



# NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2004

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

EDITORS: BOB HEATH, PAULA HARDWICK, CHARLES NOVAK, LINDA NOVAK, JIM LEE, SALLY LEE

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

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

NEXT MEETING: DECEMBER 12 @ 1:00 PM (SEE BELOW)

PROGRAM: THIS MONTH WE WILL BE CELEBRATING WITH OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY AND COVERED DISH SOCIAL, THANKS TO DR & MRS BURNS CREIGHTON, AT THEIR FARM ON MIZELLE CREEK IN LYTHERIA. This is a covered dish, pot luck social and everyone is invited to bring something good to eat. We will meet at the Creighton farm @ 1:00 pm (SEE MAP ON PAGE 04-79). Also, we will have our usual plant raffle so bring plants to donate. There will be no formal speaker and very little club business will be conducted. We will have a door prize and there will be wine tasting, so all you little ol' wine makers, please bring your best. In addition to the above activities, we will have a silent auction. We are excited about it and expect to have many nice things to auction: fruiting trees, books, cooked goodies, good 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. The club will be providing roast and barbecued turkey for our main course. This is our 10th annual Christmas party so all try to come and help us celebrate. We all should have a blast.

## From the President

Charles Novak

I'm sure everyone enjoyed the presentation by Chris Rollins, Director of the Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead, FL, at the November meeting. The *Friends of the Fruit & Spice Park* plans to host another Tropical Fruit Conference in July, 2005. I have been to two of these conferences and plan to attend again. In addition to visiting local nurseries, taking a field trip to rare plantings on the Keys, attending seminars, tasting rare fruits and taking part in other activities we can experience Mango Mania at Fairchild Gardens. In the past we have been treated to a tour of The Kampong (which was Fairchild's home) and the many fruiting trees on the property. The Conference lasts four days (Thursday through Sunday) and I hope a group of our members will represent the Tampa Bay RFTCI at the next Conference.

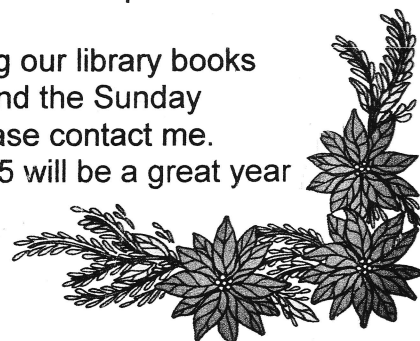
I want to **Thank** Burns & Cathy Creighton for inviting the Club to again have our Holiday Social (December 12) at their farm in Lithia. You will not want to miss this event. Everyone seemed to enjoy the silent auction at last year's Holiday Social so we will have the silent auction again this year. Donations for the silent auction and free plant exchange will be greatly appreciated!! **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.**

We are still in need of a Club Librarian. Chris Berning is cataloging our library books but due to a change in her work schedule she will not be available to attend the Sunday meetings. If you are interested in filling the position of Club Librarian please contact me.

I wish all our members a very Happy Holiday Season and that 2005 will be a great year for all of us.

## Scheduled Speakers/Events:

**January 9:** Tammy Kovar Dorton on Plant Health



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Nov-Dec 2004

by PAUL ZMODA



Weather related damage to trees may take a long time to show up. We are familiar with freezes which kill plants outright and over night, but very low temperatures sometimes injure the cambium tissues just enough so that parts of your fruit trees appear fine for weeks - even months. Then you notice an entire branch is dry, brown and lifeless. Upon closer inspection, you might discover split bark.

Our neighbor's large water oak suddenly jettisoned a huge branch last week, large enough to smash a car roof or seriously hurt someone below if it hit them. It had been cracked by high, hurricane winds but fell much later, and on a calm day; what a surprise!

Too much rainfall killed a number of our valuable fruit trees. It took a little while for each death to occur, but generally each specimen withered away and turned brown. The leaves did not drop off - a bad sign. If the leaves drop off suddenly, it may be an encouraging sign that recovery is underway.

As I feared, we did lose two of our giant longleaf pines. They were stressed last season after being denuded by thousands of sawfly larvae. Then heavy rainfall, plus the severe rocking back and forth from the winds apparently damaged the root systems. To make matters worse, a multitude of bark boring beetles finished them off. These two beautiful trees are now totally brown and lifeless. It's going to be a chore removing the upper branches without damaging our plantings below. The straight trunks will be left at 20 feet or so to allow passion vines to climb and hawks to perch. The pines' heartwood is extremely strong so I shouldn't worry about them falling any time soon.

