



December 2019

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

[Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com](mailto:Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com)

<http://www.facebook.com/TampaBayChapterRareFruitCouncilIntlInc>

Meetings are held the second Sunday, 2:00 P.M.  
at the American Legion Post 111,  
6918 N. Florida Ave, Tampa 33604

### ∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

**Important: Please note the change in our monthly meeting venue beginning with the December meeting. See page 86 for a map.**

New address for meetings:

American Legion Post 111  
6918 N. Florida Ave, Tampa, FL 33604



**December 8<sup>th</sup> - 1:00pm - Please note the earlier time for this event – The Club's Annual Holiday Social** – celebrate the holidays with other Club members. Volunteers are needed to help set up. If you are available to help, please arrive about 11:00 A.M.

Charles Novak will speak on protecting your tender plants and trees from cold snaps. Please bring a covered dish (salads, vegetables, desserts, etc.) The Club will provide the turkeys, ham, tableware and drinks. Please bring an item to donate to the free raffle (such as plants, small gifts - perhaps an item you received but can't use). You may bring your own place setting (plate, utensils, glassware) to help reduce waste.



### ∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Tony Johnson Treasure Island

President: Fred Engelbrecht; Vice Presidents: Cora Coronel and Kenny Gil; Secretary: Jager Mitchell; Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher

## ∞ Annonas and their relatives ∞ With Har Mahdeem

Annona expert, Har Mahdeem, spoke at November's meeting about the Sugar Apple and its relatives. Har began working with tropical fruits and producing potted trees, in Amazonia when he was still a child. In Florida he worked at tropical fruit nurseries for over 20 years, including hybridizing and evaluating Annonas, during most of those years. The Annona inter-specific breeding project also included trips to Guatemala, Yucatan, and Brazil, to collect fruit trees to breed with. The focus of the breeding project was to produce better varieties of Sugar-Apples, and several other closely related species of Annona.

For the past 7 years, Har has been providing fruit-tree services at many locations, now concentrating on tree nutrition and custom grafting, consultations and training on growing these interesting and tasty fruits.

Annonas are easily grown in containers, fruit very quickly – in 2-5 years from seed, and most can tolerate temperatures as low as the mid-20's. Some will drop their leaves either for a brief time in winter, or in response to a freeze, but will regrow them quickly. Just don't consume the seeds of Annonas, as they are toxic.

There are over 2000 species of Annonas, hundreds with edible fruit. Below are some of the interesting types of Annonas discussed:



Sugar apple or sweetsop *Annona squamosa*  
Most widely grown variety of Annona.



Sugar apple can also be Red or purple.



Cherimoya or Chirimoya - *Annona cherimola*

Flavor is rich and complex. There are many varieties with wild variations in flavor. Makes great rootstock for all other Annonas.



Atemoya (***Annona cherimola*** hybridized with ***Annona squamosa***).

Atemoya is favorite for Florida, as it can take the heat and humidity, but also can handle a freeze. Some varieties produce fruit as large as 5 pounds.



Ilama ***Annona diversifolia*** When the fruit is split, it is ready to eat.

Large fruits, often 6", and delicious.



Custard apple ***Annona reticulata*** Fruits taste better on a

branch grown in the sun, rather than one in the shade. Sweet, tart, perfumy flavor.



Soursop or Guanabana ***Annona muricata***

Soursop cannot take a freeze, and needs protection from that, but soursop is such a delicacy, it is definitely worth the extra effort.



Native to Florida, the Pond apple or alligator apple, *Annona glabra* often found growing near cypress trees near wet areas.



Brazilian custard apple *Rollinia deliciosa*

Taste is soft, sweet, often compared to lemon meringue pie. Tree is also very flood tolerant.



Club President Fred Engelbrecht, speaker Har Mahdeem, and longtime Club members Paul Zmoda, and Jerry Coronel chat about Annonas before the meeting began. Photo George Campani



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## ☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda

Cool weather has finally arrived and it is much appreciated. One morning saw the temperature dip into the forties before Thanksgiving.

We are eating lots of persimmons lately: Saijo and Honan Red both made large crops this year. Speaking of large crops – this has been our best year for bananas. Orinoco, Goldfinger, and Brazilian are keeping us well fed, either soft-ripe, or green and cooked or fried.

I brought the potted soursop tree indoors for the winter and began to hand-pollinate the flowers as they appear. I gave the mango tree a good heading back so it will fit inside its greenhouse when I cover the frame with plastic sheeting. I do this each fall.



Saijo Persimmon – photo by Paul Zmoda

Wooden frame that Paul will put plastic on to protect the mango tree underneath.

