



# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2003

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

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WEBSITE: [www.rarefruit.org](http://www.rarefruit.org) (CHARLES NOVAK)

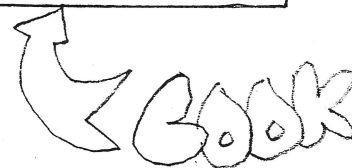
MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 PM. (THIS MONTH 1:00 PM)

NEXT MEETING: SEPT 14

PROGRAM: THE PROGRAM FOR OUR NEXT MEETING IS OUR LATE SUMMER PICNIC. It will be held on Sunday, SEPT 14, starting at 1:00, at the USF GARDENS. We will be serving barbecued chicken, grilled hamburgers & hot dogs. Members are invited to bring covered dishes: vegetables, salads & desserts to round out the table. Also, if you want to drink something with your meal, bring a drink such as a 2 liter of soda, a quart of tea, lemonade or juice. The club will provide the plates, napkins, tableware, cups & condiments. Likewise, you should bring your own chair if you wish to sit down to eat. Festivities will begin at 1:00 and this should be a great social occasion. We shall also have our usual plant raffle so bring your donation if you can. Also we will have a grafting demonstration for those interested in grafting.

Also, we will need to park across the street from the Gardens gate where we usually park for the plant sale to provide parking for visitors to the Gardens inside the gates, & walk over from there. Also, we will need about 8 people to come early, like 12:30, to help set up the tent & tables.

THIS MONTH 1:00 PM.



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COMPANION PLANTING  
as compiled by Sally Lee

At the August meeting a member asked about "Companion Planting" for Vegetables. The following are some recommendations from the video "Gardening Nature's Way".

<i>Plant this Vegetable</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>These Vegetables</i>
Cantelope		Corn
Pole beans		Corn, potatoes, radish
Beets		Broccoli, bush beans, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, onions
Broccoli		Beets, cabbage, potatoes, onions
Cabbage		Beans, carrots, celery, cucumbers, dill, rosemary, sage, potatoes
Carrots		Cabbage, chives, leeks, lettuce, onion, peas, potatoes, tomatoes
Strawberries		bush beans, lettuce, spinach
Tomatoes		Asparagus, basil, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, mustard, onion, parsley
Turnips		Peas
Swiss Chard		Bush beans, kohlrabi, onions
Eggplant		Beans, peppers, potatoes, tomatoes
Kale		Cabbage
Lettuce		Beets, carrots, parsnip, radish, strawberries, cucumbers

## AUGUST PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Rose Apple	Heath	Barbara Chapman
Loquat	"	J. Kitchen
Pineapple	"	Bill Mosler
Eugenia Confusa	"	George Campani
Papaya	"	Thom Scott
Tamarind	"	B.J. Vosburgh
Philippine Oregano	"	R & P Smeelink
Beauty Berry	"	J. Kitchen
" "	"	?
Rangoon Creeper	"	B.J. Vosburgh
Surinam Cherry	"	Michael McDuffer
Eugenia Confusa	"	Jerry Amyot
Loquat	"	Sandra Murray
Plumeria	Smith	Orpha Davis
"	"	Barbara Chapman
Siniguelas	Coronel	Ed Musgrave, J. Valdes
Spanish Plum	"	?
Kwai Muk	Charles Novak	Sandra Murray
" "	"	J.H. Ritter
" "	"	Bob Heath
" "	"	?
Muscadine Grape	Linda Novak	Keith Kirby
" "	"	Roshan Premraj
" "	"	?
Guava	Parker	Aurora Walker
Pomegranate	"	Donna Grose
Miracle Fruit	Paul Branesky	Barbara Chapman
Pineapple	Walt Yablonski	Roshan Premraj
"	Karin Yablonski	" "
Poha Berry (Ground Cherry)	Zmoda	James Davis
Acacia	B.J. Vosburgh	Barbara Chapman
"	"	?
Heliconia	"	J. Cimafranca
Bromeliads	Verna Dickey	?
Pineapple	Thom Scott	W. Yablonski
" (8)	"	?
Hot Peppers - C. America	Aurora Walker	?
Papaya	Lee	Aurora Walker
"	"	Bill Mosler
"	"	W. Yablonski
"	"	?
Plumeria	Sharon Pilot	Charlie Loenichen
"	"	?
Blue Porterweed	"	B.J. Vosburgh
Plantain	Susan McAveety	?
Praying Hands Banana	"	Joseph Divan
Mamey Sapote	Keith & Magella Kirby	J. Kitchen
Sugar Cane	"	?
Dwarf Bananas	Judy Cimafranca	Steve Brosh
" "	"	C.C. L?
Can Lychee	Marilyn Weekley	Ed Musgrave
Grapes	?	Shirley Quenan
Banana	Lisa Ghalayini	Bill Mosler
Plumeria	Jane Stavros	"

