



NEWSLETTER – November 2009

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, INC.

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Meetings are held the second Sunday
at the Tampa Garden Club, 2:00 P.M.

Upcoming Programs and Events

Please plan to join us for the following:

November 8: Program - Cold Protection & Medicinal Uses of Fruiting Plants

December 13: Holiday Social

❧ Cold Protection & Medicinal Uses of Fruiting Plants ❧

Our own Charles Novak will be speaking about cold protection and medicinal uses of fruiting plants. Charles will talk about the various ways to protect plants from the freezing temperatures predicted for this coming winter. In addition, Charles will give a PowerPoint presentation on the medicinal properties of tropical fruits and plants.

❧ Update: USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival ❧

"Thanks!" to the many club members who helped with this event; even though the weather was unbelievably hot Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We had a wide variety of fruiting plants available for purchase by the public. As in the past, our RFCI display of fruit created a great deal of interest and many questions were answered. We could barely keep up with the demand for cold juice - 533 cups were served!

The Botanical Garden asked vendors to participate in a themed Scarecrow contest to enhance the Plant Festival. There were some very creative scarecrows and The Rare Fruit Council's Scarecrow (made from terra cotta flower pots) was chosen the winner this year.

❧ Welcome to Our Newest Members ❧

Aneja Bhola, Tampa ❧	❧ Todd Pratt, Lutz
John Bleakney, Tampa ❧	❧ Fran Prockop, Tampa
Anna Engelfeld, Tampa ❧	❧ Ernie Rodriguez, Odessa
Anna Ethington, Lutz ❧	❧ Joane Schwyhart, Tampa
James Kauchick, Lutz ❧	❧ W.L. Shapiro, Tampa
Nanci Newton, Tampa ❧	❧ Robert Tyler, Apollo Beach
Laura, Ed, Kevin, Eric & Ethan Young, Valrico	
Casey Mathews & Kathleen Reres, Tampa	
Anneris & Jose Paredes-Zaglul, Tampa	

President: Paul Branesky

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I Know I am a Gardener Masochist by Victor Carrano ([victorgardener](#))

August 17, 2009 (Editor's Note: This article was originally published on February 29, 2008)

After gardening for a few years, I slowly realized that we gardeners are really just masochists who happen to have a creative urge and appreciation of nature's beauty. If we were not gardening, we would surely be engaged in some other suffering-inducing behavior. What else can possibly explain what we do?

What other hobby or pastime "allows" failure like gardening? A popular mantra states that one should not give up on a plant unless he or she has killed it at least three times. There's a thought! Gardener's Hippocratic Oath? We gardeners have adopted a baseball batter mentality. A player who fails 2 out of 3 times is a Hall of Famer, so I'll be darned if I'll give up after only 2 or 3 attempts! But if one was quilting, for example, would one out of three successes suffice? Of course not.

This gardening psychosis takes otherwise sane, intelligent people and separates them from all sense of reality and cause and effect. How many times have you planted the same plant in the same area, stubbornly deluding yourself that the next time will be the charm? Better still, we insist on putting plants where we want them, not where they will grow best.

We put sun lovers in shady areas, drainage-craving plants in wet areas and acid-loving plants in alkaline soil. Then, we are genuinely upset when they don't grow. How dare they! Those of us with deer problems refuse to surrender and will spend \$100 on sprays to protect a \$15 shrub. We'll show them who the boss is! Seed starters will boast that they save so much money, yet omit the dollar value of all the time and effort that goes into producing that impatiens that can often be bought for much less than a dollar each in large flats.

Who among us has never ignored the plant label or description and planted a shrub or tree whose mature size far exceeds its new home? Consciously or not, we either think that it will not actually reach that size, or that we will have moved to a new house by then, leaving the problem to the new owners. (This denial is akin to putting the lid down on a toilet about to overflow, only in slow motion.) Before we know it, it is indeed too big and we have to remove it entirely, pay someone to relocate it or risk serious injury and attempt the relocation ourselves.

The psychosis also extends to the failure to acknowledge death. We see plants that, by all rights, should have a large “Do Not Resuscitate!” tag on them, offered by the big box stores or nurseries for cents on a dollar. We “save” them and are convinced we just scored a major coup. Little do we realize that we did the store a favor and that the employees erupted in laughter as we pulled out of the parking lot. We then get them home and gleefully give them more TLC than we give our children. And how we beam when that 10% actually make it! It's the prodigal son revisited as our loyal garden stars scream out, “What about us?”

