November 2010

RFCI

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

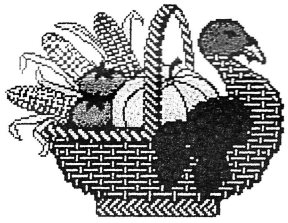
http://www.rarefruit.org

Meetings are held the second Sunday, 2:00 P.M.
at the Tampa Garden Club, 2629 Bayshore Blvd.

Upcoming Programs and Events

November 14th: Propagation Workshop at our regular club meeting, including grafting and air layering. This workshop was a great success last year, and we look forward to another very informative session. Charles Novak and others will be available to answer questions. We will also enjoy our fabulous tasting table, plant raffle and farmers' market. Members are invited to contribute to the tasting table. Please contact Charles Novak at 813-754-1399 if you have questions.

December 12th: Holiday social at our regular club meeting - ***Please Note: The festivities start at 1:00 P.M. instead of our regular meeting time of 2:00 P.M.***



USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival
Thank You!

Special thanks to all the members who donated their time to help with this event. The weather was perfect. Many fruiting plants were sold, many questions were answered, and a whopping 478 cups of juice were served.

Rose Terenzi collected 14 new memberships and 4 previous members reactivated their memberships.

Even though this event included a lot of time and effort, a good time was had by all.

President: Paul Branesky
Editor: Gloria Sciuto; Support: Bob & Paula Heath; Production/Distribution: Charles & Linda Novak

Welcome to Our Newest Members

Damian Beardi of Tarpon Springs
Alex and Jackie Bluett of Largo
Mary Jo Clark of Tampa
Elaine and Eric Coulson of Lithia
Bruce and Kathe Judd of Tampa
Silvia and Mark Sheppard of Tampa
Mary Sizemore of DeLand
Dominic Ukpe of Clearwater

Celina Bellanceau, Neal Halstead of Tampa
Bruce Shephard, Coleen Christensen of Tampa
Ronald Conradt of Tampa
Francis Hill of Tampa
Don and Annette Parr of Tarpon Springs
Carol Rittlemeyer of Lutz
Everett Thomas of Tampa
Lovella Wallace of New Port Richey

2010 Vegetable and Crop Handbook for Southeastern U.S.

This fabulous 290-page book tells you all you want or need to know about planting vegetables locally and it's free.

Topics include:

- Planting dates
- Pollination
- Disease control
- Weed control
- Insect control

You can download this handbook at the following address:

http://www.citrusandvegetable.com/TheSoutheasternUSVegetableCropHandbook/tabid/79/Default.aspx

A Safe and Happy Thanksgiving to All

Editor's Note: In preparation for our workshop taking place at our November meeting, here is a reprint of an article by Charles Novak that first appeared in our August 2009 issue.

Grafting Made Easy

by Charles Novak

Terms Used in This Article:
Scion: The part of a plant used for grafting onto the rootstock.
Rootstock: The root-bearing plant on which the scion will be grafted.
Parafilm M: A stretchable, wax-like tape. The product has been widely used for routine laboratory work for many years.

Why Graft?

- Some varieties of plants do not come true from seeds.
- Difficult or impossible to reproduce from cuttings or other propagation techniques.
- Using a rootstock better adapted to the prevailing soil and climate than scion produced naturally.
- Dwarfing rootstock can be used to greatly reduce the size of the tree.
- To increase the supply of new varieties rapidly.
- Change a tree from an old to a new variety.
- Grafted fruit trees have earlier fruit productions.
- Multiple grafts to produce a tree with several varieties or flowering plant with several different colors of flowers
- Rootstock can be selected for characteristics that the scion may not have, such as resistance to root rot or is tolerance to parasitic organisms; such as nematodes, insect larvae or other subterranean pests.

What is Grafting?
Grafting is the process of joining two or more different plants and enabling them to grow as one. The upper part of the graft (the scion) becomes the top of the plant; the lower portion (the rootstock) becomes the root system or part of the trunk. Although grafting usually refers to joining only two plants, it may be a combination of several.

What are the limitations?
Not all plants can be grafted. Plants of the same botanical genus and species can usually be grafted even though they are not the same variety. Plants with the same genus but of a different species may often be grafted.

For the most successful grafting, only chose closely related plants to form a compatible union. Generally, this means apple-to-apple, rose-to-rose.

Incompatible grafts may not form a union, or the union may be weak. A poor union results in plants that grow poorly, break off or eventually die. Trial is the only way to determine plants' compatibility. Some rootstock and scion materials are difficult to get, and some plants are not as easily grafted. This can often result in a quite high percentage of loss. This explains why some grafted trees are more expensive.