Photo Bryon Provencher

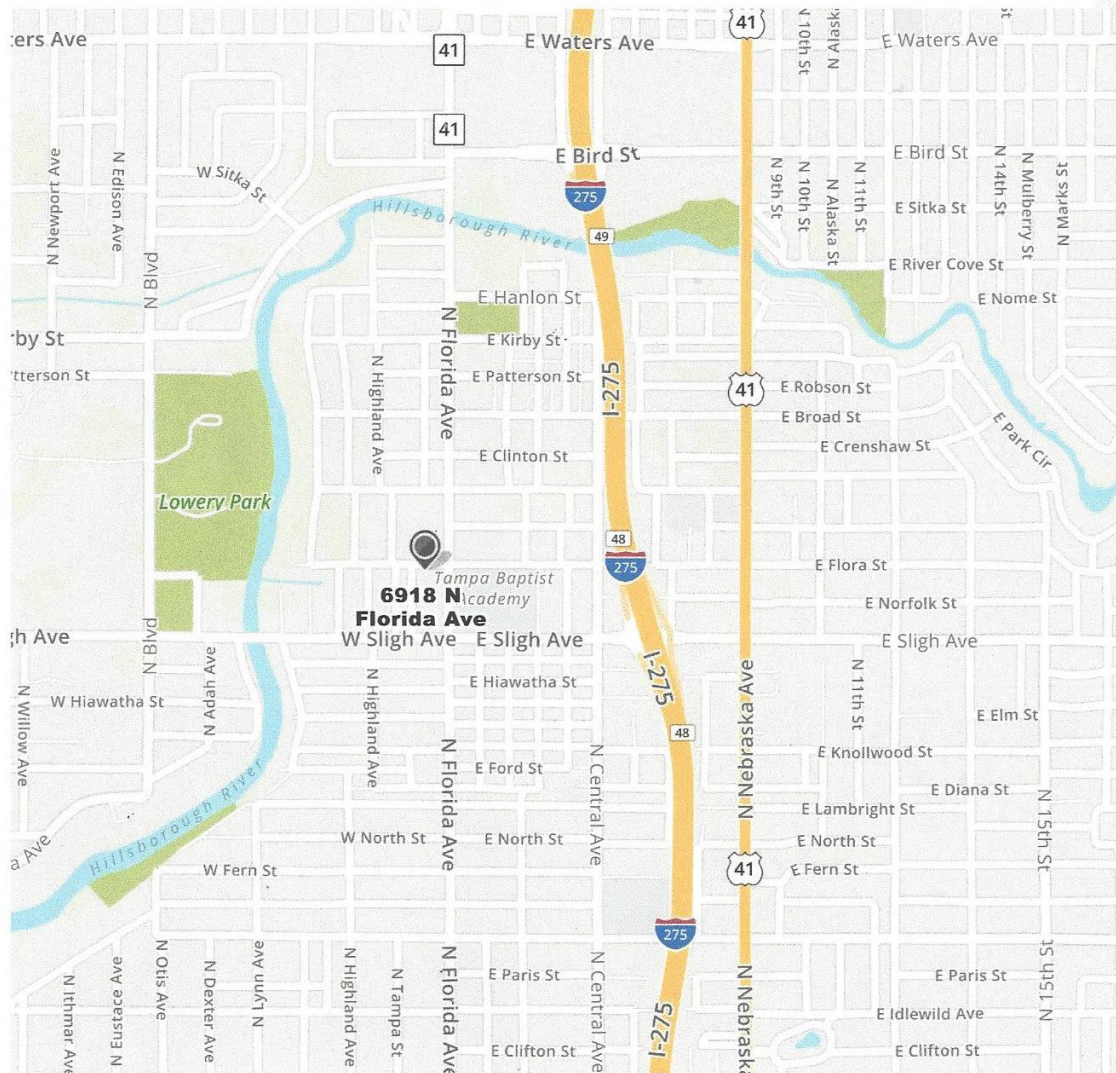




**6918 N Florida Ave**

Tampa | FL 33604-5560

mapquest



American Legion Post 111

6918 N. Florida Ave, Tampa, FL 33604

Exit 48 off 275, Sligh Ave head west on Sligh Ave, take a right onto Dearborn (just AFTER the intersection of N Florida Ave.)

There is no entrance to 6918 N Florida on N Florida itself. It is easiest to pass N. Florida and take Dearborn.

You will see the parking area on the right before you meet with W Flora St.

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## ∞ Club Notes ∞

Send in your submissions for the newsletter, pictures, notes of interest, events, tips, recipes, questions, etc. - please send them to [bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com)  
Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **December 22nd**.

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## ∞ Membership information ∞

### NEW MEMBERS

Download and fill out a membership application from: <https://rarefruit.org/membership/>,  
and send with check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI to:  
Tampa Bay RFCI, 39320 North Ave., Zephyrhills, FL 33542.

### RENEWING MEMBERS

Send check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI and mail to:  
Tampa Bay RFCI, 39320 North Ave., Zephyrhills, FL 33542.

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***The objectives of The Tampa Bay Rare Fruit Council International:***

*To inform the public about the merits and uses of fruits common to this region and encourages the cultivation, collection, propagation and growth of fruits that are exotic or unusual to west central Florida. The club also encourages the development of new fruit varieties, cooperating with local and foreign agricultural agencies.*

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Tampa Bay RFCI  
39320 North Ave.  
Zephyrhills, FL 33542