I have witnessed, first-hand, an extreme example of the denial-of-death syndrome. My first attempt at planting a Japanese Maple ended in failure, most likely due to the location. I did not want to give up on it, as it had been very expensive. So I stared at it, talked to it - *even in Japanese* - and waited. Nothing. I prayed for it, offered quiet incantations, and even gently caressed it. Nothing. I finally brought myself to perform the feared thumbnail scratch test - a test I deemed more appropriate for some co-workers than for my precious tree. As the tip of my nail made contact with the outermost cell of the twig, the entire branch snapped off. A follow-up scratch of the trunk fared no better. It was over.

Seeking closure, I asked my contractor friend, who was working on my house, to help me with the exhumation. He interjected, “You're not giving up on this, are you?” I simply pointed to the limb lying there. “That doesn't mean anything. You have a baseball bat?” Surely, he did not want to play now, I thought. Maybe to help pry the tree out? “For what?” I finally asked. “I'm gonna beat it back to life.” He explained that he had saved a number of plants by beating on them, prompting a major stress response that re-animated them. Sensing I might be in the presence of a true healer, I obliged.

Okay, stand back', he said. He then beat on my poor Maple for about five minutes. This is where sadist met masochist. I prayed no neighbors were witnessing this. I fretted that there was some plant abuse hotline picking up at that moment. He finally stopped and told me to give it a few days. It never did return. Aside from still having to remove it, I had been irreparably traumatized.



Gardening masochism greatly affects our financial sense as well. We place order after order, robotically responding to the “I gotta have that!” compulsion. Even otherwise frugal people succumb to the ordering mania. Then, the plants start to arrive. More arrive each day. You see the UPS and FedEx guys more than your family. You unpack them and then it hits you – “What in the world was I thinking??” You try to hide the plants and the credit card bills from your spouse. Eventually, you get busted. “You didn't get

Why not DIY?

more plants, did you?" "No, no, I swear!" you respond. "Then, what's this?" The spouse /interrogator points to an errant plant label sticking out of your pocket. Gulp.

That lapse of reasoning does not end with plants. A few years back, I thought I was being smart and thrifty by having mulch delivered. Why should I pay someone to spread it when I could do it and be more careful about it to boot? Well, 25 yards and countless hours later, every cell of my body was screaming.

This gardener has chronic lower back and knee problems and often comes in from gardening in real pain. My garden essentials include pain relieving pills and rub as well as ice and heat packs. *But I still do it.* I have seasonal allergies and often have sneezing fits lasting five minutes. *But I still do it.* I am a mosquito magnet and I'm allergic to bees and carry a dual Epi-Pen with me. *But I still do it.* I curse the deer whose fresh poop greets me as I start my day. *But I still do it.* Masochist? Answering that might be painful.

This is dedicated to all my fellow gardening masochists. I truly feel your pain! Photos by author.

About Victor Carrano

My background is in engineering, but these days I am a stay-at-home Dad. I have always loved Nature, but had no idea when I bought my house that I would become the gardening fanatic that I am. Gardening both stimulates and relaxes me. It appeals to all my senses and gives me the privilege to be part of the Nature I love.



Websites of Interest

<http://www.floridayards.org/fyplants/index.php>

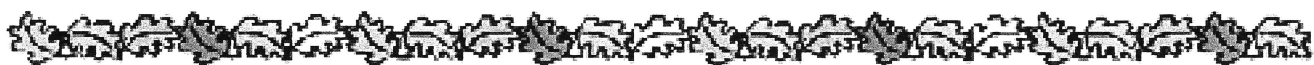
A database of Florida friendly plants, gives mature height and spread, and other useful information for hundreds of landscape plants.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG087>

Details on proper pruning techniques, Pruning landscape trees and shrubs.

<http://www.liquidfence.com/FreezePruf.html>

FreezePruf - Anti-freeze for your plants. *Note: This product has not been tested on tropical fruiting plants.*





What's Happening October-November 2009

By Paul Zmoda

What to do with an open planting space? Where should we plant our treasured fruiting specimens? New members will be especially eager to start an orchard of their own, but they should be sure to plan carefully before beginning.

Things to consider, first, among others, include:

- The size of the plot
- Cold, drought, water, shade and sun tolerances of the preferred plants
- Eventual mature sizes of these plants

Principe Borghese tomatoes are the traditional, Italian variety used to make "sun-dried" tomatoes. When you see them for sale in jars, embalmed in olive oil, you may be shocked at how expensive they are. I've been growing these for years, and they sure are good. I harvest these small fruits when perfectly ripened on the vine. Next, I wash, dry and cut them into halves. Into the dehydrator they go until they are pliable and leathery. I pack them in clean canning jars and top off the jars with a good quality, extra virgin olive oil. After a few weeks, they are sufficiently marinated, and I may begin to use them. This old-world specialty can be yours for a fraction of the market price. Seeds are available from some catalogs and online.

