



# NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 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: NOV 9 2003

PROGRAM: WITH THE APPROACH OF WINTER, OUR PROGRAM THIS MONTH IS ON COLD PROTECTION. So many of us are growing plants which are susceptible to freezes and low temperatures that this program is apropos for this time of year. With some nights with temperatures into the 20s, all is not lost. Proper preparation and protection can be very important and of great interest to all. So come and learn how to protect your cold tender plants. In addition, we will have our regular raffle and fabulous tasting table, comments about our upcoming Christmas party and welcome to our new members.

As usual we will meet at the Westside Conference Center. For the benefit of our new members, we provide a map - Page 03-72.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Oct-Nov 2003

by PAUL ZMODA

The weather has changed: the temperatures are falling and the rain is not. We are enjoying some nice persimmons this fall, but so are the opossums and foxes. I catch something in the live traps almost every night. If I don't keep at this, we might never taste the fruit.

Sugar apples are few, but very nice this year - especially the red ones.

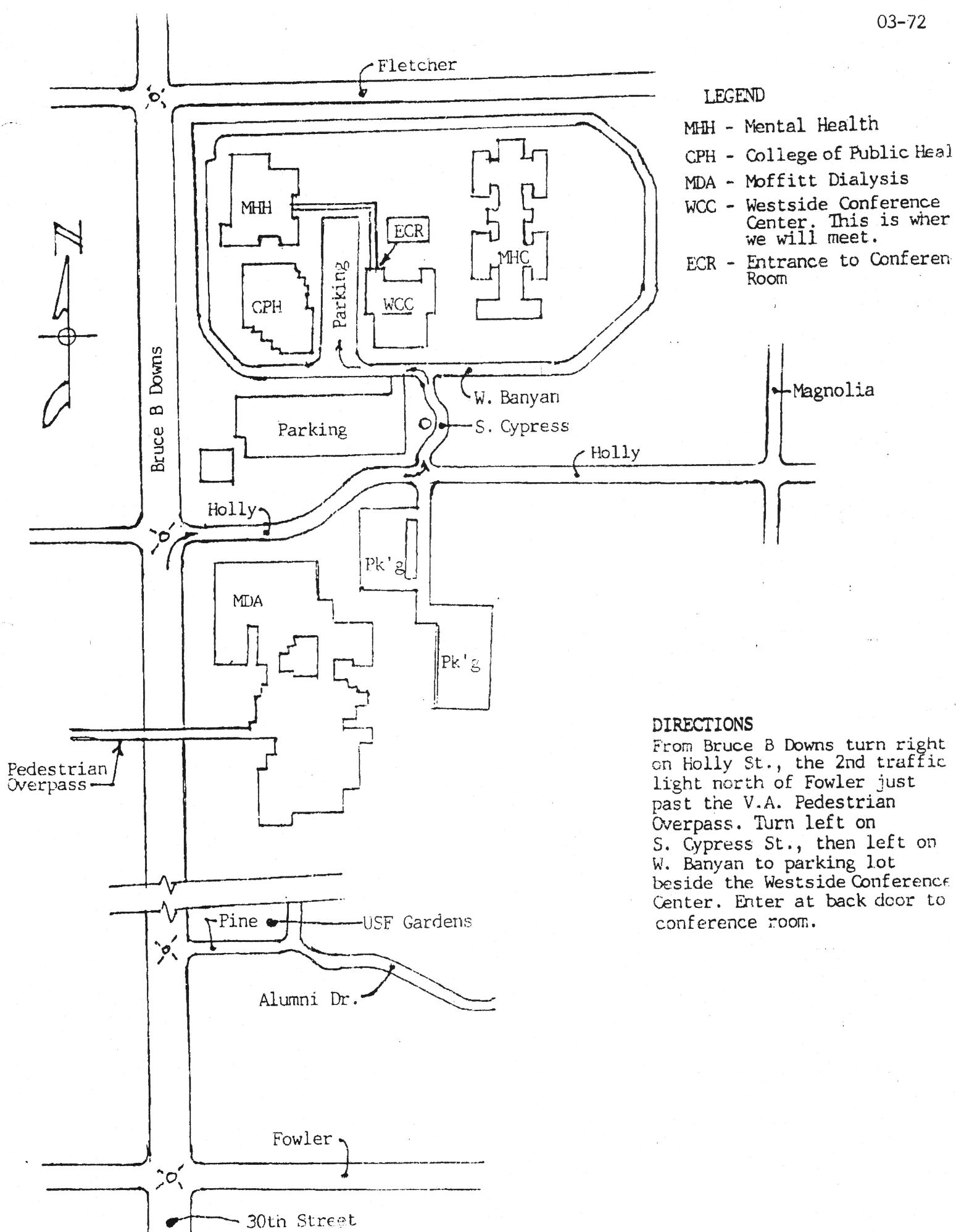
Bananas are worth the long wait. Apple bananas, or manzanos, are great eaten out of hand. We fried some green Orinoco plantains as tostones. The fat, ripe, yellow ones were delicious sliced and fried in butter until golden brown and then poached in red wine until the sauce thickened. They were finally served with a light dusting of nutmeg. Excellent! Our first ever ice cream bananas ripened to perfection. These were mostly eaten fresh, but we dried some when the supply threatened to get out of hand, so they wouldn't be wasted. You have to get creative when you have bananas coming in.

