RFCI NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2009
TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

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: JANUARY 11

PROGRAM: OUR SPEAKER THIS MONTH WILL BE BOB PAULISH, WHO WILL BE SPEAKING ABOUT GROWING GRAPES IN CENTRAL FLORIDA. In Florida vintners are working diligently to develop a Florida wine industry to compete with California and New York, so this should be an interesting and informative program. We will also enjoy our fabulous banquet table, great plant raffle, farmers market and interesting camaraderie. We will also be discussing our horticultural exhibit at the Florida State Fair and the Citrus Celebration on February 8. The meeting will begin at 2:00 pm, Sunday, January 11.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dec-Jan 2009
By PAUL ZMODA

We all got a bit of a cold snap starting in he 3rd week of November. Not too cold – only 3 or 4 light frosts. This is actually good for seasoning up some fruit trees to help them get through even colder nights which will surely come. If the weather will cooperate and gradually cool, our plants will survive much better than having a spell of hot weather followed by a quick drop into sub-freezing temperatures.

Lots of fruit trees such as peaches, apples, plums & others require chilling hours to form viable flower buds. The cold weather helps by setting up the flower buds to break winter dormancy once spring-like temps arrive. Chilling hours are counted below 45 deg. F on a fairly regular basis. The greater Tampa Bay area receives approximately 250 chilling hours annually, so choose your cultivars accordingly. Be advised that intervals of prolonged hot weather between cold spells may "undo" the chilling hours and/or cause unusual performance in certain plants.

You may begin pruning your deciduous trees after leaf fall. Now is also a great time to harvest fresh, live tree logs if you are interested in growing gourmet mushrooms. Oaks, maples, sweet gum, mulberry & lots of other species are perfect substrates for the cultivation of shiitake and oyster mushrooms. Many other edible fungi may be grown in Florida. I have had good harvest of shiitakes in the past, especially if winters are rainy and cool.

In my opinion, reconstituted dried shiitakes are just as flavorful and wholesome as the fresh picked specimens. Dried mushrooms will keep almost indefinitely, especially in the freezer.

I have purchased mushroom spawn from Fungi Perfecti (fungi.com), a company which is very knowledgeable and helpful in the cultivation of edible and medicinal fungi.

New plantings: peas & grape vines.

Programs/Events:

January 10: Multi club meeting and potluck lunch, Palma Sola Botanic Park
January 11: Speaker: Robert Paulish. Topic: Muscadine Grapes
February 5-16: RFCI Horticulture Exhibit at the Florida State Fair
February 8: Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair. ***No regular Club meeting in February.**

Potluck picnic at Palma Sola Botanical Park, Saturday, January 10, 2009, 1 P.M.
9800 17th Ave. NW, Bradenton. For those members who have signed up to attend this multi club meeting, orchid tour and potluck lunch the directions and a map are on the Club's website: www.rarefruit.org

RFCI Horticulture Display at the Florida State Fair: February 5-16, 2009.
We need members to volunteer to man the club's display. Admission tickets to the fair will be given to those members who volunteer. A volunteer sign up sheet will be available at the January 11 meeting or you may contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399 to add your name to the list.

Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair: Sunday, February 8, 2009.
This will be our 8th year hosting this event at the Fair. It has been very popular with the public as it gives them the opportunity to sample many varieties of citrus. Please plan to help with this event. **This year it is critical for members to donate citrus fruit (as many varieties as possible). Our main sources for fruit in the past are no longer available**. If you have citrus to donate (or know of someone who will donate fruit) please contact Fred Engelbrecht, (727) 943-2104, Charles Novak (813) 754-1399, or Jimmy & Sally Lee (813) 982-9359.

Also, volunteers are needed to help prepare the fruit for sampling. A signup sheet will be available at the January 11 meeting; or you may contact one of the members listed in the above paragraph. There will be more information in the January and February newsletters.

Tampa Bay RFCI Board of Directors Election in March: Directors serve a one-year term and will assume their respective offices immediately after the March meeting. The Board meets monthly or at such times as deemed necessary. The Board is responsible for the policies, finances and direction of the Chapter. A nominating committee will be appointed at the January Board meeting and members interested in serving on the Board may contact a member of the nominating committee. The list of candidates will be published in the March newsletter and will be presented at the March meeting. Additional nominations may be presented from the floor. The Board of Directors will be elected at the March meeting by a majority vote of the membership present and voting.

