



# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2003

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

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PRESIDENT: JIM 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: OCT. 11 & 12 @ USF (SEE BELOW)

PROGRAM: THE USF FALL PLANT FESTIVAL is scheduled for Oct. 11 & 12. Consequently, we will forego our usual monthly meeting which would be on the 2nd Sunday of the month, Oct. 12, to participate in the USF Plant Festival. All members are invited to participate & bring plants to donate or sell. Parking is free but admission is \$3.00 for which the Club will reimburse workers & participants in the Sale. This is an interesting affair & well worth the admission. Likewise it is a social event as well as a money maker for the Club. We will have no tasting table or plant raffle. But we desperately need workers. Let's make the USF Sale our big one. Please join us!

## USF FALL PLANT FESTIVAL

The RFCI will participate in the USF Plant Festival on Oct 11 & 12, 2003. This is an important fund raiser & all members are invited to attend, to assist in the Sale, to sell plants, to enjoy the camaraderie & to visit other groups.

Our participation will begin around 1:00 Friday afternoon, Oct 10, raising tents, setting up tables, arranging plants & posters, till about 6:00 pm. Members are needed to unload plants at 3:00 pm.

On Saturday, Oct 11, the Gardens will be open from 7:00 to 9:00 AM for our final preparations.

The front gate will close at 8:30 AM Saturday & Sunday, & participants will enter by the side south gate after the front gate closes, on foot, until 9:00. Public will be admitted @ 10:00 on both days. Admission price is \$3.00.

From 7:00 to 9:00 AM on Saturday & Sunday, traffic will be one way, in the front gate & out the side gate. The Festival will end at 4:00 PM on Saturday & 3:00 PM on Sunday, & only after 4:15 & 3:15 PM respectively, will we be allowed to bring vehicles in to re-supply or remove plants.

Parking for participants not bringing plants or supplies is across the street from the front entrance to the Gardens.

The USF Botanical Gardens takes 10% of our gross sales; the remaining 90% will be split 70/20 between the participant & the RFCI, so mark your plants accordingly, remembering that you get 70% of the selling price.

We have provided ID cards for RFCI workers. Only those with ID cards will be admitted before the Sale begins. If you are refused admittance, someone from our group will vouch for you to gain admittance. If you need an ID card, call Bob Heath @ 813-289-1068.

DIRECTIONS TO USF FALL PLANT FESTIVAL: 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.

From the President  
Jimmy Lee

We had a big turnout for the September picnic at the USF Botanical Garden. We also had nine visitors join us from the Brevard Rare Fruit Council. It was a pleasure meeting them and sharing our knowledge and experiences growing rare and tropical fruits. Our thanks to our new friends for bringing home grown jackfruit and two delicious varieties of Carambola (starfruit) for us to sample. This was a special treat as some of our members had never tasted jackfruit; while others thought it was the best jackfruit they had ever tasted.

**Thanks** to all the members who brought food and drinks-and plants for the plant exchange. A special **thanks** to Robert Dickey for bringing his grill and preparing the hamburgers and hotdogs. Our picnics are always enjoyed by the members and I look forward to the next one.

We will not have a regular meeting in October as we will be participating in the Fall USF Botanical Garden Plant Festival. We will need several members on Friday, October 10, 2:30 P.M., to help unload plants. Also, we will need members on Saturday and Sunday (Oct. 11-12) to help with the sale and to load plants on Sunday at 3 P.M.

**Programs/Events:**

<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

**WHAT'S HAPPENING**

Aug-Sept 2003  
by PAUL ZMODA

This year has been pretty good for growing fruit trees so far. Plenty of rain, hot temperatures and many sunny days all contributed to actively growing, productive plants. Our Bearss Lime gave up about 5 pounds of flavorful fruits. We juiced almost all of them for delicious limeade and froze some in ice cube trays to add to drinks later on. A touch of this nectar is mandatory in salsas. Speaking of freezing: our "excess" blueberries are still fresh-tasting and are wonderful served over vanilla ice cream.

