs. The worst thing is watering trees farthest from the house where the hose is attached to the well. When the well slows, usually by 3 hours, we switch to city water. The vegetables really use water so we mulch heavily there as well as around most trees. We applied lots more horse manure, especially around the bananas. Fertilizers were applied around most trees also. Many air layers are being made as I am getting more successful with practice.

On May 21 I found our soursop fruit had parted from the stem with a clean break and was gently hanging in the stocking support. After a few days indoors, it became soft and ready to eat. As with the first one, it took 4 months to mature.

Grumichamas were very nice this year. I picked them when they were a dark red color. They appear like a squat cherry of the Rio Grande. Their projecting calices (opposite the stem end) are quite long. The flavor is pleasant.

New Plantings: Passionfruit, red okra, amaranth, wild plums.

## ROSEMARY LEMON MUFFINS

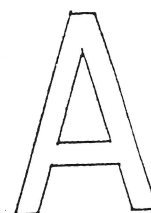
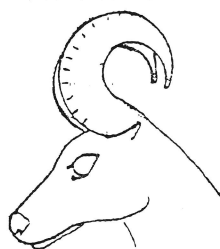
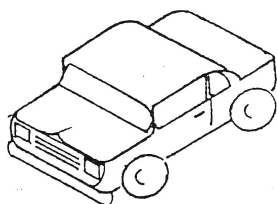
1 cup milk	1/4 tsp salt
2 Tbs minced fresh rosemary	2 eggs
1 Tbs grated lemon peel	1/2 cup (1/4 lb) butter or oleo
2 cups flour	3 Tbs sugar
1 tsp baking soda	

Combine milk, rosemary & lemon peel in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, simmer & stir over low heat for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. In a bowl combine flour, baking soda & salt. In a separate bowl, whisk eggs; stir in butter, sugar & milk until combined. Stir into dry ingredients. Fill paper lined or battered muffin cups (about 1 dozen) two-thirds full. Bake at 375°F for 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on wire rack.

## JUNE PLANT EXCHANGE

Surinam Cherry	Heath	?
Philipine Oregano	"	?
Rangoon Creeper	"	Sharon Pilot
Eugenia Confusa	"	Shane & Mayra Smith
Praying Hands Banana	"	Mark Titzel
Red Passion Fruit	"	Pat McGauley
Beauty Berry	"	Lisa Titzel
Guyana Chestnut	"	Ron Altic
Sea Grape	"	Shane & Mayra Smith
Ehretia Anacua	"	?
Cattaleya Orchid	Jose Sanjurjo	Shane & Mayra Smith
Banana	Lee	Jim Murrie
"	"	Shane & Mayra Smith
Tomato Plant	"	Shaun Chung
Tomato Plant	"	Deborah Byrd
Jack Fruit	Charles Novak	?
"	"	Theresa Miller
Loquat	"	?
White Sapote	"	?
Pineapple Head	"	?
Longan Seedling	Thom Scott	Ed Musgrave
Lychee "	"	?
3 Cannes plants	Leo Bruder	Susan Reed
Puerto Rican Cilantro 2	Shane & Mayra Smith	?
Rosemary 2	"	?
Habenero Peppers	"	Yuku Tanaka
"	"	"
Indian Curry	Don Haselwood	?
Sour Orange Seedlings	"	?
Papaya 2	"	Wiz & Raz
Papaya 4	"	Theresa Miller
Papaya 2	"	?
Brown Turkey Fig	Jim Stout	Thom Scott
"	"	Wiz & Raz
Aztec Sweet herb	Pat McGauley	?
Meiwa Kumquat	Verna Dickey	Jim Stout
Avocado	"	?
Banana	Susan McAveety	?
Lemon Grass	"	Jim Stout
White Rosemoss	Susan Reed	Lisa Titzel
Bullfrog Aloe	"	Eve Peters
Lemon Grass	"	Heath
"	"	?
Tropical Spinach	Nancy McCormack	?
Praying Hands Banana	?	Sharon Pilot

Fruit Rebus:



(Stars in your eyes)



# HERBS

by MONICA BRANDIES

Monica began her presentation by telling how it came about that she joined the Rare Fruit Council after moving here from Iowa in 1987. She first heard about our group from an advertisement concerning our annual sale at the Armory. She thought she'd go to the sale and buy a bunch of things for her empty yard and ask a bunch of questions. So she hurried over to the Armory, bought a bunch of plants and took one of the membership flyers with no intention of joining the Club. But about 6 months later when she was writing an article, she thought, "I'll have to get that flyer and see what kind of fruit we can grow here." The flyer mentioned a discount for members so she thought, considering how much she spent at the sale, it would be cheaper to join and get a discount. So she joined and came to all the meetings, which was convenient for her to get away from her 4 teenagers and home for a little time while Dad was there to take care of things. Since then most of the teenagers are gone so she doesn't need to leave the house anymore so for quite a while she missed the meetings to work in her yard or maybe take a nap.

