



RFCI NEWSLETTER

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

SEPTEMBER 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: SEPTEMBER 14

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKER THIS MONTH WILL BE OUR GOOD FRIEND FROM SOUTH FLORIDA, CHRIS ROLLINS. He will be speaking about the Fruit & Spice Park in south Florida and the fruiting trees that grow therein. The Fruit & Spice Park is an impressive garden so this should be an interesting and informative program. 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, Sept 14, at the Tampa Garden Club on Bayshore.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Sept. 14 meeting will be very special. We will have Chris Rollins from the Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead as our guest speaker – and his presentations are always interesting and informative. Also, we have invited members of four other Fruit Clubs to join us: Brevard RFCI, Tropical Fruit Club of Central Florida (Orlando), Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society, Manatee RFCI. It's a great opportunity to exchange ideas and information. We visited these clubs last year and spent a wonderful day with them enjoying their hospitality and a tour guide through their gardens. We would like to treat them with equal hospitality and ask our members to take some extra effort to contribute to our tasting table with something special for this occasion. We ask that everyone show courtesy to our guests and allow them to go ahead of us to enjoy our tasting table. Please try to attend this meeting and please contribute generously with nice fruiting plants and trees (or fruit) for the Plant Exchange.

There will be many people at the September meeting and we will appreciate it if some members can arrive early to help set up the room with tables & chairs. We appreciate your contribution and look forward to having a wonderful get together with our friends from the other clubs.

In October we will have another Plant Sale at USF & we always need your help to make it successful. Please sign the list to give us some of your time during that weekend to ease the work for all of us. Thank you for your participation.

PLANT FINDER

I get calls now & then from members who are seeking a particular fruiting plant, whereupon I refer them to Sally Lee @ 813-982-9359, who is our official RFCI Plant Finder. If you need help locating something, give her a call.

* The person who said, "Work well done need not be done again" has never worked in a garden. *

Programs /Events:

September 14: Chris Rollins: Fruit & Spice Park, Homestead, FL
October 11-12: USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival

TASTING TABLE**AUGUST 2008**

Coronel	Maja blanca mais, banana bread, fresh guava	Hendry	Sweet rice cookies
Foltarz	Chicken curry w/pineapple, jackfruit, and rice	Smoleny	Fresh pineapple
Johnston	Tropical fruit jello	Vega	Chicken pasta
Cimafranca	Madeline French cakes	Branesky	Pancit noodles
Lee	Lemon cake, guava paste	Millar	Brownies
Musgraves	Ambrosia fruit salad	Meskin	Trek y-foil
LaValette	Fried rice noodles	Campani	Brownies
Walker	Amish friendship cinnamon loaf	Rubenstein	Carrot-raisin salad
Miller	Vegetable pasta salad	Whitfield	Olives
Sawada	Exotic Fruit plate, nimonono	Ferreira	Fig bars
Shigemura	Chirashizushi, guacamole with chips, peach/dragon fruit tart	Engelbrecht	Coffee, tamarind drink
Novak	Polynesian meat balls, tropical fruit apple pie, guava-banana bread, chocolate macadania nut cookies, juices		

Thanks to everyone who donated to the Tasting Table. Please list your donation on the sign up sheet. Also, please put your name on your containers and serving utensils, etc., so they can be returned to you. Remember to ask for your free Plant Exchange ticket.

New Members: Omar Lamelas Tampa Susan Greenlaw Land O' Lakes
 Brian Pasby Floral City

2008 – 2009 Membership Directories will be available at the September meeting. Pick up a copy if you didn't get yours at the August meeting. One copy per family please.

Members' Corner:

Wanted: If you wish to give away a jackfruit tree with a few fruits already in the bloom now or in earlier years, please call Bell at (813) 569-5573

Event of Interest:

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

Go Green – Eat More Rare Fruit.

THE FRUIT OF BRAZIL

by RAY JONES

Ray began his discussion with a brief description of the horticultural gardens being developed in Manatee County and the specimen fruiting trees they are planting there, a total of about 50 trees. All the local garden clubs & horticultural societies are planting in the area to produce an exceptional horticultural garden.

