



# NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 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](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: DECEMBER 14

PROGRAM: THE PROGRAM THIS MONTH IS OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY & COVERED DISH SOCIAL THANKS TO CLUB MEMBERS DR & MRS BURNS CREIGHTON, AT THEIR FARM ON MIZELLE CREEK IN LYTHERIA. This is a covered dish social & everyone is invited to bring something good to eat. We will meet at the Creighton farm at 1:00 pm (SEE MAP ON PAGE 03-78). We will have the usual plant raffle so bring plants to donate. There will be no formal speaker & very little club business will be conducted. There will be a door prize & wine tasting so all you little ol' wine makers bring your best. This is our 9th annual Christmas party & our 25th anniversary celebration so all try to come & help us celebrate. In addition to the above activities, we will have our first silent auction. We are excited about it and expect to have many nice things to auction: fruiting trees, books, food preservation and preparation equipment, etc. Members who have anything of this nature that they are willing to donate are asked to bring it to the meeting for the auction. See map on page 03-79.

## From the President Jimmy Lee

Over 90 members attended the November meeting. Thanks to Charles Novak for his program on Cold Protection. I'm sure everyone learned some helpful ways to protect their fruiting plants.

Our club has been involved in many activities this year. I want to *THANK* those members who donated their time and energy at the Florida State Fair exhibit, the Citrus Celebration, the Spring and Fall USF Plant Festivals, the USF July Tropical Plant Festival, seminars at the USF Botanical Garden and the Sunken Garden Tropical Fruit Festival. A special *THANKS* to members who donate to the plant exchange and tasting table. *Our members are the greatest!!!*

Our Holiday Social (December 14) once again will be at Dr. & Mrs. Creighton's farm in Lithia. You will not want to miss this event. Please bring a covered dish (salads, vegetables, casseroles, desserts, etc.) to accompany the turkeys and hams provided by the club. The club will also provide the tableware and drinks. **The festivities will begin at 1 P.M.** Donations for the free plant exchange will be greatly appreciated.

**Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to our Tampa Bay Rare Fruit Council!** The first meeting was held in December 1978. The club will provide a cake at the Holiday Social to commemorate this special day. Come celebrate with us.

### Scheduled Programs/Events:

December 14:	Annual Holiday Social at the Creighton Farm in Lithia
January 11:	Don Chafin of <i>Going Bananas</i> , Homestead, FL
February 5-16:	Florida State Fair
February 8:	Citrus Celebration at the State Fair
March 14:	Ray Jones of the Palmetto Rare Fruit Council
April 10-11:	USF Botanical Garden Spring Plant Festival
May 9:	Gene Joyner of <i>Unbelievable Acres</i>



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Nov-Dec 2003

by PAUL ZMODA

As the year winds down, there are plenty of things happening here at Flatwoods Fruit Farm. Of the first, ever, Hana Fuyu Oriental persimmons to go full term for us, only one was available to eat. These are very large fruits - I'd say tennis ball sized - and are quite sweet when mushy-ripe even though it is a non-astringent type. This means you could eat one in the crunchy stage just prior to softening, as if eating an apple.

The twig girdler beetle made her annual appearance in October as expected, but damage was minimal because I was ready. I found two of them on the pecan tree, nipping off branches, and destroyed them, as well as the egg-laden branches. The aluminum foil that I use to wrap the most vulnerable leaders and scaffold branches prevents this insect from ruining our best trees. I remove the foil in mid November.

This has been our best year for figs. San Piero (or California Brown Turkey) had figs so large it took three bites to eat them. Almost all fig trees have a main crop on this fall. I attribute the good crops to generous mulching all year round, regular dolomite and fertilizer treatments and plenty of water and sunlight.

Our new lychee tree flushed out a second set of leaves as did the mango. Soon I will build thin but sturdy wooden frames around them to support the covers which will be needed on those frosty nights that are surely coming.

I set out many air layers on our large fruiting chickasaw plum tree. For this procedure I chose upright water sprouts. Since I would be pruning them off anyway, I thought I would attempt to salvage them for future plants.

Our new camera is really making some fine photos of many of our rare fruit, flowers and trees. I am finding it essential to document my experiments and to prepare slides for upcoming lectures I've been asked to present.

New plantings: Florida anise, Chinese persimmon (*Diopyros rhombifolia*), peas, broccoli, fennel and onions.

