



RFCI

NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

SEPTEMBER 2007

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

PRESIDENT: FRED ENGELBRECHT

WEBSITE: www.rarefruit.org (CHARLES NOVAK)

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

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 9

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER WILL BE CRAFTON CLIFF. He is a horticulturist from down south and is an authority on tropical fruiting plants. He will be discussing some of the lesser known fruiting trees, which is a subject we could all learn a little more about. It should be an interesting program and I'm sure all our members can learn something of interest about some lesser known fruit. Also, we will be able to enjoy our delicious banquet table, great plant raffle and farmers market, as well as interesting camaraderie. See you there.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are fortunate to have members who generously contribute to the wide variety of wonderful and strange foods to our tasting tables. It is one of the features that attract many people to our club meetings.

We also provide specialized speakers, who provide us with information that help us better understand and improve our plants and trees.

While most of us look forward to be first at the tasting tables, I believe that we should show some common courtesy to our speakers and wait until the presentation is completed before heading for the tables.

Please wait until the speaker has finished the presentation before getting up to head for the tables Thank you for your attention to this matter.

In October we will be having our Fall Plant Sale at USF . We will need help in setting up, manning the sale, answering questions and other functions.

There will be a sign up sheet at the next meeting, please sign up for the time you have available , Saturday October 13 or Sunday October 14. We appreciate your help.

Thank you.

Finally,

Our members who signed up for the October 6th trip to Ft.Myers to visit ECHO. please bring with you \$15.00 to our September meeting to ensure your place on the bus.

Members' Corner:

Wanted: Pomegranate seedlings needed for use as rootstock. Charles Novak (813)754-1399 or charles.novak@gmail.com

Event of Interest: Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society Annual Rare Fruit Tree Sale. September 30, 10 am - 4 pm.
Phillippi Estate Park, 5500 S. Tamiami Trl. Free Admission & parking. www.sfn.net

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Aug-Sept 2007

By PAUL ZMODA

On my two week vacation, I found lots to do here. Weekly grass cutting of course, but getting the vegetable gardens in shape was high on my list. I roto tilled our 1000 square feet of plots and covered them with a deep layer of hay. After a few weeks rest (for me, too!), I will begin planting.

We enjoyed a great mango crop this year – mostly Carries, a few Julies & Ice Creams, but my pride and joy was only 4 Puerto Rican mangotinas, or Mayaguezano mangoes, small and very good.

The first of a large crop of Mexican limes are ripening. These are great in marinades and salsas, not to mention drinks.

Purple muscadine grapes are hanging ripe and ready – Black Beauties, Ison, Hunt & the recent release from the University of Florida – Southern Home – an actual cross between muscadine and bunch grapes.

Natal Queen pineapples are done for now. Small but oh, so sweet.

I visited the gardens of our fellow member, Ashok Dhond, who lives just down the street from us. My eyes popped when I saw what he has growing there. Situated on perhaps the best possible site to grow rare tropicals, are healthy fruit-laden specimens of figs, papayas, bananas, sapotes, sugar apples, guavas, pomegranates and more. “Only Indian fruits”, he explained. The reasons for his success are apparent:

- 1) Location is on the south-southwest edge of a 10 acre lake. The Alafia River is just across the street also.
- 2) Good use of wood chip mulch.
- 3) Effective windbreaks of old oaks to the west.
- 4) The best of all is his use of the water from the lake to irrigate frequently. This lake is (unfortunately?) polluted with fertilizer runoff from the surrounding homeowners' lawns. It also has a very active fish population. This water is absolutely the key to producing these huge bunches of bananas and 100's of pounds of ripening papayas – both heavy feeders. How about figs “as large as oranges”?

We should all be so lucky to have a fruit garden such as this. But Ashok was not “lucky”; he wisely selected the best lot there, before the other residents did theirs.

New plantings: pink ilama, white ilama, African wild custard apple, grapes, pawpaw & cacti.



