



RFCI

NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

JUNE 2006

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

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 11

PROGRAM: THIS MONTH AS USUAL WE'LL BE MEETING AT THE TAMPA GARDEN CLUB ON BAYSHORE. THE PROGRAM WILL BE AN EDUCATIONAL SESSION, DEMONSTRATIONS ON PROPAGATION, GRAFTING, AIR LAYERING SEED GERMINATION, STARTING PLANT CUTTINGS, SETTING UP A MISTING BED, DISEASE CONTROL & QUESTIONS & ANSWER SESSION. If you need root stock or budwood for the workshop, please contact Charles Novak @ 813-754-1399 or Bob Heath @ 813-289-1068. We will try to help. This is one of the benefits of membership in the RFCI: learning propagation methods. Come enjoy our fabulous tasting table, plant raffle, farmers market, propagation classes & the camaraderie.

From the President
Charles Novak

Over a hundred members enjoyed the presentation by Gene Joyner at the May meeting. If you haven't been to his Unbelievable Acres Botanic Garden I recommend you take a trip to West Palm Beach and tour the garden.

Thanks to Andrew Hendrickson and Michael Brandt for volunteering to manage the Seed Program. Please check the seed board at meetings and take only the seeds you can use. If you grow more plants than you need or want please donate them to our plant exchange or sell them at the April and October USF Botanical Garden Festivals.

We have not scheduled a speaker for the June 11 meeting. This meeting will be a workshop which will be of interest to all club members: Grafting, Air layering, Seeds germination, Starting plant cuttings, Setting up a Misting bed, Insect and Disease Control and Questions and Answers. If you have questions about these workshops please contact me. Also, If you need budwood please contact me (813) 754-1399. This is a great opportunity for our new members to learn about plant propagation.

I would like to thank the club members who donate plants for the plant exchange and contribute the delicious items to the tasting table. It is greatly appreciated.

If you know of someone who might present a program of interest to club members, please contact me. Also, if you have any suggestions concerning possible field trips, other activities, the newsletter, etc., please contact Bob Heath or me.

There will be a Board of Directors meeting after the regular meeting on June 11. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Scheduled Programs/Events:

June 11:	Propagation Workshop
July 9:	Wae Nelson, Florida Gardening Magazine
September 10:	Maryon Marsh Topic: Herbs
October 14-15:	Fall USF Botanical Garden Plant Festival

Rare Fruit Q&A

by Terry Lee, Rare Fruit Detective

Q: I have been looking for a small (less than 20 feet) avocado tree and have run across the following varieties: Don Gillogly, Holiday, Gem, and Anaheim. Can anyone provide me some feedback about these varieties or perhaps another that would better meet my needs? - Submitted by Jim Hawk

A: There are small(er) sized avocado cultivars, but no true dwarf. Even varieties touted as being dwarfs and appropriate for containers, don't do well being grown in that environment, as the rootball is easily damaged during the repotting process and often dies as a result.

Special effort is being devoted by researchers in a number of different countries to dwarfing rootstocks and also to the use of dwarfing interstock (an intermediate sandwich graft) to control tree size. Smaller trees cost less to harvest and increase per-acre productivity. Even though the research looks promising, Mary Lu Arpaia, a noted avocado researcher (Department of Botany and Plant Sciences, University of California, Riverside) has said that it will probably take another 10 years before dwarfing rootstocks become available.

The Don Gillogly cultivar has only been recently released, so there isn't a lot of information about it on the Internet and not many people have experience with it. It has not yet been submitted for peer review, and initial reports by some of California's growers are something less than favorable. You might want to check out the following: http://www.growquest.com/Fruit%20trees/avocado_don_gillogly.htm.

I asked Julie Frink to share her thoughts on the two varieties below. Julie is CRFG's Avocado Specialist, and she was kind enough to answer a number of my questions via email.

Little Cado (aka Wurtz) – advertised to be self-fertile. Season: May through November. Julie has grown Little Cados, but reworked the trees because she didn't think the fruit was that good. She's seen them up to 12-15 feet tall.

