



NEWSLETTER

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 (CHARLES NOVAK)

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 PM.

NEXT MEETING: MAR. 13

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKERS THIS MONTH WILL BE BILLY AND BARBARA HOPKINS OF HOPKINS TROPICAL FRUIT NURSERY. They will be discussing the growing of less well known tropical fruiting trees which should be of interest to all of us who are trying to propagate these delicious fruit. Afterwards, we will have our usual plant raffle and delicious tasting table with an active social hour. Don't forget to bring fruit and veggies for the farmers market before the meeting. As usual, we'll meet at the U.S.F. Westside Conference Center at 2:00.

From the President
Charles Novak

Our fourth Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair was a big success. I want to say "THANKS" to: George & Elaine Riegler, Hue & Raffina Dindial, the Appleby's and the Citrus Arboretum for their generous donations of citrus fruit for this event; to everyone who picked and washed fruit at these locations; to Robert & Verna Dickey, Steve & Roberta Harris, and Thom Scott for delivering the fruit to the State Fair; and to everyone who showed up on Sunday to cut up the citrus for sampling and to do all the other tasks necessary to make this event a success. Almost a thousand people sampled the fruit samples and freshly squeezed juice. We received many favorable comments from the public.

Thanks to the members who helped set up our State Fair horticulture display and who manned the display. We received second place for our display. I want to thank Jene's Tropicals for providing most of the plants in our display. Jene's Tropicals is located at 6831 Central Avenue in St. Petersburg (www.tropicalfruit.com). Jene's specializes in Citrus & Exotic Fruit Trees.

There are a few more gallons of the Colloidal cleaner available for purchase. I'll bring the remaining gallons to the March meeting.

Please try to attend the March meeting and participate in the election of the Board of Directors.

Note: Fish Emulsion at 4% will stop seedling damping-off (die off) from fungi. If your seedlings suddenly keel over at the soil line, Fish Emulsion can be an effective preventative.

Scheduled Speakers/Events:

March 9: Hopkins Tropical Fruit Nursery,

April 9 & 10: Spring USF Botanical Garden Plant Festival

May 8: Gene Joyner, Unbelievable Acres Botanic Garden, West Palm Beach

New Members: Scott & Carol Vierima
Shari & Andrew Saffer
James & Toni Fasting

Lake Mary
Tampa
Dunedin

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Feb - Mar 2005

by PAUL ZMODA

The heaviest winter pruning is finished for now. The last items to be trimmed were the mulberries, pomegranates and grapes in the trial vineyard.

Mulberry trees so easily get too large and out of control. They will shade your other trees if allowed to grow unchecked. Each dormant season, I head them back to a rounded canopy on single trunked trees. They remain at 10 to 12 feet tall. After many years, the framework becomes very stout and strong; I can climb up into it like a monkey with my pruning tools, without fear of breaking limbs (mine or the tree's). Also, I don't fertilize mulberries.

Pomegranates send up lots of sprouts from the base. I prefer to thin these out so that several of the largest, nicest looking trunks are left to form a cluster. These I head back a bit and thin, for a balanced look. I finish by fertilizing with 2-10-10 on all pomegranates and apply a little extra 10-10-10 on smaller specimens.

I prune the bunch grape vineyard to a four cordon umbrella system. These vines each have two upper arms (or cordons) and two lower arms, shortened to stay in bounds. Smaller shoots arising from the arms are removed while the strongest shoots are pruned back to four or five buds. Fertilizer is not used at this time and may not be needed later either, on vigorous types.

Seeds of the giant jaboticaba have been planted. All citrus trees have been fertilized with 10-10-10.

Many years ago I wondered if "Shaklee Basic H", a biodegradable cleaner, would work as a foliar spray to eliminate insects, fungi, etc. on my fruit trees. Our members' current interest in the colloidal cleaner motivated me to begin testing with the Shaklee product. I've treated citrus, tea and a few others to it and will watch for improvements. I've already noticed that it kills aphids on freshly sprouted loquat leaves.

Carambolas are loaded with star fruit. I thin out the deformed ones to allow a nice crop of large fruit.

I would like to express my thanks to the RFCI editors and to typist Paula Hardwick for sorting through and making sense of my scribblings in "What's Happening" which now nears the end of its 13th year.

