



RFCI

NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

OCTOBER 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

NEXT MEETING: OCT 13 & 14 @ USF (SEE BELOW)

PROGRAM: THE USF FALL PLANT FESTIVAL IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 13 & 14. Consequently, we will forego our usual monthly meeting which would be on the 2nd Sunday of Oct, to participate in the USF Plant Festival. All members are invited to participate and bring plants to donate or sell. Parking is free but admission is \$4.00, for which the Club will reimburse workers who participate in the Sale. This is an interesting affair and well worth the admission. Likewise, it is a social event as well as a money maker for the Club. We will have no tasting table or plant raffle. But we desperately need workers. Let's make this USF Sale our big one. Please join us!

USF FALL PLANT FESTIVAL

The RFCI will participate in the USF Plant Festival on Oct. 13 & 14, 2007. This is an important fund raiser and all members are invited to attend, to assist in the Sale, to sell plants, to enjoy the camaraderie and visit other groups.

Our participation will begin around 3:00 Friday afternoon, Oct. 12, raising tents, setting up tables, arranging plants and posters, till about 6:00 p.m. Passes to the Sale may be obtained on Friday or by calling Bob Heath @ 813-289-1068.

On Saturday, Oct. 13, the Gardens will be open from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. for our final preparations.

The front gate will close at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday & Sunday, and participants will enter by the side south gate after the front gate closes, on foot, until 9:00. The public will be admitted at 10 a.m. on both days. Admission is \$4.00.

From 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. on Saturday & Sunday, traffic will be one way, in the front gate & out the side gate. The Festival will end at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday & 3:00 p.m. on Sunday. Only after 4:15 on Saturday & 3:40 on Sunday, will we be allowed to bring vehicles in to re-supply or remove plants.

Parking for participants not bringing plants or supplies is across the street from the front entrance to the Gardens in the south parking lot.

The USF Botanical Gardens takes 10% of our gross sales; the remaining 90% will be split 70/20% between the participant & the RFCI, so mark your plants accordingly, remembering that you get 70% of the selling price, less taxes.

We have provided ID cards for RFCI workers. Only those with ID cards will be admitted before the Sale begins. If you are refused admittance, someone from our group will vouch for you to gain admittance. Wear your RFCI T-shirt.

DIRECTIONS TO USF PLANT FESTIVAL

Enter the Gardens from Bruce B Downs one block north of Fowler, turn East on Pine St. & Left at Alumni Drive. Go one block to the Gardens entrance on the left. We will be in the southeast corner of the Gardens.



HELP AT THE USF FALL PLANT SALE

All our active members should prepare to participate in some of the activities. On Friday, October 12 at 2:00 pm, we will be setting up. At 3:00 we will be unloading the big truck with hundreds of trees. On Saturday, October 13, from 8:00 am till 4:00 pm and Sunday, October 14 from 9:00 am till 3:00 pm, we will be busy with the Sale. On Sunday from 3:00 pm till 5:00 pm we will be taking things down and loading the unsold trees.

Please make yourselves available to help whenever you can spare the time. Lunch and drinks will be provided. We appreciate your participation. Thank you.



ECHO

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Networking Global Hunger Solutions

September 18, 2007

Mr. Robert Heath
4109 W. De Leon St
Tampa, FL 33609-3851

Amount \$20.00
Check #3116
Dated 9/11/2007
Designated Where Most Needed - 0000

Dear Robert,

Thank you for your gift of \$20.00 on 9/12/2007. We have wonderful news that was just confirmed the last week of August from an anonymous donor. Any stock, credit card or check donation received by ECHO from September 1 through Thanksgiving (November 22, 2007) will be matched "Two for One" up to \$200,000! That includes doubling the donation you have already sent this month!

This is the very first time we have had such a generous offer that will allow ECHO to direct extra resources to where we can make the biggest impact. Those whom we serve overseas are desperately looking for sustainable ways to help the poor. In many cases, the solution can have an immediate impact (like plans for a solar oven). Other cases have future impact (like a plant or idea that might be an alternative source of bio-fuel later).

