



RFCI NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

AUGUST 2008

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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: AUGUST 10

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKER FOR THE AUGUST MEETING WILL BE RAY JONES FROM THE SARASOTA FRUIT & NUT SOCIETY. He will be discussing the fruiting trees of Brazil, which should be an interesting and informative program concerning one of the most prolific rain forest areas in the world. We will also enjoy our fabulous banquet table, great plant raffle & farmers market, as well as interesting camaraderie. The meeting will begin at 2:00 pm, Sunday, Aug 10 at the Tampa Garden Club.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jul-Aug 2008

By PAUL ZMODA

It's mid summer: hot, humid and plenty of rainfall. In short, great growing weather for many of our fruiting and other plants. Grass needs frequent cutting everywhere I go. I take advantage of that now by collecting bags of grass clippings along neighboring streets. These are routinely layered on my veggie gardens and among the banana plantings.

This year I am growing an amaranth called "Merah". This leaf vegetable was slow to get growing, but after 3 months is over 4' tall and is being harvested, shoot by shoot. This nutritious green loves hot weather and I love it. Used as spinach substitute, steamed or in stir-fries, it is really good. The leaves provide vitamins A & C as well as iron and calcium. Spinach has never done well for me so I am glad amaranth fills in nicely.

Our 7 year old seedling kwai muk tree *Artocarpus hypargyraeus* is finally fruiting. There are at least 50 1" fruits hanging all among the branches. This jackfruit relative of the mulberry family is quite cold hardy and has no pest problems. I can hardly wait to taste them.

The white bunch grape "Blanc du Bois" had a large crop of golden, juicy and spicy tasting grapes this year. It's a good thing I got to eat some before a huge raccoon ate every one (breaking the vine in the process). The varmint also got every "Mortensen" grape growing next to it.

Pomegranate "Fleshman" has also finally decided to set a few fruit. It joins "Wonderful" and "Cloud" in this effort.

New plantings: Indian bananas from our friend Ashok Dhond, yardlong beans, hot peppers, hibiscus and sweet potatoes.

Programs/Events:

August 10: Ray Jones: Fruits of Brazil
September 14: Chris Rollins: Fruit & Spice Park, Homestead, FL
October 11-12: USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival

Tasting Table**July 2008**

Branesky	Banana fritters, guavas, sineguelas	Coronel	Bibingka
Rosalind	Flourless raw brownies w/dates & walnuts	Foltarz	Double eggs
Cimafranca	Fried bananas w/sesame seeds	LaValette	Mixed fruit salad
Jones	Watermelon & fruit salad, black beans & rice	Johnston	Mango cobbler
Musgrave	Lemon creme cake	Davis	Salad
Lee	Lemon sponge cake	Whitfield	Salad
Divan	Vegetable rice pilaf	Hendrickson	Fruit
Gertz	Italian Brussels sprouts	Labeau	Fried rice
McAveety	Pickled watermelon rind	McCormack	Tostitos
Terenzi	Brownies	Palis	Watermelon
Engelbrecht	Coffee		
Sawada	Chicken kabobs with mango teriyaki, Japanese cucumber salad with shrimp		
Shigemura	Chocolate Key lime cheesecake, assorted fruit tarts, steamed blood orange cupcakes		
Novak	Guava cake, white chocolate & macadamia nut cookies, dried Jackfruit chips, Chicken pasta salad, Juices		

Another fabulous Tasting Table!! Thanks for your donations. Remember to list your donation on the signup sheet and to ask for you free Plant Exchange ticket.

Fourth Fruit Photo Shoot Contest: The winning photos were determined by a vote of the general membership attending the July 13 meeting.

1st Place: Roberta Harris Sugar Apple (Kampong Mauve)

2nd Place: Roberta Harris Passionfruit Flower

Other members who submitted photos are: Bill Vega, Fred Engelbrecht, Laura Wadsworth, Lauren Hendrickson, Bob Heath and Teri Worsham. **Thank you** for your participation in this event!