The red okra crop is coming on strong. Larger than the green ones, the tender pods are so good in so many dishes from pickles to soups to stir fries. They grow so fast that they must be picked daily or they will quickly become too tough to use. Since I've heard that the seeds can reduce serum cholesterol levels, perhaps the seeds from these fresh, larger pods would be useful in recipes. At each season's finale, I always leave several pods to develop fully and dry out for seeds for the following season.

What a difference in our citrus trees after treating them to regular doses of epsom salts as well as plenty of 10-10-10 fertilizer on a monthly schedule. They are deep green and so healthy looking. Every citrus specimen has some fruit on it and quite a few we are top grafting with different varieties.

Our newest persimmon - "Honan Red" - gave me 3 fruits and they are as promised: smooth in consistency, seedless and delicious when soft-ripe. These came from the top-worked wood put onto the Fuyu persimmon in January 2002. The "Honan Red" tree, grafted onto native persimmon rootstock at the same time, is now taller than me and looking well.

New plantings: broccoli, pole beans, red eggplant (from Ireland).

## SEPTEMBER PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Loquat	Heath	?
Pineapple	"	?
Passion Fruit	"	?
Papaya	"	?
Orange Berry	"	Ian Greig
Eugenia Confusa	"	?
Ehretia Anacua	"	?
Roseapple	"	?
Philippine Oregano	"	Ed Walsh
Rangoon Creeper	Heath	?
Miracle Fruit	Branesky	McGauley
" "	"	Fred Engelbrecht
Loquat	Thom Scott	?
Cherry of Rio Grande	"	?
Kei Apple	"	?
Surinam Cherry	Thom Scott	?
Purple Passion Fruit Vine	W. Yoblonski	?
" " " "	"	?
" " " "	K. Yoblonsko	?
" " " "	"	?
Mystery Passion Fruit	McGauley	?
Pineapple Tops	Lillian Smoleny	?
Blackberry	Charles Novak	Bob Heath
Blueberry	"	Fred Palmer
"	"	John Braden
"	"	Palmer
Cactus	Harris	John Golden
"	"	"
Sugar Apples	J. Braden	Kitchen
"	"	?
Red Eggplant	Zmoda	Braden
"	"	Kitchen
Poha Berry	"	?
Plumeria	"	?
Red Maple	J. Kitchen	?
Yellow Canna	"	?
Soursop	Parker	?
Papaya	"	Harris
Pineapple	"	Charlie Delp
Red Canna	B.J. Vosburgh	Charlie Delp
"	"	Claire
Ornamental Banana	Sally Lee	?
" "	"	?
" "	"	?
" "	"	?
" "	"	?
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" "	"	?

## New Members:

John Stames

Tampa

Jeannie Taylor

Tampa

Jack &amp; Sharon Singer

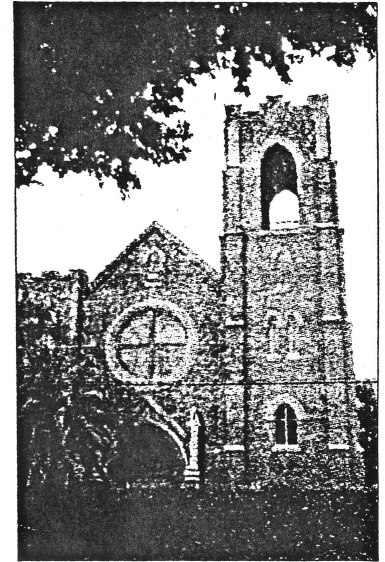
Tampa

Grafting kits, knives and Parafilm are available for purchase by members who would like to graft their own plants. Contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399 or [c.novak@worldnet.att.net](mailto:c.novak@worldnet.att.net).

