



# RFCI NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the  
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

MAR 2007

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

PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK

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

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 PM.

NEXT MEETING: MAR. 11

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKER THIS MONTH WILL BE CRAIG CHANDLER, WHO WILL BE DISCUSSING HIS EXPERIENCES WITH HYDROPONICS AND TISSUE CULTURE, GROWING STRAWBERRIES AND OTHER SMALL PLANTS AT HIS HOME IN NORTHWEST HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY. He has extensive on-hand experience using methods that he has developed himself. This should be very interesting because it affords us the opportunity to emulate many of the things he has discovered for our own developments.

We will have our usual exciting raffle, unbelievable tasting table, farmers market and annual elections of members of the Board.

Please join us at what should be a great meeting. See you there.

### From the President

Charles Novak

Our 6th Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair was very successful. Since the weather was great it was a very busy day at the fair. Therefore, we were very busy cutting up the citrus into sample size servings and squeezing the many cups of orange and grapefruit juice. This was the best year so far. I want to "THANK" everyone who helped with this event (donating fruit, picking and washing fruit, delivering the fruit to the Florida State Fair and helping with the Citrus Celebration on Sunday). We received many favorable comments from the public. We have a great club! So many members are willing to help by donating their time and energy to club tree sales and other events.

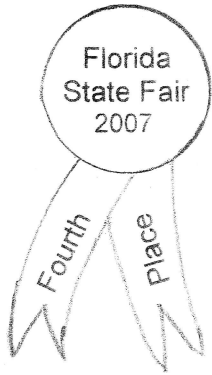
I hope everyone got through the February freezes without a lot of plant damage. The temperature got down to about 27 degrees at my place. My banana plants and other unprotected, cold sensitive plants have damage.

Please attend the March meeting and participate in the election of the Board of Directors. I want to thank our members for their support and understanding. This year was my 7th year as president. It is time for me to step aside and for someone else to take over as president. I will be available to answer questions and help the club however needed. Please give the new President the great support you gave me. Again, Thank You!

Update on Citrus Greening: Citrus Greening has been confirmed in Dover, which is in Hillsborough County. Dover is south and west of where I live. I hope to have more information at the March meeting.

### Scheduled Speakers/Events:

March 11:	Dr. Craig Chandler: Growing Strawberries.
April 14 & 15:	Spring USF Botanical Garden Plant Festival
May 13:	Gene Joyner of Unbelievable Acres, W. Palm Beach
June 10:	Vicki Parson: the benefits of Neem
July 8:	Dr. Futch: Citrus



Our Florida State Fair exhibit received Fourth place in the Plant Society competition this year. Each society receives a set-up premium of \$200. Fourth place receives an additional \$100 and the yellow rosette ribbon. **Thanks** to Roberta and Steve Harris, Thom Scott, George Campani, Ron Shigamura, Shige Sawada, Bob Heath, Charles and Linda Novak for setting up the exhibit and to all the members who spent time manning the exhibit. The public is always interested in our display of fruit trees and in the unusual fruits we exhibit.

**\*\*\*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 (made payable to TAMPA BAY RFCI) to:

**Tampa Bay RFCI**  
Charles Novak  
2812 N. Wilder Rd.  
Plant City, FL 33565-2669

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Feb-Mar 2007

By PAUL ZMODA

As I write this, it is touch and go with the weather – it's COLD! We had our first patchy frost of the winter (30 degrees F at 7:00 a.m. on 2/17). We expect at least one more frigid threat to our plants before the official "frost-free" date of March 15. We are hanging on, though, by using all the tricks we know to stave off cold damage. We cover as best we can, being sure to drape fabrics all the way to the ground, which helps hold soil heat around trees. If needed, we place 100 watt lights under the wrapped trees. Small plants are covered with cardboard boxes or buckets before being covered with old sheets, blankets, car covers – whatever will do the trick.

Some RFCI members came by Flatwoods Fruit Farm for a tour and to collect specimens. When we got to our jak fruit tree, my eyes widened. Unbeknownst to me, a jak fruit was hanging there! I was taken by surprise, but my mission was clear – protect it at all costs. When frosts threatened, I tied a large canvas boat cover to two long bamboo poles. I surrounded the tree, teepee-like, with this shield and then fastened a garden hose within the cocoon near the trunk where it trickled, emanating steam throughout the branches overnight.

Our Brogdon avocado is putting out flower buds now. This cultivar is pretty resistant to cold weather.

Early bunch grape shoots were burned by the frost. I hope later sprouts will carry some crop.

In the vegetable gardens, huge, pure white Nerima daikons are ready. The crisp, succulent, Oriental radishes are extremely versatile. Shredded raw, they are great in salads or can be mixed with egg, flour and seasonings, fried in coconut oil as a fritter, and served with sour cream. Steamed, they take the place of turnips, whether sliced or mashed. I've been experimenting with daikon pickles. An easy fix is to add them, sliced, into a hot mix of vinegars, sugar and salt. Allow to marinate in the refrigerator for a few hours to a few days before eating with meals or as a snack. Don't let the aroma put you off – they taste much better than they smell.

