



# RFCI

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

June 2011

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

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

## ∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

- **June 12:** Jamie Yates, of the Florida Citrus Research and Education Center, located at Lake Alfred will speak on Citrus Diseases.
- **Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup>:** Rare Fruit Conference. For more information, please see [rarefruit.org](http://rarefruit.org) or <http://fruitandspicepark.org/friends>.
- **July 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>:** USF Botanical Gardens Tropical Plant Fair. Saturday, it is open from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and Sunday, it is open from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. For more information, please call 813-910-3274.
- **July 10:** Kenneth Der will speak on Growing Blueberries Organically.

## ∞ Welcome to Our New and Former Members ∞

⊗ Doug Ponticos of Tampa

⊗ Michael Brandt of Tampa

⊗ John Starnes of Tampa

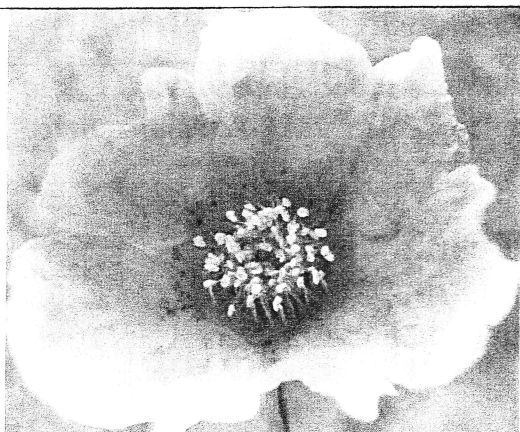
## ∞ New Membership Directories ∞

You can pick up your latest directory at the July meeting. Please notify Charles Novak before June 30<sup>th</sup> at (813) 754-1399 or [charles.novak@gmail.com](mailto:charles.novak@gmail.com) if you would like to make any changes to your name, mailing address, phone number or e-mail address.



President: Paul Branesky

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



## ∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda

This spring has been pretty good to us--nice and warm, adequate rainfall, not too many pests, and bright sunshine. All help our plants perform well at what they do best – produce food, beauty, entertainment and education.

Six of our seven pomegranate varieties are blooming well and setting fruit – if pollinated. This may happen on its own, but I recommend helping things along as “fruit insurance.” If you grow poms, I suggest that you take a finger and stir it around in the pollen-shedding blooms daily. Repeat the motion in the newly opened flowers, which will not have dry pollen ready yet. Do this gently. You may feel the light green stigma, which receives the sulfur yellow pollen. Not all pomegranate blooms are perfect (male and female). Some blooms are male only and soon drop off. If you do this routinely, you will be rewarded. Member Frank Burhenn taught me this once, and I always remember to do it.

Lots of Surinam cherries are here for eating as the loquats wind down for the year.

We picked a quart of beautiful “Brazos” blackberries every few days – some over an inch across.

I always leave patches of wildflowers alone when I cut the grass in the orchard. These flowers attract multitudes of beneficial insects, especially bees and wasps of all sorts, which not only help pollinate our fruit trees' flowers, but also assist in pest control.

You might consider hanging “bee blocks” here and there among your plantings. Bee blocks are short pieces of untreated wood drilled with 1/4” and 3/8” holes an inch or so deep, which certain, small solitary bees find attractive for nesting.

Speaking of wasps, I got some excellent photos of our largest native wasp, the cicada killer, minutes after taking her prey – a fat, green cicada!

New plantings: “Johns: elderberry, marionberry, “Obsidia,” blackberry, “Joey” avocado, a Mandarin and a vineyard block of 16 bunch grapes, both white and purple.

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∞ Going Bananas ∞  
with Gene Joyner  
of  
Unbelievable Acres Botanic Gardens

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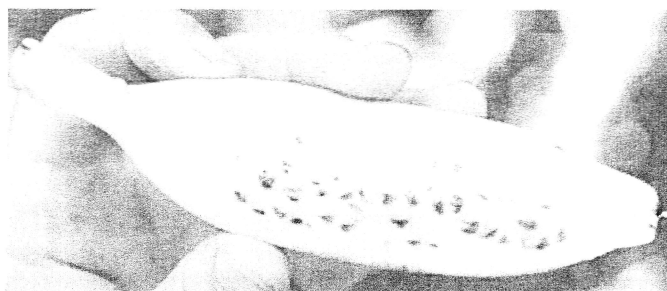


Most of us who have been club members for a while know that Mother's Day is reserved for our annual visit from Gene Joyner of Unbelievable Acres.

This year, Gene spoke about bananas – the third most popular fruit in the world, according to Gene. Gene has about 50 varieties at Unbelievable Acres. He said that there are about 5,000 varieties worldwide.

#### *About Bananas*

Believe it or not, most bananas have seeds, as shown in this fruit, which is an ancestor of our modern-day banana:



Copied from <http://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/blacksigatoka.aspx>

All are shallow rooted. They are pollinated by humming birds and bees. You can propagate bananas by using the suckers, but now, it's done by tissue culture.

