



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2003

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

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

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 8

PROGRAM: GROWING PINEAPPLES IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA by IAN GREIG. Pineapples are one of those fruit which we encourage everyone to grow in this area. First of all, they're quick - in 2 years or less. Second, they're easy and dependable. Third, they fit in well in the landscape. And fourth, the fruit is delicious. There are a few simple rules to follow and Ian Greig will give us all the information we need. Come to the meeting, learn what to do and plant a lot of pineapples. We will also have our fabulous tasting table and great raffle, at which there should be several pineapple plants.

Tasting Table - May 2003

A. Branesky	Tomato & cucumber salad	P. Branesky	Potato salad
M. Branesky	Mamay, Surinam cherries, mulberries	Hill	Apple pie
Bruder	Devils food, banana & orange cupcakes	Musgraves	Lemon cake
Coronel	Bibingka, banana chips	Sumner	Blueberries
Engelbrecht	Macaroni, ham & cheese	Parker	Macaroons
T. Scott	Fresh kohlrabi & broccoli	S. Walker	Banana bread
Terenzi	Cherry cheesecake, banana maple cake	Ludwig	Fresh Pico de Gallo
Yoblonski	Basil pesto & pork, sausage-noodles-cabbage	Cimador	Red skin potato salad
M. Palis	Papaya & mango salsa with chips	M. Kirby	Chayote au gratin
Rubenstein	Date nut crunch balls	Pilot	Almond Macaroons
Anthony	Surinam cherries, guava pastry, combread with parmesan cheese		
Lee	Chocolate cake, assorted muffins, baked beans, chicken stir fry with apples, pork & chicken with 3 bean rice pilaf		
Novak	Hawaiian coleslaw, nut breads with tropical cheese spread, candied kumquats, blueberry-blackberry cobbler, Surinam cherries, fruit juices		

THANKS to everyone who donated to the tasting table. We have many wonderful (and generous) cooks in our Council. Remember to list your donation on the signup sheet and to ask Sally Lee for your free plant raffle ticket.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA FIRST ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY

The party was held April 24 at the Holiday Inn on East Fowler, from 6 pm till 9 pm, and was enjoyed by all. The silent auction was impressive, the live auction generated a lot of excitement and the buffet dinner was ver good. Our club donated a mango tree for the silent auction and \$100 for 2 tickets. Our club was represented by Al Hendry, Bob Heath & Theresa Heath. The affair was a great success and earned over \$4300 in support of the Gardens. The friends of the Gardens are already making plans for the 2004 Garden Party.

From the President

Jimmy Lee

Gene Joyner's presentation on some of the more unusual tropical and rare fruits was enjoyed by approximately 115 members, friends and family. Gene also answered many questions put forth by club members. Many of our club members have visited Gene's Unbelievable Acres in West Palm Beach on more than one occasion and found it to be quite impressive.

A big 'Thank You' to all who donated the delicious food for the tasting table and the plants for the plant raffle. We were happy to see many of our new members at the Mother's Day meeting.

The USF Botanical Garden's Tropical Plant Festival will be July 12 & 13. There will be more information in the July newsletter.

Scheduled Programs/Events:

June 8: Ian Greig "Growing Pineapples in the Tampa Bay area"

July 12 & 13: USF Botanical Garden Tropical Plant Festival

WHAT'S HAPPENING

May-Jun 2003

by Paul Zmoda

Our blueberry crop was so delicious and welcome, especially when I noticed that they were selling for \$4.49 for about a cup of berries in supermarkets! Local commercial growers informed me they were getting \$10 per pound for them in April. Our 'Gulf Coast' variety began first and was dime-sized. Then 'Sharp Blue' came on and, though smaller in size, held many more berries. 'Misty' soon joined in for its first fruiting.

Cherries of the Rio Grande or Rio Grande Cherries, as we call them, did not disappoint us. Flowering simultaneously, our two trees bore several dozen of those delicious, deep red, 1" fruits which rival Bing cherries from colder climes in their taste.

