



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2003

**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 (Charles Novak)

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

NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 10

PROGRAM: OUR PROGRAM THIS MONTH WILL INCLUDE A PRESENTATION ON GROWING VEGETABLES BY OUR OWN MEMBER, THOM SCOTT. As Rare Fruit Council members, we devote our time to growing fruiting trees, tending to neglect somewhat the world of vegetables, and yet while trees may take years to produce edibles, vegetables can reward us with delicious foods in just months. We should devote part of our landscape to a vegetable garden and Thom Scott will get us started. Our meeting will be at the usual location on the USF campus, map on page 03-53. Join us at this great meeting where we can welcome our new members and guests and enjoy our fabulous tasting table and plant raffle.

From the President Jimmy Lee

The USF Tropical Plant Fair went very well. I want to thank all the hard working members who helped to make the sale a success. Even though it was very hot and humid we were fortunate that the rain held off until later in the evening.

Sadly, our long time and active club member, Janet Conard, passed away July 5. Everyone will remember Janet for her cheerful disposition, generosity and loving hugs to all. She sold her many varieties of jellies at our plant sales. Janet attended almost every meeting and was in charge of the plant raffle for many years. She also hosted our Christmas social for several years. Unfortunately, several of us were unable to attend her memorial service on Sunday, July 13, as we were working at the USF Tropical Plant Fair. Our sympathy goes out to Al Roberts and to Janet's family. Janet will be greatly missed.

Programs/Events:

August 10:	Club member Thom Scott will speak on Growing Vegetables.
September 14:	Our annual Club Picnic at the USF Botanical Garden (1 P.M.)
October 11 & 12:	Fall USF Botanical Garden Plant Festival
November 9:	Cold Protection
December 14:	Annual Christmas Social

UPCOMING EVENT: **Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society 15th Annual Rare Fruit Tree Sale**
 Sunday, September 28, 2003, 10 A.M. – 4 P.M.
 Phillippi Estate Park, 5500 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota.
 For further information, call (941) 412-1392. www.sarasotafruitandnut.com

New Members: Elizabeth Andersen	Lutz	Georgia Johnson	Plant City
Dona Council	Sun City Center	Anne Mitsianis	Brandon
Wayne & Lyudmila Stevens	Riverview		

WHAT'S HAPPENING

JUL-AUG 2003

by PAUL ZMODA

This month's article is dedicated to Janet Conard, who passed away on July 5th. Janet was a generous and hard working lady whose life seemed to revolve around fruit and growing them. Her yard is a showcase of many wonderful specimens which produce a bounty year round. These fruits provided many tasty feasts as well as a source for her prolific jelly making. Janet always added color to the Fruit council meetings and will be greatly missed. I urge all of you to plant your next fruit tree in her name. I have already put in three of what I call "Janet's Pomegranates".

Things are growing very well for us at this time: pineapples are ripening, tamarind is flowering again and bananas are happy. I potted up close to 200 plants - mostly tea, soursops, capers and wild plums. Made air layers on white sapotes and chickasaw plum. This has been an excellent year for eggplants, hot peppers and watermelons.

New plantings: White sapote 'Denzler', ginger, herbs, pomegranates, chinquapin, night blooming cereus cactus and Peruvian ground cherry.

Plant Locator: Sally Lee (813)982-9359. If you are looking for a specific plant contact Sally. She will attempt to locate a source for you.

New Membership Directory: The 2003-2004 Membership Directory will be printed soon. If your name, address, phone number or e-mail address has changed please give the correct information to Charles Novak (813) 754-1399. E-mail: c.novak@worldnet.att.net.

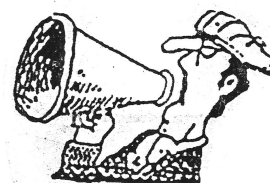
Grafting Knives and Parafilm: The club has Grafting knives and Parafilm tape available for purchase by members. Contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399

MEMBERS CORNER

FREE: Two Surinam cherry trees in pots, one 6' tall; one 4' tall.