New Members:

Michelle Wilkins & Valreie Tur	Odessa	Gloria Sciuto	Seminole
Rosalind Baker	Plant City	John Erb	Tampa
John & Dorease Headley	Auburndale		

2008 – 2009 Membership Directories will be available at the August meeting. Remember to pick up your copy. One copy per family please.

Members' Corner:

Wanted: Mango seeds. Thanks to members who have given me Mango seeds. I can still use more seeds (to grow plants for use as rootstock at propagation demonstrations). Please save your extra seeds and bring them to the club meeting.
 Charles Novak (813)754-1399

OLIVES

by ANTHONY VALENZA

Anthony began his discussion with a brief description of how he began raising olives and a description of his nursery in Gainesville FL. It seems that there has always been a lot of controversy about the fact that olives do not do well in Florida because our climate is not like the Mediterranean climate where olives are native and California where they're grown extensively. Olives have been grown and cultivated in the Mediterranean region since before the time of Christ and are mentioned several times in the Bible. This tweaked Anthony's curiosity and some years back he decided to try growing them himself. He experimented with several cultivars, some of which were very successful, and as he developed his techniques, his stock of trees grew to a point where he felt he should try selling them. One thing developed into another and today he has a large nursery devoted to propagation and distribution of olive trees in Florida and many other states. In the process, he has proved that olives will do well here. He has specialized in olive trees growing in 3 & 5 gallon containers for sale. However, he says we can go into larger containers and keep them growing in 10, 15 or 20 gallon sizes. Planted in the ground, the olive tree gets rather large and needs to be topped for easy harvesting. The trees like a well drained sandy soil which we seem to have plenty of, and Anthony suggests fertilizing with a balanced fertilizer like 6-6-6 or 10-10-10 with minor elements.

Mulching is beneficial but the mulch should be held back from the trunk.

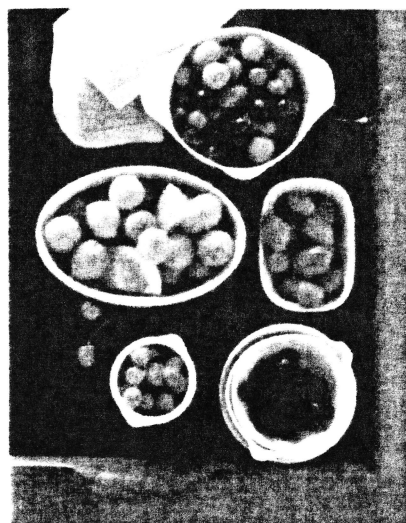
Anthony indicated that the olive tree fruits best when it gets about 100 or more chilling hours each winter. He gets this in Gainesville and we frequently get it in this area. The soil should be acid, 5 to 7. The tree flowers in the spring and summer and fruits are harvested in the fall. After purchasing a tree, you should expect fruit in 2 to 4 years under proper conditions.

For best fruiting, olive trees should be planted where they get full sun for a half day or longer. The more sun, the better fruiting. Olive fruit can be picked mature green or ripe depending on the use intended. Olives are not eaten raw out of hand green or ripe. Commercially they are treated with a lye solution to remove the astringency of the untreated fruit. Anthony described the alternate method using salt water that we would be using, and that he uses at his nursery to prepare the olives for eating. The process is somewhat complicated and time consuming but simple enough for home use.

Anthony and his wife, who accompanied him, showed us slides of his extensive plantings, long rows of tiny plants in small pots and great quantities of 1, 3 & 5 gallon containers on tables which he built with scrap lumber. We also saw slides of large trees growing in the ground with flowers and fruit clusters. All together, his nursery looks very impressive, devoted as it is to olive trees.

They brought a large quantity of trees for sale to us members in 3 & 5 gallon containers, which were looked over and snatched up by many of our members. They also brought big plump olives for tasting, which everyone found excellent, and olive oil in bottles for purchase.

It was an exceptionally interesting presentation for our members, most of whom showed interest in the propagation and growing of olives.



