



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2005

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

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PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK

WEBSITE: www.rarefruit.org (CHARLES NOVAK)

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

NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 14

PROGRAM: OUR PROGRAM THIS MONTH SHOULD BE A LOT OF FUN. CHARLES NOVAK & OTHER MEMBERS will give us a program on their exciting week long trip to the Amazon in Peru, as well as pictures of their trip to south Florida, the Mango Festival and the Rare Fruit Conference at the Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead. For those who couldn't make the trip to the Amazon or south Florida, this is the next best thing to being there. We will also have our Tasting Table, Tree Raffle & Farmers Market. The meeting will be at the Westside Conference Center @ USF, as usual.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jul-Aug 2005

by PAUL ZMODA

I was looking at our Malaysian fruit tree recently, a very healthy and beautiful tree. This specimen, an air layer off another air layered tree, is getting pretty large after 7 years in the ground. I was wondering when it would do something. By this I mean make fruit. I then began to notice pure white flower spikes here and there, some growing right out of the sides of branches.

This exotic, which appears to be an avocado, originated as seed brought to our club by Dr. Bobby Tee from Brunei Darussalem in 1995. I had always thought this species was in the Canarium genus, but now I am in doubt about that. What I have no doubt about, is that Dr. Tee would have brought something wonderful. I could be one member of Baccaurea, maybe Rambai, whose fruits hang down on similar flower spikes. I'll just have to wait and watch my mystery tree do its thing. This is one example of why it is so exciting to be a member of the Rare Fruit Council: we can learn something new every day. All together, we add to our understanding of worldwide horticulture.

Our caper bushes have started blooming also! This is one challenging plant to grow. I wouldn't dare pick any of these precious buds now. Better to try to set some seeds so future plants may be grown. Seeds are so darned hard to get. The flowers are quite attractive, though. Delicate, white with violet stamens, and about 1" across, they last one day only here.

Too much rain has hurt our remaining olive trees, hot chili peppers, some figs and one grape. I potted up lots of rooted cuttings - grapes, figs and olives. Made lots of air layers also on olives, the "Guthrie" plum and our tasty star fruit "Sunrise".

Our tamarind tree is just exploding in size and is covered with new flowers.

New plantings: Bay, holly, guamachil, stoppers, pawpaws, pineapples and Vietnamese gac cuttings.

From the President
Charles Novak

We had an interesting time at the Rare Fruit Conference, July 7 - July 10, hosted by the Fruit and Spice Park in Homestead, FL. We went on tours, learned from very knowledgeable guest speakers and had the opportunity to sample many rare and tropical fruits. Unfortunately, the weather was not the greatest due to Hurricane Dennis.

I hope our members who use the internet have looked at our newly designed club website (www.rarefruit.org). If not, please take a look and let me know what you like and dislike about the site. I have added more recipes and fruit photos.

I was recently surprised and thrilled to discover my Jakfruit tree (which is located in my conservatory) has finally rewarded me with a fruit. It is about a foot long and growing. Now, if I can just keep the wild animals away from the fruit! Also, a Black Sapote tree (grown from a seed that came from the fruit of a tree growing wild in Brazil) has set fruit for the first time. The tree is unusual in that the limbs droop down toward the ground. Other fruit trees are flowering for the first time and I'm hoping to see fruit soon.

The August program will be a presentation by several club members about their April trip to the Amazon. We have many photos and we will bring some of the items we purchased for members to see.

Scheduled Programs/Events:

August 14: Trip to the Amazon presentation
September 11: Growing Vegetables by member Debbie Butts
October 8 & 9: Fall USF Botanical Garden Plant Festival

BOOK REVIEW

by PAUL ZMODA

CORNUCOPIA a Source Book of Edible Plants

by Stephen Facciola 2nd Edition

Kampong Publications Vista, California

This is, without a doubt, the most useful reference book to own, whether you grow any type of fruits or vegetables from all over the globe, or if you just enjoy learning about the more than 3000 species available to grow for their useful edible and medicinal properties.

The contents are arranged in listings of botanical families, cultivars and sources. Indices show species that may be known only by their common local names or by their usage or edible parts.

I constantly refer to this comprehensive work when researching my articles. For instance, let's say I heard about an African fruit called jackal berry. I see that it is scientifically known as Diospyros mespiliformis in the family Ebenaceae. It is locally called Rhodesian ebony or jackalbessie. A persimmon of Africa, the pulp is very sweet and is eaten raw, made into preserves, dried or fermented into a kind of beer. To order seeds, you may write to Hurov's Tropical Seeds in Chula Vista, CA, or two other sources.