Gwen – Advertised as a dwarf, but Julie's seen them up to 25 feet. The Gwen is not a good producer unless it has another variety for cross-pollination. As far as taste goes, Julie rates the Gwen as an 8 or 9 if Hass is rated as a 10. Season: February to October. The fruit is small, up to 8 ounces.

Since your goal is to keep whatever avocado tree you select as small as possible, your best results are likely to come with actively managing the tree's growth (i.e., pruning). Some commercial growers cut trees back to 16 or 18 feet, let them grow back to 30 feet and top them again. There are even growers in Chile who limit the growth of the avocado trees in their groves to 6 feet. But decapitation (i.e., "canopy management") is not a perfect remedy because the tendency of avocado trees is to grow a new top very quickly. Julie Frink says, "We prune back to about 6 feet, now. We tried 2 to 3 feet, but found it to be too extreme, so are now going to 5 and 6 feet. Regrowth is fast. Trees that want to be tall must be continually pruned, which is why a small tree is a real asset. Dr. Greg Paritda, Cal Poly Pomona, Plant Science Head, is doing pruning studies all the time and is getting good production from Hass that are kept under 15 feet tall."

As you continue your research, you might want to give the people at Brokaw Nursery a call. They grow over 250,000 trees a year and have been involved in the production of citrus and avocado since 1956. They are experts in new varieties and rootstock. Julie Frink has said that when the people at Brokaw Nursery speak, she listens. Web site: www.brokawnursery.com. Phone: 805-647-2262.

Noted and respected avocado researchers whose names you can trust: Mary Lu Arpaia, Dr. John Menge, Dr. Avraham Ben-Ya'acov, Dr. Greg Partida, Reuben Hofshi. I was doing Google searches like:

avocado Anaheim Arpaia OR Menge OR Ya'acov OR Partida OR Hofshi
avocado Gem Arpaia OR Menge OR Ya'acov OR Partida OR Hofshi
avocado Holiday Arpaia OR Menge OR Ya'acov OR Partida OR Hofshi

Remember to capitalize the "OR." (grin)

Would you like to share your thoughts on the information published above? Do you agree or disagree? If so, please send me an email at tampa-terry@tampabay.rr.com, and we'll publish some of your responses in next month's newsletter.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

May-Jun 2006

by PAUL ZMODA

Anyone know a good rain dance? I must water constantly these days; potted plants need water fairly often and many established trees showing distress get the hose over their drip lines for 30 minutes to overnight, until they perk up.

I had repotted my entire olive collection into larger pots as well as all the tea seedlings and the Yuzu seedlings. I made lots of airlayers of many olive varieties. Many cuttings are currently rooting, such as wild grapes, some unusual pomegranates from California and some figs. Ceylon peach was top grafted onto another peach tree and Triumph persimmon was top grafted onto our large Meader persimmon. Lots of bunch grape cuttings are being rooted in various media soil, vermiculite, etc.

The interesting vine "gac" from North Vietnam has completely recovered from the last freeze and is growing like crazy. I gave a start of this plant to a Vietnamese friend. He calls it "Gook". I hope I'm not promoting a politically incorrect name here.

Now a visit to Bob Heath's gardens. The gac vines are dropping their pretty white and black flowers every evening, but we don't see any fruit set as yet. The cabeluda tree was fruiting recently but the fruit have almost all been eaten. However, the pitomba is in full fruit and we are enjoying the juicy fruit and planting seed. Each fruit has from one to four seeds so we have lots to plant.

Passion fruit vines are flowering and setting fruit at this time, so soon we will be inundated with tart, seedy fruit. We eat about six each night and juice out and freeze the rest. The Keitt mango is loaded with developing fruit. It is a late bearer so they won't be ripe for months. The fruit weigh in at around 3 pounds so they are well worth waiting for. Also, our macadamia tree is putting on lots of nuts for the first time.

