



# RFCI

## NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the  
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

Jan 2007

EDITORS: BOB HEATH, PAULA HARDWICK, CHARLES NOVAK, LINDA NOVAK, TERRY LEE

PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK  
email: Charles.Novak@gmail.com

RFCI WEBSITE: [www.rarefruit.org](http://www.rarefruit.org)

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

NEXT MEETING: JAN 14

PROGRAM: OUR MEETING THIS MONTH WILL BE AT THE TAMPA GARDEN CLUB ON BAYSHORE, where we have been meeting for the past year. The program will be a workshop, a class on propagation, grafting, air layering, seed germination, starting plant cuttings, setting up a misting bed, insect & disease control, and a question & 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.

Come and enjoy our fabulous tasting table, plant raffle, farmers market, the propagation classes and the camaraderie. This should be an educational and fun meeting.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dec-Jan 2007

by PAUL ZMODA

Slowly but surely, our vegetable gardens are filling up and growing well. I'd let much of them lie fallow throughout the summer and early fall. When I felt ready to tackle the job, I hand turned a few plots with a digging fork now and then and applied 10-10-10 fertilizer to the freshly turned, rough earth and raked it until smooth. Then I covered most of these plots with a thick layer of old straw. In the bare plots, I began to plant seeds of various root vegetables and Oriental vegetables of all kinds - mustards, cabbage, pak choi, pai tsai, etc. When these grow to suitable sizes, I will transplant them through the straw in their own beds at proper distances apart. A thorough watering will then be called for. A week or two later, and every few weeks from then on, I'll give the plants a drench of fish emulsion.

Half the satisfaction of producing your own crops is watching them grow. The other half is in the eating. With such a large selection of vegetables from which to work, one shouldn't have any trouble coming up with fresh, tasty and nutritious combinations. We use our produce each and every day for appetizers, salads, main courses and desserts.

Our jak fruit tree, still recovering from last year's freeze, has been putting on flowers, male ones, though, which look like small pickles speckled with yellow pollen. The feijoas have all been weeded and pruned, the white sapotes are flowering well, and the Brazilian dwarf bananas are ripening - a dense, sweet banana to enjoy.

New plantings: lemon grass, aloe, caladiums, snapdragons, cactus.

HAPPY NEW YEAR from Flatwoods Fruit Farm to all!

**From the President**  
Charles Novak

**Happy New Year!** Another year without a hurricane in our area (two years in a row)! Let's hope our luck holds through 2007. I'm looking forward to some big changes in my life this year. Beginning February 1, I will retire for the second time (the first was after 20 years in the Air Force). I want to spend more time with my grandchildren and with my plants.

**Thanks** to all the members who helped make our Holiday Social a big success. This was our first Holiday Social at the Tampa Garden Club. Over 100 members and family attended. A big **Thank You** to everyone for bringing the delicious food (and there was plenty!), the wine, and the plants, fruits and gifts for the free raffle. You are the reason we have a great club.

Please plan to help with the Citrus Tasting event at the Florida State Fair on Sunday, February 11. Also, volunteers are needed to man our horticulture exhibit at the State Fair, February 8 -19. Sign up sheets will be available at the January 14 meeting for the citrus tasting and for manning our horticulture display at the fair. We receive many questions and comments from the public and you will enjoy your time talking with them about growing rare and tropical fruit. If you are asked questions you cannot answer you may refer them to our club website where they can e-mail their questions and receive answers.

The January 14, 2007, meeting will be a workshop. You can get your questions answered and learn more about grafting, air laying, seed germination, starting plant cuttings, setting up a Misting bed and insect and disease control. A new topic will be 'growing plants hydroponically'. Also, if you make jams or wines please volunteer to attend this meeting and share your expertise with those members who would like to learn jam preparation and winemaking. If you need budwood or rootstock or would like to volunteer to help, please contact me at (813) 754-1399 or e-mail me at Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com. If you have any suggestions please let me know.

Note: Our club now has its own e-mail address: Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

There will be a Board of Directors meeting after the regular meeting on January 14. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Note: Judging for our photo contest will be postponed until the March meeting.

**Scheduled Speakers/Events:**

<b>January 14:</b>	Workshop
<b>February 8 - 19</b>	Horticulture display at the Florida State Fair (manned by members)
<b>February 11:</b>	Citrus Tasting at the Florida State Fair. No regular meeting.

**Third Fruit Photo Contest:** The deadline for entering photos is fast approaching, January 31, 2007. Only color photos (prints) in sharp focus. Include your name and a brief description with each photo (a self-stick label on the back of the photo). Fruits, buds, flowers, roots, are suitable subjects.  
1st Place Prize: a two-year membership in the Tampa Bay RFCI  
2nd Place Prize: a one-year membership in the Tampa Bay RFCI

### **CITRUS TASTING AT THE FLORIDA STATE FAIR; SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2007**

This will be our 6th year hosting this event. It has been very popular with the public as it gives them the opportunity to sample many varieties of citrus. Please plan to help with this event.