Programs/Speakers/Events:

September 9: Crafton Cliff, Horticulturist-tropical fruit
 October 13 & 14: USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival

Tasting Table August 2007

Sawada	Oshizushi (pressed sushi)	Smoleny	Pineapple cobbler
Lohn	Brownies with walnuts	Coronel	mango juice, omelette
Branesky	Chicken Adobo rice, gooseberries	Millar	Brownies
Moranto	Cheese casserole, dill pickles w/jalapeno	Kirby	Fried Plantain
Roberti	Italian banana pudding	Campani	Brownies
Musgraves	Brownies, avocados, passion fruit juice	Topping	Deviled eggs
Tamura	Beef oriental noodles	Scott	Red grapes
S. Harris	Avocado salsa & chips	R. Harris	Mango salad
D. Miller	Curry rice & chick peas	B. Miller	Lentils & rice
Gertz	Peppermint/spearmint tea	Macaraeg	Fruit salad
Terenzi	Chocolate rum pecan cake	D. Baker	Rice ball
Engelbrecht	Blackeyed peas & rice	Lee	Fudge chocolate cake
Zmoda	Muscadine grapes, persimmons, green grape pickles		
Shigemura	Fruit jell (agar agar), fresh fruit plate, blueberry ginger cheesecake		
Novak	Mango wild rice, lemon cake, guava-banana nut bread, avocado dip with crackers, fresh jackfruit, muscadine grapes, juices		

Thanks to everyone who donated to the Tasting Table.

New Members:	Mark & Sue Savon	Indian Rocks Beach	Garylee Gertz	Mango
	Jorge & Patricia Unanue	Tampa	Elva Kennis	Tampa
	Shannon & Tammy Howerton	Tampa		

Bus Trip to ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization)

ECHO is a non-profit, inter-denominational Christian organization in N. Ft. Myers. Its mission is to help those working with the poor in developing countries to be more effective, especially in agriculture. ECHO provides ideas, training, information and seeds. ECHO has a unique collection of interesting and rare fruit trees, herbs and other exotic species. We will be visiting ECHO on Saturday, October 6, and have chartered a bus for the trip. Those of us who are taking the bus will meet in Brandon at the Sheriff's office on Falkenberg Road. Map & directions will be available at the Sept. 9 meeting at the Tampa Garden Center. We will be leaving Brandon at 8:00 as soon as the bus is loaded. The cost to the members is \$15.00, which is due on or before the September meeting, and includes an evening meal at a local restaurant. For our noon meal, we would recommend packing a lunch bag. For those interested in joining us, or for additional information, contact Verna Dickey at 813-685-1055.

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 it into a plastic bag. You will need at least 1 cup of moist soil.

Grafting tape, grafting knives and grafting 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

AUGUST PLANT EXCHANGE

Plant	Donor	Winner
Hybrid Prickly Pear Cactus	Bob Heath	Anne Pidgeon
Yellow Passion Fruit	"	?
Miracle Fruit	"	Dalane Terrell
Muntigia (strawberry)	"	Charles Novak
Pineapple	"	?
Beauty Berry	"	?
Cabeluda	"	?
Pitomba	"	Deb Sims
Carissa	"	Steven Woolheater
Red Passion Fruit	"	Marin Shochez
BrazilianGuava	Novak	?
" "	"	?
" "	"	?
" "	"	?
Passion Fruit	Linda Novak	Michal Nizan
Citrus – murcot	Vega	R. Shigemura
" "	"	Steven Woolheater
" "	"	Jerry Amyot
" "	"	?
Avocado	"	Linda Brown
Bean – Gandules	"	Bob Heath
Guavas	Anne Pidgeon	R. Shigemura
"	"	Bob Heath
"	"	A.J. Schmett
Orinoco Banana	Roshan Premraj	Roberta Harris
Ceylon gooseberry	Andrew Hendrickson	?
Pink guava	"	?
White guava	"	Lohn
Bitter melons (good for diabetic people)	Yoshimi Tamuka	?
Carambola	Greg Macaraeci	Teri Worsham
Plumeria	David Miller	R. Harris
"	"	Ed Kirkconnell
"	"	Teresa Kirkconnell
Mangoes	Ann	James A Oliver
"	"	Teri Worsham
"	"	?
Carrie Mango	Zmoda	?