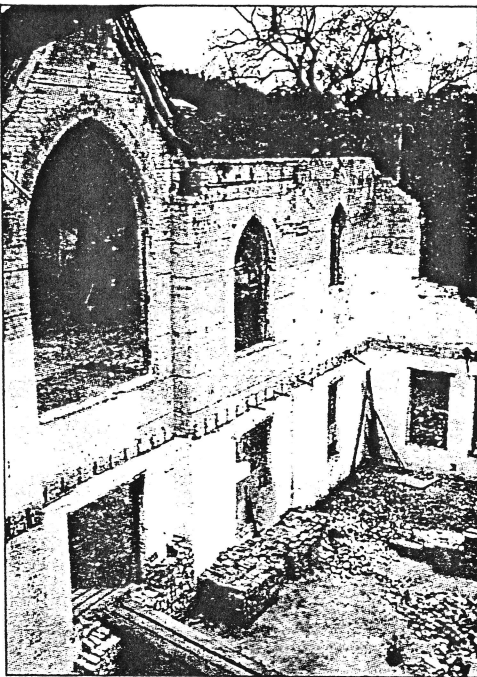
## THE RENAISSANCE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The First Congregational Church was built in 1906: a beautiful red brick building on the corner of Florida Avenue and Francis Street in Tampa Heights. At that time Florida Avenue was an unpaved dirt street, as was Francis, and traffic was almost entirely horse & buggy. The church prospered until the mid 50's but eventually faded and was converted to the Polish-American Club, which used it until 1980 when it was sold to Lighthouse Gospel Ministries. Eventually it was abandoned and condemned in 1990 when homeless people moved in. One night a fire gutted the building. Most of the roof collapsed onto the first floor and into the basement. The back wall of the building collapsed and left it a shell of three walls and a rubble of 16,000 bricks.

A man of vision and an almost unlimited drive, Nick Cutro is rebuilding the structure, a historically designated building, into the Renaissance Center for the Arts, a non-profit organization for the teaching of art, sculpture, music and horticulture. Cutro hopes to rekindle in today's youth a creative spark and renew a community spirit in old Tampa Heights. He calls it "Project Phoenix", where a jewel is rising out of the ashes of a burned out, abandoned church.



The Renaissance Center is expected to offer the finest in ambience and entertainment. The performance theater, with its 50 ft. high cathedral ceiling, wows your senses. He dreams of art exhibits, brilliant plays and music: classic, pop, folk and jazz. Outside, he envisions one strolling through fragrant gardens, beautiful flowers and fruiting trees, and listening to the whisper of cascading water, or just finding a park bench to relax under the stars.



A fire in 1990 left the former church a shell. Bricks from a crumbled back wall were recycled for the renovation.

One of our club members has agreed to volunteer as horticultural coordinator. He will be working closely with a landscape horticulturist and two horticultural teachers, all three of whom have degrees in horticulture. "Our first project," he says, will be to design a complete landscape plan of the entire site, including gazebo, water features, statuary, raised beds, fruiting trees, perennials, flowering annuals and vegetable gardens. There will be a fish pond, waterfall and a small stream with fish. There will be paved areas with cafe tables and chairs. There will be classes in horticulture, planting, pruning, fertilizing, grafting, air layering and general maintenance taught in an outdoor environment." The coordinator and his assistant are presently making up lists of fruiting trees and shrubs, vegetables, perennials and flowering annuals suitable for this area. All of these will be incorporated in a master plan. Fruiting trees will need to be obtained and planted at this time, purchased or donated as necessary. As classes begin, shrubs, flowering annuals, vegetables and vines will be incorporated under the supervision of the staff. The result should be a beautiful park-like environment to be enjoyed by the public interested in the arts and horticulture. Any of our members who might be interested in getting involved, or just would like to watch the development, may contact Bob Heath @ 289-1068.



## THANKS FROM USF

Below is a letter we received on August 25 from Laurie Walker, director of the Gardens.