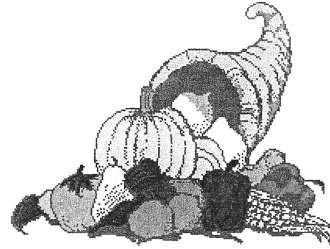
New plantings: Italian parsley, garlic cilantro, dwarf Cavendish banana and Geffner atemoya.



Tampa Bay Rare Fruit Club International Cookbook

We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the new Tampa Bay RFCI Cookbook. A special thanks to Verna Dickey and Roberta Harris for the many hours they spent preparing the cookbook for printing. We anticipate that members will want a copy for themselves and extra copies for Christmas gifts.

November in the Florida Garden



November is probably one of the best months of the year to garden in the Sunshine State. Cool, dry weather finally begins to visit Florida and usually makes itself welcome for the next six months. While we do not get the colorful leaf changes that our friends up north do, we are still treated to a nice show in some areas especially in the more northern parts of the state. Even in South Florida, a keen eye will see that the wild grasses are beginning to turn brown, the scrub willows are shedding their leaves as are the Red Maples, Cypress trees and other deciduous trees -- many with a touch of fall color.

The cooler and dryer weather also helps to reduce the bug populations. By this time of the year, fleas, chinch bugs, mosquitoes and others are hardly noticeable. There is also a change in the wildlife. Not only will there be more snowbirds in the state, but many fine feathered migratory birds will be seen heading southward to their winter homes. Many of these birds will be making pit stops along the way to take in food and water before continuing their journey so be sure to fill your bird feeders with a mix of feeds so they will stop off in your yard for a snack before moving on! Be careful though because some of these birds just might take a liking to your vegetables and strawberries and help themselves to your crops.

Be aware that even though the cooler weather will reduce certain populations of insects, not all of them will disappear. Aphids, beetles, cutworms, cabbage worms, corn earworms, leaf miners, mole crickets, leaf hoppers, leaf rollers, squash bugs and other beasties will still be around to munch on your plants if you are not watchful. While Safer sprays and liquid Sevin or multipurpose vegetable dusts applied early will help to keep insects under control, early detection and ecological control is the best medicine for your garden. I suggest fungicides and insecticides not be used on or around food crops. The choice is yours, but the wise approach right now would be to avoid using or being near toxic chemicals. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers be sure to carefully read the labels before applying *any* chemicals to your garden.

While you may take a break from fertilizing your lawn and trees this month your vegetables and annuals should still be fed. A composted manure or balanced liquid fertilizer will be much appreciated by these plants and will help to give you an abundance of blooms and vegetables.

Also do not neglect to water your plants. Even though it is not as hot and your plants' water demands are not as great, judicious watering must still be done. Mulching your plants, of course, reduces how much water they will require.

Quick Tips:

- This is a great month to begin planting roses. Be sure to buy locally pot grown varieties.
- Let your nursery or garden center be your guide for growing annuals and vegetables. Choose healthy specimens for a quick-start garden.
- Declining lawns can be revived with the application of quick acting high nitrogen fertilizers and regular irrigation.
- Careful attention to insect infestations and rust or fungal infections on your vegetables, herbs and flowers then immediate control will help to head off major problems later in the season.
- Flower buds on your Poinsettias will begin to open and many tropical plants will begin to bloom. Color will be just about everywhere.
- The next few months are open to planting and growing almost anything you can imagine especially as far as herbs, vegetables and annuals are concerned.

Vegetables: Beans, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Cucumbers, Endive, Escarole, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leek, Lettuce, Onion Sets, Parsley, Peppers, Pumpkins, Rhubarb, Romaine, Rutabagas, Spinach, Squash, Strawberries, Sweet Corn, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes, Turnips and almost any other vegetable you desire.

Herbs: Anise, Basil, Borage, Chives, Chervil, Coriander, Fennel, Garlic, Lavender, Marjoram, Mint, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Sesame, Sweet Marjoram, Thyme and most other herbs.

Flowers: Amaryllis, Asters, Baby's Breath, Bachelor's Buttons, Balsam, Calendulas, Callas, Candytufts, Carnations, Cosmos, Cockscombs, Daisies, Dianthus, Forget-Me-Nots, Gaillardias, Gladiolas, Globe Amaranth, Hollyhocks, Lace Flowers, Lilies, Lobelias, Lupines, Marigolds, Narcissus, Nasturtiums, Pansies, Salvias, Scabiosa, Snapdragons, Statice, Stock, Strawflowers, Sweetpeas, Sweet William, Verbenas, and other cool season flowers.

Sources: Florida Home Grown; Florida Gardening Month by Month

Copied from <http://floridagardener.com/monthly/November.htm>

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