

#### August 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.

#### http://www.rarefruit.org

#### 20 Upcoming Programs and Events C3

**August 14 Meeting:** Wae Nelson, Florida Gardening Magazine, will speak on Biochar: A Soil amendment. For more information, see <a href="https://www.biochar-international.org">www.biochar-international.org</a>.

**Fruit Tasting** at August meeting. We will have several varieties of tropical fruit for sampling. **Members, Please contribute** any fruit you have available for sampling (please prepare and label).

September 11: Speaker to be announced.

October 8-9: USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival.

#### Welcome to Our Newest Members C3

- Shawna Everidge of Plant City
- Debra Black of St. Petersburg
- ® Rolando Rivera of St. Petersburg

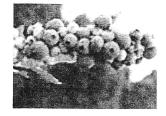
## & A Presentation to Tampa Bay RFCI in 1999 & by Debra Troyer of My Blue Heaven Blueberry Nursery, Dade City, FL

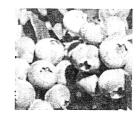
Blueberries are acid-loving plants that grow much like azaleas. They have a shallow root system that likes an acid-type fertilizer. Blueberries like cold weather and need a certain number of chilling hours to produce a good crop.

The Southern highbush varieties in Florida were developed by the University of Florida in Gainesville. They have been acclimated to our Florida climate and grow as far south as Immokolee. Debra works with 3 varieties: the Sharpblue, Gulf Coast and Misty (shown, respectively, below).

The Southern highbush is a semi-deciduous to deciduous plant. The amount of leaves it loses depends on the amount of cold weather we get during our Florida winters. If there are leaves left at the end of winter they will usually fall off when the spurt of new growth comes in the spring. A blueberry needs a certain amount of cold weather to bloom and produce well. A chilling hour is the amount of time the temperature stays between 32 and 45 degrees.







President: Paul Branesky, Pictures by Fred Engelbrecht

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

Southern highbush varieties start their transformation from vegetative growth to blossom growth during the months of August and September. When the blueberries start losing their leaves in November and December you will be able to see the blossom nodes start to swell. The blossom nodes will seem to lie dormant in their development stage until the middle to end of February when you will see a burst of beautiful fragrant white blossoms. By the end of February, the blossoms should be pollinated by bees. Then, the flowers will fall off to reveal tiny fruit starting that continues to grow until the middle of April when we begin to see the gorgeous blue color that blueberries are named for.

Bees are very important to the pollination of blueberry bushes. The flowers need to be pollinated in order to drop the flower and have the blueberry start to form. The better pollinated the flowers are, the better quality berries you will get from your bushes.

Blueberries like to be planted in an acid type soil made up of 80% fine pine bark and 20% peat. This provides good drainage and aeration, as well as the acid content necessary for the health of the bushes. Good drainage is very important for a blueberry bush. They do not like wet feet, which can cause root rot.

To establish a new planting, your bushes need water every day for the first week and then every other day for another week. After that, water as needed just as you would water other shrubs.

As mentioned earlier, blueberries like an acid environment, which is why we use an acid fertilizer. She likes to use a granular called 'Blueberry Special', a 12-4-8 mix. When plants are young, do not feed them too much too fast. Start out feeding your young plant 1 tsp. of granular fertilizer and gradually increase the amount as the plants get older and stronger. Feed your bushes once a month from February to October to get maximum growth for the next fruiting season.

The best time to plant blueberry bushes in Florida is in the months of December, January and February when the blueberries are in their dormant or semi-dormant state, before they blossom. If the bush is planted during blossom season, the blossoms should be taken off in order to allow the bush to put on new growth for the next fruiting season instead of trying to put effort into keeping the blooms on after being transplanted. It is also a good idea to cut back a blueberry bush when it is being transplanted no matter what stage it is in. This promotes new growth, which is very important to the health of the bush. You may plant blueberry bushes any time of the year, as long as you follow the watering schedule above.

The Sharpblue blueberry is a wonderful variety. It has a very large leaf. The bush itself is one of her favorites. It makes beautiful canes from the bottom of the bush. Every year after the first two years of its life, it will put on about three of four new canes a year, thus making a four year old bush about 4-1/2 feet wide and about head high. That is if you love your bush and take care of it properly. It has a firm, medium sized fruit with an excellent flavor. It is also one of the first varieties to ripen. In our commercial industry it is one of the leaders because the plant is so vigorous and not very subject to pests and disease.

The Gulf Coast variety is one of Debra's favorites. The bush actually looks like a landscape plant. It has smaller, thinner, darker green leaves and instead of having so many canes it is more like a shrub, dense and full. However, it still canes, it's just different. The flower blossoms come on just a little later than the Sharp Blue but the fruit ripens about the same time. This factor makes it excellent for the fresh market. It has nice medium to large fruit. Great taste!