DECEMBER PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Surinam Cherry	Bob Heath	?
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Pineapple	"	Nancy McCormack
Pineapple	"	Jennie Heath
Chaya Spinach Tree	"	Gloria Sciuto
Chaya Spinach Tree	"	James Frankland
Carissa	"	C. Ferretra
Rangoon Creeper	"	Rose Frankland
Passion Fruit Vine	Bob Heath	?
Cuban Mangosteen	Charles Novak	Laura Massie
Cuban Mangosteen	"	Tony Ferreira
Cuban Mangosteen	"	Sal Russo
Cuban Mangosteen	"	J.A. Oliver
Cuban Mangosteen	"	?
Cuban Mangosteen	Charles Novak	?
Pear Cactus	Meredith Retley	Sarah Kane
Pear Cactus	"	?
Pear Cactus	Meredith Retley	?
Fig (Alma)	Tony Ferreira	Susie Blanchard
Sugar Apple	Tony Ferreira	E. Musgrave
Rangoon Creeper	S.F. Saceda-Bigelow	Ursula Schultz
Crown of Thorns	S. Lavalette	?
Plumbago	"	?
Tea Plant	Zmoda	McAveety
Tea Plant	"	?
Hot Peppers	Zmoda	B. Millar
Passion Fruit	R. Frankland	?
Meyers Lemons	J. A. Oliver	Marilyn Whitfield
Meyers Lemons	"	?
Harvey Lemons	J.A. Oliver	Kris Aguire
P. Reclinata	Mike Sweet	Roberta Harris
European Fan Palm	"	?
Pineapple Plant	Michelle Doll	?
Pineapple Plant	"	?
4" Plastic Pot	Ursula Schultz	?
Tropical Spinach	Nancy McCormack	?
Chinese? Tree	Lori Maranto	Sue ?

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

As usual we had a terrific Christmas Party with many delicious dishes provided by our generous members. Thank you all for your contributions to the tasting tables.

A special thanks to our secretary, LINDA NOVAK, for providing table decorations and nicely wrapped gifts. I am sure that most everyone got a nice prize.

Unfortunately, someone thought that 3 Christmas CD's on the stage were prizes too and took them. I would appreciate it if those CD's are returned, as they are mine.

We have received an invitation from the Manatee Rare Fruit Council to attend their meeting on January 10, 2009 at the Palma Sola Botanical Park located at 9800 17th Ave NW in Bradenton. All those who have signed up for the pot luck picnic will meet at the Palma Sola Botanical Gardens in Bradenton at 1:00 pm. SEE PAGE 09-02 FOR DIRECTIONS TO PALMA SOLA GARDENS.

I trust that all our members will have had an enjoyable holiday and that you had great joy and expectations in bringing in the New Year.

Fred Engelbrecht

OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

The editors of the monthly newsletter are indicated near the top of the first page. They are Bob Heath, Paula Hardwick, Charles & Linda Novak. In addition, we get Notes from the President and input from Paul Zmoda, who writes What's Happening every month. As of August 2009, Bob Heath, who will have been working on the newsletter for 25 years at that time, and his daughter and secretary, Paula Hardwick, are passing the responsibility on to another member or other members. One of our members has already offered his expertise and we can only hope at this time that others will also come forward. If not, come September 2009, there will not be a newsletter. We are very confident this will not occur. Bob & Paula will work with whomever through the next 7 or 8 months to provide a smooth transition. Please discuss this with Bob Heath at the next meeting or call him at your convenience. Thank you.

The Horticulture Vocational Program of Falkenburg Road Jail is in need of non-working and/or no longer needed Gardening equipment (such as power equipment, gardening tools).
Examples: Lawn Mowers, Rakes and shovels in need of new handles, etc.