Congratulations to Rose Terenzi. Her Tasty Nut Doubloons recipe is one of the 5 finalists in the Mrs. Fields Cookies 30th Anniversary Cookie Contest. Rose loves to bake and for years our club members have enjoyed the many delicious baked items she has donated to the Tasting table. GOOD LUCK, ROSE !!!!

THE ART OF MAKING WINE

by DEBORAH SIMS

Deborah Sims is a member of the Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society, which started in 1980. She has been a member for about 14 years, where she met Robert Stone, a founding member who is a home wine maker and brought wine to the meetings for the tasting table. Deborah became interested in wine making and Robert offered her advice and got her started about 12 years ago. Robert made the wine from fruit he felt would do well and used utensils he found at home. He didn't believe in buying wine making equipment. He did it the do-it-yourself way, but Deborah invested a small amount of money to buy equipment at a new wine supply shop that opened in Sarasota last October. Previously, she had been buying supplies at the Beer Makers Pantry in Pinellas County. When Deborah went to the new store, she got in a conversation with the owner, who was looking for help at the store. At the time, Deborah was unemployed, but now she is a professional wine maker. She's working for a licensed micro winery that sells supplies and kits and has tasting events with their own wine, and they have an on site winery for people who want to make wine on the premises. You make it, rack it, and come back later to bottle it with your own labels. Deborah said she makes about 60 gallons a week now.

Deborah showed us a slide of a number of wines that she prefers. She said she particularly enjoys making the labels. A blackberry merlot and a cranberry chianti are from the wine shop. They are kit wines which are made from concentrates or juices, and all the rest she showed us are made from fresh fruit. A honey wine is flavored with wild grapes and the spice wine is honey wine flavored with spices. The tropical medley has bananas, mango, carissa and who knows what else in it. She showed us her passion series which is 4 wines all made with passion fruit, strawberry passion fruit, carissa passion fruit, carambola, elderberry, mango passion fruit and elderberry passion fruit. Most people don't realize that wine is made from anything but grapes. If other fruit is used, the wine is considered second class. People who live here in the south know you can make

wine out of any fruit, including beets, carrots & even rice, as in rice wine or saki from Japan.

Deborah said you can buy the equipment you need to get started for \$50 to \$60. You're going to get a primary, it looks like a paint bucket, but it's food grade plastic, and the lid has a rubber grommet to make it air tight when it's closed, and has a small opening in the top with a seal. You start your wine in the primary. Also you get a carboy, which the wine goes into for the next 2 stages. You get an air lock, a rack, cane, hydrometer, some tube and a spoon, all of which are very useful. The kit doesn't include the spoon or the cane. You also need a few chemicals, or as Deborah prefers to call them, "additives", as people seem to take offense to calling them chemicals. You need yeast, of course. There are different kinds of wine yeasts, depending on what kind of wine you're making. You need peptic enzymes and tannin, which is a naturally occurring substance in grapes, apples, elderberries & other fruit. It gives the wine zest, or bite. If the fruit has no tannin, you need to add a little. You need a fining or clearing agent, which is a clay, and you need an additive that stops fermentation, which is very important. You also need a sterilizing agent, sodium metabisulfite, camden tablets or potassium metabisulfite. You will also need an acid blend if you are using fruit which has no acids, such as bananas. With no acid the finished wine will be flat, very bland. Wines need a little acid to spice them up. Also there is a yeast fermenter which keeps the yeast going. You use the sodium or potassium sulfite to sterilize all your equipment and to put in with your must, which is the juice you start with, to destroy any wild yeast. So the sulfites are really necessary, at maybe 50 parts per million, which is not very much (most commercial wines have 200 to 300 parts per million). For wine you want the best fruit you can get, very important. You don't want unripe fruit, which will put off-flavors into your wine, and you definitely don't want overripe fruit in your must. You are fermenting and you don't want to start off on a bad step.

