



# RFCI

## NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the  
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

May 2006

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

NEXT MEETING: MAY 14

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE USUAL LOCATION, THE TAMPA GARDEN CENTER. FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR NEW MEMBERS, WE PROVIDE A MAP ON PAGE 06-29.

PROGRAM: THIS MONTH, AS USUAL ON MOTHERS' DAY, OUR SPEAKER WILL BE OUR GOOD FRIEND FROM PALM BEACH COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE, GENE JOINER. Gene's visits to our meetings are always enjoyed by our members, as he is a knowledgeable authority on tropical fruiting trees. At this meeting he will be focusing mostly on the Myrtaceae family, providing a slide presentation of the growing & care of the vast family. The Myrtaceae family includes jaboticaba, jambolan, Malay apple, Rose apple, Surinam cherry, grumichama, pitomba, all of the varieties of guava & a few others. Also he will be available to answer questions and identify plants if you have questions that need answers or plants that need identifying.

We will have our usual impressive tasting table & plant raffle. Please contribute.

This should be an exceptionally interesting meeting so we expect to see a large crowd even though it is Mothers' Day, and we suggest that members bring their mothers.

Also bring fruit & vegetables for the farmers' market.

From the President  
Charles Novak

Happy Mother's Day to all the Mothers in our club!

Our scheduled speaker for the May meeting is Gene Joyner. He is one of our favorite speakers and his presentations are always interesting and enjoyable. His presentation will be on the Myrtaceae Family, which includes Jaboticaba and many other great fruiting plants.

I want to thank all the club members who helped with the USF Botanical Garden Spring Plant Festival (April 7-8-9). You did a great job! It is greatly appreciated that you chose to spend part of the weekend helping with the sale. We were very busy on Saturday and somewhat busy on Sunday. The weather was warm and people were thirsty. There were 373 cups of juice served on Saturday and another 240 served on Sunday. The main topic of conversation on Sunday was the much needed rain that fell overnight.

Now is the time for members to start propagating plants for the October USF Botanical Garden Festival. There is a shortage of fruiting plants so it is important for members to bring their extra fruiting plants to the sale.

Welcome to all our new members and to the members who re-joined after an absence of 1 to 3 years. Let's make our new members and guests feel welcome at club meetings and let them know what a great club we have and the benefits of being a member.

There will be a Board of Directors meeting after the regular meeting on May 8. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

### Scheduled Programs/Events:

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>May 14:</b>       | Gene Joyner of Unbelievable Acres Botanic Garden in West Palm Beach. Topic: The Myrtaceae family |
| <b>July 9:</b>       | Wae Nelson, Florida Gardening Magazine   |
| <b>September 10:</b> | Maryon Marsh Topic: Herbs  |

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

APR-MAY 2006

by PAUL ZMODA

I have some bad news and some good news. First, the bad news: at our April Botanical Gardens sale we had our traditional fruit display. There, I spotted a fruit fly perched upon the guava and I was pretty sure it was a bad one. I caught it and squashed it after studying it. Later I compared it to my collection of preserved insect pests. I was shocked to confirm that it was a Mediterranean fruit fly - the dreaded "med fly" was amongst us. I called my friend Howard Wallace, a longtime employee of the State's Division of Plant Industry to report my finding...

Now the good news: Howard told me they are still dropping sterile male med flies and that was probably what I saw. There is an ongoing program to make sure the med fly, *Ceratitis capitata*, does not gain a foothold in Florida. In this program med flies are raised in a laboratory. The male flies are bombarded with radiation to sterilize them. (Think about that heavy lead apron you don at the dentist's office while getting x-rays.) Then the flies are air dropped all around the state. Female med flies, if accidentally introduced, would mate with the sterile males and thus, their eggs would be nonfertile so the life cycle would end. A pretty good application of science, I'd say.

If one wanted to verify that a male med fly was one of those that had been sterilized, one would look for a marking placed on each fly by the scientists. Place the fly under ultraviolet light & look for a fluorescent spot near the eyes.

New plantings: Croton & Walter's Viburnum. (Ornamentals, Paul? - Editor)