**FLORIDA STATE FAIR – February 5 – 16, 2004.** We will again participate in the *Horticulture Displays by Plant Societies* at the Florida State Fair. Our display will be artistically designed to display the species in which we specialize and will be maintained at a high standard of quality for the duration of the fair. The displays are judged by a committee consisting of one representative from each society entered in the competition. We will need members to man the exhibit. Free admission tickets will be given to those members who man the exhibit for a few hours. A signup sheet will be available at the Holiday Social.

**CITRUS CELEBRATION at the Florida State Fair – Sunday, February 8, 2004.** We have again been invited to host a Citrus Tasting Event at the State Fair. A signup sheet will be available at the Holiday Social. There will be more information in the January newsletter. Please plan to help with this event.

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS;**

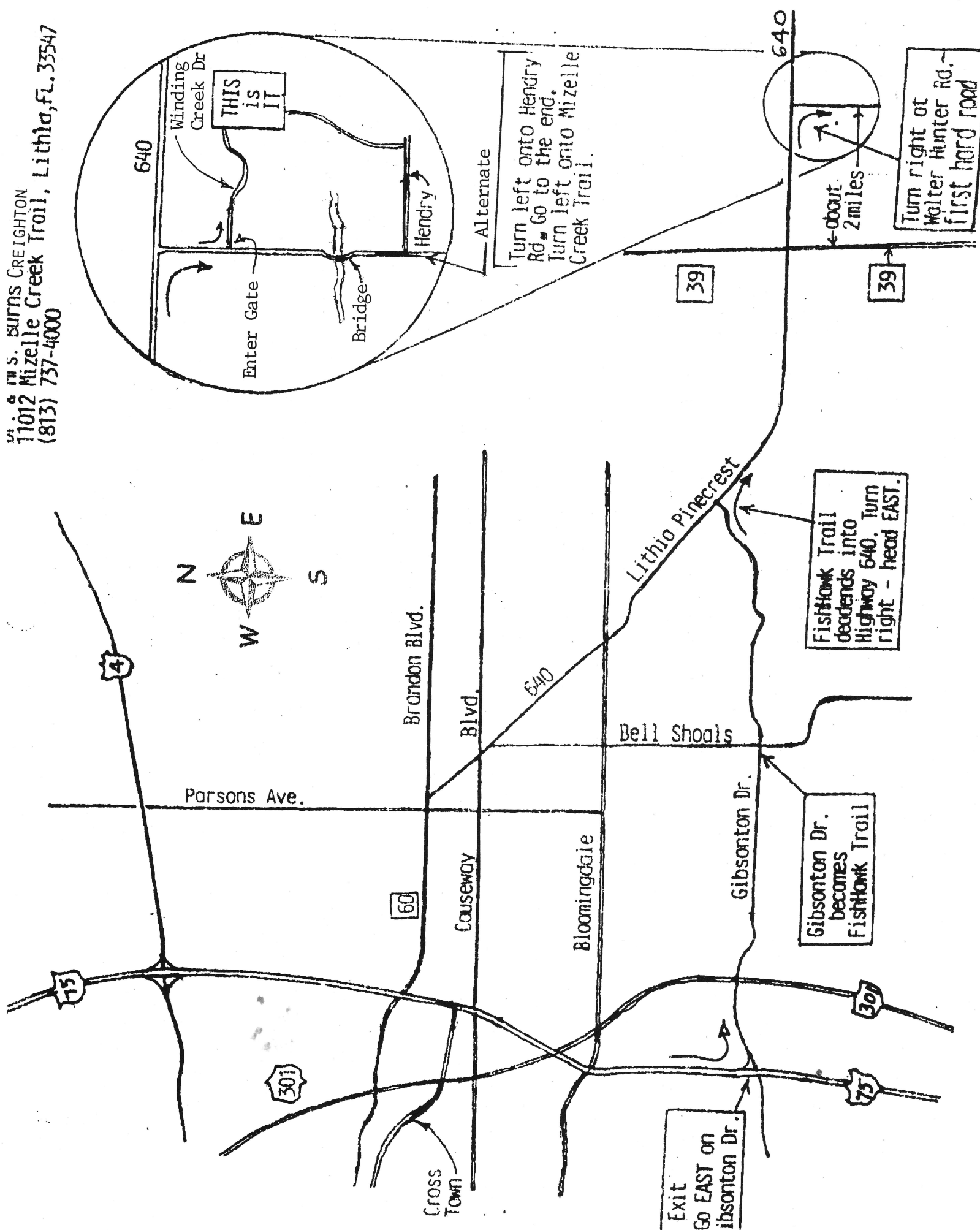
Jon & Christine Berning  
Alex Liu & Amanda Wu  
Patricia & John Cascio  
Don & Kathy Mixon  
Stephen & Mary Lohn