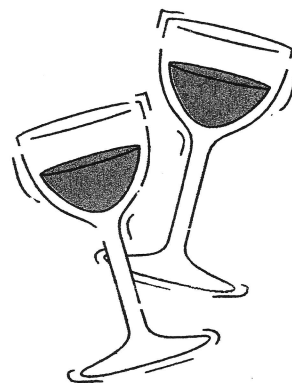
Deborah then went through the process of making wine with passion fruit juice and elderberries. She was making elder-passion wine. They go into the primary with water & sugar. It's the sugar that converts to alcohol and elderberries & passion

fruit need additional sugar. In place of the potassium bisulfites, we add camden tablets, which are added to kill any bacteria and/or wild yeast. The primary has marks on it so you can see how much fruit juice you've started with. You add good water, bottled or whatever tastes good to you, even city water. Anything you like or that tastes good will make a good wine. Your wine recipe will tell you how much sugar to add. In this case, we add 2 to 3 pounds per gallon of wine. Regular cane sugar is fine. Camden tablets are potassium metabisulfite in tablet form, which you grind up and add to the must. Then we add the yeast nutrient, which will jump start the yeast. Give it lots of good food and make sure the yeast has plenty of good things to eat so it can convert your sugar into alcohol. Pectic enzyme is added if you're using fruit that is high in pectin, which would cause a haze to the wine. The enzyme will help to eliminate that haze and it also breaks down the fruit and allows the juice to come out easier. Now is when you use the spoon. All your ingredients are in there now, so you stir the must and mix everything up to oxygenate it, since the yeast will demand oxygen to work. Now you use the hydrometer to determine the specific gravity of your must. You put part of the must in a tube, add the hydrometer, spin it, pump it up and down, and wherever it stops, you read it. The specific gravity at that point will be somewhat higher than water, about 1.07. You take this reading because if you know where you started and where you finish up, you will know the alcohol percentage in your wine. After that is done, you put the top on and push it down to make a good seal, then you install the air lock. You can add sterile water or vodka to the air lock to prevent air from going into the container. Carbon dioxide will bubble out through it, but nothing can go in, which keeps your must from getting contaminated. Now let it set for 24 hours. That's important, the 24 hours, which lets the camden tablets work to kill off any wild yeast.

After 24 hours take the top off, sterilize your hands, reach in and squeeze the bag of fruit, and stir. Now sprinkle the yeast on top of the must. It's not necessary to stir it in. All the yeast cells come alive and start reproducing. Replace the lid and air lock and within 24 to 48 hours, there should be bubbling and carbon dioxide coming out through

the air block. After the bubbling starts, put it aside in a pantry or closet for 24 hours and let it work. Every 24 hours, take it out, sterilize your hands and lightly squeeze the fruit bag and stir. Every day when you stir your wine, check the specific gravity. You will note that it is dropping every day as the sugar converts to alcohol. When the hydrometer reads 1.030, it's time to pull the fruit out of the primary. Now it is time to rack your liquid or siphon it out into the carboy. First you must sterilize the siphon tubing in the carboy. The bottom of the siphon hose needs to be just barely above the sediment in the bottom of the primary so that you are removing the liquid but not the sediment. When all the liquid is in the carboy, a stopper with the air lock is used to plug up the opening to seal the carboy. Over the next 4 weeks to 3 months, you rack the liquid off of the new sediment that forms as the wine continues to work. At this point, you rack the wine one more time to remove the fine sediment and make your wine crystal clear.