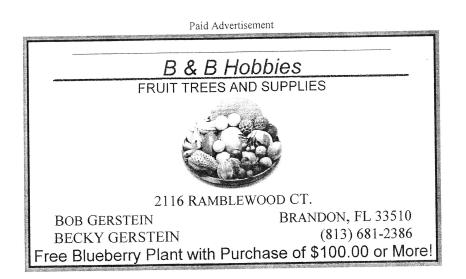
The Misty is a majestic type bush. It tends to grow more upright. It does spread through caning, but the canes tend to reach for the sky making it a slender bush. The leaves on this bush are a lot like the Gulf Coast, dark green and leathery, thin and slender. There is only one drawback to this variety and that is that it tends to over bear when it is young. So it takes more care, to trim off about half the blossoms for the first few years so the plant doesn't get stressed out. But on the other hand it blossoms around the same time as the Sharpblue, making it an excellent pollinator. The fruit on the bush are huge.

\*\*Since Debra's presentation several more highbush cultivars have become available, including: Emerald, Jewel, Millennia, Windsor, Sebring, Savory-Florida Rose, and Springhigh.

UF/IFAS Publication #1192 (2004) provides the homeowner with good, basic information for growing blueberries. For more information, refer to: <a href="http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg359">http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg359</a>.

## 20 With Sympathy CS

With great sorrow we announce that club member Brenda Hendrickson passed away on Saturday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Brenda was the wife of our Seed Chairman and board member, Andrew (Andy) Hendrickson. She was an educator and taught and mentored for over 20 years.

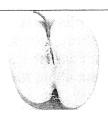




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#### 🔊 July's Tasting Table 🗷

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
Vega	White rice and chicken fricassee	Marshall	Pasta, tomato-onion salad
Coronel	Bibingka	Orr	Coleslaw
Scott	Watermelon	Davies	Sausage and shells
Maranto	Almond meringue cookies	Payne	Banana nut cake
White	New England corn casserole	Young	Salsa & chips, cookies, pineapple
Branesky	Opoe Philipino dish, Strawberry	Aneja	Vegetable rava uppuma Indian
	guavas, rambutan fruit		dish, curry leaves
Gerstein	Watermelon, hot peppers	Male	Chocolate cake, vegetables
Whitfield	Watermelon	Sweet	Key lime pie
Lavalette	Potato salad	Ferreira	Potato salad
Conroy	Mangos	Lee	Pear and mango crunch
Conradt	Bean salad	Ferst	Pumpkin banana cake
Starnes	Salad mix and dressing	McAveety	Chocolate chip walnut banana bread
Clarke	Plantains, chicken salad,	Shigemura	Stewed figs, egg rolls, mango
	cheesecake, raspberry Ice tea	and Sawada	salsa, coconut cake
Novak	Apple cake, lemon bars, fresh pineapple, fruit juices		

### & Lemon Blueberry Bread (1 loaf) 🗷

1 ½ cup all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

6 tablespoons unsalted butter (room

temperature)

3/4 cup granulated white sugar

½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

2 large eggs

1 tablespoon grated lemon peel (zest)

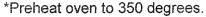
½ cup milk

½ cup nuts (optional)

Glaze: ¼ cup sugar

1 cup blueberries

2 tablespoons lemon juice



<sup>\*</sup>Butter or spray loaf pan with Pam.

In bowl of electric mixer, or with a hand mixer, beat the butter until softened and add the sugar. Continue to beat until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in the vanilla extract and lemon zest. With the mixer on low, add the flour mixture (in 3 additions) and the milk (in 2 additions) alternately, starting and ending with the flour. Mix only until combined. Gently fold in the blueberries.

<sup>\*</sup>In small bowl mix flour, baking powder and salt.

\*Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 55 to 65 minutes, or until the bread is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

\*Meanwhile, in a small saucepan bring 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tablespoons lemon juice to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves.

\*When the bread is done remove from the oven and place on a wire rack.

Pierce the hot loaf all over with a wooden skewer or toothpick and then brush the top of the loaf with the hot lemon glaze. Cool the loaf in the pan for about 30 minutes. Remove loaf from the pan and let cool completely on a wire rack.

Delicious served with a scoop of ice cream and/or blueberry sauce.

Blueberry Sauce: ½ cup sugar

2 teaspoons cornstarch

1/4 cup water
1 pint blueberries

1 teaspoon lemon or lime juice (optional)

In a pan combine sugar and cornstarch. Stir in water. Add blueberries. Bring to a boil and simmer about 4 minutes (until thickened). Remove from heat- add lemon juice. Chill.

#### & What's Happening CZ

#### by Paul Zmoda

We got to taste our first crop of dwarf pawpaws – Asimona parviflora. They looked like miniature mangoes – light greenish skins with deep orange flesh inside. There was not much to eat because of the size of the numerous seeds. From the crop of two trees, one tasted better than the other. The flavor was exotic and hard to describe – a rare taste of the subtropics.