Wimauma  
Odessa  
Tampa  
Wesley Chapel  
Apollo Beach

Al Geislen  
Rhoda Floyd  
Rusty Sealund  
Chester Davis  
Stephen Bienkowski

St. Petersburg  
Tampa  
Pinellas Park  
Brooksville  
New Port Richey

W. & M. S. Burns CREIGHTON  
 11012 Mizelle Creek Trail, Lithia, FL 33547  
 (813) 737-4000





## FLORIDA PLANTS COLD PROTECTION: HOW TO PROTECT YOUR TENDER PLANTS

by Charles Novak

While global warming may eventually make cold weather in the southern U.S. a thing of the past, for the time being, the occasional period of freezing weather will just have to be endured. Many tropical plants in central Florida are growing in a marginal climate. It is important to be careful when selecting plants that are marginal for this area, as they will not be as easy to protect when they get large. Things that will determine how well specific plants grow in this climate depend on their species, their native habitat and variety. Older, well established plants are hardier. The more healthy a plant is during a freeze, the greater its hardiness. Plants that are grown in a warmer micro climate, perhaps on the south side of the house, are more likely to endure. The moisture in the soil is important also. Wet soil will hold heat better than dry soil. Thoroughly water tender plants the morning before a freeze is expected to occur. Remember the north side of a house will be the coldest, while the south side will be the warmest. Cold sensitive plants should be planted on the south side, avoiding low spots where cold air tends to drain. Any areas open to the sky will cool faster at night; that is the reason frost may form on the top of your car if left outdoors. Borderline plants should be planted near the south drip line of larger trees or near a pond for natural protection. Also tender trees may be protected by wrapping Christmas lights around the limbs & branches. There are many other things one can do to protect tender plants from the cold. They can be grown in containers on a deck, patio or even in the ground, and be moved indoors when a freeze is expected. Likewise, mulch piled up around the trunk of a tree will protect the trunk & roots against a light freeze. Or soil may be banked in a mound piled as high as feasible around the trunk & lower scaffold of limbs. Trunk & lower scaffold will be protected from even the worst freeze. Even though the top may be killed completely, the tree will grow back from the trunk and lower limbs without going back to root stock. When your tropical trees are small, a mini greenhouse, cold frame, or box completely covering the plant down to the ground will offer protection in a light freeze. In case of a severe freeze, an electric light bulb inside the covering will protect the plant, turned on when the temperature reaches about 36° and falling.

(continued on page 03-81)

## Cold Damage Symptoms

Completely frozen, dead leaves appear bleached brown in color.

New succulent growth, when frozen, will often turn blackish in color instead of brown.

Leaf-fall within a few days indicates the wood is likely not killed, while leaf retention on the twigs indicates wood kill.

Ice may also occur in wood and result in bark splits, particularly in young trees. Such splits may be extensive in larger trees resulting in serious trunk injury.

Fruit severely injured during a freeze may drop over time.

Fruit may show dark or reddish-brown depressions, pockets, or pitting on the peel surface.

The frozen area will eventually dry out leaving the injured fruit partially hollow and lighter in weight.



(continued from page 03-80)

Cold protection designs: Different types of anti-desiccant and anti-transpirant sprays on plants the evening before a freeze will increase cold hardiness from 4° to 6° F. A plant that normally sustains damage at 30° may take cold down to 26° or 24° with no increased damage. Wilt-pruf is one chemical freeze protection sold by Worm's Way Florida, 4402 N. 56th St., Tampa 33610. There are also cold protection fabrics for breathable thermal plant blankets which help protect crops from cold and also let them breathe. Tender plants may be protected by an irrigation system sprinkling the plants whenever the temperature reaches 32° and maintained until it rises again above 32°. Water from a sprinkler utilizes latent heat released when water changes from a liquid to a solid state. Micro sprinkler emitters should be used to limit the amount of water and should be placed on the upwind (northwest) side to take advantage of wind direction. Some breakage may be expected from the weight of the ice if the sprinklers are on for a long period of time.