## GROWING VEGETABLES

by THOM SCOTT

Tom started his talk by saying we must be desperate for speakers or we wouldn't have asked him to do this talk on growing vegetables, but actually it is the type of gardening he knows best and that he's done for the longest time. Likewise, he feels Rare Fruit Council members should do more vegetable gardening. When he went searching for a vegetable growing club, he found the Rare Fruit Council, which is that and much more. He asked if many grow a vegetable garden or herbs and vegetables in pots, and found that this includes most of the membership, which is not surprising because you would expect fruit tree growers to also grow vegetables. After all, fruit & vegetables are part and parcel of the same edible plant group. Actually, some of our so-called vegetables are really short lived fruiting plants; the tomato comes immediately to mind, as well as peppers, squash, okra & others.

Thom tends to differentiate between what he calls garden fruit and true vegetables, based on their horticultural differences. Most garden fruit, such as tomatoes, squash & peppers are tender crops that need a lot of sun to perform well, and because they're grown in the warmer months, the challenges of weather, disease and insects are more severe, whereas what he calls true vegetables, those plants grown for their leaves, stems, tubers or roots, are relatively cold hardy and forgiving of shade. He has had better success with true vegetables and finds them easier to grow, but actually it all boils down to food. He mentioned the USDA food triangle, where fruit & vegetables occupy the bottom of the triangle, the largest part, and for good reason; they share most of the same nutritional qualities and together comprise the foundation of a healthy diet.

Thom said he had been growing vegetables most of his adult life, motivated because he grew up during the counter-culture revolution of the 60's, when the notion of self sufficiency and ecological living were in vogue, ideals which appealed to him. As a poor young city dweller in the pursuit of growing some

food, he quickly realized that it's unlikely that he would produce any of his own grain or raise animals, and he couldn't plant fruit trees until he owned his own property. He found that growing vegetables was economical, fast and required little space. Whether you rent an apartment, duplex or a house, it's possible to grow vegetables. They can be grown in containers, as companions to flowers in existing beds, adjacent to shrubs, around the foundation of a building or along a fence line. In a flower bed most vegetables are attractive plants that mix well with the flowers. Given the right growing season, you can produce something edible from seed in as little as 25 days. Radishes are ready that quick and so are the first leaves of many true vegetables and from those extra seedlings that necessarily must be culled from a planting to allow those remaining to reach maturity. The culled plant can be consumed in soups, salads or stews. Mustard greens are one of Thom's favorites, harvestable in 40 to 45 days with thinning of the plants earlier as mentioned above. If you continually take just their outer leaves, they can remain productive for months, and when they finally go to seed, they cover the landscape with pretty yellow flowers. A lot of other vegetables behave like mustard and mature in 2 months or less. He indicated that success or failure is relatively fast as compared to a fruit tree, and you'll have plenty to eat while you're waiting for that rare fruit to finally bare.

The starting point is a package of vegetable seeds. Thom grows most of his vegetables from seed. For a faster, easier start, you can buy seedlings of many vegetables at your local garden center, but Thom regards that as cheating for himself. He had a package of cabbage seed, priced at 59¢, discounted to 15¢, which can be found at a number of stores. The contents on the package read 500 milligrams. That may not sound like much but there's an amazing productive potential there. He counted the seeds; there were 169 of them. If you could raise just a third of

these to maturity, which is quite possible, say 150 plants, and given an extremely conservative estimate that a cabbage weighs 3 pounds, that amounts to more than 100 lbs. of cabbage for a mere 15¢. They can reach this size in about 2 months (the package says 72 days) and if you plant the 50 cabbages 1 ft. apart in a 2 ft. wide row, they occupy 100 sq. ft. That's more than 1 lb. of food per sq. ft. in 2 months. For even a small garden plot of 10 x 15 ft., we can expect hundreds of pounds of produce per year. This is the power of a vegetable seed. Seed producers should put warning labels on these packages: planting too many seeds results in a glut of food!