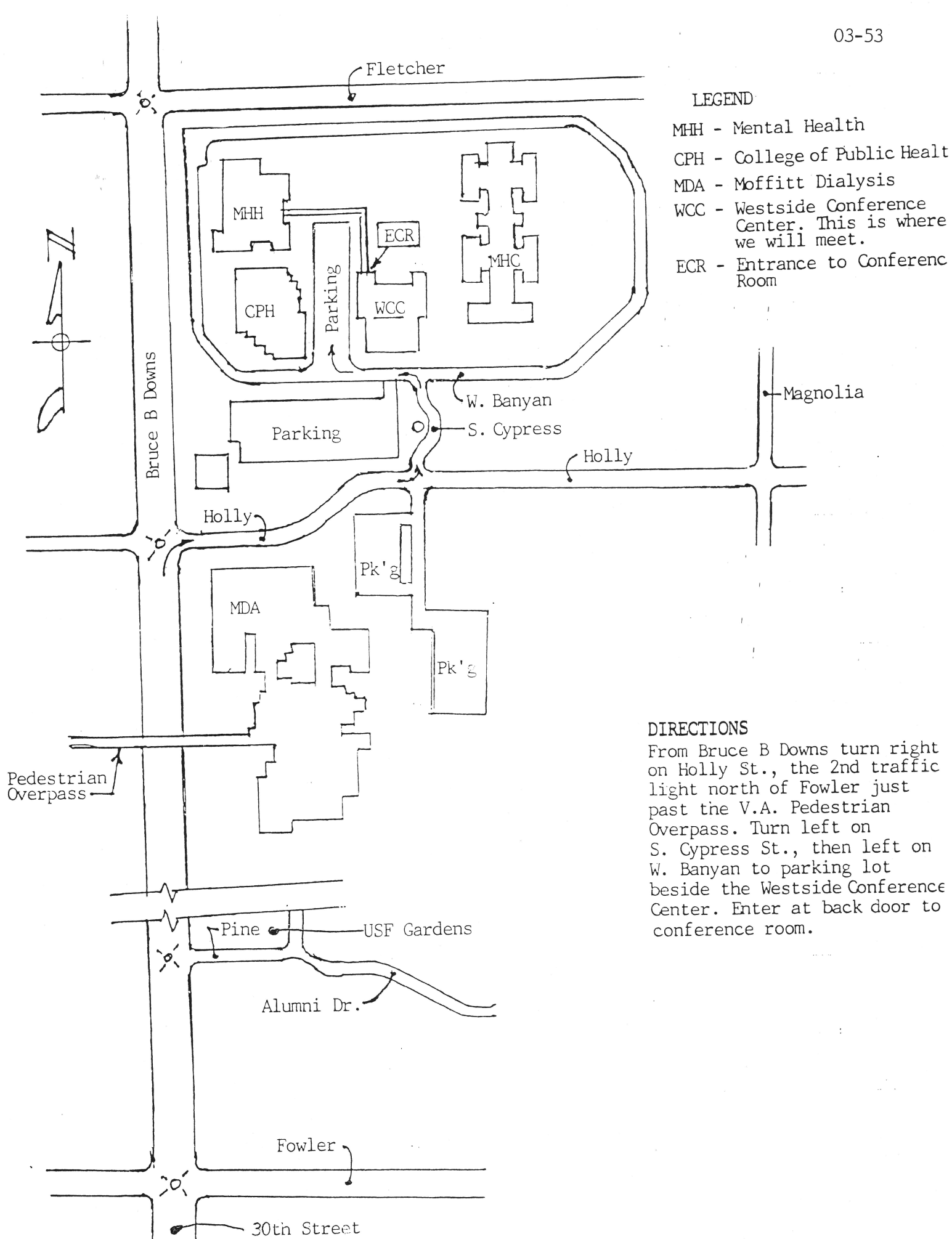
Call Bob Heath @ 813-289-1068 to arrange for pickup.

Bamboo stakes pencil size up to broomstick size, of any length, free for the pickup. Call Charles Novak @ 813-754-1399 to arrange for pickup.



SUNKEN GARDENS TROPICAL FRUIT FESTIVAL

Our club participated in this exciting event Saturday, July 26 and Sunday, July 27. We had an unbelievable display of fruit, filling two tables for the public to view and marvel at. It was a great opportunity to introduce people to the common and rare fruit that is available to grow here in Florida. In addition, we prepared innumerable fruit cups for tasting; jackfruit, mamay sapote, mango, banana, prickly pear, melons & several fruit juice mixtures. Educating the public is one of our primary functions and it was done superbly, with cooking demonstrations by local restaurants and presentations by several members, including a propagating session by Charles Novak. Live music was provided by Calypso Sounds & Pacific Harmony II. All in all, it was an entertaining, enjoyable festival and a social opportunity for the 13 members who participated. We are looking forward to a repeat in 2004.



THANKS FROM U S F

Below is a copy of the thanks which we received from Vicky Medlock, Executive Director of the USF Foundation, concerning our Club's gift for their first annual Silent Auction & Dinner.