JULY PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Pineapple (Abacca)	Bob Heath	R. Schultz
" "	"	Vega
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Chaya Spinach	"	Marilyn Whitfield
Beauty Berry	"	Alice Miller
Chaya Spinach	"	?
Sea Grape	"	Cris Andrews
Carissa	"	Lillian Smoleny
Carissa	"	Meredith Ritley
Banana	Bob Heath	?
Lemon	Vega	Marilyn Whitfield
Lemon	"	Millie Berker
Lemon	"	?
Mandarin	"	David Miller
Mandarin	"	?
Dragon Fruit	"	Max Davis
Dragon Fruit	Vega	Marilyn Whitfield
Guava	Coronel	Michelle Wilkins
Guava	"	Bob Heath
Sweet Potato	Branesky	Rosalind Baker
Sweet Potato	"	Nicole Baldwin
Sweet Potato	"	Nancy McCormack
Jack Fruit	Branesky	Kathy Johnston
Kumquat	Lillian Smoleny	Sally Jones
Kumquat	"	Ron Shigemura
Long Neck Avocado	Lee	Teri Worsham
Neem cuttings	Nancy McCormack	?
Tropical Spinach	"	?
Sea Grape	R. Baker	Susan McAveety



Go Green...Plant a Vegetable Garden



Nitrogen deficiency
Slow, stunted growth;
pale green leaves

Iron deficiency
Yellowing of young
leaves

Phosphate deficiency
Stunted growth, red
or purple leaves

Potassium deficiency
Pale yellow or brown
leaves

Magnesium deficiency
Yellowing of older
leaves

There is much misunderstanding of the role that plant nutrients play in the growth of the plant and hence they are often misused in the propagation and establishment phases of plant production.

The three so-called major elements that are required for successful plant growth are nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus. These materials are needed in addition to carbon, hydrogen and oxygen as the basic building blocks of plant material. At a secondary level elements such as calcium, sulfur and magnesium are needed in fair quantities, while trace elements, which include iron, manganese, boron, molybdenum and cobalt, are used by the plant in small to minute quantities.

Nitrogen is required wherever and whenever plant growth is anticipated. A shortage of available nitrogen is typified by the slow, stunted development of the plant and pale green leaves. It is usually taken up by the plant in the form of either nitrate or ammonium salts. Nitrogen's role in the plant is predominantly as a basic ingredient of protein and it is thus a necessary feature of developing new plant tissue. Often it is referred to as being "important for leafy growth," which is essentially true because leaves constitute a major part of plant tissue; however it is equally a necessary component of stem, root, flower and seed production. As a protein component it is also a vital feature of chromosome development.

The role of potassium in the plant is rather less easily explained. Potash, as it is commonly called, is needed as a catalyst wherever chemical reactions occur. It is especially associated with the food-making process of photosynthesis and with supplying nourishment around the plant. This again explains its general association with "leafy growth." However potash is equally important in virtually all parts of the plant where chemical reactions are occurring. Potassium deficiency in plants is usually manifest when the edges of the leaves turn pale yellow, and as this discoloration moves inward the outer edges turn brown and appear scorched.

Phosphorus, which is normally used in the form of phosphate, has two major roles to fulfill in plant growth. First it is an essential

component of those very specialized proteins that constitute the chromosomes. Second it is the basis on which the energy needed for plant growth and development is collected, transported and released within the various chemical reactions of the plant. A phosphate shortage is much more difficult and uncertain to describe especially when it is only a marginal amount, but generally stunted growth associated with a purple or red leaf discoloration is a typical symptom; however a similar situation often arises with root damage caused by pests or rots.

Most other plant nutrients occur in sufficient quantities as minor components or impurities in the main fertilizers, and they do not specifically need to be applied as individual fertilizers.

The only two nutrients that may cause problems are magnesium and iron. The prime role of magnesium is in the formation of chlorophyll, the green coloring in the plant. A lack of it is typified by a yellowing of the older leaves as the plant transfers magnesium from its older parts to its newly created parts so causing the "chlorosis" in the old leaves.

Iron has a similar function to magnesium but it is not reusable in the plant. Its deficiency causes the young leaves to turn yellow although the veins remain green, and by this characteristic it is possible to distinguish a shortage of this element from a magnesium deficiency.