At the first few meetings she attended, she said she thought we were speaking a foreign language, what with words like jaboticaba & grumichama - what in the world were we talking about? Now she says she has learned the language and picked the brains of many members and quoted them in her book. She said she put a thank you to the Rare Fruit group in the front of most of her books. Monica has written several books on herbs and they're certainly very informative. Now she says when Marion Marsh retires, they're going to write a bigger & better edition with lots of colored pictures. At one of the first meetings Monica attended, our speaker was Kaye Cude. She came up from North Fort Myers, a very sweet, nice lady and one who knows so much about herbs. They had moved down here in June of the previous year and it was spring when Kaye Cude spoke. One of the things she

said was that a lot of herbs will die over the summer. Monica has a short list of things that will die in the summer (see page 9 in her book); maybe 12 plants that are summer sensitive and, of course, they happen to be some of the most popular herbs like parsley, lavender, furry geraniums, curry shrub and salad burnet (some of the most popular cooking herbs). It's not just the heat that gets them, it's the heat and humidity together. With some of them you may as well treat them as annuals and start over again in the fall. Monica was never able to get parsley to grow through the summer but she knows a lady who has had the same parsley plants for 4 years. Normally this time of the year, you pick it and either dry it or freeze it or use it up. Some of the herbs that are summer sensitive dry or freeze very well. In her book she tells which is which. But some things are annuals, like nasturtiums, dill and arugula and in the fall you just plant new seeds or get new plants. If you really want to get them to grow all summer, Monica suggests putting them in a big pot, setting them where they get the morning sun but not the afternoon sun, and protecting them from the rain if possible. A carport sounds like an ideal place if it's on the east side to get the morning sun and the afternoon shade.

Monica has grown lavender & penny royal and we should be able to keep thyme through the summer this way. She also mentioned mints. They come in 2 kinds. One kind will take over the world and never stop growing; stand back. The other is the kind that gets lost during the summer which, of course, is the one you really wanted. So if you had the kind that got lost 1st summer, you might want to plant it in a pot this time and put it in the shade; a little protection will keep it through the summer. But don't feel bad when plants die. Most of us know that, if plants didn't die, pretty soon we wouldn't have room to plant anything; they'd keep multiplying and fill our yards. Another thing she suggested for the summer is to take some of those

trees you have in great big pots and put them where they will shade your herbs and give summer protection. Or plant some fast growing trees that will shade them, like the chaya, for instance; it grows very rapidly, is a great butterfly plant and the leaves are edible as a pot herb. It's one that can be used to shade your herb garden & when winter comes and you need more sun, just cut it down and eat the leaves. Then next spring when you need shade again, let it grow up. So there are some ways to get around the hot summer sun. The best way, however, is to plant things that are not summer sensitive. Monica indicated that she has over 100 types of herbs in her yard and most of them will survive the hot summer and through the winter. She has a list of herbs that are cold tender so that when a frost is due, she takes cuttings or brings them in to make new plants for putting out in spring. Monica says herbs are not that hard to grow. As a matter of fact she says they are some of the easiest plants to grow.

So what are herbs? A lot of fruiting plants are considered herbs, like citrus for instance. An herb is any plant that has other uses besides just food or strictly ornamental. It's an herb if it can be used medicinally or in cosmetics, house cleaning, attracting butterflies, repelling moths, etc. Most herbs are considered herbs because at one time they were used medicinally and some are still used as medicine today.

When Monica wrote the first book for Ortho, she said, "We can't write a book on herbs without mentioning medicinal uses." They said, "That's true, so write a chapter on medicinal uses." So she did. She didn't want to recommend using herbs instead of going to the doctor but some herbs, like aloe (and she knows we use a lot of aloe) will keep us from going to the doctor so often. She recommends planting your aloe right outside the door where you can get to it at night because that seems to be the time when the kids get scrapes and cuts. So put it where you can find it night or day. In addition to citrus, the loquat is an herb because the leaves were used in medicine for healing. The soursop is also an herb, having been used for healing.