Feijoas or "pineapple guavas" seem to be having a banner year everywhere. All three of ours have set some fruit with 'Nazemeth' really full.

Persimmons of all kinds are setting lots of fruit and they are enlarging rapidly. I can hardly wait to sample 'Honan Red' and 'Hana Fuyu', which are producing for the first time.

My favorite banana, 'Goldfinger', pushed out a decent bunch. I hope they ripen. They have all summer to do so with only three leaves to feed them after the winter's cold took all the rest.

Many pineapples are fruiting well - even the large variegated one finally has a beautiful colorful flower. I gave them all a good sprinkling with 20-20-20 liquid fertilizer, as you should every one to two months.

White sapotes are approaching golf ball size and are looking good. These evergreen trees should be grown by more folks around here. Cold weather doesn't seem to hurt them. The largest tree re-bloomed in May, so I expect fruit throughout the summer and fall.

Pawpaws are growing at a fantastic rate - 15 or more inches on one.

To ensure good crops on your sugar apples and atemoyas - scatter damaged and spoiling citrus fruits under the branches. This attracts the pollinators, sap beetles, which will soon find the flowers and commence to do their things.

New plantings: Roselle, fig, soybeans, pole beans.

USF Botanical Garden Workshop: On May 8 Bob Heath, Al Hendry, Charles Novak and Jimmy Lee gave a two-hour presentation at the USF Botanical Garden on growing and propagating Tropical Fruit Trees. Approximately 30 very interested people attended. Many of the more common tropical fruits and a few of the more unusual fruits were discussed. A grafting demonstration was given by Charles. Additional workshops given by our Council are scheduled for September and November.

MAY PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	Donor	Winner
Papaya	Heath	Hill
Papaya	"	T. Scott
Beauty Berry	"	?
Pineapple	"	?
Oregano	"	Tess Anthony
Tamarind	"	Rex Scarbrough
Eggfruit	"	J. Gluck
Loquat	"	Rex Scarbrough
Yuca	"	Jeannie Taylor
Eugenia Confusa	Heath	Lourdes Cordero
Dogwood	Hill	Ludwig
Loquat	Jerry Walker	?
Gloriosa	Fred Engelbrecht	Hill
Sugar Cane Plant	Kirby	Sumner
Canalilly	Bobbie Parker	Charles
?	Russell Pat	?
Passion Fruit Vines	Walter Yoblonski	Danielle/Dawson Loenichen
Tapioca	?	Rex Scarbrough
Recotte	?	Ed Musgrave
Banana	?	Steve B.
Flowering Ginger	?	Rex Scarbrough
Yuca	?	Hannah Loenichen
Yuca	?	Susan McAveety
Recotte Reedia	Novak	Charlie Loenichen
Recotte Reedia	"	Bob Heath
"	"	?
"	"	?
"	"	?
Blueberry Jam	"	Maryann Branesky
Blueberries pint	"	John Golden
"	"	Eva
Banana Orinoco	Lee	?
"	"	Ludwig
"	"	?
Casava 4	"	Fred Engelbrecht
Sugar Cane 2	"	?
Citrus Seedling	Paul Branesky	Hill
Jack Fruit	Lee	Leo Bruder
Canes	Bob & Caryl Courtney	?
Miracle Fruit	"	?
Aloe Vera	"	?
"	"	?
"	"	?
Rheedia aristata	Charles/Waters	?
Parsley	T. Scott	Marie P.
"	"	Janet V.
"	"	Rose Terenzi
"	"	?
" (7)		

Some Lesser Known Fruiting Trees Suitable for Central Florida

Gene Joyner

Gene began his presentation with a description of his gardens in West Palm Beach, two & a half acres of botanical gardens called Unbelievable Acres, which he started in the summer of 1970. He has over 170 different varieties of fruit trees and keeps adding to it just like we do. Any time he finds anything different or better, he has to get one and find a spot for it. He also has an additional two acres adjacent to his gardens which he uses for growing out things and for producing fruit to sell. He has over 100 trees of jackfruit, 17 varieties of carambolas, over 70 varieties of bananas & plantains.