Ray asked, "When you think of Brazil, what is the first thing you think of?" To answer his own question, "Normally the first thing you think of is the Amazon River Basin and the Tropics." But remember Brazil is the same size as the United States and just as we have the freezing north and the tropical south, so does Brazil, only it's the freezing south & tropical north. It is just as diverse as the United States in its weather patterns. They have the tropical areas near the equator on their north and areas that get quite cold in the south, so all the trees in Brazil are not tropical. But likewise, just because a tree comes from the Amazon doesn't mean it's not going to grow in central Florida. We've had some wonderful surprises such as the jaboticaba which grows very well here. You might not expect it when you first look at them and know where they come from.

When Ray first planted an abiu seed, they laughed at him in Miami, and when he brought sapodillas from Miami to Manatee County, they laughed again. But they are not laughing anymore. They kind of had to rewrite the cold tolerance for sapodillas and abius because both do very well in central Florida. So don't let people discourage you because we live in the Tampa Bay area because you'd be surprised what grows here, particularly in protected areas. One time the largest lychee in the state of Florida was growing in Auburndale where we wouldn't expect tropical trees to grow.

Another thing he wanted to talk about was the Rare Fruit Council started in 1955 by Bill Whitman, who sat down with 13 other people interested in tropical fruit to create the first Rare Fruit Council. Ever since, they have kind of led the way and others have followed. But Ray suggested that there are enough of us around the

state so that we may take the lead ourselves for a change. All they're doing now in Miami at the Council is publishing newsletters. They aren't doing a lot of fruit tree exploring and growing like they originally did. Ray talked to Bill Whitman just before he died. Bill said, "Ray, we used to grow fruit trees. Now we publish fruit letters or newsletters. Don't let that happen to your group", and Bill said "I'll try not to."

Ray said there was no way he could cover all the different fruit trees from Brazil because even the experts don't know them all. There are new discoveries & new books every day on the tropical fruit of Brazil, so he said he would only speak of those he has grown and knows very well, and 2 trees that have been on his list ever since he has been with the Rare Fruit Council, at the top of his list since 1973. One is *Platonia insignis* or bakuri, related to the mangosteen, a marvelous tree. He obtained seeds and gave them to Rare Fruit Council members to plant. What happened he doesn't know. Most of them died but he raised 3 to maturity and then he lost them for various reasons, maybe because we don't have the friendly bacteria and the friendly fungus in our soil that is abundant in Brazil.

Ray is trying to initiate a new project in which he will inoculate some of these trees. In Miami they were having trouble growing the abiu. Seeds seem to have a problem. The seeds grow until the plant has used all the nutrients in the seeds and then they die back. He inoculated the seeds with bacteria and plants in one gallon pots that were suffering, he repotted using the bacteria, and they responded and grew exceptionally well. Knowing what is lacking in bacteria and fungus in the soil really helps. It's not expensive and is something we can try. If you have internet access, you can find the University of Brazil; they will assist you. They have an agricultural department that will help you obtain seeds. There is a government agency down there. They have sent Ray plants on many occasions. They require a sanitary certificate and it will be sent directly to your home already certified safe. There are a lot of strange and beautiful fruit in Brazil and a lot of them will grow in this area. We'll never know until we try. We need to bring some of them into the country and

share them with others. Ray is now in the process of obtaining more plants and seeds himself.

He had a slide show he wanted to show us of the plants he is growing and the fruit. The first slide showed the abiu, *Pouteria caimito*, grown from seed. He has since had to cut it back several times because it was getting higher than his house; and his grandson, 7 years old, standing in front of another abiu grown from seed Ray got from Peru. The next slide showed the leaves & flowers of the abiu and a picture of the young green fruit and one of the ripe fruit. The abiu fruit is rather large and the tree produces a good crop of 3" to 4" fruit, bigger than a tennis ball. The one from Brazil tends to be a little larger than the one from Peru and a very pretty fruit. And they taste just as good as they look. They have a pear like consistency but with no graininess like pears, more gelatin like. The Peruvian normally has 2 seeds whereas the Brazilian usually only has one. It is an exceptionally good fruit.

Sugar apples and atemoyas are not native to Brazil but they do have other anonas, some of which are marvelous. Ray has one growing in his yard, *Sultmanii*, which he obtained from Peru, but it is also native to Brazil. It's a mountain soursop. Mountain soursop, yuck! But it's a very tasty fruit. It makes a huge fast growing tree like the mountain soursop that we are familiar with. Ray showed us a slide of the ripe fruit which was about 8" in diameter. It tastes somewhat like banana pudding, big fruit, delicious flavor, with a hint of lemon juice. However, it's somewhat fibrous but will be excellent for juicing and pies.