How to Collect and Store Scions?
Scion wood can be collected when available. It should have a diameter of 1/4 inch to 3/8 inch. The length of scion can be from a few inches to more than 2 feet. **Defoliate the scion and wrap the entire scion - cuts, buds, and stem in stretched Parafilm M**. Wrapping scion with Parafilm M beneficially conserves the internal moisture of the plant tissue. Parafilm M stretches; a little goes a long way.

If the scion cannot be grafted when obtained, store the scion in a plastic bag in the refrigerator with moist paper towels until performing the graft. If wrapped in Parafilm M, the scion can be stored for many weeks. Do not store the scion in a freezer.

When to Graft?
It is best to graft in the spring, from the time the buds of rootstock trees are beginning to open, until blossom time. The usual time is April or early May. But this should not limit you from grafting at any time of the year. Graft when scions become available.

What Tools and Materials are Needed?

- Knife. A good quality knife, able to hold a sharp edge, is the key to good grafting. Special grafting and budding knives are desirable. Keep material to sharpen the knife handy.
- Pruning shears.
- Grafting tape.
- Parafilm M.
- Fungicide – Spray bottle of Alcohol. Label the spray bottle.
- Clothes pins.
- Label for identifying the rootstock and scion (Name, variety, and date of the graft).

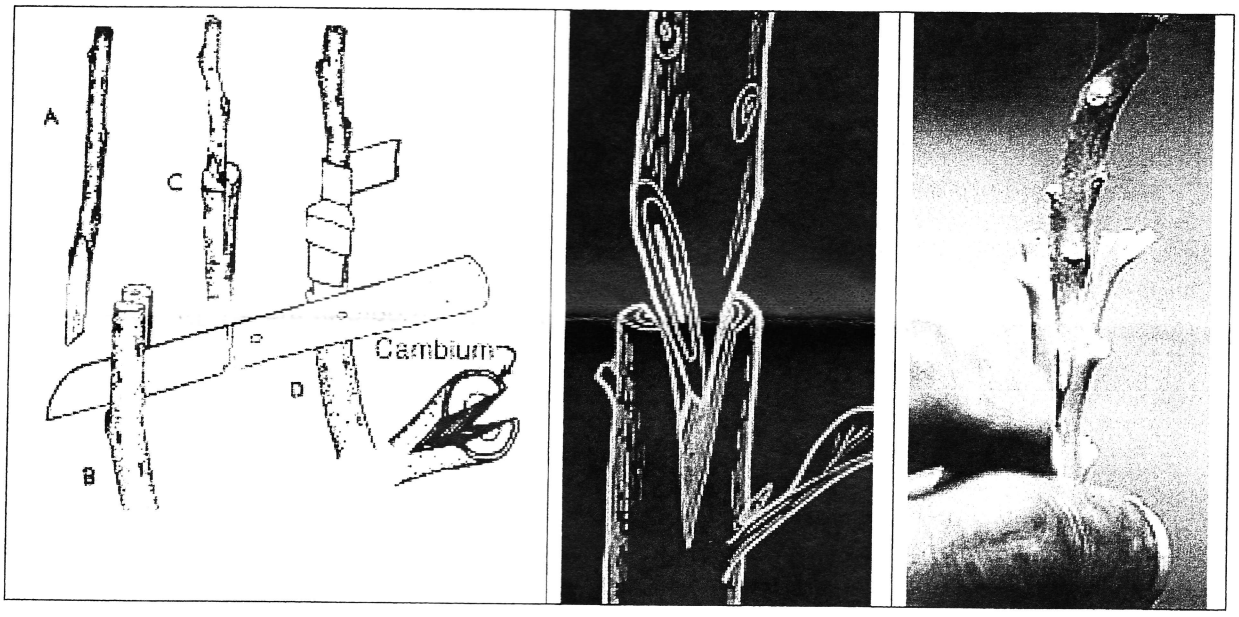
Grafting Techniques
Defoliate the scion and wrap the entire scion - cuts, buds, and stem - in Parafilm M. (Remember to stretch the Parafilm M.) The buds will grow through the Parafilm M without damage or restriction. (Note: Parafilm M is heat- and photosensitive and decomposes when exposed to direct sunlight for longer than a few minutes.) Store in a cool location.

There are many different types of grafting techniques. The cleft graft is one of the most commonly used and the simplest type of graft to perform. Here are the directions:

1. Fungicide tools and hands - spray hands, grafting knife and pruning shears with alcohol.
2. Match the scion and rootstock diameters precisely; this maximizes the chance of matching the cambiums.
3. The defoliated scion from a healthy plant should contain at least one completely dormant node on second-year wood which has had all soft, active growth removed.
4. The stock should be an actively growing seedling (do the grafting during the warmer months – in Florida grafting can be done year round).
5. (See diagram below) Cut the scion (A) and fashion its base into a thin, narrow wedge. A large contact surface area will increase the rate of healing. (Hardness part of a cleft graft) Do not touch the cut surfaces, or allow them to dry out.
6. Cut the rootstock at right angles to the stem in mature wood preferably close to a node. Make (B) a single vertical cut down the middle of the stem. The cut should be the same length as the wedge of the scion. Make sure that all cuts are straight and precise; use a very sharp grafting knife. Rock the knife back and forth – use care not to cut yourself (Safety tip: Slip a large metal washer over the rootstock stem and keep it above the fingers while making the vertical cut in the

rootstock. Remove washer before proceeding with the graft). Do not touch the cut surfaces, or allow them to dry out.