Gene's slide presentation consisted of lesser known varieties, most of which are not too cold sensitive to grow in this area. Some are probably not available in the area nurseries, so a search is required to find them.

Amberella, also called Otaheite apple, is a very rapid growing tree, topping out, if allowed to, at about 40 ft. It may be rooted from very large cuttings, 6 or 8" long branches put in the ground 18" or so with a post hole digger. Keep it moist and it will put on roots, giving you a fruiting tree the first year. The tree is deciduous in winter so it loses its leaves in December or January until about early March when it leafs out again in flower. Gene had a slide of a large tree. The mature fruit is about the size of a chicken egg or a little larger, one crop a year which ripens in the fall. The fruit turns from green to a bright yellow or orange as it ripens. It has yellow pulp and a big spiny seed in the middle. It is eaten fresh ripe or even green. The fruit normally begins to ripen in October or later until December. There is also a dwarf version for people who have small properties, which only gets to be about 8 ft. tall. It fruits 12 months of the year. You can often find flowers, small fruit & ripe fruit on the tree at the same time. It will continue to have blossoms and produce fruit even though it's deciduous and no leaves are existing. The fruit is smaller than the full size variety but develops like a

bunch of grapes. Gene has 3 of these trees; he says they produce fruit by the hundreds, a very productive tree. The seeds sprout very well and it's easier to grow from seed than to make cuttings. The seedlings may even bear when they are only a year old. The seed also has multiple embryos, so from one seed you may get 3 or 4 trees, which may be separated when they get 6 to 8" tall. They will also fruit in a container, a 5 to 7 gallon pot, which allows it to be taken in if a freeze is expected.

Red Mombin or Hog Plum. The red mombin produces very pretty flowers in spring. The fruit ripens in summer, starting about mid June through the end of July. Gene had slides showing the tree with fruit on it and a closeup of the fruit. It is a fast growing tree, up to 35 or 40 ft. Because it is fast growing, it has soft wood and if we have summer storms with high winds, we can expect some limb breakage on the larger trees. The fruit ranges in size from 3/4" to about 1-1/2" in big clusters up & down the branches, ripening over a period of several weeks. They turn red and that's when they are harvested. There's a considerable amount of pulp around a large seed. It has very good flavor and is used to make excellent jellies and fruit juices. One word of caution that Gene emphasized is that you shouldn't plant the tree so it hangs over sidewalks or driveways because of the vast amount of fruit that can be produced, or any place that can make a mess, because there's no way you can eat them all. The tree is easy to grow, fruits very early and roots very easy from cuttings. Even large cuttings, 4 to 6 ft. long, buried in 18" deep holes, will often fruit the following year. It's also available with pink & deep purple fruit, called the purple mombin.

Carissa grandiflora or Natal Plum. This is one that should be grown here and will take the weather pretty well. Real glossy, shiny leaves, white flowers, and then edible red fruit. The flowers are fragrant and are produced almost 12 months of the year. The fruit is available most of the warm months. The

fruit is either elongated or round in size of 1" up to the size of a golf ball. Inside, the flesh is pink, similar to the outside, with a few small seeds. It is used as fresh fruit out of hand, for making jellies & ice cream. The fruit also produces a little white milky sap, which is perfectly safe and not poisonous as some white milky saps in other plants, so you don't need to worry about it when you eat them. Nurseries have a lot of these that have been developed for landscape use, hedges and other nursery uses, and many of them will not set fruit although they bloom profusely. The bushes at maturity can get up to 15 ft. and are blessed with large forked thorns, which makes the plant impenetrable. As a hedge, it makes a very good security fence because no one is about to go through a hedge of Carissa.

Carissa carandas. This is a relative of the Carissa grandiflora. Caranda tends to vine and will climb up other trees. The fruit are purplish black, about the size of a medium sized grape in small clusters. Gene compares the taste to a blueberry, a very high quality fruit for out of hand eating. It produces a lot of fruit one time each year, so you get a lot of fruit over a short period of time in the spring. It roots well from cuttings, which is the usual method of propagation. The tree, like Carissa, is also equipped with thorns, but smaller. It grows very well on a trellis or up in another tree.