Ray's next slide was the *Rollinia pucosa*, or *Rollinia deliciosa*. At the right stage it is equal to any anona on earth. The nice thing about them is they will take a lot of cold and rain and a lot of drought and are not overburdened with seeds like most of the anonas. A good tree for this area.

Ray's next slide was the grumichama, a fruiting tree that is excellent for landscaping. It can be used as a specimen tree or in hedges. The grumichama, *Eugenia brasiliensis*, is a pretty little tree when it's in full flower with little fruit that looks like cherries following the flowers. The flavor is like Bing cherries with none of the

sourness and the tree is very cold hardy. For edible landscaping, it's number one on Ray's list.

In the same family is the Surinam cherry, called the Florida cherry in the Miami area. It is also referred to as the Brazilian cherry because it is native to Brazil as well as Surinam, which is adjacent to Brazil. The common name for them is pitanga. It is excellent for hedges and small bushes if it's kept trimmed back, but can be allowed to grow into a small tree. Most of them are red when ripe but there is also a black one. They fruit and flower throughout the year.

The next slide was the jaboticaba. The first time Ray's jaboticaba flowered he panicked as he thought he had insects all over it. Then he discovered they were just flowers and 30 days later he was eating the ripe fruit. The jaboticaba is a small, cold hardy tree. The fruit tastes almost like a good Muscadine grape. They normally fruit and flower four times a year depending on the amount of moisture & fertilizer. If you keep it well fertilized & very wet, it will constantly flower and fruit. It's certainly a conversation piece because the fruit grow right on the trunk and large limbs.

Ray next showed us the *Eugenia stipitata*, which may produce a fruit as large as a softball. It is yellow when ripe and has the most magnificent aroma of any fruit that Ray has ever smelled. You can hardly wait to bite into it, but then you get the shock of your life. It is extremely sour but tastes good even though it's sour. In Brazil they add sugar or honey to it & use it as a drink. It's very high in Vitamin C.

His next slide was the *Eugenia uvalha*. When Ray wrote to a gentleman in Brazil to ask for some tropical fruit seeds, he sent the *Eugenia uvalha dulce*, which is an excellent fruit. When fully ripe it tastes like a passion fruit, mango & apricot combined, a really good tasting fruit. Ray has given many seedlings to people, even some to Pine Island Nursery, and they all died. He said he doesn't know what the problem is but they seem to do fine for him. A new name for the tree is *Eugenia pyraformis*. Ray wasn't sure of the exact spelling but that is close. The fruit comes in about 4 varieties. The one that is most preferred is the round sweet one Ray showed us. It is rated very

highly in the books on fruits of Brazil. The tree is very cold hardy down to 26 deg. without dropping a leaf. It is large, occasionally as large as a tennis ball, juicy but somewhat fibrous.

The next slide was the cherry of the Rio Grande, *Eugenia aggregate*, which has a cherry like fruit about that size with one seed. It is a small evergreen tree 15' to 18' at maximum, puts on a lot of fruit April to June and is cold hardy down to about 25 deg.

Another fruit in the Myrtle family, *Psidium guajava*, comes in a variety of sizes and colors, yellow, white & pink with small hard seeds. It varies in size from 1" to 3" or greater. Brazil produces an abundance of guavas and guava relatives.

Ray showed us a picture of the cashew nut & the cashew apple. The cashew nut we eat is a seed and the fruit hangs on to the seed below it, convenient because the seed is not in the fruit. The fruit itself is pear shaped and about the size of a small pear, somewhat astringent when eaten out of hand, but makes excellent jellies & jams & fruit pies. The edible nut itself is surrounded by a caustic liquid within the shell and must be heated to boiling to evaporate the liquid and make the nut edible.

