



RFCI

NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the

RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

MAY 2007

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

PRESIDENT: FRED ENGELBRECHT

WEBSITE: www.rarefruit.org (CHARLES NOVAK)

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

NEXT MEETING: MAY 13

PROGRAM: THIS MONTH, AS USUAL ON MOTHERS' DAY, OUR SPEAKER WILL BE OUR GOOD FRIEND FROM PALM BEACH COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE, GENE JOYNER. 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 mostly discussing the Anona family, providing a slide presentation of the growing & care of this vast family; sugar apples, atemoyas, custard apples & soursop, to name a few. Also, he will be available to answer questions & 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. Also, our farmers market will be open to those who are selling fruits, vegetables or preserves. It should be an exceptionally interesting meeting, so we expect to see a large crowd, even though it is Mothers' Day, & we suggest that members bring their mothers.

For the benefit of new members, directions to our meeting are on page 07-29.

From the president:

My name is Fred Engelbrecht and I will be succeeding Charles Novak as president. I am stepping into large shoes, when I am following Charles as president of the RFCI of Tampa. Charles has led the club for many years with tireless efforts to improve the activities and make the club more exciting for the members.

So let me begin by thanking Charles and Linda for their joint efforts to make the club what it is today, providing informative speakers, trips to other clubs, tasting tables with variety of drinks and great fellowship among members. Linda has also performed as secretary with great dedication for which we are grateful.

I also want to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Jimmy and Sally Lee, Bob Heath, Verna Dickey, William Vega, Steve and Roberta Harris and others who helped us to attain a very successful plant sale at USF. on April 14 & 15th.

A special thanks to Ron Shigemura for providing us with delicious desserts.

A thanks to all others who contributed to an excellent sales performance.

The volunteering of their weekend to help the club is gratifying.

This spirit of fellowship and cooperation is what makes this club great and the more participate, the better the club becomes- so let's get involved. Thank you.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Apr - May 2007

by PAUL ZMODA

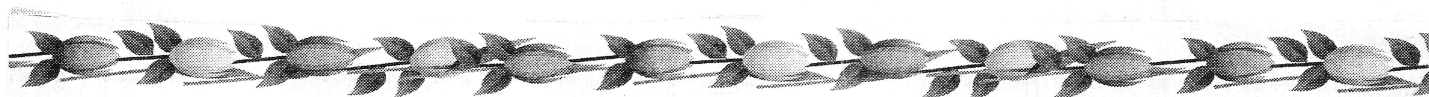
White sapotes have the stage at this time. Our four cultivars are growing quite well currently. Cold-hardy, these trees are putting out lots of new growth and are gaining height rapidly. Very minor freeze damage occurred in February while these trees were flowering. I attribute our first crop on 'Homestead' to the fact that the grafted 'Denzler' bloomed simultaneously. Cross pollination is beneficial to ensuring better cropping on this species.

I potted 50 tea seedlings, palm seedlings and grape cuttings with a great potting soil that I get free from a flower farm's "reject" pile. This pile of quality, aged soil is as large as three houses!

Pomegranates are flowering, as is the white wine grape, Blanc du Bois. Our 'Dunstan' chestnut hybrid appeared to be susceptible to chestnut blight, despite claims, so I removed it and planted a nice Chinese chestnut there. I cut some scions from the Dunstan tree and top-grafted them onto the 'Herschel' hybrid to preserve them, if possible.

New plantings: cucumbers, red okra, pole beans, amaranths, quenepa, rollinia, cardboard palm seeds, Gran Nain banana and ice cream bean.