Carob. The carob produces a pod on a medium size tree. The pulp in the pod is grown as a commercial substitute for chocolate. Trees are male or female so 2 trees are required for production, or a male may be grafted on to a female tree to provide the pollination. The tree can grow up to 20', but is frequently kept cut to shrub size. The female tree blossoms in the spring and sets fruit which ripens through the summer.

Tropical apricot. This is a common name for the Dovyalis hybrid, which originated at the USDA station in Miami. The tree will fruit several times each year with the largest crop in late spring or summer. The fruit is about golf ball size and dark purplish red. It is a large bush up to maybe 20 ft. with equal spread. The fruit has a flavor reminiscent of apricot and is very tasty. It only stays on the

tree for a couple of days after ripening and then falls to the ground, so you have to be quick in harvesting or otherwise a lot of fruit will be lost. It makes good preserves, jellies & jams and is used in ice creams, or it can be converted into fruit leather. Since it is a hybrid, planting the seeds will not produce a plant with the same characteristics, so it must be air layered or grafted, which is generally fairly easy. The trees tend to drop a lot of leaves in winter, but will often still produce a crop with the leaf loss, a good crop even in fall & winter, but not the heavy crop of spring & summer. They also work very good as a hedge and people in south Florida do this extensively. It is also a fruit that the fruit fly enjoys so we need to watch out for the fruit fly maggots.

Kei apple. This is another member of the Dovyalis family. The bush is heavily armed with thorns the size of a toothpick. It makes an impenetrable hedge and is used in Central & South America as a living fence, even for livestock. It grows to a maximum of about 20 ft. at maturity. Like other Dovyalis, it has male & female trees, so you need one of each to get fruit. The fruit ripens to a bright yellow, about an inch & a half in diameter, and fruits profusely. However, picking it can be a problem because of the wicked thorns. It is also subject to fruit fly infestation. The fruit may be eaten fresh off the tree but are more often used for jams, jellies, preserves & drinks. The fruit is round, looks like a little apple and has several tiny seeds. The Kei apple is fairly easy to propagate by seed or air layering. The tree is relatively cold hardy down to 20° without any appreciable damage. It takes about 3 years from seed to determine whether the seedlings are male or female.

Jackfruit. This is a tree that is beginning to be grown in this area, although it is cold sensitive, with damage below about 28°. It is a Southeast Asian native, India, Thailand, where it originated, and is now found worldwide in all tropical regions. A well cared for tree can produce fruit in 3 or 4 years and puts on an abundance of fruit at maturity. The fruit forms along the main branches and trunk of the tree,

even laying on the ground. The fruit has also been recorded as growing on the roots underground. It produces the largest fruit in the world that grows on a tree. In the Southeast Asia area, weights of over 100 lbs. have been recorded, which is really a monstrous fruit. This may account for the fact that they grow from the major limbs and trunk rather than the ends of the branches. The average weight of fruit we see here are only going to be 30 to 40 lbs. Gene had a slide of a tree with a lot of fruit on it that was 40 to 50 years old. They produce bigger and more fruit as they grow older. Gene offered one word of caution on jackfruit. If the tree should produce fruit when it's very young, less than 2 or 3 inches in diameter, all the fruit save one or two should be removed at the earliest stage, because heavy fruiting can kill the tree by zapping all the nutrients for producing the fruit and not allowing any for maintaining the tree. The fruit is such a drain on the resources that they'll literally suck the tree dry. The same situation exists on carambola trees where one limb will produce a tremendous abundance of fruit and as the fruit ripens, the limb will die. Likewise, if the tree doesn't die, the fruit will be small and few the following year. As the fruit ripens, the color changes very little but it does produce a strong smell that indicates it's ready to be picked. Inside the pulp is orangish yellow with a lot of edible seeds which may be roasted like chestnuts, but the pulp around the seeds is the delicious fruit. A mature fruit may also be cooked as a vegetable. Trees can be topped at 12 ft. or so, so the fruit is easy to harvest. Gene has over 100 jackfruit trees at his gardens in West Palm Beach.