I was field-grafting some white sapotes when I heard a loud buzzing sound. It got louder and louder until it could not be ignored. A honeybee swarm was in progress and headed my way! A whirling cloud of thousands of bees, maybe 30' wide by 20' tall, was slowly making its way across the cow pasture. Eventually, the bees settled onto a holly tree and became a dense, seething mass — apparently to rest for the night. By mid-morning the following day, they were gone. I have never before seen this intense insect activity. It sure was an interesting spectacle.

Well, thanks to the fruit-inducing procedure that calls for driving nails into tree trunks, we are eating our first "Hood" pears. A few had dropped off, turned yellow and softened indoors. They were absolutely delicious.

This "nailing" (as well as other treatments, such as beating and girdling) works. I continually wonder why. It is sometimes said that these procedures make the trees "think" they are going to die so they hurry to produce seeds for a future generation to carry on the species' survival. Well, trees can't think, and these trees usually don't die. What I believe is happening is that the induced injuries impede the sugar-rich sap to linger above ground in the fruiting areas instead of travelling to the roots.

I suspect that there are also other chemicals in the sap that trigger flowering. My hypothesis is this: the more nails used, the more flowers produced and then – fruit. Any readers care to test this? Let me know, and I will help you conduct the experiment

### 🔊 Jene's Tropical Fruit Festival 🗷

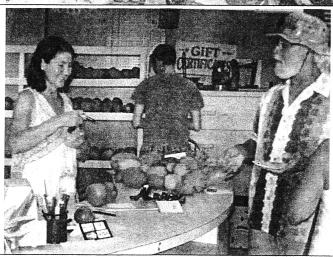
Some of our members volunteered to help out at Jene's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Tropical Fruit Tasting Festival, which was held on July 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Members helped out by answering buyers' questions. Inside the office area, two of our members and others served tropical fruit to attendees.

Our own RFCI photographer, Fred Engelbrecht was there and captured the event on film.





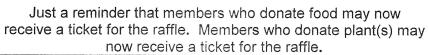








## 🔊 July's Plant Exchange 🗷





Plant	Donor	Winner
2 Chaya spinach	Bob Heath	Matt, A. Ruawreath
3 Pineapple	Bob Heath	S. Sumner, Provencher
Kei apple	Bob Heath	J. Oliver
2 Loquat	Bob Heath	R. Conradt
5 Passion fruit	Charles Novak	
Purple yam	Charles Novak	
8 Malabar spinach	Ed Musgrove	Gamboni, Rivera, Whitfield, Ponticos
3 Cherry of the Rio Grande	Thom Scott	M. Whitfield, T. Potts
Pink guava	Paul Branesky	A. Stark
Eggplant	Paul Branesky	*
Breadfruit	Paul Branesky	
2 Prickly pear	Bob Gerstein	S. Sheldon
Hawaiian plumeria	J. Newcombe	B. Mathews
Edible cactus	P. Zmoda	L. Gamboni
lchiban eggplant	S. Lavalette	R. Shigemura
Garlic chives	S. Lavalette	J.Oliver
Cactus	S. Lavalette	L. Gamboni
Kei apple	B. Levesque	W-101.00
Lemon grass	Barb Orr	
4-5 Agaves	Barb Orr	
Banana	M. Sweet	
White Sapote	T. Ferreira	
Alma fig	T. Ferreira	B. Payne
Aloe vera	R. Conradt	
Citronia	J. Somes	
Pecans	S. Lee	
2 Yellow guava	M. Nizan	
9 Jackfruit	Danny Janis	Novak, Sweet, Provencher, Campani, Branesky, Porter, Potts

#### 20 Membership Directories C3

It's not too late to pick up your directory. If you didn't pick up your copy of the new RFCI Membership Directory at the July meeting, you may do so at the August meeting.

#### Newsletter Editor Needed C3

This is my last official newsletter as editor. I want to thank all the folks who helped make it easy to complete this task every month for the last two years. Many thanks to Paul Zmoda for his monthly column. Paul, you provide great insight and inspiration to all of us. Thanks to Bob and Paula Heath who continued to provide support even though Bob "officially" handed over the newsletter to me. Thank you to Fred Engelbrecht, who has provided many photos, including those in this issue. Last, but not least, many, many thanks to Charles and Linda Novak who actually take my copy to the printer and who do the painstaking work of sending it out. As of this printing, I do not believe we have a replacement newsletter editor. If you are ready to get more involved, please consider "stepping up" and becoming the RFCI newsletter editor. You will receive lots of support from a group of dedicated people, including me, when I am able. For more information, contact Charles or Linda Novak at the meeting, call them at (813) 754-1399 or email them at <a href="mailto:charles.novak@gmail.com">charles.novak@gmail.com</a>, or you can contact me at <a href="mailto:profs\_stautz@yahoo.com">profs\_stautz@yahoo.com</a> or at 727-280-4907.

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