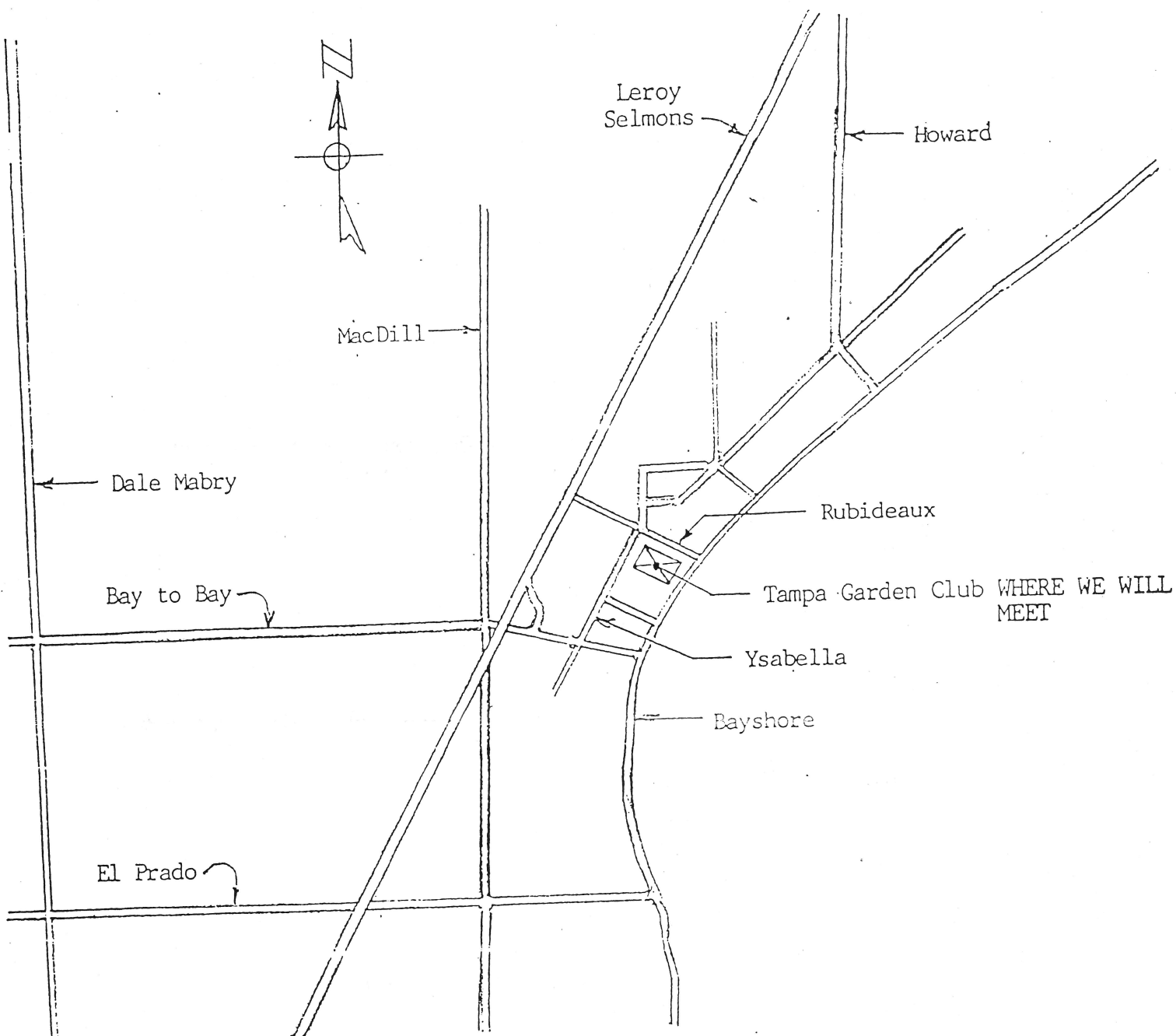
*** WANTED *** Gardening hoe or just the metal, business end from a broken down tool you no longer need or use. Paul Zmoda 813-932-2469. Flatwoodsfarm@AOL.com or just bring to the next meeting.