## USF Botanical Garden Plant Sale

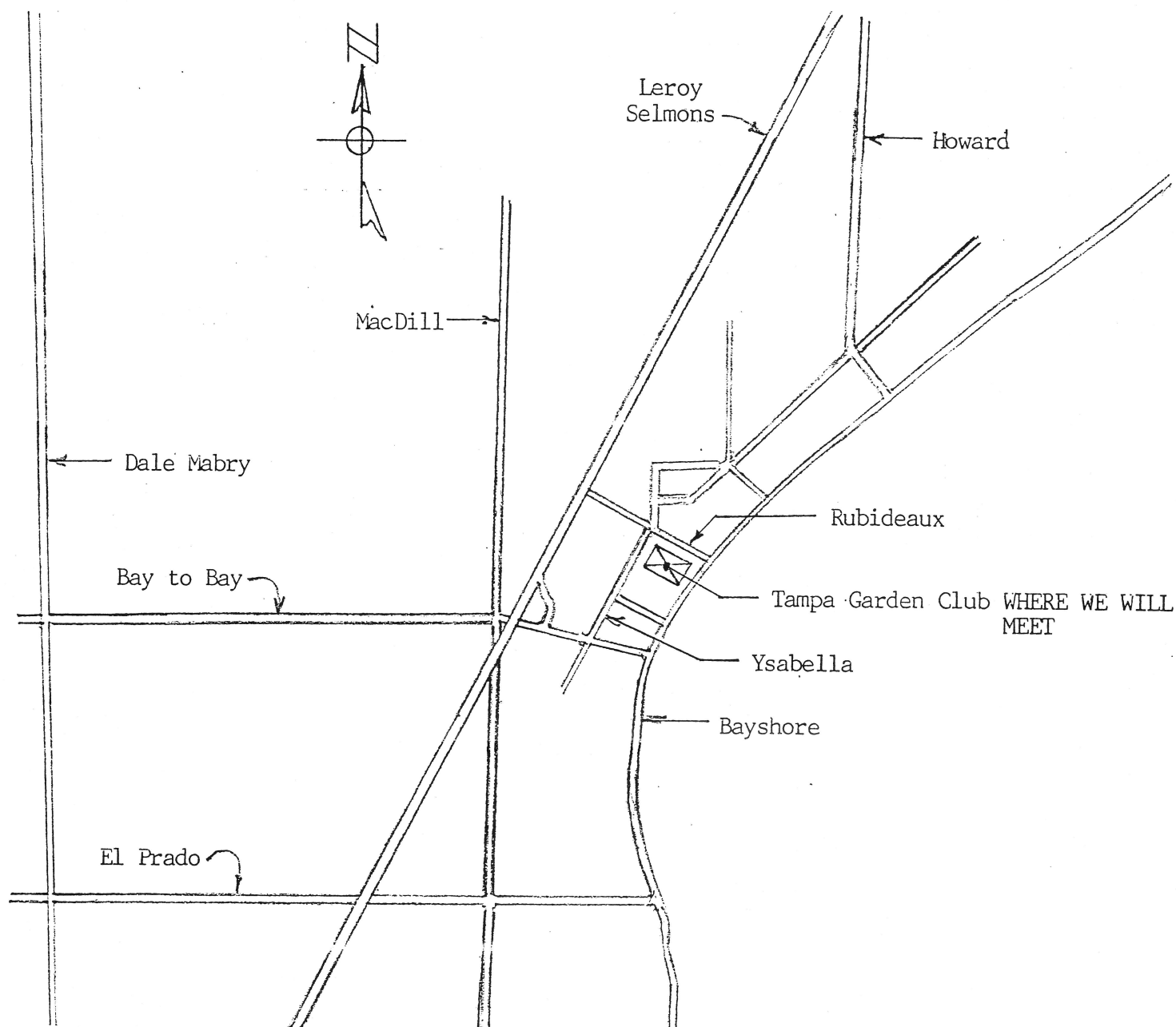
The 18th Annual Spring Plant Festival out at the USF Botanical Gardens on April 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> was a success by anyone's standards! Not only did we get a chance to let everyone know that Tampa has a Rare Fruit Council and answer a lot of questions about growing fruit (to the tune of over 5,000 attendees), we had a lot of fun. Even the weather gods decided to smile upon us. We got through the whole event without getting rained out!

There were over 70 booths/vendors at the event, so whatever your interest in plants might have been -- rare fruit, tropics, begonias, bonsai, butterfly gardening, herbs, low-maintenance Florida-friendly plants -- most people went home loaded down with new acquisitions. The guys in the golf carts taking people and their new plants out to their cars really got a workout!

The weather couldn't have been any more perfect. It was a balmy 85 degrees on Saturday and even a little cooler on Sunday. And the weather really helped drive juice sales. Well over 600 "filled to the brim" cups were sold to thirsty attendees.

Even though we didn't have as large a selection of fruit trees this year, we still managed to add over \$2,000 to the club coffers and sign up 34 new memberships.

A very special "thank you" to all the members who participated and made the event a success. We couldn't have done it without you!!!



### Directions to the Tampa Garden Club: 2629 Bayshore Blvd., Tampa

#### FROM NORTHEAST:

Take I-275 to Armenia Ave / Howard Ave exit (Exit 42).  
 Take Armenia south to West Swann Ave (1.2 miles).  
 Turn Left (east) on W. Swann Ave. Go 0.1 mile to first light (South Howard Ave).  
 Turn Right (south) on S. Howard, go 0.8 mile to Bayshore Blvd.  
 Turn Right (west) on Bayshore Blvd. Go 0.4 mile to the Tampa Garden Club.  
 Parking is in the rear. **PARKING DIRECTIONS:** Turn Right (north) on West Rubideaux St., go one block to Ysabella Ave. Turn Left (west) on Ysabella. Enter parking lot at the second gate on Left side of street.