## Cold Tolerance

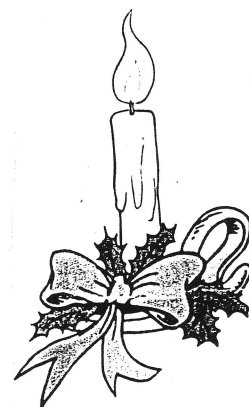
### Cold Tolerance of Selected Tropical Fruit Trees

Hardy <24°F	24°F Min.	26°F Min.	29°F Min.	
Blackberry	Cattley Guava	Akee	Ambarella	Otaheite Gooseberry
Blueberry	Indian Jujube	Allspice	Banana	Papaya
Cherry of the	Jaboticaba	Atemoya	Barbados Cherry	Pitomba
Rio Grande	Kei Apple	Bay Rum	Black Sapote	Purple Passion
Fig	Macadamia Nut	Carissa	Caimito	Flower
Kumquat	Surinam Cherry	Cherimoya	Carambola	Sapodilla
Loquat	White Sapote	Curry Leaf Tree	Custard Apple	Soursop
Mulberry		Grumichama	Guava	Wax Jambu
Muscadine Grape		Imbe	Jackfruit	Pineapple
Persimmon		Lychee	Kwai Muk	Malabar Chestnut
Pineapple Guava		Mysore Raspberry	Mamey Sapote	Sugar Apple
Pomegranate		Wampi	Mango	Rose Apple
Prickly Pear		Longan	Mayan Breadfruit	Canistel
			Monstera	Ice Cream Bean
				Tamarind

## Average Days Below 32F

Years 1962-1992 (These were cold years.)

Station Name	Number of Times Below 32° F	Minimum Recorded Temperature
Bartow	106	18
Brooksville	133	13
Lake Alfred	151	16
Lakeland	62	20
Parrish	87	18
Plant City	153	17
St. Petersburg	19	22
Tampa	78	18
Tarpon Springs	79	19



# Cold Protection Questions



Question: When should I prune my plants after a freeze?

Answer: It is best to wait until all risk of frost or freezing weather has passed, usually sometime after mid February.

Question: My banana tree is getting mushy. What should I do?

Answer: Succulent plants such as bananas can be cut down as soon as the damage is observed because the tissue is collapsing & may rot down to the ground anyway.

Question: How long can I leave the covering over my plants?

Answer: If you have used cloth, cardboard boxes or newspapers, they can stay on 3 or 4 days without harm unless it rains or they get wet, then this type of cover would need to be removed. If you use plastic, it should be removed each day.

Question: When can I take my potted plants from the garage to outdoors?

Answer: As soon as it warms up above freezing. It may be necessary to move them back in if night temperatures are to drop again. Most potted plants can stay in the garage several days without damage.

Question: I covered my plants with sheets & blankets but they are still damaged. In fact, they look worse than my neighbors' who didn't cover their plants. What happened?

Answer: Covering plants with sheets & blankets will protect them from frost but once the temperature goes below freezing, the covering will not prevent cold damage. It may trap enough heat to protect the roots & most of our tropical plants that are well established will rejuvenate from the root system in spring.

## Cold Protection Design Choices

Cold Protection Design	Protection from		Effectively saves		Method is prone to			
	Min Temp	Wind	Growth Bud	Foliage	Fungus	Physical Damage	Foliage Baking	CO2 Starvation
Minigreenhouse	high	high	high	high	high	no	high	high
Open Heater	high	low	high	high	no	Fire	no	no
Coldframe (no heat)	+2°	high	medium	medium	high	no	high	high
Coldframe (heat)	high	high	high	high	low	Fire	low	high
Tripod	low	low	medium	low	low	no	low	no
Plastic Cone	low	high	low	low	low	no	medium	no
Wrapping	high	high	high	high	low	medium	low	low
Cage	medium	high	medium	low	low	high	no	no
Box	medium	high	high	high	low	low	no	no
Blanket	+4°	high	low	medium	medium	low	high	low
Mulching	low	no	no	no	low	no	no	no
Chemicals	low	low	low	low	no	no	no	no



