



RFCI

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 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: CITRUS TASTING AT THE FAIR, FEBRUARY 8 (SEE BELOW)

CITRUS TASTING EVENT AT THE FLORIDA STATE FAIR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

If you have citrus fruit to donate or know someone who will donate fruit, please contact Sally Lee (813) 982-9359, Fred Engelbrecht (927) 943-2104, Paul Branesky (727) 341-2605, or Charles Novak (813) 754-1399. We need as many varieties as possible for the public to sample. The fruit will need to be picked, labeled by variety, and brought to the Novak residence on washing day – see page 09-11; or washed, labeled, and arrangements made to get the fruit to the Fair.

****We also need citrus, tropical and rare fruit for our display table. If you have a nice specimen you would like to display, please let us know.****

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Thanks to all members who have signed up to help with this event. Members who are helping should plan to be at the Family Living Center Building at 8:30 a.m. We will be very busy cutting up the fruit as we begin offering samples to the public at 10:00 a.m. Members who have signed up to help with this event will receive their Fair admission tickets in the mail.

If you have questions or need information, please contact Sally Lee, Fred, Paul or Charles.

****See first paragraph above for phone numbers.**

RFCI HORTICULTURE DISPLAY at the Florida State Fair (Feb. 5 – 16): Fair admission tickets will be mailed to members who have signed up to man our exhibit.

Gardening Myths and Facts:

Myth: Fill tree cavities with concrete or another fill material to prevent disease from entering the tree.

Fact: Leave any cavities in trees alone. Trees heal cavities themselves by developing callus tissue around the cavity. Filling a tree cavity will often cause more harm than good, as it will prevent the tree from healing properly. A filling can also seal in moisture and cause fungal diseases.

GROWING GRAPES IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

by BOB PAULISH

Bob began his presentation with a few comments about the types of grapes being grown by the grape growing industry and the need to grow Muscadine grapes in Florida. He hopes there are some potential commercial grape growers in our membership. He also described the bunch grapes being grown by much of the grape growers and wine makers throughout California and other areas. He concentrates on the muscadine because there are so easy to grow and are native to Florida and the southeast.

There are male & female Muscadine vines and all will produce fruit. The male is self pollinating but the female vine requires a pollinator. At the present time there are about 40 different named varieties of Muscadine grapes being developed by the Florida industry and colleges.

People should grow Muscadines; they are easy to grow and there is a great demand for them especially from the wineries. They are good as fresh fruit but do not have a long shelf life so they need to be picked in a hurry and taken to the grocery stores immediately. They are excellent when ripe and soft, but not good when green. The vines need very little care and fertilizer but Bob says keep the weeds down; weeds are the only thing he sprays for.

Muscadines are native to the southeast: Florida, Georgia, Alabama, as far north as South Carolina and as far west as Texas. They like sandy and loamy soil but do not like wet feet or too much water.

The Muscadine is a sweet fruit, excellent for making wine, but they do have seeds and the skin is tough. They are not called red & white; we call them browns & blacks because when they ripen, that's a more accurate description of their color. In making wine, you come out with wine that's white or red.

Bob grows his own vines from cuttings to replace those that have died because replacement vines of

desirable varieties are hard to find in the nurseries. Muscadines can be cultivated in arbors overhead or may be grown on wires horizontally. The way Bob grows his vines is on a single strand of wire about 4 feet high for easy picking. The wires are oriented north and south to get proper sunlight distribution through the day. He recommends planting new vines deep, as the roots normally grow out from the surface and are not very deep. He does not recommend cultivating around the vines as this may cut the roots. As the new vines grow, cut off all the lateral and only leave the main center riser. When he growing vine gets above the wire about 6 or 8", it's time to snip off the main riser and retain 2 or 3 more arms to tie to the horizontal wires as they grow. If you're growing them on an arbor or trellis, you would leave more than 2 arms.

In the 1st & 2nd year whenever fruit forms, it should be picked off to allow the vines to grow. For Bob, usually the 5th year is the first year of their production. That is when the vines have developed enough to produce a lot of fruit. He lets the individual vine grow about 12' on the wire; that's 6' in each direction, and on the 5th year and thereafter, he gets about 40 pounds from one vine. That's a lot of fruit.