Actually, though, there are other costs to consider in vegetable gardening, principally those of land, soil, labor, water and fertilizers. Land and labor are the major costs; however, you are already paying for your land, and your labor is your own, so why not put both to more productive use. The benefits of growing vegetables far exceed the costs. You're outdoors in the fresh air, you get some exercise, you gain satisfaction from seeing the plants grow into beautiful edible products. A vegetable garden enhances the look of your property and your neighbors will love you for the excess produce you give them. In addition, you'll be eating the freshest and hopefully the most healthful produce possible and it will be free of pollutants and germs, free of pesticides, free of waxes and fungicides and free from the subsidized and unrealized costs inherent in store bought food. You will learn more about your environment, its ecology, biology, geology, hydrology and climate, and fulfill a desire to nurture that is in all of us.

A larger world of produce may be available to you, both in specific types of vegetables and in specific varieties within a type. Our modern world has brought us a greater variety in the marketplace but remember that what is available there has largely been selected for its ability to be shipped, handled and stored, and not necessarily for the best taste or appeal. An example that is rare in the stores is kohlrabi. Kohlrabi originated in Germany and translates as cabbage turnip. Its leaves can be eaten as a green and the large stem can be

eaten separately raw or as a cooked vegetable. Another example is tat-sou, Chinese mustard. It is very much like a small version of bok choy, but easier to grow. Look in a seed catalog for a great number of varieties within a species. A market may carry a few varieties of a vegetable; the catalog may list dozens, and you can help preserve that diversity by saving your own seeds, which also saves you money in the process.

Many vegetable seeds are easily saved, so easy that they may escape the garden and become naturalized volunteers in your landscape. In my garden mustard greens and cherry tomatoes commonly do this. Along the way to seed, you and the pollinators can enjoy the flowers. The excess seed can provide for a double bonus in the form of sprouts - typical of this are broccoli and radish.

There are double rewards with many vegetables: turnips and beets yield two crops, their roots in one dish and their greens in another. The growing tips of sweet potato vines are another example of "bottoms and tops". Roselle or Jamaican Sorrel, often regarded as a fruit, is known to this club in the form of a beverage, sauce or jelly made from its calyces, but additionally, its leaves can be cooked as greens.

Lastly, you can enjoy a vegetable both in the prime of its season and later as a preserved product, be it canned, frozen, pickled or dried.

I don't have to tell you that Florida is a great place to grow food. You can grow nearly anything under the sun here. Very few places in the U.S. can you grow some of vegetable year round. During the months of January, February and March, Florida provides 80% of the fresh produce grown in this country. That too is my favorite growing season.

Growing most vegetables is easy but it does require proper planning and preparation. You can't grow them in the wrong place or the wrong time. If you have room for a formal vegetable garden, ideally it should be sited well away from tree roots in an area that receives at least 6 hours of sun each day. Then prepare the site. A good soil test is the best way to start. It will tell you if

your soil is acid or alkaline and the nutrient levels. Few of us are lucky enough to have good starting soil. You will have to add soil amendments, probably more organic matter than anything else. Store bought peat is the most readily obtainable source, but compost, whether home made or purchased, is better because it contains more nutrients and enzymes.

Mulching also adds organic matter to the soil as it decomposes and has many side benefits as well: it insulates the soil, keeping it cooler, conserving both its substance and moisture; it minimizes erosion, controls weeds and fosters soil organisms. One of the secrets to Florida gardening is mulch, mulch and more mulch.

Both macro and micro nutrients will be needed; they can be from organic or inorganic sources, the plants probably won't notice the difference; but care must be exercised with inorganics for they are a very concentrated form of nutrients and over-use can damage both your plants and the environment.

Consider well what you attempt to grow: it makes little sense to produce something you or your family don't care much for nor does it make sense to grow too much at one time. Contact your local extension service and consult vegetable gardening books designed for Florida. They'll teach you the growth habits of vegetables: how big they get, yield, spacing, days to maturity, when to harvest, and most important, they'll list the ideal planting dates for a specific crop if your particular area. You can't plant vegetables in Florida during the months you planted them back home in Michigan, Poland or China. In many ways Florida vegetable gardening is unique.