Actually we can grow any herbs here that can be grown anywhere; we just have to treat them differently here and don't think you need a special area devoted to an herb garden. Herbs can be planted right in with everything else in your vegetable garden or in your ornamental garden or cutting garden. But Monica recommends planting them where they can be gotten to very easily, where they're easy to smell because one of the best things about some herbs is the fragrance. She mentioned the lotion ginger which she bought at one of our tree sales in the fall and planted. It promptly disappeared and she thought, "Well, I've killed another one," but in the spring up it came again, produced a lot of leaves and 1 flower, which she was so proud of. She already knew that if you squeeze the flower, you get a juice like lanolin. Many people grow the plant and do not know you can squeeze the flower to get lotion. Her flower lasted from the 4th of July to New Years Eve. Lotion ginger usually goes dormant before Jan. 1st but it takes the cold weather to put it back into the ground for its winter sleep and that year the cold was late coming.

Most herbs will grow in very poor soil, Monica said, as she has them growing where she couldn't even grow beans. They would like a little help like anything else and they do need good drainage, which we normally have in Florida soils. Herbs that go well with fruit are the Aztec sweet shrub, which will spread and can be used as ground cover. It is very easy to grow and 2 or 3 leaves will sweeten your tea or your fruit drink or whatever needs sweetening. Misting Shed Nursery has the Aztec sweet shrub and they will probably be at the sale on the 13th & 14th. Stevia is also another sweetener and some of our members are growing it. It's probably a better sweetener than the Aztec sweet shrub but it doesn't seem to grow as easily. Mints are also very good with fruit. There is probably 50 different kinds of mint and they're all good with fruit. Pineapple sage, which has a red flower, is very easy to grow and the leaves smell just like pineapple and it is very good in fruit drinks. Arugula is one that you can grow from seed and as it comes up, it looks just like cabbage. But after it

grows, it looks completely different. Lemon grass is also very good with fruit. Monica says she got her first lemon grass from our club. It will grow in the sun or the shade but it doesn't grow very well in the shade so it should be grown in full sun or as much sun as is available. To make a tea with lemon grass, pull the leaves out all the way to the bottom because it's the white part at the bottom of the leaves that you use for tea. It only takes about 3 leaves to make a quart of some of the best tea you've ever tasted. Nasturtiums, Monica said, are an excellent herb. Everything about them is edible; the flower, seed, leaves, everything. She suggested picking the flowers to make a bouquet and when they're fading, to put them in a salad, which will give the salad a real bite.

There are many other easy ways to use herbs and many hard ways too but Monica said she wouldn't tell us about them because she doesn't do the hard ways. The first thing to do, she said, was to rub and smell. Anyone who walks by a rosemary bush and does not rub it does not know what rosemary is. You rub the leaves and then smell your hands and the smell will stay there for hours. Many herbs are good in bouquets, many have flowers or leaves that are wonderful. One of Monica's favorite herbs is the silver dollar eucalyptus. You can buy a small plant in a 4" pot or a bigger one in a 1 gallon pot and in 2 years you'll have a small tree. The last 2 that Monica bought she killed. The problem with the plant is that it doesn't know how to grow, it just sprawls, so you have to use a stake and a leader and show it where the sky is & say, "Look fella, you're the leader." Then it will start to grow into a tree.

The plants are very shallow rooted and will fall over in the least wind so for a few years they need to be staked. Monica's tree is 20 to 30 ft tall and it's hard to get to the branches so she recommends keeping them topped to keep them as shrubs. One needs to get to the leaves because they're so pretty in a bouquet.

Another way to use herbs is what they call strewing herbs. We hear about the castles of old that sound so romantic and were such grand places to live. To tell the truth those old castles were pretty smelly, damp & dirty. They used what they called strewing herbs. They strewed them around on the floor and under the rushes to make it smell better. The modern way to use strewing herbs doesn't involve throwing them around on the floor. When you put away a suitcase, put some herbs inside or when you put away your winter jacket, put some in the pockets. A cooler you're not using, put a few herbs inside to add a fragrance. Put them under the cover on your ironing board so when you're ironing, you get that nice fragrance. Eucalyptus, mint, rosemary, any herbs that smell good and dry well.