Now you can taste the wine. It will probably be a little harsh but you can get an idea of how it will taste. If you would like it a little sweeter, this is the time to add sugar. Deborah says she likes her wine a little sweeter, she's not really a connoisseur. Add the sugar sparingly and stir it well so it's all dissolved. Keep adding sugar sparingly till it satisfies your taste buds. Now if you add sugar, you have fed the yeast again and the fermentation process will continue. To stop the fermentation, you add potassium sorbate, a stabilizer. It doesn't kill the yeast, but it does stop it from working. At this point, you siphon the wine into the bottles, check the alcohol content and cork or cap the bottles. Now label your bottles; you can make your own labels or buy stick-on labels. Store the wine in a dark place to age for 2 to 6 months to let it mellow.

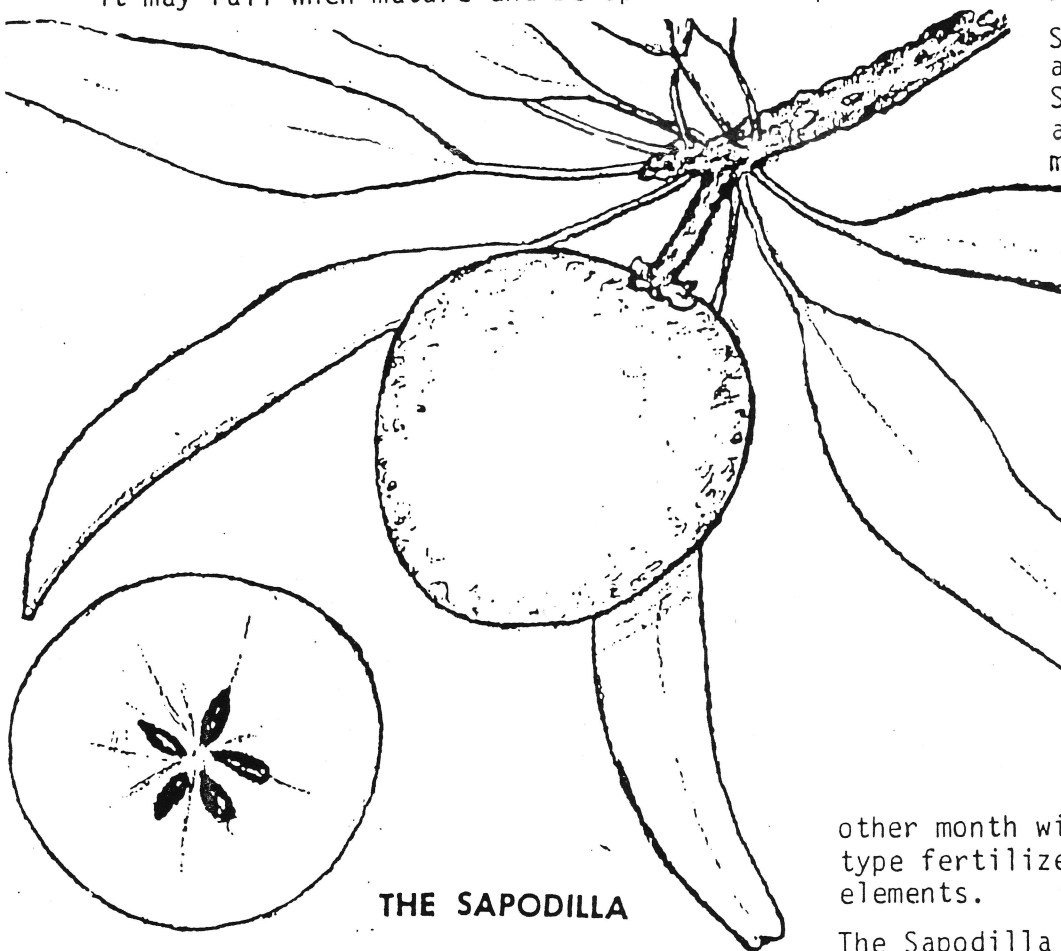


TROPICAL FRUIT OF THE MONTH - SAPODILLA - By Bob Heath

That the sapodilla will grow and fruit in central Florida can be attested to by several of our members who presently are enjoying the tasty brown fruit. Sapodilla is a member of the Sapotaceae family. You may find it listed as Manikara Zapota or Achras Sapota. In its native habitat in Central America and Mexico, it is a large slow growing evergreen tree, as is the Mamay Sapote, a near cousin. The tree is highly salt tolerant and adapts to a wide range of soil types and growing conditions. However, it is tropical and should be protected against temperatures below 30°. For this reason we recommend growing the trees in a container or in a location where they may be protected and can easily be covered.