Final fall fertilization of citrus has been done. Soursop trees are flowering heavily and hand pollination is done as needed. Successful fruitset is evident. We are eating Goldfinger bananas. At the first hint of yellow on the upper hands, I cut off some and allowed them to finish ripening indoors. These medium length, thick bananas are light in texture, tasty and sweet. From flower to harvest, it took five months.

#### GAC FRUIT (*Momordica cochinchinensis*, Spreng)

When Chris Rollins came from the Fruit & Spice Park to speak to us November 14, he brought with him two fruit from the gac vine that grows in Vietnam. The fruit were the size of softballs and pear shaped, resembling a squash or papaya. He indicated that he might be the only person in the United States with a fruiting vine of the fruit known as gac.

The gac is used for food and medicine in Southeast Asia. The red oily pulp surrounding the seeds is cooked along with the seeds to flavor and give its red color to a rice dish, xoi gac, which is served at festive occasions such as weddings and anniversaries. Seeds are used in traditional medicine in China. Lycopene concentration in the red aril in a ripe gac fruit can be more than 75 times the amount of lycopene found in commercial tomatoes. The total B-carotene in this fruit is also very high. The gac arils contain 22% fatty acids by weight, consisting of high concentrations of unsaturated (oleic [33.7%] and linoleic acids [28.7%]) and lower concentrations of saturated (palmitic acid [32%]) fatty acids. Seeds contain mostly stearic acid at about 60%. \*

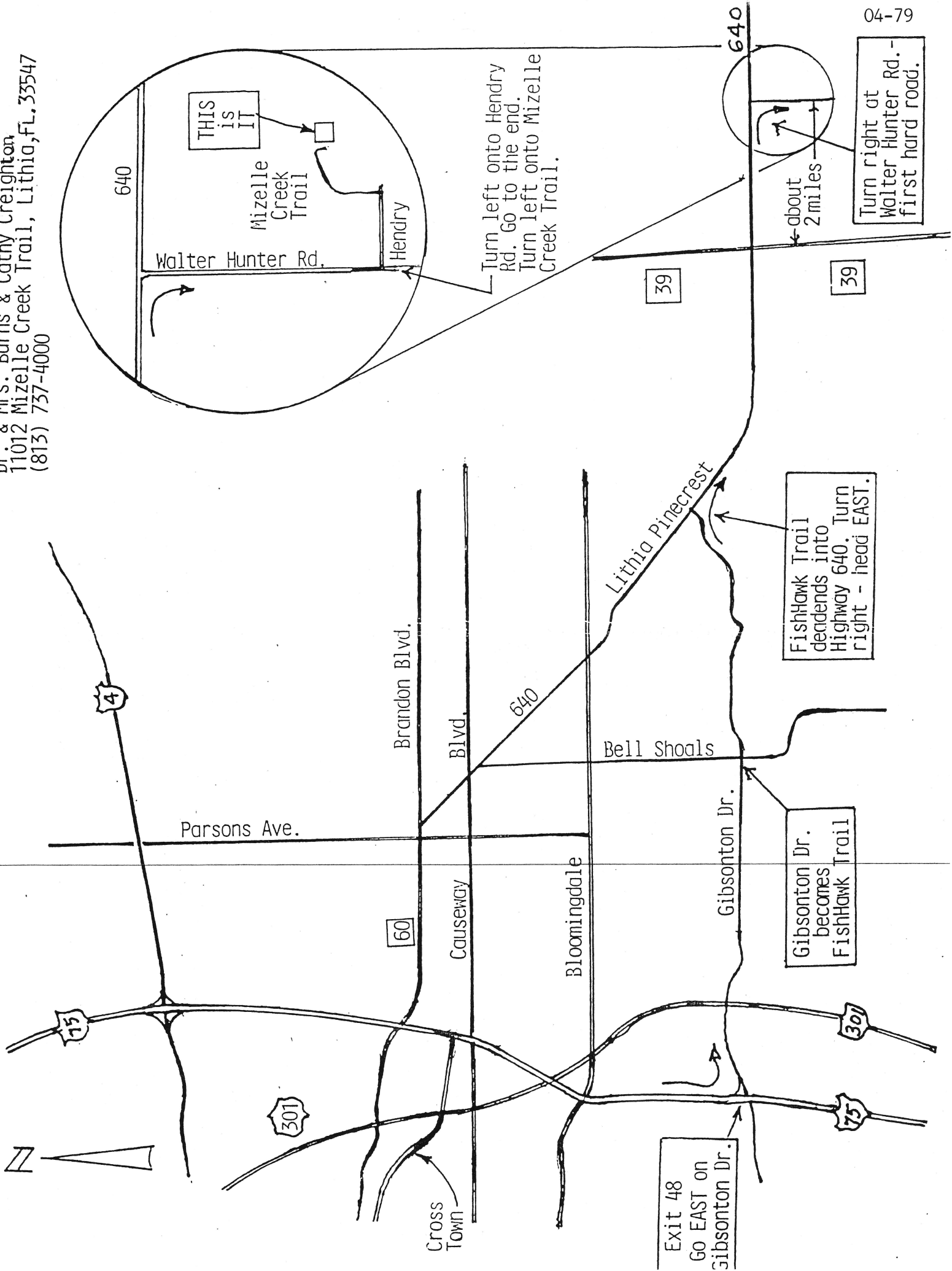
We ate some of the red aril that surrounds the seeds and found it edible raw but not particularly enjoyable. Cooked with rice, it may provide a more pleasant side dish or desert. Gac's value to us will have to wait until we get fruit from the seeds that members took to plant.