Please consider making an extra donation this year to take advantage of this amazing matching gift offer from a new ECHO donor family. All areas of ECHO's ministry will benefit from your matching gift, including the introduction of new nutritious food crops or trees, our agricultural training program, and the unique problem solving solutions that ECHO staff and volunteers provide to those seeking help.

Thank you again for your faithfulness in giving and for making it possible for ECHO to be the organization that connects you with those who represent hope!

Sincerely,

Mike Sullivan
Development Director

NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO DONATE!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Sep-Oct 2007

By PAUL ZMODA

Suddenly, guavas began to overwhelm us: round, green-skinned ones with white flesh and Miami Supremes, pear-shaped and pink inside their yellow skins. Caribbean fruit fly larvae are feasting also, so I have to scan for softening fruits often and pick them before they become riddled inside. So many are wasted, but many are used. Luisa made a big batch of guava paste according to her trusty Puerto Rican cookbook. This thick jam is really great on toast.

Our Mexican limes are producing the largest crop ever now. Each day I pick up these bright yellow freshly fallen citrus fruits which are at their absolute peak of quality. So delicious in so many ways.

Early one recent morning, while taking the compost-fixin's out back from the kitchen, I surprised a large lizard basking in the sunshine. This creature was LARGE – close to four feet long! It was actually beautiful: shiny and in colors of browns, black and gray spots. What the heck was that thing which quickly took cover among the wild growth? At the time, I was not certain of the species, but I was certain that it did not belong there.

I consulted Dr Todd Campbell, a biology professor and exotic reptile expert at the University of Tampa. He believes I saw an Argentine Red Tegu lizard, which he said has established a population in Riverview. They are voracious eaters of just about anything they can catch. They also eat (gasp!) fruit!! Traps were quickly set out in hopes of capturing it (or horrors) them. No further sightings were made, except by a lawn crew past the other side of our property. Never a dull moment here.

I am getting ready for our big fall fundraising sale at USF on October 13 & 14. I select the most worthy specimens, groom them and make labels and signs. Lots of goodies will be available then.

New plantings: grape, squashes, watermelon, daikons, basil and other herbs, grafted Yuzu citrus.



TASTING TABLE

SEPTEMBER 2007

Coronel	Bibingka, banana bread	Smoleny	Banana bread
Lohn	Walnut banana bread	Musgraves	Macaroni & cheese
Zmoda	Apple cactus fruits	T. Scott	Watermelon
Garylee	Guava lychee cobbler	Mann	Avocado salad
Branesky	Chicken fried rice	Kirby	Potato salad
Newcombe	Carambola coleslaw	Fischetti	Coleslaw
Topping	Oriental pan fried noodles	Terenzi	Tasty nut doubloons
Palis	Bok choy (E. meets W. salad)	Cimafranca	Petite pastries
Phillos	Chamarrita furi koke	Lee	Muscadine grapes
McCormack	Pretzels	Divan	Indian Khkhhoa
Sawada	Japanese Nimono (vegetables)	Rochan	Pocora
Shigemura	Mabo tofu, tofu cheese pie, tofu cheese cake		
Novak	Guava rum cheesecake, key lime cookies, banana-chocolate chip nut bread, sliced carambolas, banana chips, juices		

Thanks to members who donated to the tasting table. Remember to ask for your free plant exchange ticket.

A SOUTH AMERICAN ADVENTURE

by CRAFTON CLIFF

Crafton Cliff, world traveler and rare fruit impresario. By way of introduction, he held up what looked like a cluster of bunch grapes. It looks like a grape and is closely related to grapes but the difference is, in about 2 weeks after the fruit ripens, the vine will come apart at every joint and will fall to the ground like a pile of chicken bones. Ampelociffes, an underground tuber like a sweet potato, carries it through the dry season, and About Easter, it comes up with a vengeance and flowers and fruits right away. The fruit are red and very, very sour, and are used to make a good tasting vinegar with chili peppers and other things in it.

Crafton suggested that some of us might have a table grape-Muscadine cross which may be grown and fruited in Florida. Table grapes won't fruit here and he reason is black rot disease, which makes little black spots on the grapes. Dr Dunstan crossed the table grape from California with the Muscadine to eliminate the problem.