The correct use of fertilizer

It is important to ensure that sufficient nutrients are available to young plants. If composts are correctly formulated they should contain an adequate amount. However, seedlings, for example, are germinated in a compost containing only phosphate; as soon as they begin to show green leaves they will benefit from feeding with nitrogen and potash to encourage growth.

Although it is possible for the gardener to make up his own soluble feed it is far simpler and much more reliable to use one of the several proprietary brands of liquid feeds that are readily available. If a plant shows signs of, for example, potash deficiency, buy a proprietary brand of liquid fertilizer with a high balance of that particular

nutrient, and not one with only that nutrient in it, and use it as recommended.

Organic fertilizers such as bonemeal and dried blood are too slow acting to have any real beneficial effect on a plant with a nutrient deficiency.

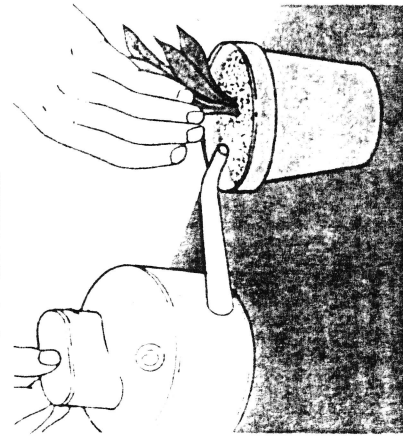
In the closed environment of pot or seed tray, inorganic fertilizers such as nitrate of soda, sulfate of ammonia, sulfate of iron, sulfate of potash and superphosphate should also be avoided as they may have too drastic a chemical effect on the plant and also upset the balance of the other nutrients.

If the gardener is plagued with regular magnesium deficiency substitute magnesium limestone (Dolomite limestone) for ordinary limestone in the compost.

Acid-loving plants and ericaceous ones such as heathers and rhododendrons are liable to have an iron shortage and this can be treated with a chelated iron compound either in the compost or as a foliar feed.

When applying a foliar fertilizer, always follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly. Water the nutrients over the plant's leaves using a fine rose.

APPLYING A FERTILIZER



Make up a nonfoliar fertilizer according to the manufacturer's instructions. Then water on to the compost, protecting the plant's leaves with the hand. Alternatively, place the plant pot in a bowl. Pour in a dilute solution of fertilizer. Leave overnight to absorb.

Hygiene

The greatest stumbling block to successful plant propagation is the loss of cuttings and seedlings from the action of various pests and diseases. In many cases this occurs because the gardener has failed to maintain good hygienic standards.

A system for successful propagation must be based on regular prevention and control of all possible pathogens. It is not just a question of keeping the cuttings or seedlings free of such agencies; it is also necessary to practice good standards of hygiene in the potting and propagation environment, the containers and tools used for propagation, the composts, the propagating material itself and the subsequent husbandry practiced.

Always keep a scrupulously clean and tidy workbench in the potting shed. Before leaving plants to propagate in a greenhouse, scrub out all of the nooks and crannies with a solution of disinfectant so all residual infection is eliminated. It is considerably easier to do this job effectively in a modern metal-structured greenhouse than in a traditional

wooden-structured greenhouse, so take extra trouble when cleaning the latter. The best time to do this is in the early winter, when the gardener's other activities in terms of propagation are at their lowest ebb. Once clean, any remaining problems can be controlled by the routine use of various fungicide and pesticide smoke canisters, which will permeate throughout the greenhouse. At this stage, especial attention, by the use of the requisite chemical, should be paid to the control of such agents as red spider mite, whitefly, sciarid flies, mildews and damping-off fungi.

In order to avoid cross-infection in a propagating area, at the earliest opportunity always remove containers and spent compost that are not in use. Spent compost will provide a splendid home for the multiplication of both damping-off fungi and sciarid flies.

Perhaps the chief cause of infection of compost-borne rots is in the use of dirty containers for propagation. It is of paramount importance to ensure that the containers are clean, not only of fungal spores but especially of weed seeds such as chickweed, bittercress and annual meadow grass. Their source of infection usually occurs in the "crusty" layer of soil and chemicals that occurs as a tidemark on pots and seed trays. Hence the containers should be scrubbed and washed with soap solution so that they are completely clean. Clay pots will also need soaking to ensure their cleanliness. It is important to wipe all tools absolutely clean after use to ensure they do not become a potential source of infection.