\* Information taken from U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Research Service.

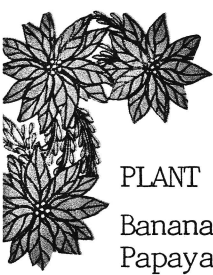



Dr. & Mrs. Burns & Cathy Creighton,  
11012 Mizelle Creek Trail, Lithia, FL, 33547  
(813) 737-4000

04-79



## NOVEMBER PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Banana	Heath	V. Sinclair
Papaya	"	R. Shigemura
Tinpricot	"	?
Surinam Cherry	"	D. Kirby
Pineapple	"	Richardson-Chase
Cuban Oregano	"	P. McKenzie
Beauty Berry	"	Fred Engelbrecht
Sea Grape	"	?
Moringa	"	Ed Musgrave
Loquat	Heath	Mary Derrick
Aloe Vera	Novak	?
Eugenia Stipitata	"	Ed Musgrave
" "	"	Joanne Kitchen
Ice Cream Banana	Novak	?
Papaya	Lee	?
"	"	Michael Gustin
Orange Berry	"	"
Java Plum	"	?
Passion Fruit	"	Mary Lohn
" "	Lee	?
Cuban Oregano	Debbie Butts	Joanne Kitchen
Avocado	Lee	Susan Reed
Orinoco Banana	Roshan Premraj	James Davis
" "	"	Shane & Mayra Smith
Prickly Pear Red, Green	Pat McGauley	?
Loquat	T. Scott	Dole W.
Papaya	"	Richardson-Chase
"	"	?
1 Doz. Passion Fruit	"	S. Saceda-Bigelow
Window Box	"	?
" "	"	?
1 Doz Passion Fruit	"	R. Shigemura
" " " "	"	James Davis
" " " "	"	?
Surinam Cherry	T. Scott	?
Rosella	Jerry Walker	?
Catwhisker	Mike Gustin	Richardson-Chase
Indian Curry	"	?
Guava	Don Haselwood	P. McKenzie
Red Guava	"	Ed Walsh
Key Lime	Roberta Harris	?
Papaya	"	?
"	Keith & Magella Kirby	Fred Engelbrecht
Fig Banana	"	?
Avocado tropical	"	?
Day Lily orange	"	Joanne Kitchen
Elephant Ears	Saceda-Bigelow	Shane & Mayra Smith
Hanging Plant	"	?
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Papaya	Michael Nizan	?
Muscadine Grape	"	?
Tropical Spinach	Ebanks Vineyard	?
Cactus	Nancy McCormack	?
Beauty Berry	Virginia Male	?
Tabebuoa Tree	Beth Reddiccliffe	R. Shigemura
Hot Pepper	"	Judy Cimafranca
	"	Sonia F. Saceda-Bigelow