**This year it is critical for members to donate available citrus fruit (as many varieties as possible). Our three main sources for fruit in the past are no longer available.** If you have citrus fruit to donate (or know someone who will donate fruit) please contact Charles Novak, Bob Heath or Paul Branesky. The fruit will need to be picked, washed, labeled by variety and brought to one of the following locations: **\*Note** we will need the Fruit on Friday, February 9 or Saturday, February 10.

Bob Heath  
4109 Deleon St.  
Tampa, FL  
(813) 289-1068

Paul & Maryann Branesky  
4022 68th Street North  
St Petersburg, FL  
(727) 341-2605

Charles & Linda Novak  
2812 N. Wilder Rd.  
Plant City, FL  
(813) 754-1399

We need volunteers to help prepare the fruit for sampling. A sign up sheet will be available at the January 8 meeting, or you may contact Charles Novak or Bob Heath to volunteer or if you have questions. There will be less fruit and fewer varieties of fruit available this year.

Therefore, it is very important for members to contribute fruit for the citrus tasting. There will be more information in the February newsletter. Thanks in advance for your help.

### **RFCI HORTICULTURE DISPLAY AT THE FLORIDA STATE FAIR: February 8-19, 2007**

We will need members to man the club's horticulture display. Free admission tickets will be given to members who volunteer to man the exhibit. A volunteer sign up sheet will be available at the January 14 meeting; or volunteer by contacting Charles Novak (813) 754-1399 or e-mailing: Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com.

**Tampa Bay RFCI Board of Directors Election in March:** Please give some thought to serving on the Board of Directors. Directors serve a one-year term and will assume their respective offices immediately after the March meeting. The board meets monthly or at such times as deemed necessary. The Board is responsible for the policies, finances and direction of the Chapter. A nominating committee will be appointed at the January Board meeting and members interested in serving on the Board may contact a member of the nominating committee. The list of candidates will be published in the March newsletter and will be presented at the March meeting. Additional nominations may be presented from the floor. The Board of Directors will be elected at the March meeting by a majority vote of the membership present and voting.

**New Members:** Katie Johnson

Spring Hill

Teresa and Bob Klingler

Sun City Center

## SAPODILLA

The sapodilla (*Manilkara zapota*) is a large evergreen tropical tree native to Central America and Mexico. Although it is slow growing, it is a recommended large shade tree because of its high resistance to breakage and uprooting by strong winds. The tree also has a high tolerance to salt and is often used in seaside plantings.

The sapodilla will adapt to a wide range of soil types and growing conditions but will be injured by low temperatures of 26°F or lower. The tree is quite drought resistant once it has been well established and will also survive short periods of flooding with no ill effects.

Young trees should be fertilized about every other month with a citrus or fruit tree type fertilizer, and after the first year, trees only need to be fertilized 2 or 3 times a year.

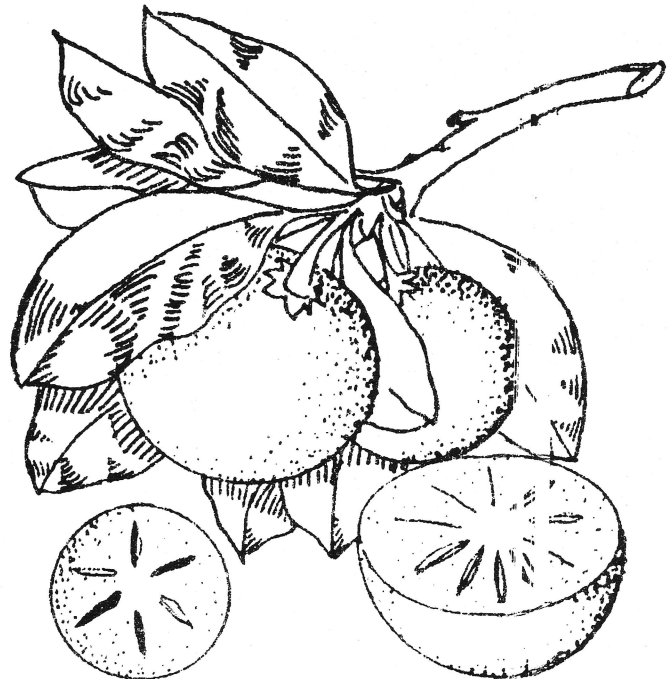
Small, inconspicuous 3/8" flowers are borne throughout the year and the large 2-4" round or egg-shaped brown fruit mature primarily during the warmest months, though some fruit may mature during the winter.