Otaheite gooseberry. Gene had slides of the Otaheite gooseberry covering the limbs of the tree. It is very productive, producing fruit in fabulous quantities. The individual fruit is the same size and shape as a Surinam cherry but has very low color change as it ripens. It turns slightly yellow at maturity. The

fruit is very tart, possibly the most tart of all fruit, but makes an excellent, beautiful jelly, turning almost red as it is cooked. The tree gets up to 25 ft. at maturity, is deciduous in the winter and drops all its multiple leaves. It is cold sensitive but comes out pretty early in the spring if there is no freeze. It's not one you'll find in nurseries as a rule, grows very rapidly and fruits when only 3 or 4 ft. tall, and air layers relatively easy.

Star Apple. The star apple is related to our native satin leaf. It produces a pretty leaf, green on the top and bronze or rusty on the under surface, which gives the tree an undulating appearance during a little wind. The tree is erect, 35 to 40 ft. tall at maturity, with a short 3 ft. thick trunk and a dense broad crown and white gummy latex sap. Small inconspicuous flowers cluster in the leaf axils, yellow or purplish white, with tubular petals. The fruit may be round, oblate, ellipsoid or somewhat pear shaped, 2 to 4" in diameter, red, purple or pale green. It has a glossy, thin, leathery skin covering an inner rind and a soft white seed pulp, with 8 or 10 rubbery seed cells in the center, which has the appearance of a star when cut crosswise. The seeds are about 3/4" long, flat, black when first cut but turning light brown as they dry. Mature trees may be injured with temperatures below 28°, so it is a tropical or near tropical tree. The trees are most widely grown from seeds which retain viability for several months and germinate readily. It takes 5 to 10 years for a seedling to bear but cuttings and air layers root in 4 to 6 months. Grafted trees may be expected to fruit within 2 years. Grafting on the satin leaf tree produces a dwarfing effect. Mature fruit has a dull skin, a trifle wrinkled, and the fruit is slightly soft to the touch. The skin and rind are inedible and contain a bitter latex. A good way to eat the fruit is to cut it in half and scoop out the flesh with a spoon, leaving the core and the rind intact.

New Members:	Robert Edwards	Jacksonville	Janet Valadie	Tampa
	Joyce Rudd	Lakeland		
	John & Estela Wesselhoft & Filiberto Mayorga		Clearwater	

Bring On the Bats

THESE MALIGNED MAMMALS ARE AN ORGANIC SOLUTION TO INSECT PROBLEMS. by JAMES MCCOMMONS

FEW ANIMALS are so burdened with myth and superstition as bats. Let's begin by refuting a few of them: Bats aren't blind. They are not rodents with wings. They rarely bite people unless harassed, and they are no more likely to be rabid than other mammals. If one flies into your house, it doesn't want to nest in your hair; all it wants is to get back outside.

Fortunately, human understanding

and attitudes toward bats are gradually changing, mainly due to education efforts by Bat Conservation International (BCI), a nonprofit organization in Austin, Texas. BCI has shown that bats are among nature's most beneficial critters. They pollinate plants, disperse seeds, and control insect populations. Smart gardeners know it's not only possible but desirable to lure bats into their backyards with properly constructed and placed bat houses.

■ Agile and Quick

A bat's wings consist of a web of skin running between the neck, arms, and tail. An insect-eating bat tends to have long and slender wings. Its tail acts like a rudder, enabling the bat to swiftly change directions.

■ Sight by Sound

Bats hunt in the dim hours surrounding sunset and sunrise by relying on *echolocation*, or sonar. Emitting loud, high-pitched (*ultrasonic*) noises through their noses and open mouths, they bounce sound off insects and solid objects and then interpret the returning echoes to home in on their prey. When researchers have broadcast tapes of high-pitched bat noises over farm fields, they've observed moths immediately diving toward the ground. Believing a bat to be in the area, the moths take evasive action and often leave the fields.