A grafted tree will fruit when it is only three or four years old and perhaps four feet high and an inch or so in diameter. It is a dense, beautiful tree with thick glossy green leaves clustered at the tips of the branches. The wood is hard and termite resistant and is provided with a milky sap which is the source of the original chicle chewing gum.

The fruit is slow to develop from the small inconspicuous flowers and will normally reach maturity during the summer months, though some fruit may mature during the winter. The fruit is two to three inches long, oval, brown and scurfy. The flesh may be cream colored to brownish in the different species and normally provided with six or eight hard flat black seeds. It is normal to pick the fruit when it is mature and not allowed to ripen on the tree, as it may fall when mature and be spoiled at impact with the ground.



THE SAPODILLA

Suggested varieties are Prolific, Brown Sugar, Dade, Madella, and Russell. The tree may be grown from seed and later grafted from a tree with good quality fruit or air layering may be used to propagate new plants. A grafted tree will normally fruit in three to four years. The leathery leaves vary in size but average three to four inches in length. They are elliptical and frequently pointed, about 2" wide, a dark glossy green on the upper surface and pale green underneath. Young trees should be well nourished and given plenty of water for rapid growth. They may be fertilized every

other month with a citrus or fruit tree type fertilizer provided with the minor elements.

The Sapodilla is a desert fruit to be eaten raw or it may be pulped and used

for ice creams or sherbets. Because of the chicle in the fruit, cooking usually results in a rubbery mess. It is reported that the Caribbean fruit fly will attack the Sapodilla but I have not had that problem, although the Caribbean fruit fly is very much in evidence in my neighborhood.

TROPICAL FRUIT CLUB PARTY

SUNDAY, AUGUST 19

Approximately 20 club members met with members of The Tropical Fruit Club of Central Florida and the Brevard Rare Fruit Council. This event was hosted by The Tropical Fruit Club of Central Florida and was held in the Camellia Room at beautiful Leu Gardens in Orlando. We arrived about 12:30, signed in and received name badges, admired the items on the raffle table and the club displays, selected our seats and chatted with members of the other clubs. The tables were decorated with white tablecloths, large Monstera Deliciosa leaves, baskets of fruits, and a large cluster of Longans. After welcoming everyone and introducing visitors we all dined on many delicious entrees, side dishes, desserts, drinks, etc., provided by our hosts. Everyone was impressed with the amount and variety of tasty dishes from which to choose.

We were treated to an enjoyable and informative presentation by Bill Hettig. He showed us how to prepare a pickled tropical fruit salsa in a brine mixture using the Perfect Pickler canister he developed. He also prepared a green papaya slaw. These salsas and slaws are ready to enjoy after only four days in the Perfect Pickler. We were treated to tasty samples of several of his recipes.

Erik Tietig of Pine Island Nursery in South Florida discussed 'Cold Protection' for tropical plants. He also had three volunteers from the audience graft jackfruit using the veneer side graft. Each step was shown on a screen for the audience and he guided the volunteers through each step of the graft.

The afternoon ended with the raffle of many plants, books, and other items. The table decorations were offered for purchase and the remaining fruit baskets were auctioned off.

THANK YOU, TROPICAL FRUIT CLUB OF CENTRAL FLORIDA!!

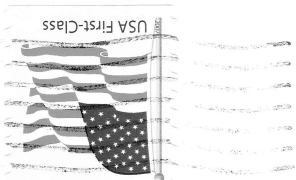
It was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and we look forward to meeting together again in the 'not too distant' future.



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