New plantings: black mustard, daikon radish, nailon pai tsai, pac choi, dandelions and sweet corn.

### 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 is 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	Thom Scott	Verna Dickey
Jimmy Lee	Charles Novak	Judith Cimafranca
Linda Novak	Andrew Hendrickson	Susan McAveety
Jerry Amyot	Fred Engelbrecht	Paul Branesky
Teri Worsham		

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

#### Members' Corner:

Wanted: 1 gallon pots. Charles Novak (813) 754-1399. If you have extra 1 gallon pots please bring them to the March meeting or I can arrange to pick them up. *Thanks.*

### DODDER SNIFFS OUT VICTIMS

A life-sucking killer ranking among the Most-Wanted list's top 10 could be lurking in your backyard. Dodder, also known as strangleweed, was the subject of a recent study at Pennsylvania State University.

Experiments with *Cuscuta pentagona* suggested the surprising result that the rootless, leafless plant seeks its victims based on scent. Researchers, led by Consuelo M. DeMoraes, determined that the parasitic plant can sense chemical compounds emitted from potential host plants, though the biological mechanisms involved are as yet unknown.

Within the first week after germination, dodder must locate a host plant to survive. Dodder germinated in the laboratory avoided wheat in favor of tomato plants, if given the choice. This could influence the direction of further research to control several varieties of the noxious weed, which can decimate food and ornamental crops indiscriminately.

Dodder is an annual, yet a single plant can produce several thousand seeds that remain viable for decades. Gardeners across the United States should be on the lookout for its thin, yellow-to-orange twining growth. To avoid possible spread of seeds, the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Food recommends that all plants coming in contact with dodder be burned, and all clothing and equipment used in the cleanup should be thoroughly cleaned afterward.

**Third Fruit Photo Contest:** The winners of the Photo contest will be selected by the members present and voting at the March meeting. 1st Place prize: two-year membership in the Tampa Bay RFCI. 2nd Place prize: one-year membership in the Tampa Bay RFCI.

**New Members:**

Julie Garcia & Eric Foecking  
Kimberley Heurlin

Zephyrhills  
Punta Gorda

## BEAT THE BUGS WITH AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY

*Callicarpenal, a compound isolated from beautyberry, has proven effective in repelling mosquitoes.*

Landscapers love this showy shrub for its bright color, low maintenance requirements and adaptability to a variety of conditions. Now there's another reason to love beautyberry – its potential for warding off mosquitoes and other biting insects.

Scientists with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced that in laboratory tests simulating human skin, a compound isolated from *Callicarpa americana* proved effective in warding off mosquito bites. Tests showed that the compound, called "callicarpenal", is potentially just as effective as DEET, originally developed by the US Army for use in jungle warfare and now the most widely used active ingredient in commercial insect repellents. Many consumers are seeking less toxic alternatives to DEET, which Duke University researchers have warned may, through frequent, heavy, and prolonged exposure, result in brain cell damage and other injury, particularly to children. The USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has submitted a patent application for callicarpenal and hopes to begin testing it against tick bites, running toxicity trials prior to testing on humans, and developing ways to produce large quantities of the compound through synthesis or crops.

ARS was introduced to the plant's potential by one of their own botanists in Mississippi, Charles Bryson, who learned about it from his grandfather, a Mississippi farmer. Some 100 years ago, people in northeastern Mississippi knew how to use beautyberry to protect themselves and their animals against bug bites. Placing crushed beautyberry leaves under the harnesses of animals mashed out a repellent oil. Eventually, some people took to rubbing the residue of mashed beautyberry leaves on their own skin.

--from Association of Florida Native Nurseries Native Plant & Service Directory--

## A GUIDE TO TROPICAL FRUIT TREES & VINES (continued)

### 108. *Morus alba* - White mulberry

Deciduous tree to 60 feet, native to Asia and naturalized in North America. Coarsely toothed leaves are 4 inches or more long. Fruit is whitish, pinkish or blackish in color. Fruit is 1 to 2 inches long. Fruit is eaten fresh, used in jams or pies. Most mulberry plants produce suckers that can be used for new plants. Also propagated by cuttings and air layering.

### 109. *Paurouma cecropiaefolia* - Amazon tree grape

Small tree to 35 feet, native to South America. Round, purplish fruits are about 1 inch in diameter. Pulp is eaten fresh and used in

beverages. It has a sweet flavor. Propagation is by seed.