(Also, the editors would like to express our appreciation to Paul for the nigh onto 13 years of "What's Happening" which has graced the pages of our newsletter. We are sure that our membership has enjoyed and learned from Paul's "scribblings" over the years. No one has done more for so long for the quality of our newsletter.)

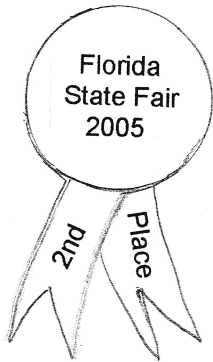
*****MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE IN MARCH*****

PLEASE CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL. IF THERE IS A RED MARK ON IT, YOUR

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES MARCH 31. Please pay your dues (\$18) at the next meeting or mail your check to Charles Novak, Membership Chairman, at the following address: 2812 N. Wilder Rd.

Make check payable to: TAMPA BAY RFCI

Plant City, FL 33565-2669



STATE FAIR EXHIBIT

Our exhibit received Second place at the Florida State Fair Plant Society Competition this year. Our exhibit received 182 points out of a possible 200 points. Each society receives a set-up premium of \$200. Second place receives an additional \$200 and the red rosette ribbon. **Thanks** to Roberta Harris for designing the exhibit; to Steve Harris, Thom Scott, and Bob & Theresa Heath for helping to set up and take down the exhibit; and to George & Elaine Riegler for the much admired stalk of bananas. A special **thank you** to Jene's Tropicals for the donation of tropical fruiting trees. I'm sure everyone enjoyed the time spent manning the exhibit and talking with the public about growing rare and tropical fruits. The public is always interested in our display of fruit trees and the unusual fruits we exhibit.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

At the March meeting the general membership present will elect the Board of Directors for a one-year term. The Board then elects the executive officers. Directors must be willing and able to make a significant commitment of time and energy to the club. The Board meets monthly or at such times deemed necessary. The Board is responsible for the policies, finances and direction of the Chapter. Therefore, it is very important for Board Members to attend as many meetings as possible. The Board of Directors meetings are open to the entire membership and members are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion of issues.

The nominating committee has selected the following members for your consideration as the next Board of Directors:

Bob Heath
Jimmy Lee
Sally Lee
Susan McAveety
Jerry Amyot
Paul Branesky

Thom Scott
Charles Novak
Walt Yoblonski
Steve Lohn
Steve Brosh

Verna Dickey
Judith Cimafranca
Linda Novak
Jerry Springer
Fred Engelbrecht

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the March meeting. Please plan to attend the March meeting and vote for your Board of Directors.

pH Soil Testing at the March meeting: If you would like to have your soil's pH tested obtain soil samples from 6 to 8 sites within the area you want tested. Mix the soil together and put it into a plastic bag. You will need at least 1 cup of soil for the test.

Gardening's Hidden Hazard

If your tetanus immunization is not up to date, gardening can put you at risk for the disease. "When we think of tetanus, we usually think of rusty nails. But in fact, the tetanus bacteria lives in virtually all soils and compost," says Dr. Susan Rehm, infectious disease specialist at the Cleveland Clinic. Even a small cut or scrape is enough to admit the bacteria. According to a survey by the National Gardening Association, 40% of gardeners aren't up to date on their tetanus boosters. The shots are safe and inexpensive. If you aren't sure you've had a tetanus booster in the past 10 years, ask your doctor about one before you start digging.



PLANT SALE

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2005

9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Offering a variety of plants at great prices.

PINELLAS COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE

12175 - 125th St. North Largo, FL

727 582-2598

RARE FRUIT CONFERENCE 2005 - Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead, FL

Website: <http://www.fruitandspicepark.org/FruitConference.php>

Thursday, July 7th - Pre-Conference activities and registration

Florida Keys Fruit Safari (visit historic plantings, fruit trees too cold tender to live on the mainland and the Key West Botanical Garden).

Friday, July 8th - Pre-Conference activities and registration

Tour Brooks Tropicals Packing House, visit Fresh King Tropical Fruit Winery for tour and tasting, tour Going Bananas Nursery, Pine Island Nursery and Possum Trot Nursery and Grove, tour of Fruit & Spice park and barbecue, key note speaker Alan Carle (Australia).