Other trees fruiting at this time are the Kei apple, Rose apple, persimmon, avocados, citrus & Annonas. Most of our 15 varieties of figs are setting fruit and the limbs of the Otaheite gooseberry are loaded with its little yellow berries, very pretty. We also have 6 or 7 pineapples coming and we are looking forward to their delicious fruit.

TASTING TABLE MAY 2006

Shigemura	Corn casserole, chicken & yellow rice	Sawada	Melon fruit basket
Yoblonski	Watermelon, baked beans w/meat	Lohn	Brownies
Brandt	Multi grain rice medley	Bolt	Macaroni salad
Sinclair	Pistachio, dates and raspberries	Topping	Crab noodle salad
Hendrickson	Acerola (Barbados cherry)	Musgraves	Cherry dump cake
Engelbrecht	Caribbean pineapple cake	Kirby	Macaroni salad
Branesky	Watermelon, cantelope	Hill	Cherry pie, fruit
Helveston	Spicy black beans & rice	T. Scott	Coleslaw
Reddicliffe	Tropical ambrosia salad	Estes	Potato salad
Parker	Four bean salad	Coronel	Bibingka
Ludwig	Coleslaw		
S. Lee	Strawberry cheese streusel, blueberry cheese streusel, pound cake		
Novak	Wild rice with tropical fruit, white chocolate & macadamia nut cookies, coconut pound cake with chocolate merlot fudge sauce, fresh fruit platter, juices		

and several other delicious dishes not listed on the sign up sheet. Remember to get your free plant exchange ticket.

MAY PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Yellow Passion Fruit	Bob Heath	?
Rose Apple	"	Tony Ferreira
Yellow Jaboticaba	"	Mike Gimeno
Pink Guava	"	?
Surinam Cherry	"	Chris Knight
Papaya	"	Linda Brown
Loquat	"	Pete Dixon
Carissa	"	Jennifer Hunt
Ehretia Anacua	"	Jerry Amyot
Cherry of Rio Grande	"	Sal Russo
Beauty Berry	Bob Heath	Keith Kirby
Cabeluda	"	?
Fruit Basket	Novak	?
Fruit Basket	"	R Shigemura
Pineapple Slip	T Scott	Terry Lee
Pineapple Slip	"	Fred Engelbrecht
Pineapple Slip	"	?
Pineapple Slip	"	?
Mango	Tony Ferreira	?
Calamondin	Peter Dixon	Jennifer
Dutchman's Pipe Vine	Niki & John Hill	Vicki Parsons
Grapefruit Tree	"	Sanda Worsham
Grapefruit Tree	"	"
Grapefruit Tree	"	Iris Helveston
Elephant Ear Tree	Nick & John Hill	?
Golden Rain Tree	Charles Novak	Sarah Kane
Golden Rain Tree	"	Gary Anderson
Golden Rain Tree	"	?
Ty Plant	Mike Brandt	?
Watermelon	"	?
Ty Plant	"	?
Mango	Ferreira	Scott Hendrickson
Box Canning Bottles	Hendrickson	Jennifer Hunt
Loquat	"	?
Kava	"	Terry Lee
Biriba	Pat McGauley	Ed Musgrave
Pink Pomelo	"	P. Ebanks
Neem	"	?
Papaya	Ed Andrews	Bill Brown
Papaya	"	Gary Anderson
"	"	"
"	"	Mike Brandt
"	"	?
Shooting Star	Beth Reddicliffe	?
Coral Plant	"	Mike Brandt
Tabeluea Ipe Pink Seeds	"	John & Niki Hill
Tabebeluea Yellow Seeds	"	?
"	"	?
Dwarf Brazilian Banana	Chris Knight	?
Rose Banana	"	?

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

THE MYRTACEAE FAMILY

by DAVE JOINER

Gene began by thanking the Club for a donation to help in the repair of the gardens in Palm Beach, his Unbelievable Acres. The gardens were closed after Wilma, until March 11 but they are now open for public tours. He indicated also that there will be a sale at Mounds the 2nd Saturday in July from 9:00 AM till 2:00 PM.