Today, most are bred to be disease-resistant.

In Florida, a banana tree can produce in as early as 6 to 7 months. To do so, the plants need lots of water and lots of fertilizer – about 1 cup per month. Gene likes to mulch his bananas heavily -- approximately 4" to 10" deep.

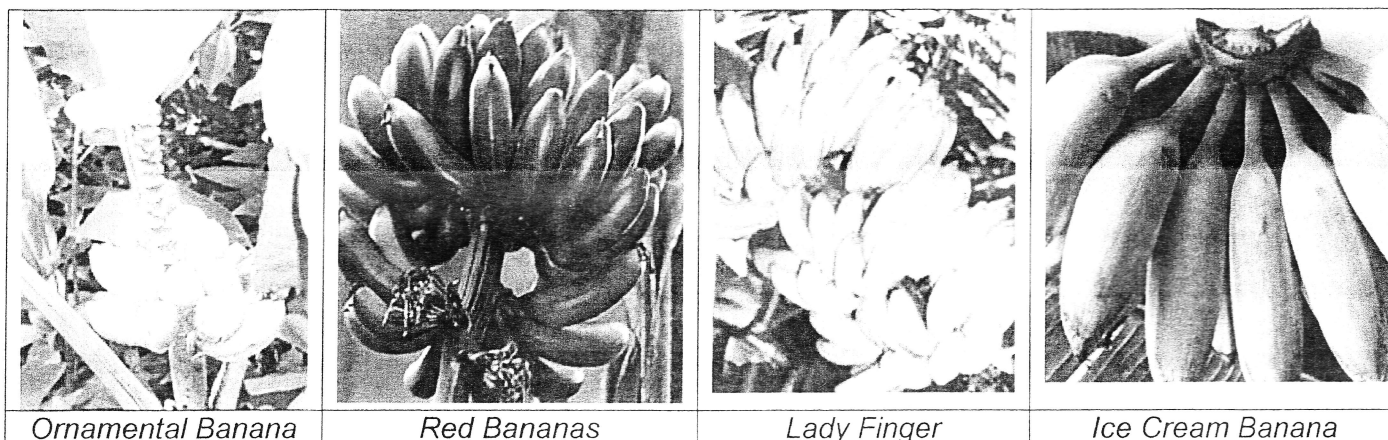
Gene uses citrus fertilizer (8-10-10) on all his trees, including his bananas.

### *Types of Bananas*

Gene spoke of a variety of types, including banana plants grown for their fruit, ornamentals that are grown for their flowers and other banana plants that can be grown as container plants.

Some of the bananas that Gene mentioned that are good to eat, include the following:

- Java Blue or Ice Cream banana
- Apple or Cuban banana
- Valerie (commercial)
- Cavendish (commercial)
- Jamaican red banana
- Lady finger banana



<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=lady+finger+banana&view=detail&id=401B81AE774373AB50EF87C6FC4D026D4B45C334&first=31&FORM=IDFRIR>

### *Plantains*

Plantains, which are generally angular or triangular, are used for baking and frying.



## Diseases

Bananas can suffer from a variety of problems, ranging from splitting fruit caused by too much rain to shredded leaves caused by too much wind as well as freezing.

There are a variety of other problems, including the following diseases:

- Black Sigatoka – blotches on leaves; can kill the plant; remove immediately

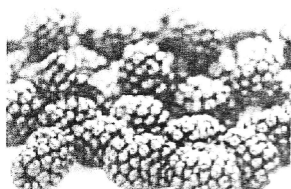


Copied from <http://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/blacksigatoka.aspx>

- Panama disease – no cure; caused by the fungus Fusarium

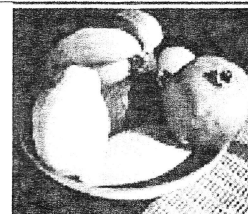


Copied from <http://www.neatorama.com/2008/06/01/say-goodbye-to-bananas-panama-disease-is-coming-back/>



## May's Tasting Table

Thank you to the following folks for their tasty offerings and to all those who did not sign the sheet. Members who donate food may now receive a ticket for the raffle.



Name	Item	Name	Item
Coronel	Palitaw	Newcombe	Sweet pea salad
Shigemura	Chipotle road pork, green beans, salsa	Vega	Rice, chicken, pastry
Sawada	Strawberry shortcake	Scott	Cucumber salad
Orr	Cole slaw	Saceda-Bigelow	Chicken liver and onions
Davies	Meatballs and sauce	Kirby	Macaroni salad
Phillas	Noodle delight	Branesky	Philippine rice cake
Novak	Chicken corn casserole, blueberry lemon glaze nut bread, key lime cookies, coconut cookies, juices		

## ∞ Did You Know? ∞

Here are some fun facts about bananas copied from <http://www.botanical-journeys-plant-guides.com/facts-about-bananas.html>.

### **Will bananas cure hangovers?**

Nothing but time will cure a hangover. But a banana might help to settle your stomach after a wild night. It also makes a nice quiet breakfast.