## FAMILY - MORINGACEAE

### 110. *Moringa oleifera* (*pterygosperma*) - Horse-radish tree

Small, semi-evergreen tree to 30 feet, native to India. Fern-like leaves to 2 feet in length. Fragrant, white flowers about 1 inch across. Three angled fruit to 18 inches long. Roots, young leaves and fruit are cooked and used as vegetables. Oil is extracted from seeds and used for perfume, soap and lubricating oil. Propagation is by seed or cuttings.



# Guava could protect state's citrus

The Orlando Sentinel  
 Jerry W. Jackson  
 December 16, 2006

## **We're not saying this is the silver bullet, but this shows significant potential**

Citrus researchers said Friday that they are launching a crash program to study whether guava trees, placed in Florida orange and grapefruit groves, can protect the state's multibillion-dollar industry from a devastating tree disease known as greening.

The technique has been used in Vietnam with 'dramatic' results, deterring both the insects that spread greening and the bacterial disease itself, according to top researchers at a federal laboratory in Fort Pierce.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has within the past week bought or ordered every guava plant it can find -- 15,000 to 20,000 so far -- with plans to quickly establish field tests in South Florida, the researchers said.

'We're not saying this is the silver bullet, but this shows significant potential,' said Calvin Arnold, director of the USDA's Horticultural Research Laboratory.

Tim Gottwald, a veteran plant pathologist and leader of the new research initiative, said he learned of the unusual effect guava plants have in combating greening during a recent meeting in Japan with scientists from Vietnam and Australia.

Vietnam has little citrus, but some small plantings there have survived at least 15 years despite the presence of greening -- and preliminary tests hint that it is a protective effect from 'volatile compounds' given off by guava, Gottwald said.

'We're going to see if we can re-create the effect in Florida,' Gottwald said during a telephone news conference Friday afternoon.

Greening was first confirmed in Florida in 2005 but since then has been found in 13 South Florida counties -- and the psyllid insect that spreads it is common throughout the state, giving the research extra urgency.

The disease is difficult to detect, ruins fruit and eventually kills trees.

One of the key USDA scientists who will work on the guava research, insect specialist David Hall, said the preliminary evidence seems to show that guavas suppress the levels of other insects that damage citrus as well -- such as aphids and leaf miners, which contribute to the spread of canker.

'There are a lot of challenges ahead, but the data we have seen are so promising,' Hall said.

Central Florida citrus grower Rex Clonts said Friday that he was unfamiliar with the guava initiative, but he expressed hope that it holds the potential for relief.

'It's such a devastating disease. It's got us all scared to death,' said Clonts of Oviedo. 'I'm worried about what I'm going to have to spend to try to keep it out of my grove.'

Florida is the nation's leading citrus state and second only to Brazil in worldwide orange production.

Gottwald said the research by Vietnamese and Australian scientists is only a year or two old, and the small, invitation-only meeting in Japan about a week ago was the first time that the evidence involving the guava had been publicly discussed.

Guava plants, which yield a small fruit often used for jellies and preserves, are commonly grown in Vietnam. Small fields that had one guava planted for every citrus tree seemed to have nearly total protection from greening and from the psyllid insect that spreads the bacteria.

In at least some cases, Gottwald said, citrus trees appear to have survived unharmed for 15 years, even though greening has been in Vietnam since at least the 1800s and is one reason the country has no significant commercial citrus production. In most cases, researchers said, greening wipes out a citrus grove within two to five years.

Guavas emit numerous compounds, Gottwald said, and part of the Florida research will be to see if researchers can isolate which ones may be producing the deterrent effect. That might enable scientists to synthesize the chemical and improve upon it so that citrus growers do not have to plant huge numbers of guava trees to protect their groves.

Another part of the research -- which also will be conducted in Brazil, where greening is a relatively newly found pest, too -- will be to determine if guava might be planted at far lower rates than one plant per citrus tree and still achieve the same deterrent effect.

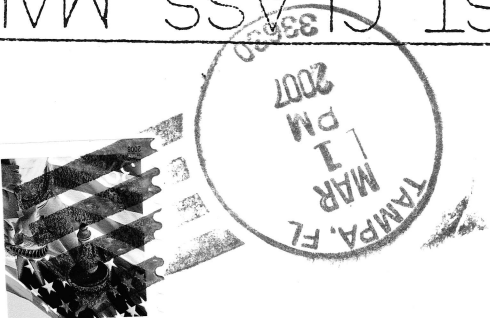
The research could take up to three years to produce definitive results. But, meanwhile, growers who want to plant guava trees on their own might have a hard time finding them because of the need to obtain plants for basic field experiments.

'We've tied up every one we can find,' Arnold said.

Jerry W. Jackson can be reached at [jwjackson@orlandosentinel.com](mailto:jwjackson@orlandosentinel.com) or 407-420-5721.

J. J. JACKSON  
314 DEER PARK AVE.  
TAMPA, FL 33609

FIRST CLASS MAIL



TAMPA BAY CHAPTER REC'D  
4109 DELEON ST  
TAMPA FL 33609