**Scheduled Speakers/Events:**

May 13:	Gene Joyner: Unbelievable Acres, W. Palm Beach
June 10:	Vicki Parson: The benefits of Neem
July 8:	Dr. Futch: Citrus
August 12:	Debbie Sims: Wine from tropical fruits

New Members:

Kevin, Robin & Allan Murphy	Tampa	Francisco Valentin	Riverview
Aunt Donna's Butterfly Garden	Dover	Judith Chaudhry	Tampa
Scott Baker & Frances Phillos	Tampa	Christine Collins	Lutz
Odilia Ferreira & Tereza Cleary	Tampa	Judith Gust	Holiday
Jack & Karen Flaacke	Tampa	Annabelle Knowles	Tampa
Mike & Mary Anna Murphy	St. Petersburg	Michael Logan	Tampa
Alice Miller	Plant City	Deepty Patel	Lutz
Julio Piazza	Tampa	AJ Scharett	Tampa
Bell Sheno	Brandon	Roger Broderick	Seminole



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.

Guava may be citrus savior

By Susan Salisbury
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer
Saturday, December 16, 2006

The tropical guava tree could hold the secret to stopping citrus greening, a deadly plant disease that is spreading rapidly in Florida, a team of U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists said Friday.

Tim Gottwald, a plant pathologist at the U.S. Horticultural Research Lab in Fort Pierce, said that in southern Vietnam planting guava trees alongside citrus trees has suppressed the insect that spreads greening. The bacterial disease has not appeared for 15 years in the small Vietnamese groves that have citrus and guava, he said.

Guava trees, which can reach a height of 30 feet, produce a 4-inch-long yellow fruit that Floridians have long used to make jelly.

"We are not saying this is a silver bullet," Gottwald said Friday. "It is a promising research area, one we have looked at thoroughly in the short time we have had it. We tried to poke holes in it. It is as good as anything we have."

Gottwald learned of the research while at a recent meeting in Japan. Now the research lab here is jump-starting research by buying 15,000 to 20,000 guava trees to learn more about how the guava might suppress the psyllids that spread greening, lab director Calvin Arnold said.

The team, which includes Gottwald, plant physiologist Greg McCollum and entomologist David Hall, has commitments from 10 major citrus growers in greening's hot zone of South and Southwest Florida.

They will cooperate by planting guava trees in their groves.

"We want to see if we can make work what the farmers in south Vietnam make work," Gottwald said.

Gottwald said he expects to have preliminary data in six months to a year. Field experiments could take from one to three years. The data from Vietnam was developed in collaboration with Australian scientists.

Over a one-year period, researchers established the guava tree, Gottwald said, and a year later interplanted it with citrus. Within four months, in the citrus-only grove, greening started to show up and reached 30 percent in a year. The interplanted grove showed no incidence of greening at the end of a year.

Arnold said the differences in data from groves with guava plantings and those without guava are startling.

"That is what excites us," he said. "The disease incidence itself is not occurring."

Greening has been in southern Vietnam since the late 1800s. It has become pandemic around the world, with the United States one of the last recipients.

But Hall cautioned that Indian River-area citrus growers who ship to Japan may have concerns about planting guava trees in their groves. Caribbean fruit flies, a top pest of grapefruit, prefer tropical fruits such as guava.

"I have spent thousands of dollars over the last 15 or 20 years trying to get rid of guava trees within a half-mile of a grove," said Stan Carter, citrus division manager at McArthur Farms in Port St. Lucie. "Japan won't accept fruit from an area where fruit flies are found."

Yet Carter said he is hopeful that scientists will be able to isolate the compound in the guava trees that repels the psyllids.

"If they could come up whatever that is, they could extract that from the guava and use that as a deterrent," he said.

Doug Bournique, executive vice president of the Indian River Citrus League, said the USDA scientists told him there is one guava variety that does not attract Caribbean fruit flies and could be used in the Indian River region, which extends from Daytona Beach to West Palm Beach.

"This is the first ray of hope that I know of," Bournique said of Friday's announcement.