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the staff, members and volunteers of the University of South Florida Botanical Gardens, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind help and generous support over this past year. Our fiscal year ended on June 30. This also marks the completion of our first year without University funding. I am pleased to report that we had a wonderful year, despite the stock market woes and world uncertainties! Thank you for participating in our Weekend Gardener Workshops and Plant Sales, donating to our collections and displays and helping us promote the Gardens. Your participation in these activities has been instrumental in helping us meet our financial goals. We look forward to an even stronger partnership with you in the coming year.

Revenues generated by Gardens activities support not only the daily operations of the Gardens but also our growing needs! We need restrooms, staff office space, classroom space, a retail shop, a climate controlled display facility and paved pathways! To this end, we run a retail plant shop and book "store" that is open daily, provide weekly workshops and classes, host weddings and tours, and hold plant sales and festivals - all of which much provide financial support for our needs and goals!

Thanks to a great group of volunteers, a "Friends of the Gardens" group was formed last fall. Our first annual fund raising dinner was held April 24 and was a great success! We send a very special thanks to you for supporting this great event with your generous donations for the silent auction. Some of you even bought tickets to the event. We raised more than \$4,000 toward our restroom fund! The University has given approval for us to build restrooms and, in contributing to the effort, have installed a water line for us. Now all we have to do is raise the \$30,000 needed to build the restroom facilities! During the past year, we have raised nearly \$20,000, so we are almost to our goal!

I encourage you to visit the Gardens, see all of the new displays and let us show you our future plans. We have a new bonsai display, thanks to the members of the Hukyu Bonsai Society. Our orchid collection has never looked better, thanks to Jim Clarkson, the Tampa Bay Orchid Society and a number of dedicated volunteers. The front entrance has been replanted with natives thanks to a grant from the Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. We have been given University approval for a gazebo and are in the process of raising funds for it as well!

In keeping with our mission and that of the University (education, research and community engagement), we offer classes in the spring and fall for the Learning in Retirement Program. We have designated an area for vegetable gardens for University students. We are working closely with faculty on campus on research projects at the Gardens and have many ideas for new displays and collection additions. We will be hosting a campus open house in early September to introduce new students, faculty and staff to the Gardens. There are many other exciting plans in the offing, lots to keep us busy and always something new for you to enjoy.

I hope that you will continue to support the USF Botanical Gardens, to be a part of this beautiful place and special organization. There are many opportunities for you, your club or your business to get involved. Please feel free to contact me. If you have any questions or ideas, I am happy to hear from you.

Thanks from USF (continued):

With the interest and support of community members and friends like you, we are able to enhance our programs and promote the goals of the Gardens. Thank you for contributing to the success of the University of South Florida Botanical Gardens.

Sincerely yours,

Laurie Walker  
Director

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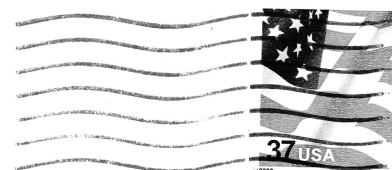
RECIPE: PAPAYA CHIFFON PIE

1½ cups cooked papaya put  
through a sieve  
½ cup sugar  
1 cup milk  
½ tsp salt

½ tsp ginger  
½ tsp nutmeg  
½ tsp cinnamon  
3 eggs

Put papaya & milk in top of double boiler. Mix with sugar, salt, ginger, nutmeg & cinnamon and combine with papaya-milk mixture. Mix well and when hot add to 3 egg yolks slightly beaten. Return to double boiler, stir & cook until thick. Measure ¼ cup cold water, add 1 tablespoon gelatin & when soft, add to hot papaya mixture. Mix thoroughly & cool. When it begins to stiffen, beat 3 egg whites until stiff, beat in ¼ cup sugar & fold into papaya mixture. Pour into baked pie shell, chill in refrigerator. Garnish with whipped cream just before serving.

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