The compost used for propagation must be sterile. Usually this is achieved by making up the compost from sterile ingredients. Peat, by its nature, is highly acidic and consequently to all intents and purposes is sterile. Sand should already be sterile, as will be the chemical additives. The only component that may have to be sterilized is the loam and this can be done in an oven at 82°C/180°F in a broad, flat container covered with foil so that the steam generated encourages the sterilizing process.

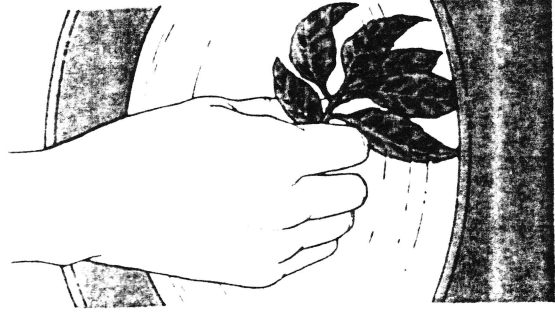
It is important however to remember that while all these components are sterile when fresh, if they are left lying about open to the

elements they can no longer be considered to be sterile. All composts and their components should be kept bagged and covered to maintain their reliability. Incidentally, do not attempt to reuse spent compost, even if sterilized, as the chemical balances will be out of proportion.

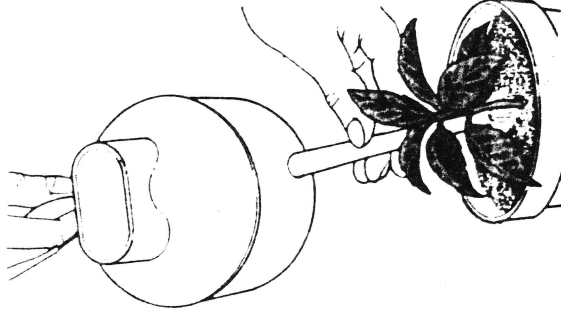
The plant material itself must also be free of infection—do not use diseased cuttings or grafting scions for propagation. As a precaution against disease, dip leafy cuttings in a dilute solution of fungicide such as Captan or Benlate. After they have been planted, it is a good precaution to water with another dilute solution of fungicide. Similarly, germinating seeds should be sprayed with Captan or a copper fungicide in an attempt to reduce damping-off diseases to a minimum.

As cuttings and seedlings develop, regularly use aerosol sprays or smoke canisters of fungicides and pesticides as a routine precaution against possible infections of damping-off diseases and mildews, and infestations of red spider mite, whitefly and sciarid flies.

Leafy cuttings

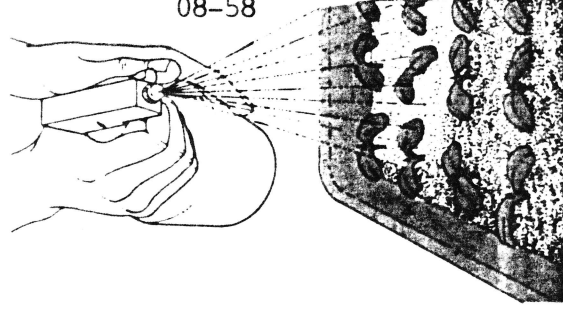


1 Dip leafy cuttings in a dilute solution of fungicide, such as Captan or Benlate, to prevent disease.



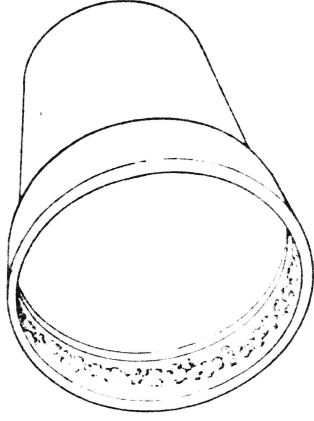
2 Fill a pot with compost. Dibble in a cutting. Then drench the compost with a dilute solution of fungicide.