7. Force (C) the wedge into the slit which was made in the rootstock; no gaps should be apparent. Always match the cambium layers on one side during the tying process; don't worry if both sides are not matching
8. Wrap the graft with stretched Parafilm M. Ensure that all points are covered with Parafilm M. Air and water must be excluded from the graft-point if a successful union is to occur.
9. Wrap the (D) graft **firmly** with Grafting tape, tying from just below the graft and working up. Care should be taken not to force the scion from the stock when traversing the join. Clothespins can help hold the graft together while wrapping with grafting tape.
10. Label graft with name, variety, rootstock and date of the graft.
11. Place the plant in a stress-free environment such as a shaded (50-90%) area.
12. Examine regularly. The dormant nodes should burst in about 3 to 4 weeks. Remove any buds that develop below the graft point.
13. Remove the grafting tape at a later date.



Some Reasons for Graft Failure

- Rootstock and scion were not compatible.
- The cambiums were not meeting properly.
- Scion was upside down. (Some plants can be successful grafted upside down).
- Grafting was done at the wrong time of the year (Most plants can be grafted year around).
- Rootstock or scion was not healthy.
- Scion was dried out or injured by cold.
- The scion was displaced by storm, birds, or other means.
- Insects or disease attacked the graft.
- The graft union was girdled because tape was not cut or released in time.

The main reason for failure is not trying!

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RFCI Bus Trip to ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization) and Tree House Nursery

by Verna Dickey

On October 23, 2010, 46 members and friends of the Rare Fruit Council International, Tampa Chapter, enjoyed a great bus trip. We boarded our bus and met our driver, Patrick Chandler, at the Sheriff's Office on Falkenburg Road and left about 8:05 AM. We arrived at 10:00 A.M. at ECHO in Fort Myers. ECHO is a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting world hunger through innovative ideas and information, seeds from their seed bank, and agricultural training. The organization also networks with community leaders and missionaries in developing countries to provide agricultural solutions for families growing food under difficult conditions. ECHO has a Global Village to research crops and farming techniques on 6 different climate areas. It reaches over 180 countries with these ideas and seeds from their seed bank.

We saw a short film about ECHO and then were divided into two groups to tour the areas. One group was led by Martin Price. Our tour guide was Dr. Vic Estoye. They are both volunteers. Vic was very knowledgeable and made our tour fun. I will mention a few things that he told us along the way. We started with Jackfruit, which has fruit the size of watermelons. When eaten green, it is a vegetable. Even the seeds can be roasted or boiled for food.

Next, we saw Citron trees which were cold-sensitive. Citron is the base of fruitcake. Beautyberries (a Florida native) were abundant. Vic said the Indians rubbed the berries on their skin as insect repellant. Next, was a Tamarind tree. He said they make barbecue sauce from that fruit. Bananas and Plantains were next, but they are herbs; not really trees. Both can grow in sawdust and can be propagated by rhizome cutting and tissue culture. Papayas were abundant on even small trees; Vic said it is a vegetable when eaten green. He told us to pick them when the color is covering 30% of the fruit and let them ripen the rest of the way indoors. If you let a papaya ripen on the tree, the fruit flies will beat you to it. It takes less than a year from planting a papaya seed until you get fruit.

Macadamia trees were next. Vic told us the smooth shelled ones have three leaves coming out of the branch and the rough shelled have four leaves. The fruit ripens in stages, falls to the ground and is raked up to harvest. Macadamia nuts are the hardest nut to crack but if you roast them at 300 degrees for 15 minutes, they will be easier to crack.

Vic cut and let us taste a Wiekewa Tangelolo, which is a cross between Mineola Tangelo and Ruby Red Grapefruit. It is not popular because the fruit drops when ripe and it is very juicy (eat it over the sink). But it was sweet and tasty. There were a lot of Avocado trees. An avocado ripens off the tree. Cut it below the lump on the stem. The lump keeps it from ripening. You can freeze an avocado in chunks. Sprinkle it with lemon juice to keep from turning brown and then thaw it out and use it in guacamole. The Sapodilla trees did not freeze. To tell if the fruit is ripe, scratch the skin to see if the color has changed. Be careful you do not eat a seed. They have hooks and can cause problems if swallowed. The Chaya plant has leaves that tastes like spinach when boiled but are poisonous when eaten raw. They are used for living fences – will root when stuck in the ground and keep animals out of the garden. Jatropha can also be used as a living fence. Seminole pumpkins are very good to plant by a tree as they are insect resistant.