Crafton asked if anyone in the group had ever heard of Jim West in Ecuador. Not surprisingly, the only one who had was Al Hendry, our world traveler.

30 years ago when Crafton worked with the Rare Fruit Council in Miami, he was on Jim West's mailing list, and being on Jim's mailing list meant you would be receiving packages of seeds from fruit you had never heard of before. Jim was in the Peace Corp and after that, he traveled around South America for 3 years, then came back to Colombia and finally settled in a beautiful place in Ecuador. Crafton visited Jim West many times, even though to get to his place was a 3 day journey overnight in Quito, the next day a bus to the end of the bus line, the third day to the end of the milk truck route, then a fast walk to get to Jim's place before dark. But despite this almost inaccessible rain forest terrain, Jim accepts over 300 visitors every year to see his menagerie of over 500 species of tropical fruiting trees. Several slides showed the extent of this interesting place.

In Ecuador they have a fruit they call a guava, which is what we call an ice cream bean. One slide showed this long edible bean. They have a different name for the fruit we call guava. Growers top the ice cream bean tree to keep it short enough to make the harvesting of the bean easy. Likewise, with citrus they top the tree to make the picking easy. Every morning they pick the beans and head for the farmers market to sell their produce. Crafton had several slides of the ice cream bean tree, immature fruit, ripe fruit and the fruit open to show the beans where we saw the white pulp and the big black seeds.

Even though Quito is on the equator, trees that are most common there are temperate trees; willow, ash, black cherry & sycamore. You'll find these kinds of trees in the mountains in Mexico down through the Andes. Crafton indicated there are a lot of different species of Solanacea in the surrounding jungles similar to the tomatilla. When he asked Tim, "How do you determine which of these fruit are edible and which may be poisonous?" Tim replaced with a little smile, "We feed them to our children."

Jim's farm in the jungle is quite unique. To live in the jungle without clear cutting is unique and different. Since Tim uses a lot of firewood for cooking, some trees have been girdled so they will die. When they do, Jim will cut them for firewood. Then he will have some open spaces where he can plant fruit trees. They are slowly developing what used to be jungle. But he doesn't leave the land lay fallow, not for a minute. The ground is covered with rotting leaves and humus, ready to be turned under to plant trees or a vegetable garden. Jim knows how to use the jungle, how to use the land and the soil, which is why he gets 300 people trekking out through the jungle to see how he does it.

Jim's house is a house without walls, just a roof and the plants around it, which are about waist high, act as walls. Otherwise it's wide open. And

yet they've never had a robbery until about a year ago when some people whom his wife knew, threatened to kill them.

Crafton had a series of slides of fruit that are native to the area, some from families we're not familiar with and others in the *Eugenia* family, like *Eugenia stipitata*, which some of our members are growing in this area, a very sour fruit. Like a lemon, it makes a very pleasant juice drink. He also had slides of the *Eugenia uvala* and the similar *Eugenia Victoriana*, which are also very sour, and slides of the Edwards mango which is probably the best tasting mango there is. It doesn't do well in Florida because it's very early and subject to late cold spells. Down in the Andes, though, it is grown extensively, is cheap, and is really appreciated.

The naranjilla is a fruit which Crafton described as being similar to eggplant and tomato, but is a little difficult to grow here because it is basically a higher altitude plant, although some of our members have grown it here from seed. The naranjilla plant is a spreading shrub to 8' high with thick stems that become somewhat woody with age. It is spiny in the wild but spineless in cultivated plants. Leaves & stems are coated with richly purple hairs. It produces clusters of fragrant flowers with 5 petals, white on the upper surface & purple underneath. A brown hairy coat protects the fruit until it's fully ripe when the hairs can be easily rubbed off of the bright orange, thick peel. The fruit is round to 2-1/2" across, and filled with translucent green or yellowish, very juicy, slightly acid pulp of delicious flavor, with numerous small thin, flat, hard seeds. Unfortunately, the plant is very subject to nematodes and if planted on their own roots, frequently become infested with root knot nematodes and die. It may be grafted onto *solanum macranthum* which is nematode resistant and makes a satisfactory root stock. In Colombia and Ecuador the naranjilla flourishes at elevations near 5000 ft. It may be grown in Florida at near sea level but it doesn't tolerate temperatures much over 85 degrees F. and is not adapted to full sun. Ripe naranjillas, hairs rubbed off, may be consumed out of hand by cutting in half and squeezing the contents of each half into the mouth. Flesh, complete with seeds, may be squeezed out

and added to ice cream mixes, made into sauce, or utilized in making pies and various other cooked desserts, but the most popular use is in the form of juice.