#### FROM NORTHWEST OR SOUTH:

Take Dale Mabry or MacDill, turn East on Bay to Bay Blvd.  
 Pass under Leroy Selmon Expressway.  
 Turn Left (North) on Ysabella.  
 Enter Tampa Garden Club after Barcelona, before Rubideaux St.

## Rare Fruit Q&A

by Terry Lee, Rare Fruit Detective



Do you have a question about one of your fruit trees that you'd like answered? Are you looking for a cultivar of peach tree that has low-chill-hour requirements and will fruit in Florida? Would you like to know the fertilizer requirements for your newest tropical plant acquisition that no one's ever heard of down at the garden center? Have you wondered why your kiwi or pawpaw isn't fruiting or whether you should grow a Chinese or Indian Jujube in Florida? We have a wealth of knowledge available to us within the Rare Fruit Council. I can assure you that someone within the group has either done it or tried.

Send your questions to me, Terry Lee, at [tampa-terry@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:tampa-terry@tampabay.rr.com), and I'll make a few calls on your behalf to see if I can track down the answer to your question. We'll pick a few of your questions every month and publish them here.

### Welcome to our New Members:

Gary Andersen	Land O' Lakes	Melody & Patrick Ludwig	Palmetto
Tatiana Anderson	Davie	Harold McCrary	Mulberry
Julie & Franz Badias	Odessa	Bonnie Mullen	Sun City Center
Larry & Connie Bell	New Port Richey	Roland Newman	Thonotosassa
Janet Bocknor	Dover	Nancy Ann Page	Wesley Chapel
Hugh Bolt	Sun City Center	Joyce & Ken Paisner	Weeki Wachee
Dwan Brock	St. Petersburg	Robert RamaSanto	Largo
Linda Brown	Land O' Lakes	John Reimschisel	Tampa
David Burton	Ruskin	Dan & Mary-Frances Rodriguez	Odessa
Michael Camama	Tampa	Michael Safran	Seffner
Dave Duncan	Lutz	Hennie Schoemay	Tampa
Mark Foltarz	Tampa	Anjna Shah	Tampa
Michael Gimeno	Tampa	Ari Stern	Lutz
Don Hartley	Gibsonston	Helena Szepe	Tampa
Paul Hill	Spring Hill	Richard Valentine	Tampa
Jeff Jenkins	Tampa	Carlos Vasquez	Valrico
Stephen Kraybill	St. Petersburg	Glenn Walters	Wesley Chapel



Carambola

### Carambola Pie

2 cups carambola sections	1/4 tsp nutmeg
1 cup sugar	3 Tbsp minute tapioca
1/8 tsp salt	1 tsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp cinnamon	

Mix ingredients together & place in a 9" unbaked pie crust. Dot with 1 tablespoon butter. Cover with top crust.

Bake at 425°F for 40 minutes.

Note to prepare carambola sections: Cut top & bottom from carambola. Shave the tips off the fins. Remove fins without cutting into seed core. Squeeze juice from seed core after all 5 ridges have been removed.



## God Finds Out About Lawn Care

"Winterize your lawn," the big sign outside the garden store commanded. I've fed it, watered it, mowed it, raked it and watched a lot of it die anyway. Now I'm supposed to winterize it? I hope it's too late. Grass lawns have to be the stupidest thing we've come up with outside of thong swimsuits! We constantly battle dandelions, Queen Anne's lace, thistle, violets, chicory and clover that thrive naturally, so we can grow grass that must be nursed through an annual four step chemical dependency.

Imagine the conversation The Creator might have with St. Francis about this:

"St. Francis, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistle and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect, no maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracted butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But all I see are these green rectangles."

"It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great extent to kill them and replace them with grass."

"Grass? But it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It's temperamental with temperatures. Do these suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?"

"Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn."

"The spring rains and cool weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy."

"Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it \_ sometimes twice a week."

"They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?"

"Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags."

"They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?"

"No, sir. Just the opposite. They pay to throw it away."

"Now let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?"

"Yes, sir."

"These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work."

"You aren't going to believe this Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it."

"What nonsense! At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves form compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle of life."

"You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and have them hauled away."

"No! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter and keep the soil moist and loose?"

"After throwing away your leaves, they go out and buy something they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves."

"And where do they get this mulch?"

"They cut down trees and grind them up."

"Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. Saint Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?"

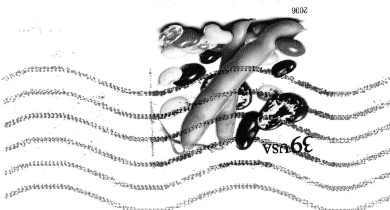
"Dumb and Dumber, Lord. It's a real stupid movie about..."

"Never mind I think I just heard the whole story."

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