## NOVEMBER PLANT EXCHANGE

Plant	Donor	Winner
Surinam Cherry	Heath	J. Ritter
Tamarind	"	?
Loquat	"	?
Passion Fruit	"	Chris Berning
Cycad Dioon	"	?
Ehretia Anacua	"	Nancy McCormack
Papaya	"	?
Pineapple	"	?
Philippine Oregano	"	?
Rangoon Creeper	Heath	?
Rangpur Limes	"	?
Purple Pole Beans	Zmoda	Tyson Richmond
Avocado Seedling	Lee	?
Longan	"	?
Banana	"	Wil Rushing
Bonchosia	"	?
Orange Berry	"	Wayne Stevens
Orange Berry	"	Lisa Ghalayini
Papaya	"	?
Papaya	"	?
Jack Fruit	Branesky	Tess Anthony
Jack Fruit	"	Lisa Palls
Orinoco Banana	Roshan Premraj	?
Surinam Cherry Red	Thom Scott	Kathy Mixon
Surinam Cherry Red	"	?
" " "	"	?
Loquat	"	?
Kei Apple	"	?
Talisia Esulenta	Charles Novak	Bob Heath
" "	"	?
Kwai Muk	"	Fred Engelbrecht
"	"	?
Yuca Stems 3	Joanne Kitchen	?
Mother-in-Law Tongue	"	?
Papaya	J. Newcombe	?
Lady Finger Banana	"	Jerry Amyot
Banana	Keith & Magella Kirby	Jane Stavropoulos
Banana	"	Steve Brosh
Hibiscus	Kathy Mixon	"
"	"	?
Chaya	Nancy McCormack	?
Little Finger Banana	Fred Engelbrecht	?

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

## OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY: 25 YEARS OF GROWTH

Our first official meeting was held December 3, 1978, Sunday afternoon @ 2:00. 14 members were present at this organizational meeting, only 4 of which remain members to this day. It is interesting to note that the second Sunday of the month at 2:00 was the meeting time agreed on by the members and has remained our normal meeting time for 25 years. It is also interesting that all of \$7.00 was collected for our treasury. A copy of the minutes for that first meeting is on page 03-84. It is also well to note that our club serves a special place among gardeners in central Florida, considering the size of our membership and the impact we have made on the knowledge of rare fruiting trees in this area.



## M I N U T E S

## ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE BAY AREA RARE FRUIT INTEREST GROUP

December 3, 1978

PRESENT: Modesto Arencibia  
Joe Constantine  
Bob Heath  
Theresa Heath  
B. F. Gordon  
Faye Gordon  
Bill Lester  
Nancy Lester

Kathee Mercer  
Jim Mercer  
Barry Schwartz  
Wesley Wilkinson  
Edmund Witson, Sr.

Individuals introduced themselves and each talked briefly about their background and interest in rare fruit. We learned that we have a diverse group ranging from "adventurers" with an interest in fruiting plants to nurserymen and growers.

The first portion of the meeting was spent chatting informally. As Jud had predicted in his letter announcing the meeting, it was an enthusiastic one. We learned that within the small group present there was a wealth of knowledge and experience.

The general goals of the organization were discussed. The following were suggested:

1. Information exchange.
2. Introduction/development of new/improved varieties of rare fruit.
3. Education of the public at large regarding less well-known varieties of rare fruits.
4. Development of data concerning how well varieties grow and produce in this area.
5. Plant/seed exchange.

Members present agreed that there was sufficient interest to formally organize. Jud Newcombe was asked to serve a Temporary President and Nancy Lester as Temporary Secretary/Treasurer.

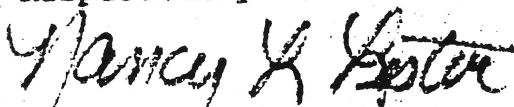
Affiliation as a chapter of the Rare Fruit Council International, Inc. was discussed and it was agreed that the bylaws of that organization should be reviewed concerning requirements which must be met. Options available are (1) affiliate immediately; (2) decision not to affiliate; (3) delay decision until the group is better organized and goals are clarified.

Bob and Theresa Heath volunteered to review and recommend a name for the group.

Members present agreed to meet again on January 14, 1979 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at Joe Constantine's home on Lake LeClare. (A map and directions are attached.) We will have an opportunity to observe drip irrigation and spot heating systems as well as Joe's rare fruit plantings.