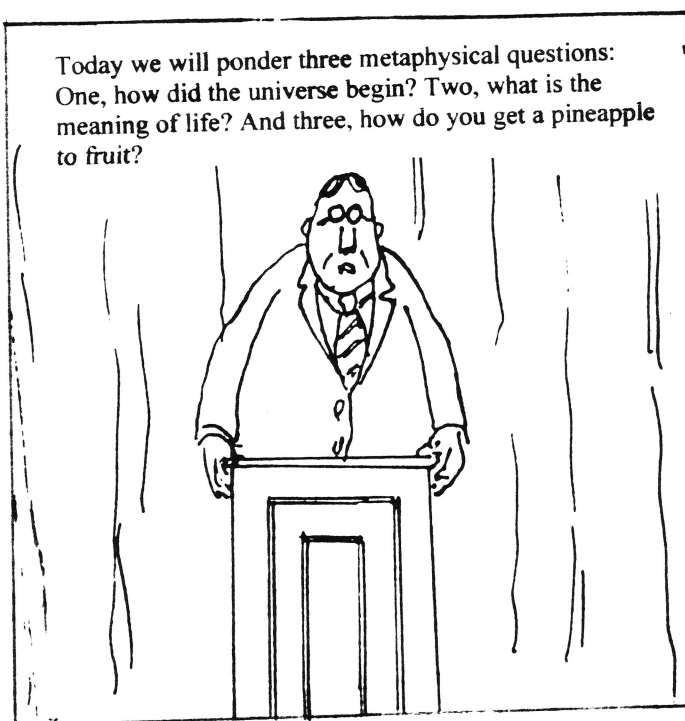
A cactus that grows in Brazil and Peru and produces a fruit that Ray indicates was the best cactus fruit he's ever eaten, and he's eaten cactus fruit from Hawaii, Mexico & Costa Rica. It's a large fruit with many seeds that are edible like in a guava. Ray says it is a delicious fruit.

The rollinia which Ray showed us on the next slide probably has over 60 species throughout Brazil, only a few of which have edible fruit, and

the best of which is the biriba. It belongs to the *Annonaceae* family and resembles other anonas but has large bumps or spines. The tree is rather large and cold hardy only down to 30 or 32 deg. The fruit are large up to 6" in diameter, conical or heart shaped, yellow when ripe and composed of many segments & seeds. The pulp is white, juicy and sweet. Ray's tree is about 5 years old and this year it is loaded with fruit.

Ray indicated that there are more fruit that he doesn't have than those he has, and which are readily available and can be obtained. If we just spend a little time, do a little research, we can have all those that we don't have now. In the past we have depended on people like Bill Whitten and Julia Morton to bring in the fruit from throughout the world and try to grow them in Florida. We can do the same thing and we would all be richer for it if we did.

* * * * *



RECIPE: DATE NUT BARS

2 beaten eggs
½ cup honey
2 Tbs melted butter

¾ cup flour
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt

½ cup chopped nuts
½ cup finely chopped dates
confectioners sugar

Butter an 8" square cake pan. Preheat oven to 350 deg.F. Beat eggs, add honey & butter, mix well. Add flour, baking powder & salt. Stir in dates & chopped nuts. Spread in pan & bake for 25 minutes or until golden brown & firm. Cool for 10 minutes. Cut into 1" x 4" bars & roll in confectioners sugar to coat.

AUGUST PLANT EXCHANGE

08-66

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Casabana	Bob Heath	Michelle Wilkins
Casabana	"	?
Surinam Cherry	"	Nicole Baldwin
Chaya Spinach	"	Sheldon Sumner
Jelly Fig	"	T. Scott
Carissa	"	?
Papaya	"	ValerieTur
Carissa	"	Wil Rushing
Beauty Berry	"	Linda Lowe
Rangoon Creeper	Bob Heath	?
The Lucky Nut	Charles Novak	Bob Heath
Pineapples	Vega	?
Spanish Pasleaf/Recao	Vega	A.J. Scharett
"	"	Meredith Ritley
"	"	Bob Heath
Miracle Fruit	"	?
Palm	Vega	?
Surinam Cherry	Sumner	Michelle Wilkins
Jack Fruit	Branesky	T. Scott
"	"	S. Worsham
"	"	Ed Musgrave
Variegated Potato	"	?
Maringa	Branesky	Marilyn Whitfield
Loquat	J. Cimafranca	Nicole Baldwin
Curry Tree	Ed Musgrave	T. Worsham
Mousteriosa Del	"	Sally Lee
French Guiana Chestnut	"	Gloria Sciuto
Sugar Cane	Ed Musgrave	Marilyn Whitfield
Fig Celeste	Tony Ferreira	Sally Lee
White Sapote Fruit	"	?
Water Iris	Linda Lowe	?
Sapote	John Headley	J. Champagne
Orinoco Banana	Roshan Premraj	James Oliver
Plumbago Plant	Sully La Valette	Tony Ferreira
Muscadine Grapes	Sally Lee	Ron Shigemura
Carissa	Marilyn Whitfield	?
Grape Vine	?	Teri Worsham
"	?	Meredith Ritley
"	?	Nicole Baldwin
Lemon Grass	?	T. Scott