This is only a few of the ways you can use herbs, actually the tip of the iceberg. You can make vinegar, herb flour, herb sugar & herb butter by just adding herbs to any of those things.

## FRUITING TREES FOR CENTRAL FLORIDA

by Gene Joyner

(continued from last month)

### Mamay Sapote

The mamay sapote is from South America and is another fruit that is in wide demand in south Florida. It makes a big tree, often 30 to 40', but in the groves in south Florida they keep it trimmed like other trees to 12' or so, to make the harvest easy. The fruit, up to 10" long & 3" wide, has a brown scruffy skin. It wholesales

for about \$2.00 a pound. It makes an excellent dooryard fruit but it takes as much as 14 months from flower to ripe fruit, which means the fruit on the tree has to go through 1 winter. The fruit remains brown throughout its development; and does not change color as it ripens. The only way to detect the ripe fruit is

to scratch the surface; underneath it will be pink or red if it's ripe. Mature fruit will fall off when very ripe but they will be soft & easily damaged. The pulp has an excellent flavor for eating out of hand & makes great milk shakes & ice cream. The seed is quite large, brown & shiny. People frequently make the mistake of trying to grow the tree from the seed without grafting. Gene says he's seen mamay sapote trees 20 years old that haven't produced the first fruit, so don't waste time on seedlings unless you're going to use it for root stock.

### Sugar Apple

The sugar apple is a member of the Anona

family from Central and South America. It produces a very interesting fruit, bumpy on the outside, anywhere in size from a small orange to a grapefruit. It is a summer and fall fruit, August to October. There is very little color change as the fruit ripens, a little lighter green, but the bumps can separate a little, indicating that it is ripe. At full size the fruit needs to be checked frequently to see if it's softening. When it is ripe, it will fall and will be smashed when it hits the ground. The pump inside is white, custard like, high quality, very sweet and full of little brown seeds. It is delicious out of hand and makes excellent milk shakes & ice cream.

### JOKES

\* \* \*

What are America's favorite sports?

Answer: Fruitball & Soccertash.

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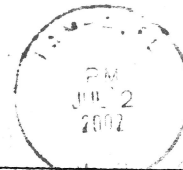
1st guy: I'm going to quit the Fruit Council.

2nd guy: Why is that?

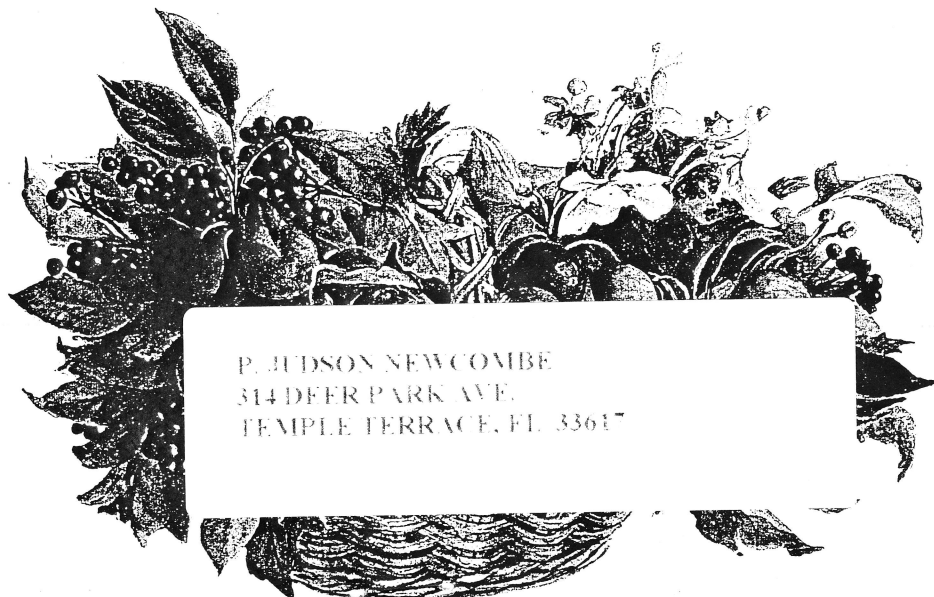
1st guy: My wife took fertility drugs & had quince.



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