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#### NEW MEMBERS

George Campani  
Sandra & Patrick Murray  
Nagaraja & Lakshmi Rao

Palm Harbor, FL  
Palm Harbor, FL  
Odessa, FL

#### WHAT'S HAPPENING

Aug-Sep 2003

by PAUL ZMODA

Our last speaker was right on target; Thomas Scott knows that the best way to the best garden yields is the organic way. There is nothing better than harvesting your dinner minutes before you are ready to begin cooking. Although I do not use organic growing methods exclusively, I tend to favor that approach. Using lots of mulch and compost is beneficial for almost all your plants. Keep in mind that citrus can probably do without it and that mulch should not be banked up around your trees' trunks. Allowing the trunks to remain moist is an invitation to rotting. I've been mulching many of our plants for years; the more you use, the better your soil becomes, which leads to bigger and better crops and healthier plants.

RFCI members Jerry and Cora Coronel showed us photos of a very rare fruit tree they are growing. In the Philippines it is called Kamachili. Also known as Madras thorn, Pithecellobium dulce is a type of mimosa tree and is similar to ice cream beans. A fat, curled pod is produced on the tree which provides a sweet pulp around the seeds. A native of tropical America, it is grown on many Pacific Islands now. I was very happy to get one of their first sprouted seedlings.

Our tea trees are growing quite nicely at this time. I only use fish emulsion fertilizer on them as I've found that chemical fertilizers will burn the leaves. This leads me to believe that they are salt-intolerant so they may not do well near the gulf waters. They are very successful in bright shade and moist, rich soils. August is the month I harvest the large, brown seeds to plant. This year I obtained about 200 good seeds.

I noticed quite a few pecans on one of our trees. Barring any squirrel attacks, maybe we'll finally get to try some.

New plantings: Peruvian ground cherry, mustards, herbs and pole beans.

## CONDOLENCES

It is with heartfelt sorrow and deep regret that we offer our condolences to Al Jean for the recent passing of his wife, Pat, on Tuesday, Aug. 26. Al & Pat were active members of the club for many years. Pat was friendly, pleasant and a dedicated member, and will be missed by all the members of the club. May her soul rest in peace.



## \* 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 & citrus. Please give a copy of your recipe(s) to Verna Dickey at the next club meeting or mail a copy of your recipe(s) to:

Verna Dickey  
2114 Fairfield Ave  
Brandon FL 33510

This is an important RFCI project and we need the input of lots of our members.

## MEMBERS CORNER

**BONSAI:** For anyone interested in bonsai, we have two well developed bonsai that need tender loving care for someone who can provide it. Call Bob Heath @ 813-289-1068 to arrange for pickup.

**FOR SALE:** Lawn/garden tractor - Sears 17 hp, 42" cut, automatic transmission with new dump cart. Was \$1575 when new. Now \$850. Call Paul Zmoda @ 813-932-2469 or 813-677-5985 for more details.



**WANTED:** Malabar spinach seeds or plants. Call Sally Lee @ 813-982-9359 or bring to picnic.

## **From the President** Jimmy Lee

Thanks to club member Thom Scott for his interesting and informative presentation last month on the growing of vegetables. He shared with us many tips to help us to grow our vegetables successfully.

We are looking forward to our annual picnic in September at the USF Botanical Garden. I invite all members to attend as there will be a grafting demonstration. This would be especially beneficial to our new members. There will be plenty of good food and members have always had a good time getting to know each other better. **We will be eating at 1 P.M.** There is more information in this newsletter.

## **Programs/Events:**

<b>September 14:</b>	Our annual Club Picnic at the USF Botanical Garden (1 P.M.)
<b>October 11 &amp; 12:</b>	Fall USF Botanical Garden Plant Festival
<b>November 9:</b>	Program on Cold Protection
<b>December 14:</b>	Annual Holiday Social

## THE CHINESE JUJUBE

### Zizyphus jujuba

by Marjia Bahr

(Taken from Flower and Garden, Aug-Sep, 1981)

The Jujube is one of the five principal fruits of China and has been cultivated there for at least 4,000 years. It was introduced into America in 1837. There is a tree on the grounds of the National Guard Armory in Cairo, Illinois, that was planted in the 1840's by homesick Chinese working the flatboats on the Mississippi River between St. Louis and New Orleans. The tree is a beauty, still producing huge crops of fruit each year.

