



RFCI

NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the

RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

JUNE 2007

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MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 PM.
@ THE TAMPA GARDEN CLUB, 2629 BAYSHORE BLVD, TAMPA

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 10

PROGRAM: THE SPEAKER THIS MONTH WILL BE VICKI PARSON. SHE WILL BE SPEAKING ABOUT THE FABULOUS NEEM TREE, ALL ITS HEALTH BENEFITS & MEDICINAL PROPERTIES. It will be a great opportunity to learn about the interesting neem tree. We will also enjoy our spectacular banquet table, great raffle, and our farmers market will be open for those who have fruit, vegetables or preserves for sale. This should be an interesting meeting and I hope to see a large crowd of my great friends.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

May-Jun 2007

By PAUL ZMODA

I moved our two largest potted soursops from our protected carport to the great outdoors. One has a 5" fruit hanging. I cleaned up our banana plantings, removing all those dried, brown leaves that winter left us with. A few passes with the lawn tractor made a fine mulch of them which I finally raked around each clump of bananas. All olive trees received a light cosmetic pruning to shape them.

I was checking our "Giant" jaboticaba (species unknown) to see how the crop was progressing. I was able to pick a pint of 1-1/8" shiny black fruit. This was a timely harvest as, later that night, some creature got all the remaining ones. These fruits are very juicy and sweet inside, while the skin is somewhat leathery, and has a pleasant vinous flavor.

You really have to gnaw on the seeds to obtain the pulp, much of which remains firmly attached, just as in the case of "regular" jaboticabas (*Plinia cauliflora*). Many of our members are familiar with those unique berries, especially Mr Modesto Arencibia, who recommends freezing your excess crop of jaboticaba fruit for a cold, refreshing treat on a later date – especially on a hot summer day – a great idea.

I potted up a dozen "Blanc du Bois" white wine grapevine cuttings, as well as some wild Chickasaw and flatwoods plum seedlings.

Our jackfruit, about 6" long, dropped off unexpectedly. Alas, it was not ripe yet. My "autopsy" on it showed that all seeds inside were still mere vestiges: pollination had not occurred. Maybe next year.

Ceylon olive seeds are coming up. White sapotes are ripening. These first fruits are the size of baseballs and a light yellow-green color. The pulp surrounding the seeds is of the consistency of avocados and of a yellowish-cream color. The flavor is quite nice – sort of like pears. Pomegranates are flowering and setting fruit.

New planting: Lychee.

MAY PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Carissa	Bob Heath	David Miller
Yellow Passion Fruit	"	Pat Ludwig
Loquat	"	Melody Ludwig
Red Passion Fruit	"	Pete Dixon
Pineapple – 3" pot	"	Pat Ludwig
Jelly Fig	"	Laura Massie
Cycad Dioone Edule	"	Shigemura
Pineapple – 1 gal	"	?
Gac	"	Pete Dixon
Cuban Oregano	Heath	Pete Dixon
Pink Lemoln	RFCI	R. Harris
Valencia Orange	"	?
Fresh Tomatoes	Lohn	?
Fresh Tomatoes	"	?
Coffee Plant	Paul Branesky	?
Salad Plant	"	Judy Cimafranca
Jack Fruit	Luba	Linda Brown
Jack Fruit	"	?
" "	"	?
Purple flower	Luba	Ron Shigemura
Tomato plant	Vega	?
" "	"	?
Tomato plant	"	?
Cocono	Peter Dixon	Michael McDuffie
Calamasi	"	?
White Sapote	Tony Ferriera	Peter Dixon
Chaya	Susan McAveety	?
"	"	?
Chaya	"	?
Pinecone Ginger	Susan McAveety	?
Rangpur (red lime)	Melody Ludwig	?
Lillies	Judy Cimafranca	?
Red Hisbiscus	?	A. Stark
Flipino Lemon	?	Tony Ferreira
Pink Lily	?	R. Harris
" "	?	Vega