Susumber is a fruit which is similar to the naranjilla, which the Spanish call solum. It is highly favored in the Philippines and sells at \$90 a bushel. It is one that Crafton said he would like to have around. In English it's the soda apple which is illegal. Soda apple is not the same as the naranjilla.

Another plant that's illegal and is even better than naranjilla is the water spinach. It's illegal because it tends to clog waterways like the water hyacinth. It is so cold tender that it's hardly a problem here in waterways.

The cocona is closely related to the naranjilla but is a quite different fruit. The plant is an herbaceous shrub 6 to 7' in height with large downy leaves. Flowers, in clusters of two or more in the leaf axils, are 1" wide with 5 pale greenish yellow petals. The fruit may be round or oblong, from 1 to 4" long. Fully ripe fruit is orange, yellow, red or deep purple. Within is a thin layer of firm flesh enclosing the yellow, jelly like, central pulp. The flesh has a mild tomato like flavor, the pulp has a pleasant lime like acidity with small edible seeds, 800 to 1000 in each fruit, and grows well in Florida.

Other members of the *Solanaceae* family which do well in Florida are the cape gooseberry, strawberry tomato or ground cherry, producing a straw colored husk with a 3/4" round fruit inside. The fruit is sweet with pleasing grape like tang. The husk is tight fitting and usually splits as the fruit ripens. The fruit is 1 to 1- 1/2" in diameter, yellow or purple when ripe, with pale yellow flesh, acid, sub-acid, sweet or insipid with many tiny seeds, but has not done well in Florida.



JOKE:

Is citrus wood ever used in boat construction?

Only the Navel orange.

SEPTEMBER PLANT EXCHANGE

Plant	Donor	Winner
Yellow Passion Fruit	Bob Heath	Michal Nizan
Papaya	"	?
Pineapple	"	Gary Anderson
Pineapple	"	?
Sapodilla	"	Mann
Red Sugar Apple	"	Sally Lee
Carissa	"	Matilda Gonzalez
Carissa	"	?
Bag of Carambolas	"	Mary Lohn
Rangpur Red Lime	Bob Heath	Marv Hymes
Catley Guava	Charles Novak	Gary Anderson
Catley Guava	"	Alan Male
Catley Guava	"	Matilda Gonzalez
Avocado & Carambola basket	Linda Novak	Stapuk
Avocado & Carambola basket	"	Steve Lohn
" "	"	Steve Hunt
" "	"	Rose Terenzi
Key Limes bag	"	?
Pink Guava	Paul Branesky	Marv Hymes
" "	"	?
Black Pepper	?	Ed Musgrave
" "	?	J Divan
Star fruit	Charles Novak	?
Key Lime	Judith Pope-Champagne	R. Shigemura
Snake plants	David Miller	Joseph Divan
White Guava	?	Matilda Gonzalez

Programs/Speakers/Events

October 13 & 14: USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival
November 11: Jonathan Crane, UF Extension Agent, Topic: Avocados
December 9: Holiday Social. Guest speaker: Dr. Richard Campbell, Curator of Fairchild Gardens in South Miami

New Members: Viengchai Kempinski St. Petersburg Linda Lowe Brandon

Grafting tape, grafting knives and grafting Parafilm are available for purchase by members who would like to graft their own plants. Also, RFCI polo shirts are available.
 Contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399 or charles.novak@gmail.com

Joke... A skunk believed in reincarnation. When he died, he came back as a muskmelon.

THE FIG

by Gene Joyner

Almost all of us like to deal in exotic tropical fruits; one which is not truly tropical is a favorite among all fruit growers, the fig. Figs are native to Asia Minor and are grown throughout the world where climatic conditions are favorable.