Gene indicated that his presentation will be about a specific group of tropical fruit, the Myrtaceae family, which is an extremely large family of about 70 genera & over 6000 species found in two regions of the world, Australia area & Brazil, & includes many ornamentals as well as fruiting trees. Allspice, bay rum, cloves are in this family. The *Eugenia* genus is probably the largest member of the Myrtaceae family with some 600 different types of fruiting trees, including 90 different kinds of citrus.

He started his slide presentation with the jaboticaba and the reason he started with it first was because it is probably the most unique in the manner in which it fruits of any of our tropical fruit. It's one of Gene's favorites. The jaboticaba is a native of Brazil, growing in the swamps and along the river banks where it's flooded. They up to 60' tall in Brazil. Here in Florida they say the mature height is 20 to 25'. The trees have very fine foliage, a real pretty light colored bark; it's a very handsome tree but when it fruits is when it attracts attention, which occurs after 6 to 10 years from seed. When it blooms, the flowers start at the ground and go all the way up the entire length of the trunk and out on the main branches. All the flowers open about the same day so the trunk looks like it's covered with cotton balls. But the next day all the flowers have dropped off and from flowers to mature fruit is 21 to 24 days. Very few fruit trees do this in 3 weeks. The purple-black fruit line the trunk from the ground all the way up to the bigger branches. The fruit are 1"

or more in diameter, as big as ping pong balls in some cases. Fruit will hang on the tree when they're fully mature from 5 to 7 days. Then if you don't pick them, they release & you have a layer of them on the ground. But they're such a delicious fruit, most people don't waste them. As soon as they start ripening, you're picking them. They also freeze well. Gene has frozen them from 6 to 9 months in a freezer bag, thawed them out, & they were just as good as when they went in. It's normal for the jaboticaba to have successive fruiting, with flowers & ripe fruit on the branches at the same time. The fruit does have a thick skin like a muscadine grape and most people can't tell them apart. It makes a delicious jelly & jam and also an excellent wine. The tree is a very thirsty one, needs a lot of water. There is also a yellow jaboticaba. It has light green foliage and the fruit, unlike the black jaboticaba that bears on the trunk & big limbs, the fruit are at the ends of the little limbs. The fruit is yellow, fuzzy & smaller than the black. It has a tough skin, very sweet pulp & usually 1 seed and normally takes only 3 to 5 years from seed to produce fruit. The leaf structure is unique in that the leaves, when they first come out two together, are joined at the edges and when they get full size, they split open to reveal the next two leaves coming inside the first two, like a pod.

Another one in this group that is quite familiar is the guava. It's found today throughout the world in all the warm tropical climates and 6 or 8 variations are normally grown in Florida. They may produce fruit non-stop for 12 months of the year if the weather permits. Most varieties have a yellow skin, from ping pong ball size up to grapefruit size. Since they produce fruit all year round, you can have flowers, tiny fruit and mature fruit on the tree at the same time. The outside color may be yellow but inside they range from pure white through pink to a ruby red color.

The thickness of the outside skin or shell varies considerably from a thin skin to almost the entire fruit in the seedless varieties. The inside pulp is full of seeds, small and edible along with the pulp. Most guavas are probably eaten ripe out of hand but they do make excellent jams & jellies & guava paste and are excellent as guava shells with cream cheese. The tree is rather scraggly, not a particularly handsome tree, & matures out at maybe 20 to 25'. The Cattley guava, which is more often used as an ornamental, is much more cold hardy than the common guava, as low as 25 or 26° without any damage. The Cattley guava comes in 2 color forms, red & yellow. The red may get as large as ping pong balls & is often referred to as a strawberry guava because of the color, but not the taste, and normally only bears a couple of times during the summer. The yellow form tends to be a little larger and is sometimes called a lemon guava. The fruit of both is full of seeds and is very tasty. Guavas have many uses and commercially, worldwide, they are very important. In Central & South America there are quite large processing industries, making a variety of products for export.