A wealth of information is found in Cornucopia. I humbly add here that I assisted in the data collection by providing the author with seeds and information on a European crucifer - Broccoletto (*Brassica rapa*, Ruvo Group).

Events of Interest:**August 2005:**

Chris Rollins' 27 Day Fruit and Garden Tour of Southeast Asia,
www.fruitandspicepark.org (305) 247-5727

Membership Directories: A new membership directory will be printed in August. Please pick up your copy at the August meeting. If unable to attend the meeting please contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399 and a copy will be mailed to you.

Grafting Knives, Parafilm and Grafting Kits: The club has grafting knives, Parafilm and grafting kits available for purchase by members who would like to graft their own plants. Contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399.

Tampa Bay RFCI Polo Shirts: The club has polo shirts (dark green or blue) available for purchase by members. The cost is \$15 each. Contact Charles or Linda Novak.

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

Members' Corner:

Charles Novak and Jim Lee have large fruiting and flowering trees for sale at very good prices. Please call (813) 754-1399. The trees are at Charles Novak's Home. Will deliver if all the trees are purchased by one person.

If anyone is interested in buying jackfruit (the fruit, not the trees), please call Sally Lee @ 813-982-9359.

**BREVARD RFCI PICNIC & TRIP TO TAMPA**

On Saturday, July 30, the Brevard County RFCI had a picnic on Toppy's 15 acre fruit tree spread. Certain of our club members who are friends with some of the Brevard club members were invited to attend. About a dozen were able to make the 2 hour trip to Merritt Island for a very enjoyable pot luck lunch, tour of Toppy's planting, jackfruit tasting, grafting, air layering demonstrations & picture taking event. Toppy has 20 to 30 varieties of mature mango trees, several fruiting varieties of lychees & longans, a number of varieties of avocado, macadamia, citrus & other fruiting trees, for a very interesting tour. Jimmy Lee gave an excellent presentation of cleft grafting with parafilm. It was an enjoyable time and a great opportunity to renew acquaintance with old friends.

On Saturday, Aug. 21, members of the Brevard County RFCI are coming for a tour of Charles Novak's gardens and a tour of Paul Zmoda's gardens in Riverview. Further details will be available at our meeting on Aug. 14.

JULY 10 MEETING AT THE RENAISSANCE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Unfortunately, Hurricane Dennis was in full swing in the Gulf on July 10 and only about 10 members made it to the Arts Center. The weather was nasty and we spent our time indoors looking at the spectacular architectural beauty of the renovated building. We sat around talking about world shaking events such as whose trees are presently fruiting and the future of horticulture in the Tampa Bay area. Members who didn't come to the July meeting because of the weather, but would like to tour the building, are welcome to come by at 2201 Florida Ave. any Saturday between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM for a tour.

RATS and THEIR FUZZY TAILED COUSINS

We live in the city so we're not worried about deer and rabbits damaging our gardens, but squirrels and rats are everywhere, and we have our share of them. Our avocado trees had over 100 fruit set this spring, but thanks to squirrels and rats, not one ripened on the tree. All were harvested by the varmints, most with minor or major damage. The majority did ripen and were eaten by us, but some just rotted. Now the trees are bare and we have maybe 20 to 25 fruit in the house, which we are waiting to eat when they ripen.

Passion fruit, which they are attacking now, are a different subject. Passion fruit, if harvested green or if they are damaged, will not ripen satisfactorily. Those already showing color will ripen, but they are almost too tart to eat. However, we already have nearly 100 in a box, that are colored nicely, which we are eating 8 to 10 a day. Once they begin to wrinkle, they keep pretty well in the refrigerator, and are better cold anyway.

Our macadamia tree is setting nuts, but we are aware of what squirrels do to macadamias. However, we may be able to bag some of the bunches to thwart the squirrels, as the nuts develop.

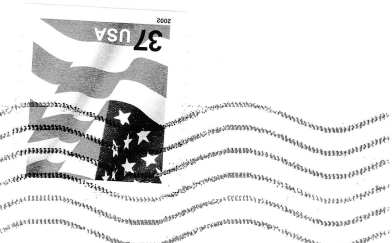
Also, my grapes are just beginning to show some color, so the varmints will be getting to them pretty soon, eating one and knocking off 10 green ones, their usual procedure.

At least when the squirrels are up in the trees looking for fruit, they are not down on my tables digging up my little plants, which is what they like to do for their recreation.

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