Germinating seeds



Spray seedlings that have recently germinated with Captan or a copper fungicide.

TIDEMARKS ON POTS AND SEED TRAYS



Scrub all containers thoroughly before and after use so they are completely clean and all possible sources of infection are eradicated. Remove all crusty layers of soil or chemicals on the sides of containers. Clay pots should also be soaked to ensure they are clean.

COMPOSTING DOWN UNDER

We all know what compost is, dried leaves, green cuttings, rabbit bedding, cow manure, all that organic stuff that goes into our compost pile. And most of us have a compost pile. It may be ugly, even smelly, and stuck somewhere in the back corner, from which we get that rich black stuff to put in our flower beds and gardens.

Now meet the "compost underground", that very useful yet woefully underutilized composting in excavated trenches, a method every compost gardener should know and use. It is the best way to make soil improvements, creating planting space for a new vegetable garden or a new small tree.

Underground composting works exceptionally well in our sandy soil because the compost is down there where the roots are and can't be leached out by excessive rain. While underground composting puts organic matter exactly where it is needed in each reach of the roots, its most attractive aspect is that it cannot be seen or smelled. It provides a safe way to use seedy weeds and manures or other problem material. When buried more than a foot deep, most weed seeds eventually perish. Underground composting methods are basically on site in their nature. They should be used in spots where you want more and better soil for your plants. These ready to plant beds combine the benefits of double digging with layers of organic matter so they are an ideal way to make up a new garden space.

In the fall, dig trenches where you intend to plant your garden vegetables in the spring. Dig them about 2 feet deep and pile the soil beside. This requires a substantial amount of work up front with little or no follow up labor.

The hole can be of any shape but should not be so large that you cannot reach the middle when you kneel at the edge. After digging, begin filling the crater by covering the bottom with a 3" thick layer of coarse compost material such as dead plant material, hay or thin sticks broken

into small pieces. Next, add a 2" thick layer of shredded leaves or other high carbon brown material, topped by an inch of soil. Spread a light dusting of dry organic fertilizer over the soil and water well. Next add about a 2" thick blanket of high nitrogen green material such as grass clippings, manure or shredded green leaves. Add another 2" thick layer of brown material and another inch of soil. Add a light sprinkling of organic fertilizer and water well. Continue to add similar layers until the top of the layered crater is 4" higher than the surrounding soil. At the end of the season use a digging fork to mix the material in the crater. Add more compostable material as needed to keep the crater from settling. In the spring your trench should be properly composted and ready for planting.

The same method can be used for planting a tree. Dig a round hole about 3 feet in diameter and 3 feet deep, fill with compostable material and allow to compost for several months. This will provide an excellent place for planting a tree.

In the short run, soil improvement using underground composting may seem chunky with undecomposed material compared to soil that is mixed with finished compost. But if you want a composter's garden where time is not measured in days or weeks, but in months or years, this is what you will get.



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have completed another Photo Contest and the Board has declared ROBERTA HARRIS as winner of First and Second Prize based on votes by the membership on July 11. Congratulations, Roberta!

A note of thanks to all who participated in submitting beautiful photos of fruit. Some of these depictions of fruit may be used for our display board during the plant sale, so the photos are of service to the club.

Our thanks also to those members who supply us with delicious foods and desserts; also those who donate plants.

See you at the next meeting.

Events of Interest:

Plant Sale: Friday, August 22. 8 AM to 12 Noon:. The Horticulture Vocational Program of Falkenburg Road Jail will be having a plant sale in front and to the right of the main public entrance of Falkenburg Road Jail. They are in need of basics: such as fertilizer, equipment, labels, soil and books. Please come out and be a part of this opportunity to help men better themselves, and serve you at the same time!! Note: Most plants are only one dollar.

Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society Rare Fruit Tree Sale. September 28. 10 AM – 4 PM.
Free admission and Parking. Phillippi Estate Park, 5500 S. Tamiami Trl. (941) 223-4475
www.sfns.net



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