When fertilizing the vines, the first thing you should do is get your soil tested to see what they need. If you don't get it tested, Bob would recommend a 10-10-10 fertilizer spread away from the trunk. The area around the vines should be kept weed free to provide maximum benefit of the fertilizer. For the same reason, he does not recommend ground covers around the vines. There are several pests that attack the vines. For aphids, Bob recommends spraying the vines with a soap solution.



Tampa Bay RFCI Board of Directors election: If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee: Sally Lee (813) 982-9359, Paul Branesky (727) 341-2605, or Mark Foltarz (813) 837-2324. The list of candidates will be published in the March newsletter and will be presented at the March 8 meeting. The Board of Directors will be elected by a majority vote of the membership present and voting.

New Members:	Diane Schwaninger	Tampa	Kathryn Penia	Tampa
	Marie Jorgensen	Tampa	Kyle & Teresa Campbell	Odessa

Grafting Tape and grafting Parafilm are available for purchase by members who would like to graft their own plants. RFCI Polo shirts (\$15) are also available. Contact Charles Novak (813) 754-1399.

TASTING TABLE

JANUARY 2009

Branesky	Blackeyed peas	Harris	Lemon cake
Musgrave	Escalloped pineapple	Lohn	Cookies
Newcombe	Carambola & yogurt	T. Scott	Dried papaya
K. Johnston	Tropical fruit cobbler	Klinger	Strawberry shortcake
Chavez	Pineapple upside down cake	C. Andrews	Leche flan
Saceda-Bigelow	Turkey sandwiches	Foltarz	Barbecue chicken
Phillos	Kisses-Amish friendship sweethearts	Ferreira	Potato salad
Sweet	Brownies & sliced tangelos	Theryo	Corn nuggets
Maranto	Orange cake & chicken & wild rice	McCormack	Caramel cake
Palis	Copper penny salad (Carrot salad)		
S. Lee	Date bread, pineapple bread, cassava pudding cake		
Sawada	Seafood yakisoba, kumquat cheesecake		
Shigemura	BBQ hotdog "octopus", meatballs, berry pasta salad, blackberry cobbler		
Novak	Strawberry & banana Trifle, lemon cake, Waldorf salad, fresh citrus, juices		

And many other delicious edibles not listed on the signup sheet. **Thanks** to the members who donated to the tasting table. Please remember to put your name on your plates, bowls, serving spoons, etc., so they can be returned to you. Also, you get a free plant exchange ticket for you donation to the tasting table.

Our condolences to Raffina Dindial on the recent loss of her husband Hue Dindial. Hue and Raffina have been members of the Tampa Bay Rare Fruit Council for many years. Hue was very knowledgeable about growing citrus and tropical fruit.

Programs/Events:

February 5 – 16:

February 8, Sunday:

Horticulture Exhibit at the Florida State Fair

Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair.

****No regular meeting at the Tampa Garden Club.**

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Some 15 members of our club attended a wonderful afternoon at the Palma Sola Botanical Gardens in Bradenton. We were joined by four other fruit clubs, including Brevard, Leu Gardens, Fruit & Nut Group and of course Manatee Rare Fruit Council.

The Palma Sola Botanical Gardens entrance has beautiful palm trees, a display of roses and a large building surrounded by flowers and shrubs. In the rear of the building an area was cleared for the establishment of a Tropical Fruit Section. We had an opportunity to visit this area where we saw a variety of mangos which were full of blooms. Since these were recently planted, most of the trees were young; however, no doubt in the future it will be worth visiting this Botanical Gardens. It will be a great place for a rest stop, having an outdoor picnic and viewing the gardens.

Meeting the members of the other clubs gave us a chance for camaraderie and to talk about our favorite topic. We were treated to a delectable tasting table and an abundance of fruit and desserts. Many of our members signed up to attend, but did not show, thereby missing a very pleasant afternoon.

I trust that we will have a good turnout for the Citrus Celebration at the State Fair. Thanks to everyone for your support of our club.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jan-Feb 2009

By PAUL ZMODA

I've been working on clearing an area of about 200 sq. ft. at the back of our property. Pulling out stumps and leveling the soil is really hard work, but I have a vision for planting this spot. That vision is blackberries. I have loved blackberries since I was a young lad growing up in New Jersey, where blackberries grew wild across the street and were free for the picking.