I added more horse manure to the vegetable gardens. I topped that off with a thick layer of hay. Through this attractive mulch, I planted several kinds of onions, leeks and broccoli.

New plantings: Chestnut hybrids, Java lingonberry, holly-leaved cherries and mayhaw.

**Propagation Workshop:** Saturday, November 22, 10 A.M. USF Botanical Garden Conservatory. Several club members will be giving grafting and air layering demonstrations. Contact the Garden for further information. (813) 974-2329

**Membership Directories:** New membership directories have been printed and will be available at the November 9 meeting. One per family please.



## From the President

### Jimmy Lee

Thanks to those club members who helped with the USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Sale. The weather was very nice on both Saturday and Sunday. We were constantly busy and many fruiting plants and cups of juice were sold. We had a wide variety of fruiting plants available for purchase. I especially enjoy meeting the public, answering their questions, sharing my fruit growing experiences and telling them about the Rare Fruit Council.

Winter will be upon us soon and you will not want to miss the November meeting. Member Charles Novak will give a presentation on Cold Protection. For those who have cold sensitive plants this will be an opportunity for you to learn various methods of cold protection to help your plants survive through the winter.

#### Programs/Events:

<b>November 9:</b>	Program on Cold Protection for your plants
<b>December 14:</b>	Annual Holiday Social
<b>January 11:</b>	Don Chafin of <i>Going Bananas</i> , Homestead, FL
<b>February :</b>	State Fair
<b>March 14:</b>	Ray Jones – Selective Fruits
<b>April 10-11:</b>	USF Botanical Garden Spring Plant Festival

#### BANANA TREES

When Don Chafin comes up from Homestead in January to speak about bananas, he is willing to bring special varieties of banana plants for members who order them. Members may order bananas by calling Growing Bananas at 305-247-0397. Prices will vary so request the price when you order the banana tree. The editors recommend the following bananas:

Rajapuri. This is a dwarf plant that grows 7 to 8 ft. before fruiting. It has a thick stem and stands up very well to the wind. The heads of fruit grow up to 30 or 40 pounds maximum and it is a prolific fruiting plant when managed properly. It takes the cold better than most bananas and the fruit has a sweet flavor. It is immune to Panama disease and is not attacked by nematodes or corm borers.

Apple Banana. This one grows from 12 to 14 ft. tall and has a light margin of red around the leaf. It is a small banana, similar to the Rajapuri with a flavor reminiscent of a cross between an apple and a very sweet banana, quite pleasing. The heads of fruit will get up to 60 pounds maximum with proper fertilizer and care. The plant is almost as cold hardy as the Rajapuri but may be attacked by nematodes and corm borers.