Contact Information:
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Office: (813) 744-5676
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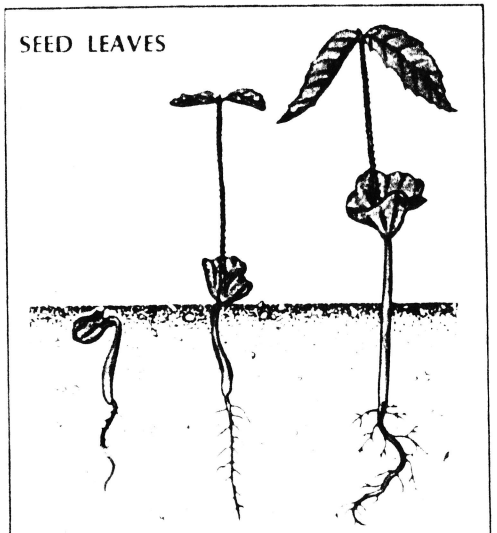
Happy New Year!

The developing seed 1



When the seed begins to germinate, the embryo produces a root and seed leaves. These seed leaves are usually different from the true leaves that will follow.

Germination

The germination of seeds covers the entire process, from subjecting a resting seed to suitable conditions to cause it to develop to the stage at which the seedling produces true leaves and establishes as a young plant. If a seed is subjected to the conditions required for germination, and it fails to germinate, despite the fact that it is alive, then the seed is described as being dormant (see pages 28–9).

Water is vital to allow plant growth to get under way. So, if the seed has not been soaked before sowing, it is important that the compost should be watered immediately after sowing.

Once the seed has sufficiently imbibed the embryo inside the seed begins to produce root and stem systems, which eventually break out of the seed.

To grow, the embryo uses its food reserves. When oxygen is combined with carbohydrates in these food reserves the energy necessary for growth is produced. Thus the germinating seed will have a massive oxygen requirement, which can only be satisfied by a well-aerated environment within the compost.

All growth processes within the seed are chemical reactions activated by the addition of water. To develop successfully, the seed needs an increasing quantity of water, and the compost must be capable of holding these amounts.

As all the processes involved are basically chemical reactions they will obey normal physical rules, the simplest of which implies that the higher the temperature is raised, the faster will be the rate of the reaction. In practice this means that the warmer seeds are kept, the quicker they will germinate. As all these reactions are taking place in a biological context, there are biological limitations as to how high the temperature can be raised. In practice there are also economic considerations, because high temperatures are costly to maintain. Experience suggests that a germination temperature of 21°C 70°F is a reasonable compromise for most flower and vegetable seeds, and this is why an airing cabinet is an excellent place for seeds to germinate. For germination of tree and shrub seeds see page 35.

To keep seeds moist and warm, cover the container with a sheet of glass so that water condenses on the glass and falls back into the compost. To minimize temperature fluctuations cover the glass with a sheet of paper.

As soon as the seedlings emerge, both paper and glass should be removed. Spray the seedlings regularly with water and place them in a well-lit area, out of strong direct sunlight to avoid scorching.

Spray germinating seeds with Captan or copper fungicides regularly, or they may succumb to damping-off diseases.

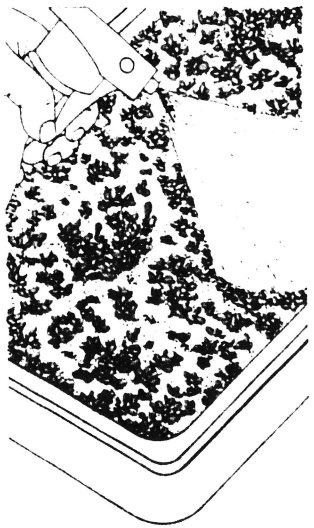
If the seedlings are to be kept in their container for some time they should be given a liquid fertilizer diluted according to manufacturer's instructions, because many seed composts contain only a phosphate fertilizer.