"Blackberries; we eat 'em all the time," we would sing on our way to filling pails which we would quickly deliver to our mothers, who would then begin to churn out delicious cobblers, jams and pies. I long to relive those sacred memories by having my own blackberry patch.

Have you ever eaten a 'Page' orange? I have, from our own tree. It is actually a Mandarin hybrid of Clementine DX Minneola tangelo. This small, pretty citrus has deep orange segments having a flavor which is explosively delicious. Clementines are available in our markets, but are outrageously expensive. I would like to obtain a tree but so far – no luck.

The Page is very similar in quality; it has thick skin rather than the thin rind of the Clementine. Page trees are rather easily obtained around here.

I just read an interesting article by a Dr. Don Batten, PhD. In it he proposes that lychee and mango buds form flowers if the tiny, growing buds are subjected to low temperatures rather than forming inside primordial tissues before the shoots grow. His experiments seem to support his hypothesis. We had a good cold snap in November and now our own mango tree has so many flowers on it – the buds were pushing during that November spell. All five top-grafted cultivars are loaded with so many inflorescences.

Dr Batten thinks that withholding water or fertilizer to induce dormancy in these trees has nothing to do with the formation of blooms. You want to have your trees push buds just as cold temperatures arrive for maximum flowering. How are your mangos and lychees flowering this year? Please let me know.

New plantings: Typhon, dill, fennel, pak choi and black kale.

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Recipes of the month

Calabaza Baked Pudding

1 1/2 -2 cups cooked mashed calabaza (other hard squash or pumpkin may be used)	
1 stick butter, melted	2/3 cup evaporated milk
2 Tablespoons flour	juice of 1 lemon
2 eggs	1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon citric acid (to taste)
1 cup sugar	1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine all ingredients and mix well. A blender may be used. Pour into a round microwave safe dish. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave using the defrost cycle for 45 - 60 minutes, until set. Serve cold, or warm (with vanilla ice cream-yum!).

Easy Gingerbread Muffins by Catherine Creighton

1 1/2 cup flour	1/2 cup cooking oil
1 teaspoon baking soda	1 egg beaten
1/2 cup brown sugar (packed)	1/2 cup molasses
2 teaspoon Watkins Gingerbread Spice	1/2 cup cold tea

Sift together flour, soda and spice. Cream oil and brown sugar until well mixed. Beat in egg and molasses. Add tea and flour alternately to the creamed mixture, mixing well. Pour batter into greased muffin cups. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Top muffins with confectioners sugar or whipped cream or applesauce. Recipe makes 12 regular size muffins.

JANUARY PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Surinam Cherry	B. Heath	M. Lohn
Surinam Cherry	"	George Merceron
Surinam Cherry	"	S. Sweet
Surinam Cherry	"	S. Worsham
Pineapple	"	?
Chaya Spinach	"	?
Carissa	"	Mike Sweet
Carissa	"	Bob Klingler
Rangoon Creeper	"	Nancy McCormack
Sapodilla	Bob Heath	Jerry Amyot
Bag of Citrus	Novak	T. Worsham
Bag of Citrus	"	?
Kumquats	"	J. Oliver
Pomello	Novak	Ron Shigemura
Cuban Oregano	Sawada	?
Cuban Oregano	"	?
Cuban Oregano	Sawada	?
Variegated Sweet Potato	Paul Branesky	Sonia F. Saceda-Bigelow
Coffee	Charles Novak	Shige Fawada
Coffee	"	S. Lohn
Mamoncillo - 3	Mike Brandt	George Merceron
Monstrosia Deliciosa	Ed ?	Mike Sweet
Pineapple Plant	"	?
Bignay	"	Sanda Worsham
Asparagus Fern	Sonia F. Saceda-Bigelow	?
Plantain	Mike Sweet	?
Palm-Phenix	"	?
Butterfly Vine	Sharon Pilot	Chris Andrews
Sugar Apple	Tony Ferreira	?
Loquat	"	?
Black Sapote Fruit	"	Marilyn Whitfield
Black Sapote Fruit	"	?
Jatropha Cuttings	Nancy McCormack	Ed Andrews
Sago Palm	Marilyn Whitfield	?
Harvey Lemons (2 bags)	J. Oliver	?