## TROPICAL FRUIT TREES AT FRUIT & SPICE PARK

by CHRIS ROLLINS

Chris began his discussion with a description of the Fruit & Spice Park and plans for the future. He mentioned some of the tropical trees they expect to be growing in the future. In the last election, the voters approved a bond issue to improve county facilities; the Fruit & Spice Park was listed for \$4 million, so Chris expects to make a lot of improvements specifically in things that are going to be a lot more workable than the infrastructure they've had to work on so far. He also said they have some great events coming up, specifically an affair in July the same weekend as "Mango Morning" at Fairchild Gardens. He calls it the Tropical Fruit Weekend or the Fruit Club Conference. Members from clubs all over the world come to meet in one place, from Florida, California, Arizona & Texas. The speakers at these conferences are flown in from all over the world. Their keynote speaker in July, for example, will be Allen Carl from Australia who is one of the best tropical fruit collectors in the world. The conference lasts about 4 days, including a trip to the Keys to view tropical trees that can't be grown anywhere else in the United States, and trips to packing houses & nurseries in south Florida to see the fruit grown there. It's a fun time for all. In August Chris is planning a trip to Cambodia, Vietnam & Thailand, an event he described as an Easter egg hunt. They go from market to market to farms to research centers eating fruit and collecting seeds the entire time. Southeast Asia has a lot of variety of tropical fruiting trees, a lot of good stuff.

Next Chris held up 2 fruit that he brought with him from the Fruit & Spice Park and asked if anyone knew what they were. The only one who knew was a Vietnamese lady who recognized them as gac (see additional information about gac on page 04-78). On his last trip to Vietnam, a young man came forward with a package of orange rice and gac fruit. The fruit was orange and it's the pulp that is used to color the rice. Chris has found, however, that the vine will not set fruit unless the flowers are hand pollinated. The vine produces both male and female flowers but we apparently don't have the pollinating insects in Florida like in Vietnam. Gac is used to produce a red dye which is exceptionally

fast and long lasting. Each of the black flat seeds has an envelope of pulp around it which is the part that is eaten. The remainder of the fruit is discarded. Gac is propagated by seeds and may also be propagated with cuttings.

After a few questions, Chris began the presentation of his slides. His first one was the skin of the jackfruit. He said when he described the fruit, he says it looks like a watermelon wrapped in alligator hide. He said people have changed in our society. 20 years ago they would turn up their noses at a piece of jackfruit; they were averse to trying anything new. But today they are willing to try new things. The jackfruit is the largest edible tree in the world. One fruit can weigh up to 80 pounds, and the one Chris showed us on his next slide was close to that. Obviously you do not climb up a jackfruit tree and pick an 80 pound fruit and expect to carry it down. Picking jackfruit up high in the tree takes some pre-planning. Chris had several slides of the market with jackfruit for sale. People don't normally buy an entire jackfruit, they are usually cut into pieces and you buy just enough for your immediate wants. Inside, the jackfruit has a core down the middle. It is an aggregate fruit like pineapple and sugar apple, which are composed of several little segments of individual fruits to make up the whole. The center core is surrounded by individual fruit, each with a nut which is also edible and the pulp surrounding the nut. Chris had a slide of the flowers. On each tree there are male & female flowers which are easily distinguishable one from the other. Also the male blossoms form out on the ends of the limbs, where the female blossoms are on the big limbs & the trunk, which is necessary to carry the heavy fruit when it forms. Each of the knobs on the forming fruit will have a female flower that opens as the fruit develops to provide for the development of each individual fruitlet. There is effort underway today to produce a smaller jackfruit, since who would like 60 lbs. of jackfruit all at one time, although as Chris says, they do freeze well. How do you tell when a jackfruit is ripe? It's not easy and many people have picked them when they're green and if they're green, they'll stay green; they will not ripen

off the tree. There is a stage just before ripening when the fruit appears green but it will ripen off the tree. The easiest way is just to follow your nose; when one of the fruit smells like Juicy Fruit gum, follow the smell back to the fruit and if it has just a little give to it, not soft but just a little give, cut it off. But just figure, if we grow jackfruit, we're going to pick some of them green until we learn. Chris showed some slides of damage to jackfruit caused by fruit bats. He said we don't have the pest problem here that they have in Southeast Asia. The only way to protect the fruit in Southeast Asia is to bag it. He said the last time he was in Malaysia, their annual production for export of starfruit was 28 million pounds. At 4 carambolas per pound, that amounts to a lot of carambolas, and every single one they pick off as a ripe fruit has been bagged by hand and wrapped in newspaper. They even have to bag the jackfruit. The quantity and variety of fruit pests is unbelievable.