Tasting Table May 2007

Lee	Papaya bread, fried rice	Sinclair	Dates with halva
Branesky	Grande shrimp surprise	Vega	Rice, dessert
Lohn	Walnut brownies, ice cream bananas	Zmoda	Tamarinds
Musgraves	Texas tornado cake	Scott	Mini carrots
S. Jones	Turkey, rice, gravy, cranberry sauce	Ferreira	Potato salad
Knowles	Dessert, bread sticks	Harris	Mango salad
Male	Pineapple cake	Terenzi	Chocolate pecan cake
Ludwig	Tuna salad w/currant tomatoes & pita chips		
Cimafranca	Picadillo & rice, smoked chicken, apple sausage		
Coronel	Bibinka, banana bread, bread pudding, carrot cake		
Novak	Coconut rice & chicken, coconut mango rum cake w/mango sauce, apple & blueberry crunch, plantain chips, jaboticabas, juices		
Sawada & Shigemura	Fried tarts, blueberry lemon cake, tomato salad w/yuzu dressing		

And other delicious edibles not listed on the signup sheet. *'Thanks'* to everyone who donated to the *Fabulous* tasting table. Remember to ask for your free raffle ticket.

New Members:	Carol Bennett	Zephyrhills	John Mounger	Bushnell
	Benson Cruz	Temple Terrace	Tony Sarte	Ruskin
	Tri Vu & Hoa Nguyen	Temple Terrace		
	Dabney Conway & Mary Roberti	Clearwater		

2007-2008 Membership Directories will be available at the June meeting.

Members' Corner:

For Sale: Extra large picnic table (30" x 70") with 2 benches. Unique, heavy design with inlaid table top. Never used outdoors. A great work surface. \$100.00 firm.
Marilyn Chavez (813) 932-9077

Grafting tape, grafting knives and Parafilm are available to members who would like to graft their own plants. Contact Charles Novak (813)754-1399 or email: charles.novak@gmail.com.

RECIPE: BANANA NUT BREAD

3 ripe bananas, well mashed	1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs, well beaten	1 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups flour	½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
¾ cup sugar	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a loaf pan. Mix bananas & eggs together in a large bowl. Stir in flour, sugar, salt & baking soda. Add walnuts and blend. Put batter in pan and bake for one hour. Remove from pan to a rack. Serve still warm or cooled.

THE ANONA FAMILY

by GENE JOYNER

Gene began his presentation with an introduction to the important Anona family. A lot of fruit in this family are found around the world in commercial plantings and many of us enjoy growing them in our back yards. The family has a wide range of climatic conditions where they grow in lowland areas and can tolerate flooding, like the native pond apple in Florida, and ones that are not happy unless they are growing above 3000 feet in the mountains, as in South America, like the cherimoya. We grow our summer and early fall fruit and a lot of other fruit are ripening also, but we can always find room in our landscape for anonas because of their very fine quality. The chief use for this family is fresh fruit eaten right out of hand or used in ice cream, milk shakes & as juice. Several members are planting on very large scales particularly in Central & South America. Gene said he has visited places in Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala & Puerto Rico where they're growing on tens of thousands of acres on a commercial scale.

Gene indicated he would go through the family one by one of those we grow in Florida, with information about the culture and improved varieties. He added that these trees will fruit when only 3 years old at a very small size, so you don't have to wait years for it to become a huge tree. Some, like the sugar apple, will fruit when only 3 feet tall within 2 to 3 years from planting. With a grafted tree you may even get fruit the year after planting it. They also lend themselves to container culture. Many of the members of the RFCI grow them in pots where they stay their entire life, in a 15 or 20 gallon pot next to the pool or on the patio. But if you are a real fanatic about anonas and want lots of fruit, you're going to have to put it in the ground to get a bigger tree.

None of the anonas have serious pest problems. He's got some he's had for 30 or 35 years and they've never had any kind of pesticide used on them. Any problems he's had have been minor and never life threatening, and if you do get a leaf problem, remember that sometime during the year every

leaf on the anona trees will come off and be replaced by new leaves. Usually, they drop about all the same time, which is usually in the winter season. Many of them, like the sugar apple, atemoya and custard apple, are deciduous for a very brief period. So we get a few weeks when the plant looks like a dead stick & then it leafs out & produces its flowers. It gives the tree a chance to get rid of any bad things that might be on the foliage.