Bobby Sexton, president of the Oslo Citrus Growers Association in Vero Beach, said he's hopeful that something can be found to combat greening.

"I'm glad there is some positive news out there," he said.

Florida Department of Agriculture spokeswoman Denise Feiber said Friday that greening has been confirmed in 12 counties, including St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade.

The disease, which turns a tree's leaves yellow and its fruit bitter and inedible, was first detected in the state in August 2005. As of Oct. 25 this year, it has been confirmed in more than 575 residential trees and 221 grove trees.

pH Soil Testing: If you would like to have the pH of your soil 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.

Grafting tape, knives and Parafilm are available for purchase by members who would like to graft their own plants. **RFCI Polo Shirts** are also available. Contact Charles Novak (813)754-1399.

THE SAPODILLA

The Sapodilla, Manilkara sapota (synonyms, Manilkara achras and Achras sapota) is a member of the family Sapotaceae. It is native from southern Mexico to Venezuela and is now found around the world between the 30th parallels. It grows best at medium to low elevations and is tolerant of a wide range of conditions, dry and wet, although it prefers a short dry season. It tolerates strong winds and may be grown close to the sea. It is adaptable to many soil types, but it prefers well drained, light to medium textured soils of acid to neutral pH.

The Sapodilla tree is a handsome slow-growing evergreen reaching a height of 40 to 60 feet in Florida under favorable conditions. It usually has a dense spreading canopy of dark glossy green leathery leaves.

Propagation is mainly by seed, but seedlings may take 8 to 12 years to bear fruit, if ever. Some never fruit due to pollen sterility. Also, seedlings are often inferior in fruit quality and productivity, so it is best to propagate superior varieties vegetatively. Cultivars propagated by grafting or cuttings should fruit in 2 to 4 years. Propagation methods practiced successfully include cuttings, marcotting, inarching, cleft, splice and side grafting, and shield budding. In Florida conditions, however, side veneer grafting is the best method; air layering (marcotting) and rooting of cuttings have not been successful here. Sapodilla seedlings are used as rootstocks here, but other species have been tried elsewhere.

Named varieties include "Prolific", "Brown Sugar", "Modello" and "Russell". Mature "Prolific" trees will bear 4 to 6 bushels of good quality fruit in a normal year, but productivity for the other varieties has not yet been determined. The fruit may be round or egg-shaped depending upon the variety, and 2 to 4" in diameter. "Russell" is among the larger varieties and "Prolific" averages about 1/2" smaller. The skin is brown and scurfy, the flesh brown with a smooth to granular texture, and the flavor rich and sweet.

There may be from 0 to 12 shiny black hard seeds about 3/4" long, which separate from the flesh readily. Because no change in fruit color occurs at ripening, it is difficult to know when Sapodillas are ready to pick. For home use they may be gathered when of good size and easily detachable from the stem with little flow of latex. At this stage, fruit will complete ripening within a few days. They are not edible until quite soft, as unripe fruits contain tannin, making them unpleasantly astringent.

Sapodilla fruit are used primarily fresh, out of hand. As a dessert fruit, it is improved by chilling before eating. Other uses include a drink made from the juice, which may also be boiled down into a syrup. The mashed fruit may be added to breads and pancakes. A jam can be made from it or it can be combined with citrus in marmalades.

The latex obtained from the bark of the tree is called chicle and for many years was the principal ingredient of chewing gum. This was then an important industry in Mexico and Central America. The tree also furnishes an extremely hard and durable wood.

To this date there are no significant disease problems with the Sapodilla. A rust fungus which sometimes attacks the leaves can be controlled with copper sprays. Oil sprays will control scale insects which leave black sooty mold on the leaves. The major pest is the Caribbean Fruit Fly which will destroy the fruit in which it leaves eggs. There is no control for this problem, except bagging the fruit.

Because of its handsome appearance and tolerance of neglect, the Sapodilla tree is a highly recommended ornamental for landscaping in south Florida. The delicious fruit is an added bonus.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



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