The Malay apple is another handsome tree but a little too cold sensitive for many areas in central Florida, a beautiful specimen up to 40' with a typical pyramid shape. In the tropic cities they are often used as street trees. In bloom they are a very beautiful flowering tree, the flowers being crimson red & about an inch or more long, in large masses. The fruit are about the shape & size of a Bartlett pear & bright red. Inside it has pure white flesh & 1 large seed. Consistency is similar to an apple or pear. The seed is a multiple embryo, which means one may get 5 or 6 sports from a single seed.

A close cousin to the Malay apple is the wax jambu & it is probably on a larger scale in the Far East & South America than the Malay apple & the tree may grow a little larger. The flowers look like white powder puffs. The fruit resembles the Malay apple but comes in white, light pink, dark pink & crimson

with white flesh & a single seed. The tree is a little more cold hardy than the Malay apple & should fruit in about the 4th year from seed in full sun.

Another one in that group is the Rose apple. It has a big light yellow flower, much bigger than that of the wax jambu, which only lasts a day or two, then falls, but it is a very attractive tree. The fruit are unusual, being perfectly round like a ripe lime, and yellow, sometimes with a pink blush. They range in size from 1" to 2½". The fruit is hollow & the seed is loose inside. You can shake the fruit & hear the seed rattling. The pulp is only about 1/4" thick & it definitely has a rose flavor, like roses smell. It is crunchy & sweet. Jelly & other things made from the Rose apple have that same rose taste. Most people like it but some say it's like eating perfume. The tree will fruit from seed, occasionally as yearly as the 3rd year, forming a rapidly growing bushy form, & should be fairly hardy in this area.

The Java plum is in the same category but fast growing, making a massive tree in time, to 80 or 90' & 3' in diameter. The bark is very light colored, almost white. It's not a tree to plant next to a sidewalk or driveway because they produce massive amounts of fruit, which can become pretty messy underneath, & in decomposing, attracting flies. Ripe fruit are purple, 1" to 1½" long, & about ½" in diameter, & 1 big seed with a tasty pulp around it, which a lot of people enjoy out of hand. It's excellent for jelly & jam. The fruit ripens in June or early July in great quantities. Like the Rose apple, it fruits only once each year. It grows easily from seed & fruits as early as 3 or 4 years from seed.

Next Gene showed us the pitomba, which is native to Brazil & grows to about 20' in a very bushy form. The fruit are bright golden yellow, 1 to 1½" in diameter & round, growing in clusters at the ends of branches. It blooms in late March or April & the crop matures about the middle of May. Frequently they will bloom a 2nd time & produce another crop in the summer. Gene described the flavor as reminiscent of an apricot & it also retains the apricot essence in jam and

jelly It is a very heavy producer & has perfect flowers, so only 1 plant is required. Normally grown from seed, it will fruit in 3 to 4 years. It is also fairly cold hardy, good in this area.

Another fruit from Brazil is the grumichama, which makes a nice tree in an upright height of 30' or so. The grumichama also makes an excellent hedge. Like the pitomba, it blooms in early summer and sometimes in late summer. The fruit are purple-black and grows in clusters of 2 to 5 fruit.