The developing seed 2

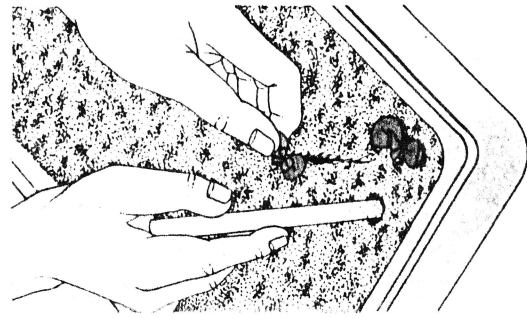
development of the young plants. This is known as pricking out or potting on.

Fill a container with John Innes No. 1 compost or a compost of similar structure (see page 12), and firm to the base with the tips of the fingers. Strike off compost level with the rim. Lightly firm with presser board so that the compost is $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ in below the rim of the container, which is now prepared.

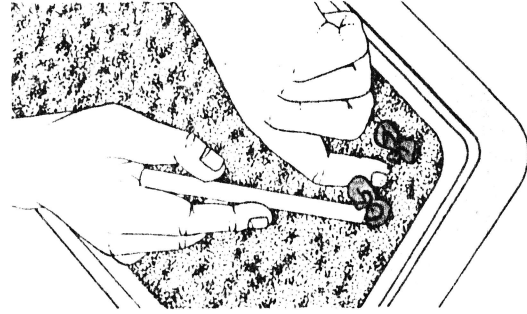
Water the seedlings; then loosen them by knocking the old container so that the compost comes away from the sides. Hold a seedling by its seed leaf and gently lift with the aid of a dibble, keeping its root system intact. Never hold the seedling by its stem.

With the dibble, make a hole in the fresh compost big enough to take the roots. Drop in the seedling and gently firm the compost back round the roots with the dibble. Repeat this operation for each seedling spacing at 24–40 seedlings per tray.

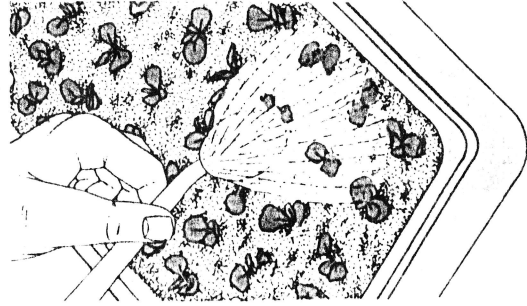
After the tray has been filled, water in the seedlings and return them to the warm environment (21°C/70°F) so that they can establish as quickly as possible.



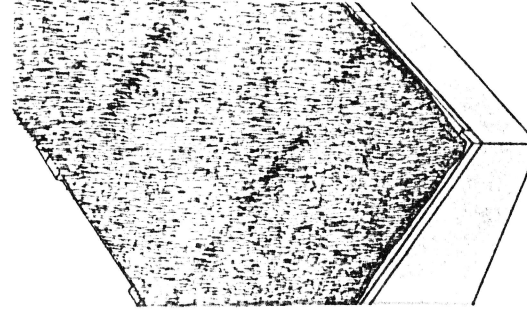
7 Hold the seedling in one hand. Make a hole with the dibble in the fresh compost in a new container.



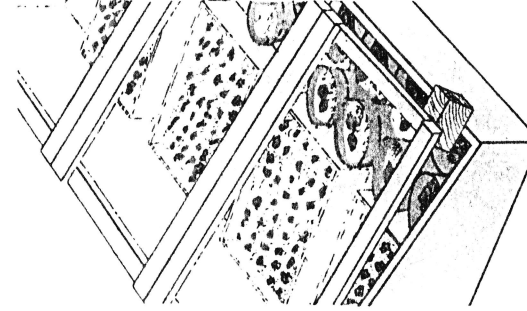
8 Place the seedling in the hole and firm the compost back with the dibble.