\$7.00 was collected for printing and postage for minutes and mailings.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy L. Lester  
Temporary Secretary/Treasurer

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

69. *Dovyalis hebecarpa* - Ceylon gooseberry

A spiny, small tree or shrub to 20 feet, native of Ceylon. Leaves to 4 inches long. Fruit is purple-black and under 1 inch in diameter. Purplish pulp is acid and eaten fresh, cooked or used in jelly. New plants are started from seed or cuttings.

*D. abyssinica* x *D. hebecarpa* - Tropical apricot

A small, dioecious shrub or tree with pale green, 3 to 4 inch leaves. Branches are long and drooping with small to large thorns. Fruit is velvety and bronze in color to 1-1/2 inches long. Taste is similar to an apricot. Propagation is by air layering or cuttings.

70. *Flacourtia indica* - Governor's plum

Small, spiny tree to 30 feet, native to tropical Asia and Madagascar. Plant is dioecious, requiring male and female. It will tolerate temperatures to mid-20 degree F. Flowers are yellowish and round fruit to 1/2 inch in diameter and purple in color. Its sweet yellow pulp is eaten fresh or used for jams and jelly. Plants are started from seed, cuttings and air layering.

71. *Flacourtia inermis* - Lovi-lovi, Martineque plum

Small tree to 20 feet, native to Southeast Asia. Red fruit is less than 1 inch in diameter. Its yellow pulp is acid and eaten raw, used for jams, jellies and pies. Propagated by seed, cuttings and air layering.

72. *Flacourtia rukam* - Indian plum

Small tree to 45 feet, native to Philippines and Malaya. Its crooked trunk and branches have thorns or spines. Flowers are yellowish-green, producing a roundish fruit to 1 inch in diameter, juicy and dark purple when ripe. Fruit is acid and astringent, used fresh, in jams and pies. Roots, fruits and leaves have medical uses. Plants are started from seed and air layers.

73. *Oncoba spinosa* - Fried egg tree

A spiny shrub or small tree to 20 feet, native to tropical and South Africa. Its straight spines reach 2 inches in length. Leaves to 4 inches long with saw-toothed margins. Camellia-like flowers are white, fragrant and to 3 inches across. Its glossy fruit is 2-1/2 inches in diameter and reddish-brown in color. Fruit is sour and its edible pulp has a pomegranate taste. Roots and leaves are used for medicinal purposes. Plants are propagated from seed.

## FAMILY - GNETACEAE

74. *Gnetum gnemon* - Spanish joint fir

A Malayan pine to 50 feet in height. Seeds are eaten roasted, boiled or fried. Green leaves are cooked like spinach. Trees grow best in hot, wet, tropical conditions. New plants are started from seed or cuttings.

# Tasting Table November 2003

C. Coronel	Bibingka	S. Lee	Donuts, cookies
T. Anthony	Grapes	A. Musgrave	Tropical fruit dump cake
B. Marler	Cheese flan	M. Springer	Potatoes & green beans
S. Gonzalez	Pound cake	Al Roberts	Chocolate chip cookies
J. Taylor	Brownies	I. Stout	Papaya, cantelope
J. Ritter	Bean medley	P. Branesky	Fruit snack jellies
S. Quenan	Macaroni salad	C. Delp	Tortas & beans & veggies
B. Parker	3-bean salad	T. Scott	Globe grapes
S. Smith	Carrot cake	L. Smoleny	Pumpkin-pecan squares
S. McAveety	Green papaya salad	M. Kirby	Mofongo-crushed green plantains
J. Valadie	Fruit salad	F. Engelbrecht	Yuca root with butter & garlic
R. Terenzi	Brownie cake, birthday cake		
L. Novak	Deviled avocado dip & crackers, mango-kiwi salsa & chips, orange-coconut-pecan cookies, assorted citrus slices, fruit platter, juices		

*THANKS* to everyone who contributed to the November Tasting Table. Members are invited to contribute a favorite food dish or fresh fruit for all to enjoy. Remember to ask Sally Lee for your free plant exchange ticket (one per family, please).

# Happy Holidays

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER RFCI  
4109 DeLeon St  
Tampa FL 33609



FIRST CLASS MAIL

P.O. BOX 12345  
TAMPA, FL 33609