■ One Baby a Year

One cause of bats' decline is their slow reproduction rate. Females usually bear just one young per year, primarily because nursing a baby requires a lot of energy. Newborns wean in 3 to 4 weeks, reach adulthood in 3 months, and mate at 1 year. In the wild, a bat typically lives 4 to 6 years.

■ On the Decline

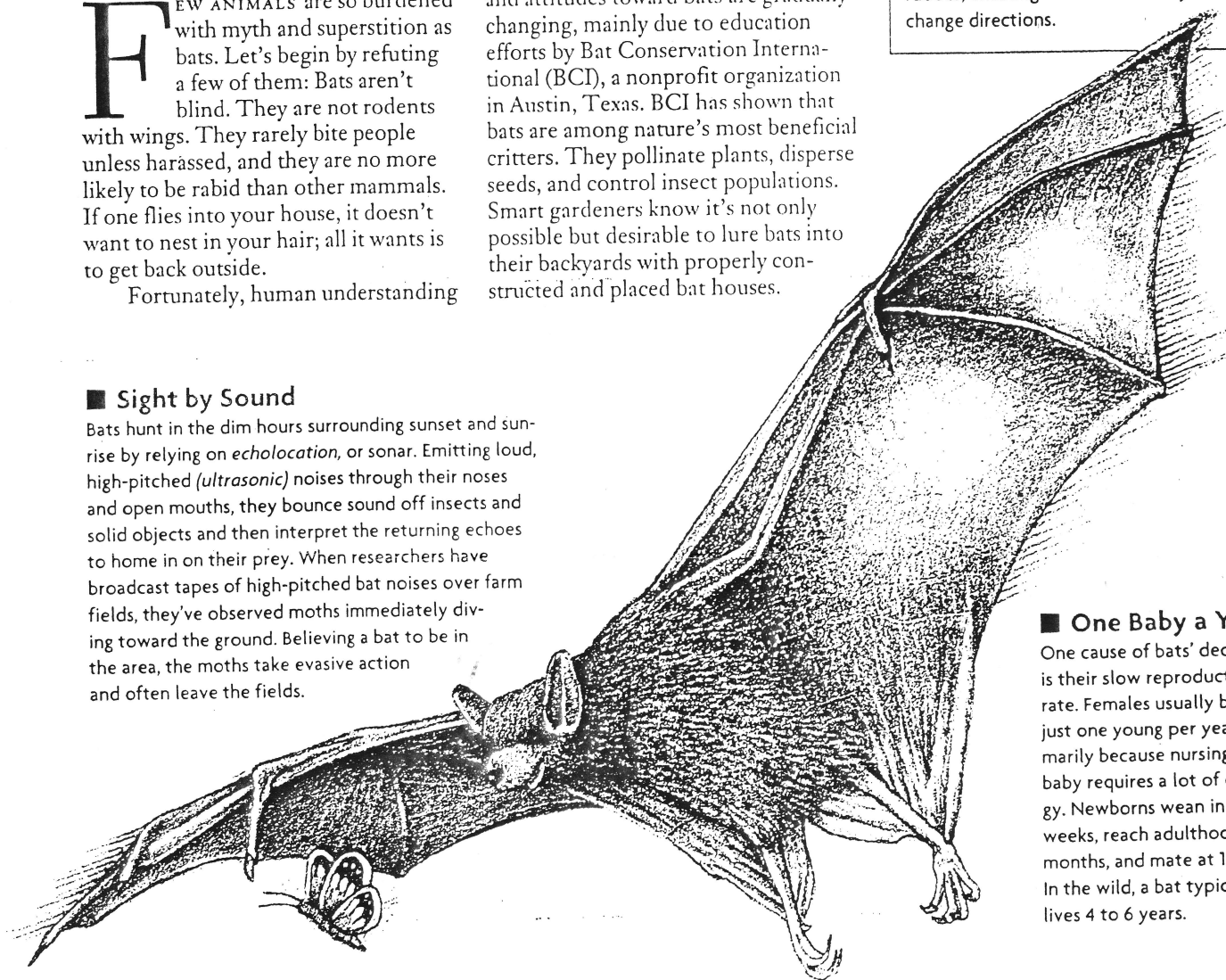
Bats make up one-fourth of all mammal species on Earth. Of the 45 bat species in the United States and Canada, some are abundant and widespread, but many—such as the Indiana bat and the California leaf-nosed bat—have declined dramatically due to habitat loss, pesticide poisoning, and the destruction of roosting and hibernation sites.