Pricking out

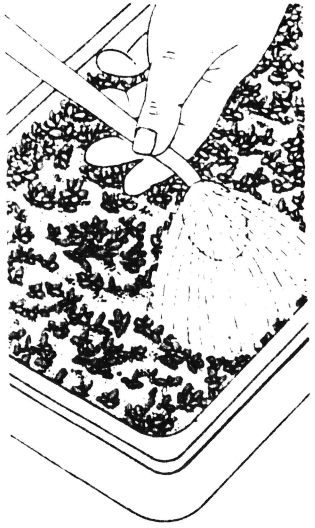
As soon as seedlings can be handled, transplant them into a more suitable compost, leaving enough space for unrestricted

The developing seed

1 Remove the glass and sheet of paper as soon as the seedlings appear. Place in a well-lit area.

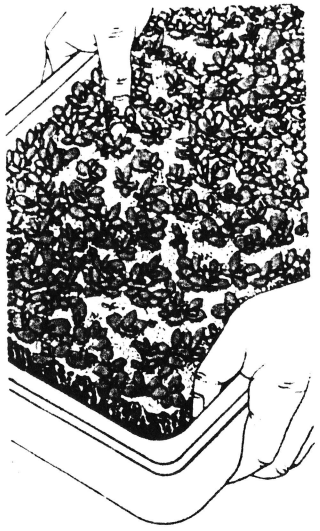


2 Spray seedlings regularly with water, but do not allow compost to become waterlogged.

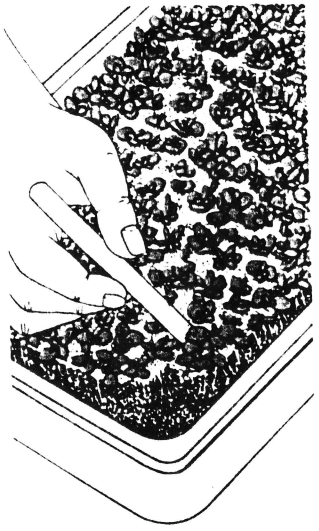


3 Water in a fungicide to prevent or contain any outbreak of damping-off diseases.

Pricking out



4 Knock the sides of the container on the work-bench to loosen the compost and seedlings.



5 Loosen the compost further with the dibble, lifting a clump of seedlings.

6 Lift one seedling free of compost by holding its seed leaves and gently pulling.

09–05

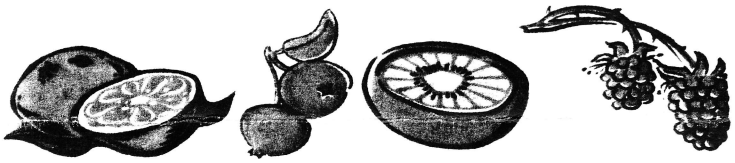
FAMILY - PIPERACEAE

150. *Piper methysticum* - Kava-kava

Erect shrub to 20 feet, native to the Pacific Islands. Leaves are about 8 inches wide and 10 inches long. The plant is dioecious, having male and female flower parts on separate plants. Its leaves have a licorice flavor. Kava drinks are made from this plant. Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

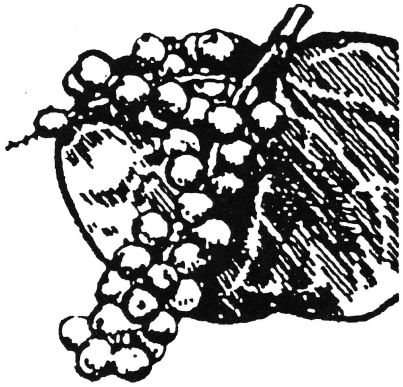
151. *Piper nigrum* - Black pepper

Monoecious or dioecious vines, native to South India and Ceylon. Leaves 5 to 7 inches long and up to 5 inches wide. Black pepper is obtained from dried unripe fruit. When the outer layer of the fruit is removed, the product is white pepper. Propagation is by seed or cuttings.



FAMILY - POLYGONACEAE

152. *Coccoloba uvifera* - Sea-grape



Evergreen tree to about 20 feet, native to Tropical America. Its round, leathery, glossy leaves are up to 8 inches in diameter. New growth has reddish veins and tinge. White flowers are produced in racemes. Its purplish fruit resemble grapes in size and bunches. Pulp is eaten fresh or used for jellies. Plants are used for landscape purposes and are very salt tolerant - thriving on coastal dunes. Plants are started by seed, cuttings and layering.