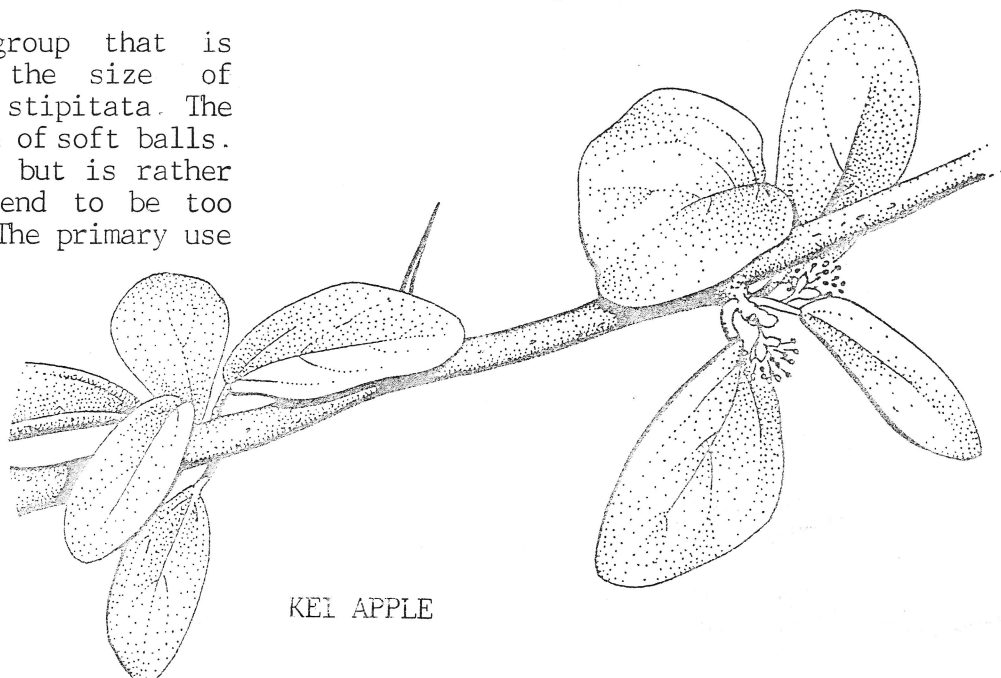
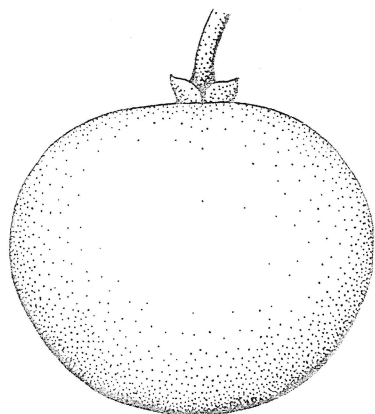
The cherry of the Rio Grande is similar to the grumichama and likewise bears at the same time of year. The grumichama fruit is round, but the cherry of the Rio Grande is more elongated. It can be used for hedging also and likewise makes a small tree. The fruit are very sweet & a deep red or purple when mature, very good quality and excellent for jelly & jam.

The Surinam cherry is another small fruit that is grown profusely in the area. The seed germinates very easily & you will probably find it coming up in unwanted areas. The foliage is very aromatic and a red color when the leaves first come out, then turn green. It makes a small tree up to 25 or 30' but is frequently kept trimmed down to hedge size. The fruit ranges from light red through dark red to almost black, and ranges in size from $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1". It will bloom 2 to 3 times through the summer; early summer, mid summer & late summer, almost fall.

Another one in this group that is interesting because of the size of the fruit is the *Eugenia stipitata*. The fruit are usually the size of soft balls. It produces a nice fruit but is rather sparse bearing & they tend to be too tart to eat out of hand. The primary use

is for making juice and in other beverages. The pulp is yellowish white with lots of seeds. They are slow growing but will fruit when they're only 3 or 4' tall. They are grown extensively in Costa Rica for making juice & beverages. The plant is cold hardy down to about the mid 20's. They are normally grown from seed so you might need to see someone who has a fruiting tree to get seeds.

Another in the *Eugenia* family with a small pear shaped fruit is the *Eugenia uvalha*. The fruit is only about 1" long, shaped like a little Bartlett pear with 1 seed & has a sweet flavor, although it's rather bland, not very exciting, but there appears to be some variation in the quality of the fruit. The tree will get up to about 20'. It's rather slow growing & is cold hardy in this area. It fruits off & on from spring to late summer. Gene indicates that when you transplant a new tree in your garden, you should fertilize it monthly very lightly for the first year to help it get established & then drop back to 3 times a year. He recommends heavy mulching around these tropical trees because many of them are shallow rooting & tend to dry out in the dry seasons. A couple of inches of mulch will keep the roots cool & moist and the compost will add nutrients to the soil. Additionally, it cuts down on the weed problem. Pests are not a great problem for the *Eugenias*, except for the Carib fruit fly, which might add a little protein to our diets.



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