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA
FOUNDATION

On behalf of everyone associated with the University of South Florida, our heartfelt thanks for your generous gift. Private support has and will continue to play a critical role in assuring the depth and quality of education that makes a measurable difference for students of all ages. Your gift strengthens USF's ability to step forward as a research and teaching resource, as well as a strong community partner.

We are proud of the many accomplishments of this university, and know that its future is unlimited. Make no mistake about it – our aim is nothing less than to be among the finest universities in the country. It is your dedication and support that makes this goal possible.

Thank you for helping to share the gift of knowledge.

THE CARAMBOLA - FRUIT OR VEGETABLE?

by Bob Heath

This year many members' carambola trees are doing their thing, rewarding their owners for the care and love which has been devoted to them. So some of us have lots of fruit. What do we do with them? There is a limit to how many carambolas we can eat out of hand. Giving them away to our friends and club members is honorable, of course; but remember, we grew our trees to eat the fruit.

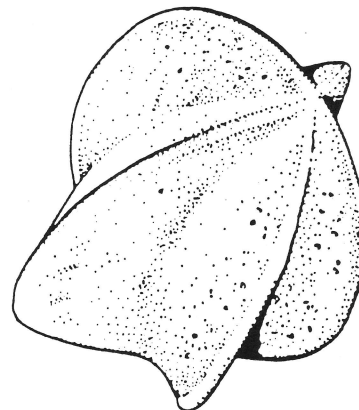
But is it just a fruit, like the apple and orange, or may we consider it also a vegetable, like the tomato or avocado?

Perusing the literature reveals all too few good carambola recipes for dessert but why not consider them as a vegetable? Like a tomato, the carambola has the sweet yet tart flavor that makes it so desirable.

Try it in salads in place of the tomato, or in addition to the tomato. Try it on sandwiches in place of tomatoes. Try it in vegetable soups and cut up in stews. Try it in a relish with peppers, onions and vinegar.

We have tried the above suggestions and in some cases, they work pretty well. But we found they tasted much better when we used the tart varieties, slightly unripe, for use as a vegetable. While some of our experiments tasted very good, others were not too great.

However, we will continue to experiment and we're sure some of our attempts will prove very fruitful.



Carambola

Discover the Secrets of Your Soil

A SIMPLE TEST CAN TAKE THE GUESSWORK OUT OF GARDENING. by JILL JESIOLOWSKI CEBENKO

HAVE YOU BEEN IGNORING your soil's fertility, hoping for the best and wondering whether you've been cheating yourself out of an optimum harvest? Have your gardens been on a steady decline, and you keep applying stuff from a bag, hoping it will be a cure-all?

It's time to get serious about your soil and to take advantage of one of the best-kept secrets in gardening: the extremely inexpensive soil tests available to most American and Canadian gardeners through their local Cooperative Extension offices or similar systems. A fairly comprehensive test usually costs between \$5 and \$10—less than you'd probably spend for a bag of fertilizer that a soil test could very well show is not necessary. Tests commonly indicate the acidity or alkalinity of the soil (pH), levels of phosphorus and

potassium (the *P* and *K* in NPK ratios), and levels of calcium and magnesium. Because soils are so variable from region to region, labs may test for other things, such as nitrogen, salts, sulfur, and heavy metals, depending on where you live.