Fruit Tree Exhibit at Palma Sola Botanical Park

Our Council has made a \$500 donation to the Manatee RFCI to help with the purchase of rare and tropical fruit trees for their fruit tree exhibit at the Palma Sola Botanical Park in Bradenton. The Manatee club planned the layout, prepared the site and has started planting the fruit trees. What a great way to educate the public on the joys and benefits of growing rare and tropical fruiting plants and trees!!! We look forward to visiting the Palma Sola Botanical Park and viewing the rare and tropical plants and trees exhibit.

Various pests may cause problems when propagating, but as they attack a wide range of host plants they need only be considered in a general way so that the gardener can recognize them and treat them appropriately.

When infested propagating material, or a plant, is placed in a propagating environment, the increased levels of temperature and humidity often cause a population explosion.

It is important, therefore, to propagate, whenever possible, from material that appears to be free of pests. It is safer, and often easier, to control pests on stock plants before taking cuttings rather than to treat the cuttings later before they have established themselves as plants. This is not always possible, however, and routine pest control measures should always be taken in the propagating area to combat invasions of pests from infected plants elsewhere in the greenhouse or garden.

Aphids

Insects, such as greenfly and blackfly, are invariably present in small populations on almost all plants during the growing season, and it is important to control them not only because they can debilitate plant material very quickly with a rapid population build-up but also because they may carry virus diseases.

In a propagating area the most useful method of applying insecticides is by using aerosols, preferably in the evening. The most effective are those containing pirimicarb, pyrethrum, bioresmethrin or malathion. Do not spray with these chemicals when the plants are exposed to direct sunlight.



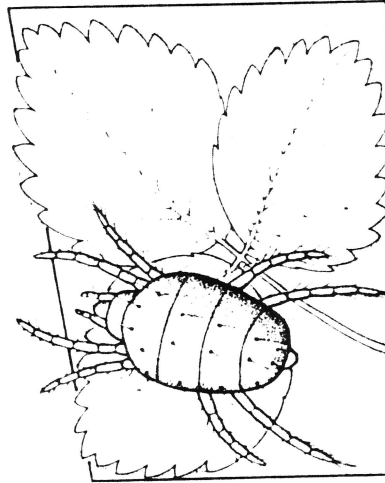
Red spider mites

These are not, in fact, insects but are related to the spider. They have eight legs and are capable of spinning webs. Most of them are minute and are comparatively difficult to see, but because they normally occur in such vast quantities their collective action is readily apparent.

A typical sign of their presence is for a yellow mottling to appear on some leaves. This discoloration gradually turns a rusty brown and is followed by a grayish sheen of web formation.

It is in the propagating environment with its increased temperatures that populations of red spider mites can build up unchecked, and they can cause problems on plants as diverse as cucumber, cyclamen, dahlia and conifers.

Available methods of control are not always effective as the most useful materials are also dangerous to humans. The easiest system is simply to keep populations to a minimum by reducing the mites' hibernation stage by routinely scrubbing down all propagating areas during the winter. However, outbreaks will occur, and spraying at regular intervals with chemicals containing dimethoate and malathion, or the use of Derris in liquid formulation, will reduce the infestation.



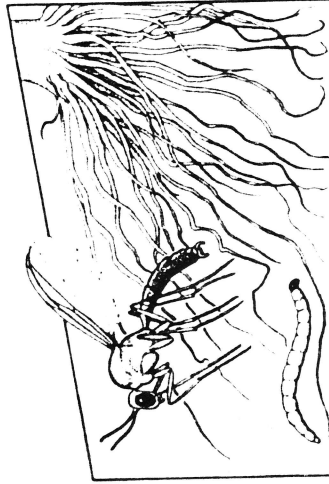
Sciarid flies

The movement of these very small black-bodied flies is more eye-catching than the flies themselves. They are a relatively new phenomenon and are probably associated with the increasing use of peat-based com-

posts. The adults are attracted by peat, especially when it is wet, and they will lay their eggs in it. The small white grubs that hatch then proceed to eat whatever is available—in this situation usually the young, freshly succulent roots of a cutting or seedling.

Most damage is caused when the compost is overwatered, so more eggs are laid and more roots are consumed. Therefore to control infestation of sciarid flies do not allow the compost to be continually soaked. Water little and often.