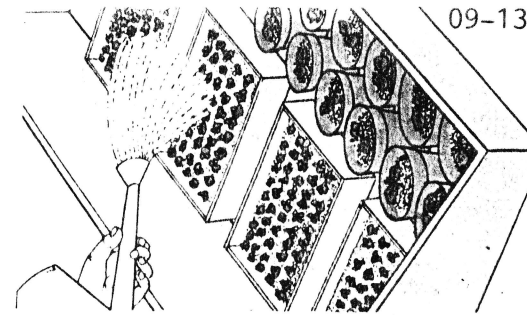
9 Water in the seedlings once the seed tray is completed. Place in a warm (21°C/70°F) area.



10 Cover cold frame with fibrous matting to insulate seedlings against damage caused by frost radiation.



11 Raise the cold frame lid to allow the seedlings to harden off.



12 Water, using a fine rose, to ensure seedlings do not dry out. Add a fungicide and liquid feed regularly.

so more day-to-day care and attention are needed, which is of course time consuming.

Once the pricked-out seedlings have re-established, move them to a cooler environment. For this purpose there is no real substitute for a cold frame, which should be kept firmly closed. Over the course of a few weeks increasingly air the frame during the day by raising the lid, until the frame is continually aired during the day and night; indeed the lid may be completely removed during the day if it is warm. Eventually the lid can be discarded altogether.

Frosts as severe as -4 °C/25°F are sufficient to penetrate into the cold frame, so, if this level of cold is expected, provide some insulation to protect half-hardy plants. The best and most easily manageable insulation should be light yet thick; fibrous matting and similar materials are useful and effective.

Regularly check the seedlings in the frame to ensure that they are not drying out excessively. They should not however receive too much water. If anything it is better to err on the side of dryness rather than risk water-

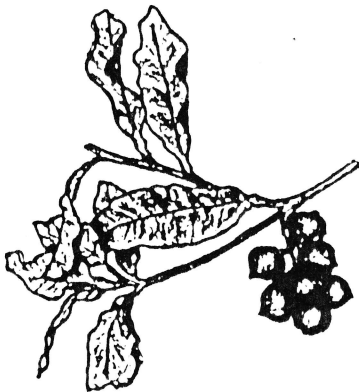
Hardening off

logging. Under these cooler conditions wet composts are increasingly susceptible to fungal root rots. Similarly, the close density of plants creates conditions under which leaf diseases are capable of taking hold. It is, therefore, important that all plants in the frame are sprayed regularly with a fungicide, either Captan, which will prevent the diseases spreading, or a systemic fungicide such as Benlate, which should prevent an outbreak of the diseases.

Another aspect of seedling management is the necessity for feeding. Many pricked-out seedlings will spend several weeks in the potting compost before being finally transplanted, and there is no point in starving them and preventing them developing to an adequate size. Thus the seedlings should be regularly fed using a proprietary liquid fertilizer at the intervals stated on the manufacturer's instructions. Avoid excessive feeding as it will produce overvigorous plants that will check their growth on transplanting; it will also increase the risk of disease in the cold frame.

FAMILY - PROTEACEAE

153. *Macadamia integrifolia* - Macadamia



Evergreen tree to 60 feet, native to Australia. Its shiny, dark green leaves are up to 12 inches long, with prickly margins - resembling holly leaves. Creamy white to pinkish flowers are produced on drooping spike-like racemes. Of the one to several hundred flowers produced, only one to twenty fruit may set. The round, brownish,

hard seed coat are about 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter and contain 1 seed or nut - at times 2. Because of its hard shell, a special nut cracking machine is used commercially. Nuts have excellent flavor. They are eaten fresh or roasted. They are also rich in oil. Propagation is by seed and grafting.

154. *Macadamia tetraphylla* - Rough-shell macadamia



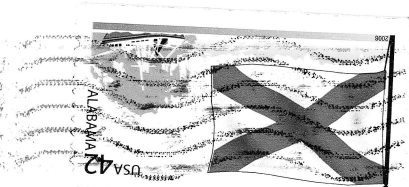
Evergreen tree to 60 feet, native to Australia. Its saw-toothed leaves reach a length up to 20 inches. Pink flowers number 100 to 300 per raceme. Round fruit to 1 inch in diameter. The kernel is eaten fresh or roasted and is rich in protein and oil. Propagation is by seed and grafting.



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