The Jujube, or Chinese Date, (Zizyphus jujuba) belongs to the Buckthorn family, the Rhamnaceae. Most varieties have thorns, but not all. It can be grown as a shrub, but usually it's pruned into a single-stem tree. It reaches 25 to 30 feet in about 15 years. Most of the trees resemble a pecan tree in shape, with open, spreading branches. A few have pendulous limbs which bend low when laden with fruit. The branches of all varieties are supple, densely covered with bright green foliage reminiscent of citrus. The color and sheen of the leaves is one of the most striking things about the Jujube.

Flowering begins in April or May, depending on climate (and extends late into the summer in Florida). The greenish-white flowers are borne by the hundreds up and down the branches, and although small, they give a charming overall effect. Most Jujubes are scentless, but 'Lang' and a few other Asian selections have a faint cinnamon fragrance. All are loved by bees and yield fine honey.

Fruits ripen from mid-September to early October. They resemble large olives and have a seed like that of a date. Fruit size varies widely, but the choice Chinese kinds are usually 1½ to 2 inches long, and 1 to 1½ inches thick. Fruit color ranges from very dark red, through brown, to almost black. Eaten fresh from the tree, Jujubes are sweet, with a creamy flesh like an apple. They make delicious jam and preserves. When dried, they look and taste much like a date.

The Chinese Jujube thrives in alkaline soils, but will grow anywhere if it has good drainage and full sun. Neither insects nor diseases seem to bother it, and good crops can be had without spraying. It tolerates a wide range of temperatures, and is hardy where winter cold doesn't drop below minus 20 degrees. It can take hot summers that wither many other fruits.

Plant either in spring or fall, depending on climate. (Cold areas should plant in spring.) The nursery supplying your tree will ship it at the proper planting time for your area. Jujubes have exceptionally large, heavy root systems. This big root system helps the tree survive drought. It's best to prepare a 3' X 3' planting hole in autumn, working in compost and well-rotted manure. Although the trees will grow in poor ground, fruit quality improves on trees given more favorable soil conditions.

Some varieties are self-unfruitful and need another nearby variety to set fruit. Check catalog descriptions on this point.

Feed young trees in late winter before the buds begin to swell. Use a balanced fertilizer (but do not put any in the planting hole nor use any for several months after planting.) If your soil tends to be acid, apply lime (dolomitic limestone) occasionally to help provide the high pH that Jujubes prefer. Expect a few flowers and fruits the year after planting. Fruit production and size of fruits will increase as the tree ages. Mature trees are capable of ripening tremendous crops.

**TASTING TABLE****AUGUST 2003**

Zmoda	Fresh fruit plate, miracle fruit	Coronel	Biblinka
B. Parker	Papaya pudding, Papaya bread	Heath	Spiced Carambola
Yoblonski	Loquats, papaya, figs, sweet potato paste	Roberts	Shortbread cookies
Marler	Pecan-fudge brownies	Riegler	Broden Avocado
P. Branesky	Boiled Jackfruit seeds	Springer	Green beams
M, Branesky	Green Jackfruit surprise	A. Walker	Fried sweet Plantains
Vosburgh	Black beans & yellow rice	Dickey	Macadamia nut cookies
Englebrecht	Buttered Plantains	Ritter	Tuna noodle casserole
Chapman	Guacamole & chips	Mann	Fruit salad
T. Scott	Carrot raisin salad	Pilot	Wacky chocolate cake
Musgraves	Orange cake	Palis	Blueberry muffins
Terenzi	Blueberry cheesecake	Cimafranca	Cantelope balls
Lee	Stir fry, pineapple cake, strawberry shortcake		
Novak	Wild rice-mango-pineapple-pecan salad, Key lime cookies, Mango & date nut bread, fresh fruit platter, Muscadine grapes, Juices		

A huge THANKS to all the members who donated to the tasting table. Everyone enjoyed the wonderful, tasty array of delectable edibles prepared by our generous club members. Remember to get your free raffle ticket from Sally Lee (one per member or family).

**Grafting knives, Parafilm, and grafting kits** are available for purchase. Contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399.

**New Club Polo Shirts** are available for purchase by members. The cost to members is \$15. Shirts will be available at the September picnic.

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