In the rainforest area, Vic told us the natives slash and burn to make gardens but they are teaching them to slash and mulch. In the arid area, there was drip irrigation by using a bucket with two hoses coming out of the bottom. That bucket will water two rows of plants 20 feet long. Just puncture holes in the hose at each plant. The Perennial Peanut is a plant that will provide nitrogen in the soil when turned under - as are all legumes. We saw pumps to get water out of shallow wells – one was using a hand crank and another with peddles. On the hillside, rows of plants and trees were divided by grassy strips to keep down erosion. Neem is a very beneficial tree – toothpaste made from neem helps gum diseases and the oil is an insecticide.

The last section was above ground gardening. Anything available was used for gardening. Also, there was wick gardening using old rugs or cloth using a bucket of water with a small hole to water it.

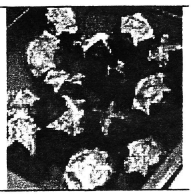
We had our sack lunches in the pavilion and left about 1:30 P.M.

Our next stop was at Tree House Nursery on Pine Island near Punta Gorda. It was an interesting trip out there with a lot of Palm Tree farms and quaint fishing areas. We arrived about 2:30 P.M. Steve greeted us and gave us the price list for his trees but said we could get another discount. Several club members bought trees while the rest of us either stayed on the bus or looked around. Some of us discovered a Jackfruit tree with at least 15 large fruit on it. After loading the trees on the bus, we took off again.

Our next and last stop was at Ozzie's Buffet in Ruskin where we were greeted warmly by Ozzie and commenced to eat our fill. There was live music, and some members couldn't help but go dancing. We left there with full stomachs and arrived back at Falkenburg Road about 7:15 P.M. All agreed it was an enjoyable trip. The consensus was that if the Club ever gets a chance to go back to ECHO, to the Tree House Nursery or to Ozzie's Buffet, let them know what a good time we had!

∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda
October-November



We were looking forward to our very first chestnuts, and the trees sure delivered. Our three trees are not very large - yet. The oldest two are eight years old. We had a modest crop this year.

The prickly burrs opened, fell, and released the dark shiny nuts. I snipped the end of each one to prevent them bursting as we boil them for 20 minutes. After cooling, we squeeze the delicious sweet meat out with our teeth. It is well worth the wait.

For best cropping, you must plant two or more genetically distinct specimens near each other. This ensures good cross pollination. As chestnut turns a darker shade of orange, I clip them off and continue to ripen them indoors. Within days, the center of each mostly seedless fruit becomes a gooey sweet mass - just right for spooning out to eat. I'll attempt to dry some for future snacks.

New plantings: English peas, tea seeds, hot chili peppers, broccoli, onions, shallots, garlic, broccoletto, clementine and honey murcott citrus trees.

Cold Tolerance of Common Fruit Trees According to ECHO

Hardy Below 24°F	24°F Minimum	26°F Minimum	29°F Minimum		Not at all Hardy
Apple	Anise	Akee	Ambarella	Otaheite Gooseberry	Coffee
Blackberry	Bay Leaf	Allspice	Annato	Papaya	Spanish Lime
Blueberry	Cattley	Atemoya	Banana	Peach Palm	Malay Apple
Cherry of the R. Grande	Guava	Bay Rum	Barbados Cherry	Pitomba	Miracle Fruit
Fig	Indian Jujuce	Carissa	Black Sapote	Purple Passion Fruit	Spanish Lime
Jelly Palm	Jaboticaba	Cherimoya	Caimito	Sapodilla	Cashew
Kumquat	Kei Apple	Curry Leaf Tree	Carambola	Soursop	
Loquat	Macadamia Nut	Grumichama	Cinnamon	Wax Jambu	
Mulberry	Surinam Cherry	Imbe	Coconut	Pineapple	
Muscadine	White Sapote	Lychee	Custard Apple	Malabar Chestnut	
Grape		Raspberry, Mysore	Guava (Tropical)	Sugar Apple	
Nectarine		Wampi	Jackfruit	Rose Apple	
Peach		Longan	Kwai Muk	Canistel	
Pear			Mamey Sapote	Ice Cream Bean	
Persimmon			Mango	Tamarind	
Pineapple Guava			Mayan Breadnut		
Pomegranate			Monstera		
Prickly Pear					

http://www.echonet.org/content/fruitInformation/889

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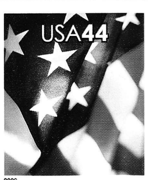

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