The markets are the places to find new & unusual fruit, not the jungle. It's very seldom that you find anything in the jungle that's very good, because if it was good, it would have been picked and taken to market. If you can find a market in a remote area, there you may find some cool stuff.

Chris had many slides of markets in Southeast Asia showing the great variety of fruit that is available and how orderly, well kept and clean they are. The jackfruit is originally from southern India and spread throughout the region through the centuries. Now it's everywhere in the Southeast Asian countries. It makes a very large tree & Chris indicated that he's seen trunks as much as 5 feet in diameter. He said this summer they are taking a trip to Cambodia, Vietnam & Thailand and he is planning 2 years after that to go to southern India to see the greatest genetic diversity among jackfruit in its place of origin. He expects to find some new things there.

We also saw a slide of the chempedak which originated in the rain forests of Borneo, among the oldest rain forests in the world. Chris said people like chempedak but he cannot eat it unless

they make it into fritters, which they frequently do. He said it's all he can do to keep it in his mouth, it's so rich. He prays people won't offer him a taste of a good chempedak. When a chempedak or jackfruit is peeled, there is a very sticky sap just under the skin which is so sticky, it's actually used for trapping birds. But if you just slit the skin of the chempedak with your knife point, you can peel the skin off, which avoids getting the glue on your fingers. With jackfruit the procedure normally is to put vegetable oil all over your hands to keep it from glueing your fingers together. The chempedak is harvested mostly from the wilds so there is a great diversity in quality. It is closely related to the jackfruit & there is a hybrid of the two that's grown here in Florida. Chris mentioned one variety of jackfruit he particularly favors. He gave some trees to Pine Island Nursery in Homestead where they immediately started grafting to seedlings and have sole hundreds of them. It's called a Borneo Red and it's the color of a Hayden mango. The texture is crunchy like an apple; the flavor is mild jackfruit with canteloupe flavor, a very interesting jackfruit.

In one of the markets, Chris found an interesting fruit called a tarap, which is one of the favorite backyard fruit of Borneo & the Malay Peninsula and even into the Philippines. In Thailand and Vietnam they have no idea what it is, not one of their fruit. This fruit, like all of the Artocarpus group, evolved and developed in the Malay Archipelago primarily on the island of Borneo, which is the epicenter for the origin of many extremely good fruit. Borneo probably has the greatest diversity of good fruit in the world. The tarap has the same kind of structure as the jackfruit with a seed in each one of those little segments. It tastes kind of like melted ice cream. For Chris, he says it's better than a chempedak. The skin has heavy bristles sticking out in all directions like a scrub brush. He showed us another Artocarpus which he said he had never found before and it was a total shock. He said it looked like a tarap, a little larger than a grapefruit. It tastes like a combination of orange sherbet and Navel orange chopped up together. Chris

says he doesn't believe anybody would not like this fruit the first time they tasted it. When he got home they planted the seeds but Hurricane Andres killed the trees. He said there are a couple of trees in Florida and he's hoping to get bud wood for their new greenhouse. They are so rare that even some people in Borneo didn't know what it was and it doesn't have an English name. It's *Artocarpus lancifolia*. The bread fruit probably has more allure. It is one tropical fruit that lots of people know because of the famous Mutiny on the Bounty. Breadfruit is always thought of as being Polynesian. It's not; it's in Polynesia but it's a relatively recent introduction carried there in the last 1000 years, along with the first humans. When the Polynesians colonized the islands in the Pacific, they took plants with them, fruiting plants they thought they would need. They brought breadfruit, taro, sweet potato, etc. A close relative of the breadfruit is the breadnut, sometimes called seedy breadfruit because it has nuts in the fruit. Today there are breadnuts in the Caribbean. Breadnut leaves can be 3 feet long. It's a beautiful plant and it's one of the great tragedies that we can't grow it here, not even in south Florida.