The first one Gene showed us was by far not the best example of the anona family for quality of taste, and this is the native pond apple, which is found throughout southern Florida up to central Florida. Down around Lake Okeechobee many years ago there were native pond apples growing. Much of the rich muck lands around Okeechobee which are now the big commercial sugar cane and winter vegetable areas, were called by the natives "custard apple land", which was their name for the pond apple. The pond apple is found along the lake shores, streams, low areas & swamps. The fruit is about the size of your fist, a golden yellow-orange which smells great, but after one bite, that's all you're going to try to eat. It's not very tasty and is full of seeds, but what makes pond apples desirable is the fact that it can be used as root stock for all the other anonas and since they can grow in naturally wet areas and actually in the water, are often used by nurseries as an under stock for sugar apples, atemoyas & custard apples that if were grown in areas that flood, would be killed, but not if grafted on pond apple root stock. The pond apple will grow in standing water but it does not need wet areas to thrive, so it makes an excellent root stock for other anona types.

The next anona Gene showed us was the custard apple, which is a big notch above the pond apple in flavor, and is grown as a dessert fruit. It is native to Central America, Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, etc. This is the area where they're found in abundance. The custard apple is often called "bullock's heart" and the large ones reach the size of a grapefruit. The color when ripe is usually a golden yellow but they are also sometimes purple or red. There is one variety in Belize that has a bright orange skin. The pulp of all of them except the red ones is a white color, a soft custard-like

texture, very sweet & pleasant tasting. It's eaten as a fresh fruit, made into ice creams & milk shakes. The tree will reach up to 30-35 ft at maturity. It's propagated very easily from seed and takes 2 to 3 years to fruit. Most of the better ones are grafted to get better & earlier fruit production. The nurseries plant a lot of seeds & when they get about 12" tall, they graft the better varieties onto the seedlings because seedlings are a little unpredictable. These are deciduous in the winter like a lot of anonas, but in springtime they wake up very quickly and go through a real burst of growth in late March or April. Gene showed us a red fleshed custard apple. There are some that have real dark red flesh which makes them a much more attractive fruit when you're displaying them for people to sample. There are some nurseries in the Homestead area that propagate the red custard apple. There is also a variety that has a purple skin, one of which is called Fairchild's Purple, but the flesh inside, except for a little purple next to the skin, is white.

Next, Gene showed us a slide of the sugar apple, which is one notch above the custard apple in flavor. They are native to much of tropical America, throughout Central America and the northern parts of South America. The tree will get up to about 30-35 ft at maturity. People, though, prune them & grow them as a bush instead of a tree to make it easier to harvest the fruit. The fruit come in in summer & early fall into August. The bulk of the fruit ripen in September & October. One has to watch the fruit very closely for a slight color change & a softening of the flesh because the fruit when fully ripe, will drop from the tree & be destroyed when it hits the ground. So harvest the fruit from the tree & ripen them inside the house. The big fruit will get up to 5" long, and in south Florida it is a commercial crop. There are a lot of different named varieties & many are selected for the size of the fruit, but there is very little difference in the quality of taste.

Next Gene showed us the atemoya, which is a cross between the cherimoya & the sugar apple. The atemoya has advantages over the cherimoya and is very similar to the sugar apple. The fruit tends to be more bumpy on the outside but the flesh on the inside is very similar to the sugar apple but has far fewer seeds. Atemoyas, because

they are hybrids, do not reproduce true to the parent from the seeds, so we don't normally waste our time growing them from seeds, unless they are grafted, and the custard apple is more commonly used as root stock for atemoyas. The atemoya has the same season as the sugar apple for fruiting. Grafted trees will bear in 1 to 2 years. Some of the atemoya fruit has a history of cracking or splitting as they ripen. Because they are ripening during the rainy season, they take up too much water & that causes the fruit to split. So we need to avoid the varieties like Page that are known for splitting. The Gefner atemoya is the number 1 variety for planting commercially. The fruit at maturity are distinctly larger than those of the sugar apple and the trees seem to take a few degrees more cold, a gift which it receives from the cherimoya parent which grows in the high Andes where it's considerably colder.