Chemical control is not easy. The adults because of their mobility are virtually impossible to kill, and control is therefore limited to an attempt to eliminate the larvae. The incorporation of a granular insecticide in the compost will have some effect as a preventative. If an infestation occurs, the best results are achieved by drenching the compost, preferably with BHC.

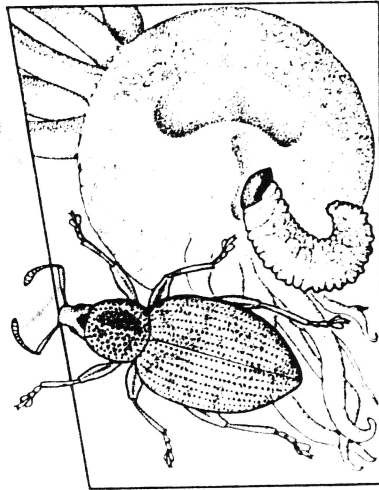


Vine weevils

The larvae of the vine weevil do much more damage than is suspected, and although they are obviously not just pests of propagation areas they can nevertheless cause havoc in newly potted young plants. If any seedlings or young plants collapse suddenly, they have most likely been attacked by vine weevils. The adult weevil lays its eggs in soil or compost. The grubs that hatch are white with a brown head, and they feed on nearby roots. In recent years vine weevils have become more of a problem as they no longer show the pronounced seasonality in their life cycle that had previously been assumed.

The only satisfactory method of control is to attempt to kill the grubs just after they

hatch by routinely incorporating a powder insecticide in the compost when sowing and potting. The most effective insecticides are those containing BHC.

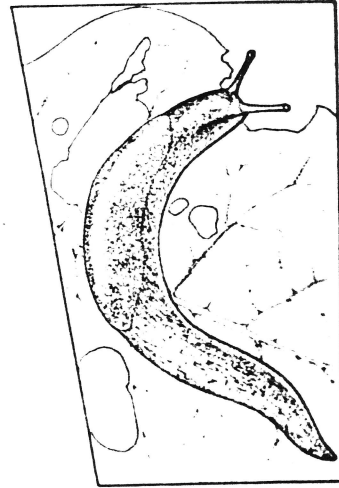


Glasshouse whiteflies

These are one of the most troublesome pests of plants grown under glass. The small, white, mothlike adults and the greenish-white scalelike larvae that occur on lower leaf surfaces both feed by sucking sap, and they excrete a sugary substance known as honeydew. This makes the foliage sticky and allows the growth of a black, sooty mold. The larvae are fairly tolerant of most insecticides, unlike the adults which can be controlled by insecticides containing pyrethrum, bioresmethrin or resmethrin.

Slugs and snails

Slugs and snails feed on the seedlings of many crops. Routine use of slug bait should keep damage to a minimum. If there is a sudden infestation treat with metaldehyde.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Aug-Sep 2008

By PAUL ZMODA

Star fruit are coming on. Carambolas, *Averrhoa carambola*, are fairly easy to grow around here. The distinctive fruit are star shaped when sliced crosswise and are quite unique as far as fruit goes. These Asian fruit trees will grow well for you as long as you select their planting sites well. They are prone to freeze damage if planted out in the open where winter temperatures will fall below 27 degrees or so. Since they do well even in light shade, you may plant them beneath large trees which provide medium light levels and several degrees of frost protection with little depreciable decrease of fruit. Since carambolas are well known for producing much more fruit than can be used, this is acceptable. Planting two or more varieties is advised if large crops are desired due to cross pollination.

Many meetings ago, RFCI member Jimmie Lee told us about promoting fruiting on reluctant trees such as mango, lychee, longan and avocado by driving iron nails into their trunks. A wedding gift to my wife and I was a nice grafted sapodilla. In the 10 years hence, it has not produced one bud, though growing quite well. Since these grafted trees are expected to flower in 3 to 6 years, I was getting impatient. I decided to try the nail treatment. After 2 months I was happy to see flower buds! I counted at least 6 so far. This is a valuable procedure to know.

Loquats are blooming now. I've never seen fruit form on bloom this early and can't understand why not since the late winter blooms produce well. If any of you have an answer, please let me know.

New plantings: My new grafted "Variegated Red Navel" orange (on pummelo rootstock), Australian tree fern, azaleas, amaryllis and crotons.



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