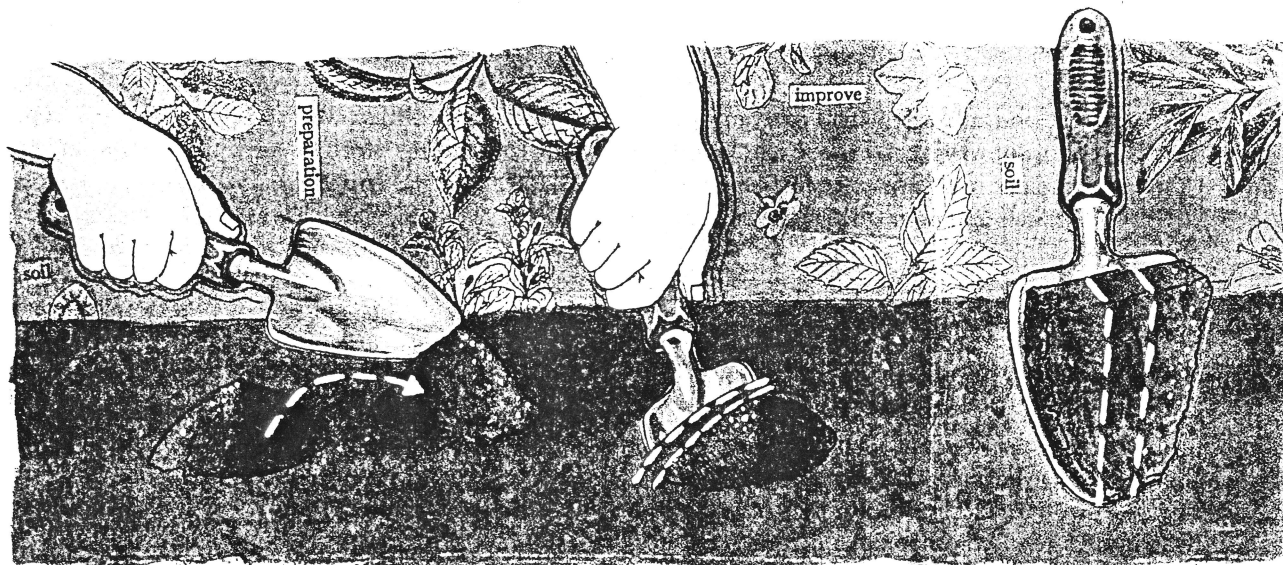
Check with an extension office or garden center about soil tests. If you get stuck, we have a list of state and provincial soil-testing labs, plus companies that specialize in testing organic soils. Send \$2 and a self-addressed stamped envelope to Soil Testing Lab List, OG, 33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098. Or view the list at www.organicgardening.com.

Once you have a soil-test kit, head out to the garden with a trowel or spade, a knife, and a plastic bucket. Make sure none of your tools are rusty, galvanized, or made of soft metal, such as brass; they could throw off the test results. Here's how to collect a soil sample to send to the lab:

- [1] **SCRAPE OFF ANY MULCH** or litter from the soil surface. Use a trowel to lift out a wedge-shaped piece of soil about 6 or 8 inches deep. Set this aside. ▼

- [2] **WITH THE TROWEL, SLICE A HALF-INCH-THICK PIECE OF SOIL** from the smooth side of your wedge-shaped hole and lift this slice out of the hole. ▼

- [3] **USE THE KNIFE TO CUT OFF BOTH SIDIES OF THE SLICE**, leaving a 1-inch core in the center. Put this core into the bucket. ▼

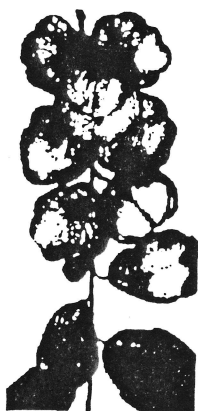


- [4] **REPEAT STEPS 1 TO 3** at least a half-dozen times in different parts of your garden so you can combine the soil cores to get a single sample that represents the soil in your whole garden. (If you want separate readings for different areas, you will need to do separate tests.)

- [5] **WHEN YOU'VE COLLECTED ALL YOUR SOIL CORES** in the bucket, use the trowel to mix them together thoroughly. Fill the soil-sample bag or container supplied by the lab with some of this mix, fill out the paperwork that goes with it, and send it all off to the lab.

(Provided by the Organic Gardening Magazine)

A GUIDE TO TROPICAL FRUIT TREES AND VINES (continued)

64. *Phyllanthus acidus* - Otaheite gooseberry

Tree to 20 feet, native to Madagascar and India and growing wild in parts of South Florida. Leaves are 2 to 3 inches long and arranged in two rows on smaller lateral branches. Tiny flowers are reddish. Fruit is round, 3-lobed, pale yellow-green in color and about 3/4 inch in diameter. Firm flesh contains a large, single 3-angled stone containing six small, flat, brown seeds. Fruit resembles a gooseberry and is quite acid. Pulp is eaten fresh, stewed, used in making pies and preserves. Plants are propagated by seed or greenwood cuttings. Budding is also used.

65. *Phyllanthus emblica* - Myrobalan

Deciduous tree to 40 feet, native to tropical Asia. Flaking bark and leaves are arranged in 2 rows. Small yellow flowers are clustered in leaf axils. Fruit is about 1 inch in diameter, slightly lobed, greenish-yellow or red with yellowish pulp. Flavor is very sour. Eaten fresh, stewed or preserved. Propagated by seed or greenwood cuttings.

RFCI Tampa Bay Chapter
4109 DeLeon St
Tampa FL 33609



FIRST CLASS MAIL