Gene's next slide was the very bumpy, spiny looking soursop, which has a reputation of producing the biggest fruit of any of the anona family. Gene, attesting to how big they get, reported that he bought one in Costa Rica that weighed 35 lbs. He said the soursop gets to the size of beach balls or bigger. During development, the fruit has very large exterior bumps which tend to smooth out as it develops. It is also probably the most cold sensitive of all the anonas we grow in Florida. With a low of about 40 degrees, they become very unhappy. The leaves begin to turn brown, and down near the freezing point, you get some major damage, which limits locations in Florida where we can grow soursops. Soursops have a long ripening season. It blooms & ripens over several months here in Florida. Commercial use of the fruit is very wide spread in the tropics where the Spanish name is Guanabana. The juice is also canned & distributed by some supermarket chains in the United States and can be bought & used to make milk shakes & ice cream. Also the pulp can be bought in supermarkets in south Florida. Soursops have a very distinct flavor. Most people would not just cut it up and munch on it out of hand, but it's usually used to make ice cream & milk shakes or blended with other tropical juices. The flavor is a little strange and some people do not like it, but it's the kind of flavor that grows on you, so after trying it in different ways, you learn to appreciate it. The soursop is probably the no. 1 planted tropical fruit in most of Latin America.

Another interesting member of the anona family is the rollinia. Th rollinia also has fruit that is very bumpy & spiny looking and likewise is a summer & early fall fruit, but as they ripen, they turn a bright lemon yellow which is quite handsome when they ripen. The fruit range from the size of a navel orange up to the size of a pumelo. The bumps on the surface can be as much as an inch long, very smooth & rounded, not sharp. You need to pick it before it's quite ripe and let it ripen off the tree because it may fall as soon as it gets ripe & be destroyed on the ground. The flesh inside is soft & custard like, with fairly large seeds that make them easy to extract. The grow to about the size of the other anonas, a very nice fruit to have, but hard to find in the nurseries. The quality of the fruit is not quite as good as the sugar apple, atemoya & soursop, which might explain why it's not very popular in the nurseries. It is also a little more sensitive to cold.

The ilama is another member of the family that is very attractive, both in the tree & in the fruit. The fruit is kind of purplish red with a silver blush on the outside, so it makes a very handsome tree with fruit hanging on it as they ripen. Unfortunately, it

is very bad for splitting. Most nurseries are not interested in growing it. However, if the fruit is picked at the proper stage of development, it can be ripened indoors without it splitting. If left on the tree the fruit will split in 90% of cases. Once the fruit splits, little bugs & beetles are in there almost immediately and ruin the fruit. The flesh inside is a light red or pink & makes a very handsome display when cut. The tree tends to be a little more cold tolerant & is a little later than the other anonas in leafing out in the spring.

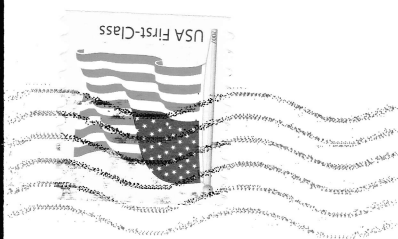
Pollinating the flowers of anonas is somewhat of a problem, as the male flower sheds its pollen at a different time than the female flower is receptive, similar to the situation with avocados, so what many people do is collect the pollen one day & the next morning, go out & use that pollen to fertilize the female flowers. Also, there is a little brown beetle here that you see on rotting citrus fruit, which is probably the number 1 pollinator of anonas, so if you have waste from juicing out citrus fruit, use it as mulch around anonas and you will have a constant source of little brown beetles for pollinating your anonas.

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