Saturday, July 9 - Conference Field Day

Mango Morning at Fairchild Tropical Garden, tour of the Kampong, tour the USDA Plant Introduction Station in Miami, Conference banquet at Fruit & Spice Park, enjoy tropical ice cream, key note speaker Dr. Voon Hoe from Sarawak, Malaysia.

Sunday, July 10th - Conference Lecture Series

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM Lectures on topics of interest

Cost: Pre Conference and Conference \$100.00 per person

Conference: \$75.00 per person

Registration forms will be available at the March meeting for members interested in attending the 2005 Rare Fruit Conference at the Fruit & Spice Park.

MARCH GARDENING

Now is the time to prepare your garden for summer. Begin by replacing winter landscape plants with heat lovers and prepare your vegetable garden for hot weather. Winter vegetable crops such as tomatoes and cabbage will call it quits soon. It's time to plant summer vegetables such as okra, eggplant and peppers, or if you are going to retire the garden bed for the summer, plant a quick growing annual cover crop to be tilled in at the end of its life cycle, and then go ahead and solarize the soil. We are going into a dry season now, where dry windy conditions can quickly stress out plants. Be sure to monitor plant water needs carefully. Set up an irrigation system such as a drip system or soaker hoses. Plant new trees, bushes and other plants, but don't forget it's the dry season; they'll need water. Tune up your mower and other power equipment because it's almost time to resume lawn maintenance. Migratory birds will arrive soon, as the weather warms. Clean and fill your bird baths and keep the feeders stocked. Keep an eye out for the robins, as they'll only be around for a few days. Most vegetable crops will call it quits soon. Compost healthy plant debris and dispose of diseased plants in the garbage. The bugs wake up as the weather warms and we'll soon go from just a few hundred harmful bugs to a few million. Check often; it's easier to stop an infection at the beginning than letting it get out of control. If you had a problem with the luber grasshoppers last year, be sure to order Semaspore or Logic. These are totally natural and organic control for grasshoppers, but they only work on the little ones.

The Value of Organic Matter

Organic matter is the most important material we can add to the sandy soils common in Florida.

A good soil in the mid section of our country can contain more than 5% organic matter while our sandy soils often have less than 1% organic matter.

Organic matter or humus in our soils has a tendency to bind loose sandy soils while it will make stiff clay soils more open and porous. Organic matter increases the water holding capacity of sands. It also makes the soil into a more favorable environment for the growth of plant roots and for the growth of beneficial soil microorganisms. , it often supplies certain catalytic agents and growth substances beneficial for plant growth.

Decomposing organic matter renders inorganic elements from our fertilizers more readily available to plants and thus increases soil fertility and the availability of essential elements such as iron, zinc, manganese and others.

Organic matter and clay greatly improve the buffering ability of the soil and thus makes it less likely to damage our plants by the excessive use of artificial fertilizers or by the inadvertent addition of some toxic material to the soil.

On an equal weight basis, humus far exceeds clay in its ability to combine and hold exchangeable bases. Since organic colloids are extremely active, an increase of 1% of organic matter can double the exchange capacity of a soil. The base exchange capacity of a soil is the ability of a soil to absorb and retain a group of elements such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, copper and zinc.. These are known as exchangeable bases.

Organic matter decomposes rapidly and completely in Florida soils. Therefore, we must continually add organic matter to our soils.

Another value of organic matter is that vegetables, flowers, fruit, and landscape plants growing in soils that are high inorganicmatter or that are covered with a heavy perminant mulch are less damaged by nematodes than are those growing in soils of low organic content.

Organic matter in the soil seems to contribute to the reduction of nematodes in several ways. Decomposinnng organic matter causes a great increase of soil microbes, fungi, bacteria, and actinomycetes. These are followed by a great number of organisms that feed upon them, including many predatory nematodes, mites, insects and fungi that capture and feed upon parasitic nematodes.

Also the decomposition of some organic materials and green manures have been shown to generate other chemicals that are directly toxic to nematodes and thus decrease their numbers.

(This article was written and kindly given to us for our Newsletter by Lewis Maxwell in 1994.)

Please post the flyer!

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER RECI
4109 DeLeon St
Tampa FL 33609