■ Down in the Mine

In the daylight hours, bats roost and rest in tree hollows, caves, sheds, and attics—places that are warm and moist. In winter they may migrate hundreds of miles to hibernate in an environment that maintains temperatures constantly above freezing. Old mine shafts are increasingly important refuges.

■ Water Lovers

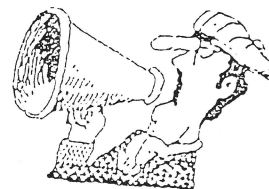
Insect-eating bats typically hunt and roost within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of a lake, river, or wetland because aquatic environments support night-flying insects. Forests, farms, and gardens also harbor plenty of insects. Bats cruise crops and orchards for mosquitoes, June beetles, codling and corn borer moths, stinkbugs, locusts, grasshoppers, leafhoppers, and many other insects. Research shows that the presence of insect-eating bats greatly reduces pest damage to crops.



MEMBERS CORNER:

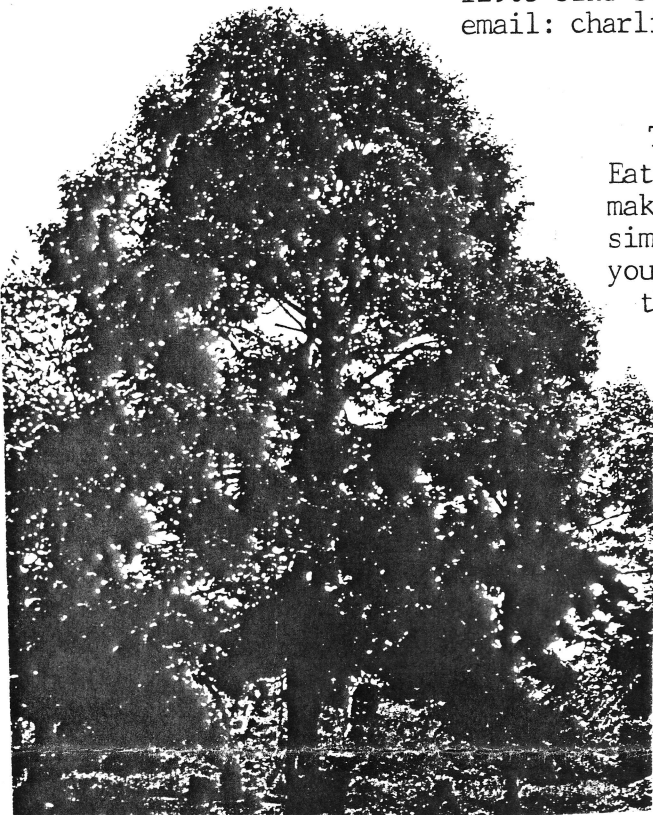
WANTED: Taro-Colocasiae, the South Pacific tuber crop used for carbohydrates. I could use the top of the corm, buds, or suckers. Thanks for your help.

New Member Charlie Delp
12905 52nd St, Tampa 33617
email: charliedelp@hotmail.com



TREES OF LIFE

Eating vegetables isn't the only way greens can make you healthy. A new study suggests that simply living near trees, even in cities, does your body good. Japanese researchers studied the survival rates of more than 3000 senior citizens in urban Tokyo, and found those who lived near parks and tree-lined streets were more likely to outlive those surrounded by asphalt, regardless of age, sex or marital and socioeconomic status. The researchers think that the availability of such spaces contributes to good health because it entices us to be more active.



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