### **Can you eat too many bananas?**

Yes. If you do, they'll act as a stool softer.

### **Are bananas binding?**

No. Just the opposite. See the previous question.

### **Do bananas grow on trees?**

No. Bananas develop on fast-growing herbaceous plants. Some of them reach tree-like heights of 15 to 25 feet. The thing that makes them a plant and not a tree is that a banana's trunk never becomes woody.

### **Why do bananas turn brown?**

For much the same reason that metal rusts. Because of a chemical reaction between the oxygen in the air and an enzyme in the fruit.

### **How do bananas reproduce?**

If the underground portion of the banana is not killed by a hard freeze, it will continue to grow and send up suckers. This corm will become very large in time.

I planted one banana plant in my yard and I soon had a stand of bananas. I cut a couple of the suckers off the edge of the stand and planted them in different spots. I now have several stands, or groups, of bananas.

### **Where are most bananas found?**

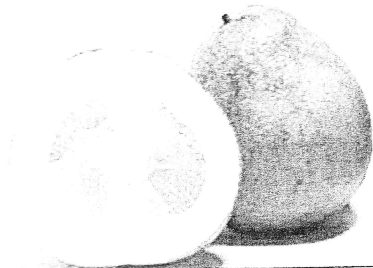
Bananas are a staple food in many tropical countries. Almost 25% of the bananas in the world are grown and eaten in India. Brazil is the second biggest banana growing country in the world, followed by China.

### **When is the best time to plant bananas?**

In south Florida, March, April and May are the best months for planting if irrigation is available. Otherwise, planting should be delayed until the onset of the rains in June. Planting holes should be large (3 ft wide by 2 ft deep), if possible. Mixing the native soil with completely composted organic matter or a sand-peat moss mixture. Plants should be watered-in thoroughly. Place a heavy layer of mulch around the suckers immediately after planting to assist in keeping the soil moist and to suppress weeds.

## Members' Corner

Two of our members from Brandon, Bob & Becky Gerstein, have started a nursery with a nice selection of fruit and citrus trees at reasonable prices. They also can special order for you. They can be reached at 813 681-2386. Call them for information and availability.



## May's Plant Exchange

Just a reminder that members who donate food may now receive a ticket for the raffle.

Members who donate plant(s) may now receive a ticket for the raffle.

Plant	Donor	Winner
2 Loquat	Bob Heath	J. Wolfram
2 Kei apple	Bob Heath	---
3 Chaya spinach	Bob Heath	Davies, O'Neal, Badias
Carissa	Bob Heath	---
2 Abaca pineapple	Bob Heath	---
8 Malabar spinach	Ed Musgrove	Jerry, Skele
Purple yam	Charles Novak	---
3 White guava	Charles Novak	Brandt, Miller
16 Cherry tomatoes	Bill Vega	Saceda-Bigelow
4 Mint	Bill Vega	Jerry
3 Cherry of the Rio Grande	Thom Scott	Shigemura, Skeo
Window planter	Thom Scott	---
Maringa	Paul Branesky	Englebrecht, Porter
Yellow pitaya	Mike Brandt	---
2 Hua Moa Banana	Roshan Premraj	Matthews
Parsley	Barb Orr	Sally Lee
Basil	Barb Orr	Matthews, Lee
Green Pepper basil	Ruth Davies	---
Mustard	Julie Badias	---
Bitter melon	Sally Lee	Bigelow

**THREE BERRY SHORTCAKE**  
**Printed from COOKS.COM**

11-48

1/2 c. fresh mixed berries (sliced blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries)  
1/4 c. honey  
1/2 c. maple syrup  
1 tsp. nutmeg  
2 c. unbleached white flour  
1 tbsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. salt  
3 tbsp. granulated sugar cane juice  
2 tbsp. safflower oil  
2 tbsp. plain non-fat yogurt  
2/3 c. skim milk

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Lightly oil baking sheet. Set aside 1/4 of berries. Combine remaining berries, honey, syrup, nutmeg, and mash with fork. Gently stir in the set aside berries. Let mixture stand at room temperature for 20 to 30 minutes. Sift flour, baking powder, and salt. Stir in granulated sugar cane juice, oil, and yogurt. Lightly blend with fingertips until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal. Add milk and stir briefly with wooden spoon until mixture just forms a dough-like consistency.

Divide into 8 balls; drop onto baking sheet, letting balls touch to form a ring. Bake on middle rack in 450 degree oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Carefully transfer to rack and let cool. Slice off top quarter of cake. Place bottom portion on cake platter and spoon over half the berries. Put berries in center ring and around sides. Replace top of cake and put remaining berries on top. Garnish with vanilla yogurt.

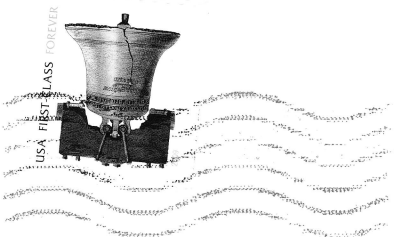


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