Chris mentioned again how wonderful he thinks the markets in Asia really are, and he showed us a roadside market in the Philippines. He said you could tell it's the Philippines because of the velvet apple. Chris said he doesn't care for the velvet apple but lots of people do. His two less popular fruit are the chempedak

and the velvet apple. The velvet apple is a round, brick colored fruit covered with fuzz. In the markets they've been wiped clean to make them easier to handle. A few are grown in Thailand but mostly they are grown in the Philippines, as well as the canistel and avocado, all of which are not big items in Asia, but are in the Philippines because of the Spanish influence and the trade between the Philippines and Central & South American countries. There was a lot of trade early on and those kind of plants got carried back & forth. The star apple, canistel, sapodilla & papaya were introduced very early in the Philippines and became appreciated there. So if you can not go to Asia with one of his groups, you can come to the Fruit & Spice Park for their Asia Festival which has been held the first week of March every year for the last 15 years. The preponderance of those who visit the park at this time are Asians; they come to see the trees and fruit and are very emotionally disturbed by the Asian fruit that are grown here, which they may not have seen for many years. This is the reason for the Festival every year; to help finance the park & to provide an Asian custom celebration. The partners in this Festival is the Thai Temple that is near the park. With the food and the costumes from each and every country in Southeast Asia, it is like a trip to a Southeast Asian Festival.



#### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

Joanne Hodge  
Michal & Moshe Nizan  
Nancy Ernest

Tampa  
Temple Terrace  
Brandon

Ariel Rodriguez  
Robert Castellano & Connie White

Brandon  
Valrico

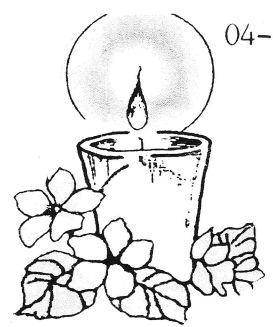
**FLORIDA STATE FAIR - February 10 - 21, 2005.** We will again participate in the *Horticulture Displays by Plant Societies* at the Florida State Fair. Our display will be artistically designed to display the species in which we specialize and will be maintained at a high standard of quality for the duration of the fair. 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 and at the January 9 meeting.

#### CONDOLENCES

We extend our condolences to Cathy Creighton for the recent loss of her mother, Margaret Miranda. We are also sad to report that club member Steve Bienkowski passed away November 14.

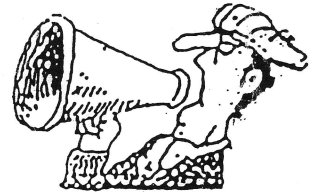
## TASTING TABLE NOVEMBER 2004

Lohn	Apple pie	M. Kirby	Green bean salad
Coronel	Maja Blanca Mais	Reddicliffe	Potato salad
Sinclair	Romeo & Juliett	S. Quenan	Oatmeal raisin cookies
T. Scott	Passion Bananas	S. McAveety	Cupcakes
Walker	Brown rice & mango pie	B. Parker	Ginger snap cookies
R. Harris	Persimmon	Saceda-Bigelow	Cucumber sandwiches
Maya Smith	Pineapple jello	M. Chavez	Beans & hotdogs
Musgraves	Guava bites	Shigemura	Mango cheesecake, orange dome cake
P. McGauley	Sweet red guava paste with cheese & crackers, sweet red prickly pears		
Lee	Fruit bites, shrimp chips, cookies, chicken & noodles		
Novak	Papaya citrus salad, kumquat pound cake, candied kumquats, fresh kiwi & papaya		
	Fruit juices		



## MEMBERS CORNER

Free for the digging - Raphis Palms. Call Marilyn Chavez @ 932-9077 for further information.



**The club has purchased a pH Soil Tester** and beginning with the January meeting members may bring in soil samples for testing. Obtain soil samples from 6 to 8 sites within the area you want tested. Mix the soil together and put into a plastic bag. You will need at least 1 cup of soil for the test.

**Club Polo Shirts:** The club has polo shirts available for purchase by members. The cost is \$15.



RALEIGH FRUIT COUNCIL INTL  
314 DEER PARK AVE  
P. J. DIXON NEW ORLEANS

FIRST CLASS MAIL



RALEIGH FRUIT COUNCIL INTL  
Tampa Bay Chapter  
4109 DeLeon  
Tampa FL 33609