The fig is a *Ficus*, *Ficus carica*, and most figs make large shrubs or small trees up to 15 to 20' tall. Leaves are very large, prominently veined and deeply lobed and may be 8 to 10" long. Most figs are deciduous during the winter and drop their leaves in late December and resume growth in February and early March.

Figs are prized for their deciduous fruit which can be 1 to 3" in length, violet, brown or black. There are even varieties with yellow fruit. Most fruits are borne from early summer to late fall on new growth, and they generally mature very quickly.

Most figs grow well on a variety of well-drained soils and prefer sun or light shade. Nematodes can be a problem, so figs benefit from heavy mulching and light frequent applications of a balanced fertilizer. Generally, fertilizing should be done 3 to 4 times a year for optimum growth and fruit production.

There are nematode resistant root stocks such as *Ficus glomerata*, but these are difficult to find. If you have a real difficulty with nematodes, grow figs in containers where nematodes should not be a major problem.

Some named varieties of figs available in the nursery trade include Celeste, Brown Turkey, Magnolia, Texas Everbearing, Green Ischia and Black Mission. Figs are easily propagated by rooting cuttings during late winter and early spring when they are dormant or just breaking dormancy.

Growth on figs generally can be 3 to 5' a year under good conditions and they require some pruning and shaping when small to keep them from becoming leggy.

Major problems with figs include a leaf disease called fig rust, which is difficult to control, and in most years little can be done to slow down its spread. Occasional spraying with copper fungicide helps a little, but nothing really cures it and it is a problem throughout warm climates. Birds and other animals occasionally attack fruit, requiring covering of the fruit or the clusters of fruit to protect them.

Figs can be eaten fresh or used for preserves and other desserts; they also dry well and once dried keep for long periods. If you haven't tried growing figs, many nurseries dealing in fruit trees offer figs of several selections. If you don't have a lot of yard space, grow them as a container plant on your porch or patio and you'll still be rewarded with plenty of figs.

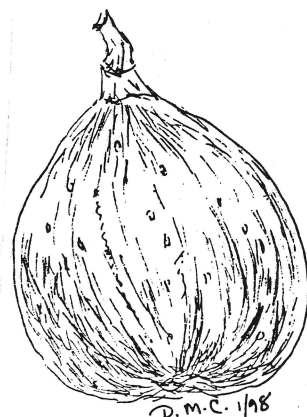
JOKES...

Where has Mom bin? Looking for Paw Paw.

I think I have some ill trees.

Why do you say that?

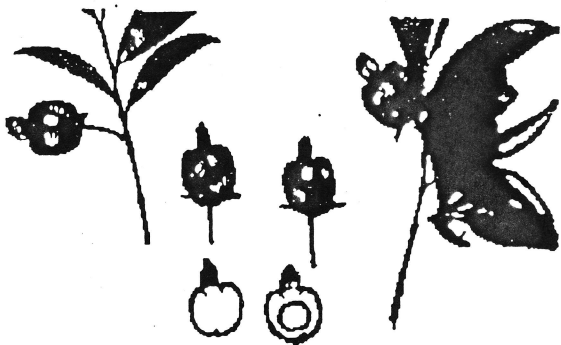
A horticulturist told me I have a horse chestnut & a sycamore.



Fig

A GUIDE TO TROPICAL FRUIT TREES & VINES continued...

FAMILY - MYRTACEAE

114. *Eugenia aggregata* - Cherry of the Rio Grande

Evergreen shrub or small tree to 15 feet, introduced from Brazil. Glossy, dark green alternate leaves are about 3 inches long. Flowers are white and produced in pairs. Fruit is a red berry about 1 inch long; the pulp is yellowish-orange in color. Pulp is eaten fresh or used for jellies. Plants are started from seed or by grafting. This fruit will withstand temperatures to minus 8 degrees C.

115. *Eugenia dombeyi* - Grumichama

An evergreen shrub or small tree to 20 feet, native to Brazil. Leaves are leathery and glossy, alternate, and up to 5 inches in length.

Flowers are white. The fruit is purplish-black in color and varies in size up to 1 inch. Its sweet orange pulp is eaten fresh or used in jellies. Propagation is by seeds, germinating in about a month.



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