The flesh is usually light yellowish brown with a texture that varies from smooth to granular, and has a sweet pleasant taste. There might be no seeds or there may be as many as 6-10 hard, shiny, flat, black 3/4" seeds. When fruits reach their maximum size, they are usually picked and allowed to ripen off the tree. If you allow them to ripen on the tree, the fruit will often be destroyed when it falls to the ground.

The fruit can be used in a variety of ways as a fresh fruit, but the latex in fruit is a problem when the fruit is cooked.

Landscape nurseries offer sapodillas for sale but many of these have been propagated from seed and may be inferior in fruit quality and productivity. A number of seedling trees in south Florida produce good quality fruit and these can be propagated by grafting or air layering. Named varieties include "Prolific", "Brown Sugar", "Modello", "Russell" and "Martin". When selecting for fruit characteristics, trees of good quality can be grafted or air layered.

Sapodillas have very few pest problems. However, the mature fruit is attacked by the Caribbean fruit fly. It is important that the fruit be picked and not allowed to get too mature on the tree or else there will be damage to the fruit when it falls.



Sapodilla



## PERSIMMONS

One species of persimmon is native to the United States and though widely scattered in the native forests and eaten for years by people and possums, is still not well known.

There are 200 species in the genus *Diospyros*. Persimmons, black sapote, velvet apple are species widely grown for fruit. Others are grown in Asia. *Diospyros virginiana* is the native persimmon and is common through most of the eastern U.S. forests. *Diospyros kaki* is an exotic species from Asia and is cultivated in California and Florida for commercial use. *Diospyros texana* is native to Texas and almost unknown outside of Texas.

Some selections of *Diospyros virginiana* have been made and 12 varieties were listed by USDA in 1915. Yet the improved varieties are not commonly available in nurseries. The fruit is normally astringent, seedy and small. Named varieties have fewer seeds, larger fruit and some, very little astringency.

*Diospyros virginiana* will grow in most soils not waterlogged. Sandy soils seem to be most suitable and many trees are growing on and near the University of South Florida campus. The trees are host to tent caterpillars and other pests and diseases but do not seem to be greatly hampered by them. A long tap root makes transplanting difficult.

Pollination is complicated. Generally male and female flowers are on separate trees and must be grown together to produce fruit. However, some females produce male flowers and some apparently set fruit without pollination and produce seedless fruit. Male limbs can be grafted to female trees. Check with your supplier if you buy trees to insure you get the right sex of trees to produce fruit. The fruit is astringent until soft ripe. The variety Morris Burton is said to be non-astringent.

*Diospyros kaki* has been cultivated for hundreds of years in northeast Asia and there are hundreds of named varieties. Fruit is much larger than *Diospyros virginiana* and some are non-astringent and can be eaten when crisp ripe like an apple. The fruit is dried in Asia to keep through the winter.

Most *Diospyros kaki* are self-fruitful but check before you buy. Most sold in the East are on *Diospyros virginiana* rootstock for nematode resistance. Check on this is you buy from California. They use *Diospyros lotus* or *Diospyros kaki* as rootstock, which is more suitable to dry soil.

Persimmons tend to drop fruit when under stress. Water and fertilizer evenly and use nitrogen sparingly on mature trees. Slow release or organic is best. I.F.A.S. recommends a balanced fertilizer at the rate of 1/2 to 1 pound per year of age up to a maximum of 8-10 pounds. In the first year, use 1/2 to 1 pound in April or May, then half the fertilizer in January and the other half at the start of the rainy season in June.

HAPPY NEW YEAR !!

# Recipe

## THE NEW LEMON SQUARES

1 cup flour, sifted  
 1 cup graham cracker crumbs  
 1/2 cup brown sugar  
 3/4 cup butter or oleo, softened  
 4 eggs, beaten  
 2 cans (14 oz. each) sweetened condensed milk  
 3/4 cup lime or lemon juice  
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
 1/2 cup flour, sifted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. For the crust, mix the first four ingredients in a large bowl until completely blended. Spread evenly over bottom of lightly greased 9" x 13" baking pan and press into place. Bake in conventional oven for 12 to 14 minutes until just turning brown at the edges.

Prepare filling while crust bakes. Whisk eggs in mixing bowl. Add condensed milk and juice. Mix baking soda with flour and add to mixing bowl and blend. Pour over baked crust and return to oven and bake 22 to 24 minutes. Allow to cool before cutting into squares.

STATION NEW ORLEANS  
 STADIUM PARK AVE  
 NEW ORLEANS, LA 70112

FIRST CLASS MAIL



TAMPA BAY CHAPTER RFCI  
 4109 DeLEON ST  
 TAMPA FL 33609