The Macaboo or Red Jamaican. The dwarf mutation grows to about 8 to 10 ft. with heads of about 45 lbs. maximum. It produces top quality fruit with a sweet & buttery consistency. The skin of the banana is dark red but the flesh is a standard banana color. Ask for the dwarf.

Hua Moa. Hua Moa is a tall banana with a thick trunk, up to 14 ft. tall. The fruit may grow to 3" in diameter & 10" long and falls in between a plantain & a banana. It may be eaten out of hand or fried; in either case it is very delicious. It is somewhat cold sensitive, is resistant to Panama disease but is attacked by corm borers and nematodes.

<b>New Members:</b>	Samuel Dennis	Tampa	Dixie Ribickas	Zephyrhills
	Jose Javier Diaz	Tampa	Tyson Richmond	Tampa
	Ubiraci Fernandes	Tampa	Kim Skibbie	Odessa
	Elisabeth Fraser	Temple Terrace	Wendy & Chris Smiekel	Tampa
	Gail Hamilton	Dade City	Bob & Czarina Spieler	Tampa
	Bob Hunter	St. Petersburg	Michael Moser	Palmer, AK
	Alton Kemp	Tampa	Linda Stamat	Land O' Lakes
	Cathy Klein	Tampa	Jean Steely	Tampa
	Craig Livingston	Gibsonston	Heidi Stephens	Tampa
	Shelly Maisonville	Lakeland	Ellen & Nancy Verdel	Tampa
	Chris Newton	Tampa	Charmant Theodore	Tampa
	Prativ Patel	Brandon	Teri Worsham	Seffner

*WELCOME* to our new members and we hope to see you at the November meeting!

## A SILVER ANNIVERSARY, 25 YEARS OF GROWTH

Below we reprint the first letters mailed to local members of the Miami Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council to form the core of our budding local chapter. You may note the signature on both letters; Jud Newcombe is still with us; Bill Lester moved to north Florida and is no longer a member.

September 25, 1978

Dear Friends:

How often have you read about the activities of the Rare Fruit Council and wished you were close enough to Miami to participate? Being a member is good -- but being an active participant would be even better.

Your interest in rare fruits makes you unique in the Central Florida area. Probably you have discovered that our alien climate and growing conditions do not lend themselves to the growth of plants that thrive in southern Florida. What you have learned from experience would be interesting to other members in this area.

We are writing to see if you, and other Rare Fruit Council members in West Central Florida, would be interested in forming a chapter of the Council. We are not asking for definite commitments now. We are surveying the members from Lakeland to Largo and Riverview to Brooksville to see if there is sufficient interest to warrant an initial meeting.

Probably we should make it clear that we are not experts in growing rare fruits. Some of you have had more experience with them than we have. However, we are interested . . . and we have many questions! Also, we were fortunate to be able to attend one of the Council meetings in Miami a few months ago. We were impressed with its activities.

If you are interested in the possibility of a chapter of the Council for this area, we would like to hear from you. Would you send one of us a note, or call us during the evening or weekends? We are anxious to know:

1. Do we have your correct address on the envelope you received? What is your telephone number?
2. Which of the following would be your first and second choices for a meeting time?
  - a. Saturday morning
  - b. Saturday afternoon
  - c. Saturday evening
  - d. Sunday afternoon
  - e. Sunday evening
  - f. Weekday evenings
3. Do you know of a meeting place (or places) that would be available and convenient for other members?
4. Do you have a particular area of interest in rare fruits?

We look forward to hearing from you. If we find sufficient interest, we will contact you again.

Jud Newcombe  
314 Deer Park  
Temple Terrace 33617  
(813-988-3249)

Bill Lester  
7115 N. 50th St.  
Tampa  
(813-988-8451)

November 12, 1978

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Heath  
4109 Deleon Street  
Tampa, Fl. 33609

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Heath:

As a result of your response to our first letter, we are sufficiently encouraged to investigate further the possibility of beginning an organization concerned with growing rare fruit in West Central Florida. We have secured the meeting room of the Temple Terrace office of the Tampa Federal Savings and Loan Association from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, December 3, 1978. The location is 9250 56th Street, Temple Terrace, one block north of Busch Boulevard, across from Winn Dixie.

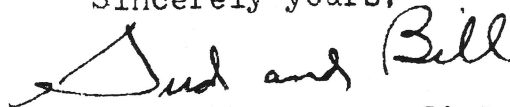
If you are unfamiliar with this area, you may take Busch Boulevard east, past Busch Gardens and the Sea Wolf Restaurant (a good place to have a Sunday dinner if you have never been there) to 56th Street. Turn left on 56th Street and go one block. Make a left turn into the Tampa Savings and Loan Association parking lot.

This will be an informal meeting. It probably will be quite small but if your letters and phone calls are any indication, it will be an enthusiastic meeting. We will talk about some of the alternatives available to us. Also, we would like each of you to describe your interests in the area of rare fruits, nuts, and ornamentals. If you have specimens of fruits you are growing and can bring them with you, we would enjoy seeing them!

Please feel free to bring anyone with you who shares your interest. If you can include that person's name on the enclosed card, we will prepare a name tag for that individual.

We look forward to visiting with you on December 3.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jud and Bill". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed names of the signatories.

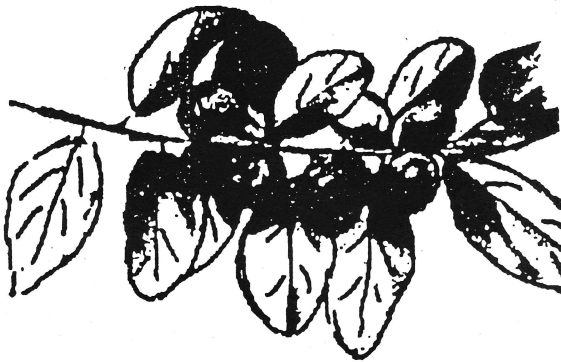
Jud Newcombe and Bill Lester

We've come a long way in the passing years with about 500 members after starting with only 14. Ours is the largest horticultural group in central Florida and likewise the most fun. We have a right to be proud of our club.

## A GUIDE TO TROPICAL FRUIT TREES &amp; VINES (continued)

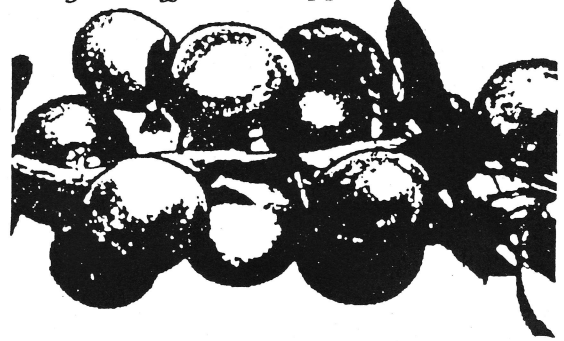
**FAMILY - FAGACEAE**66. *Castanea pumila* - Alleghany chinquapin

Deciduous tree to 45 feet found from Florida to Texas. Coarsely-toothed leaves up to 5 inches long, with whitish hair beneath. Nuts singly about 1/2 inch across. Male flower in catkins and female flower at base of male. Nut eaten raw or roasted. Propagated by seed.

**FAMILY - FLACOURTIACEAE**67. *Dovyalis abyssinica* - African dove plum

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER RFCI  
4109 DeLeon St  
Tampa FL 33609

A small dioecious shrub or small tree to 30 feet, native to Africa. Branches have spines about 1-1/2 inches long. Flowers are green and its berry, apricot fruit is about 1/2 inch in diameter and light orange in color. Pulp is yellow and eaten fresh, stewed or preserved. Flavor is acid. Plants grow well in hot, dry climates and are propagated from seed or cuttings.

68. *Dovyalis caffra* - Kei apple

Small tree to 20 feet with stiff, sharp spines, native to Africa. Smooth berry-like fruit is about 1 inch in diameter, juicy and yellow in color. Its yellow pulp is sour or sub-acid and eaten fresh, cooked, preserved or used in jelly. Plants are propagated from seed or by cuttings.



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