



RFCI

December 2020

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>
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 ⌘



From the President:

To all the members,

Like you, I am very disappointed not to have a meeting since March and no USF Spring or Fall plant sales.

I trust that the vaccine developed will give us a brighter outlook for 2021.

The board wishes all of our members a happy and safe holiday, and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

I look forward to resume our meetings next year as soon as it is safe for everyone to get together.

Thank you for your patience!

Fred Engelbrecht

⌘ Welcome New Members ⌘

Dylan Chadwell Tampa

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

Tampa Loses Beloved Gardener

Local avid gardener and rosarian John Starnes passed away tragically in a fire at his residence November 26, 2019. John was a passionate horticulturalist, eagerly sharing his knowledge of plants with anyone. As a landscaping consultant, he assisted many people in selecting the proper plants for their homes. He also authored his own magazine “The Garden Doctor”, and for many years wrote a garden advice column in the then-named St. Petersburg Times newspaper. He loved roses, with a special fondness for the cracker rose. His home in Tampa was a lush jungle of all the plants he loved and enjoyed.



John was a long time member of the Tampa Rare Fruit Council, and was often found at the meetings talking about plants with other members and offering his wisdom. John was passionate about the Tampa Rare Fruit Council’s educational efforts, and bequeathed his estate to the Council to further these worthy efforts.

The J. Starnes Tampa Rare Fruit Council Scholarship and Grant program was developed from this gift to assist college or university students, promoting the study of horticulture and/or agrisciences in Florida.

∞ What’s Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda



Photo: Paul Zmoda

It’s finally beginning to cool off a little. Hurricane Eta brought over eight inches of rain here. The trees seemed to handle it, but the vegetable garden is in bad shape – only the corn and kale are unaffected. The sweet corn is a strain that is uncommon here; the seed was hand-carried from Cuba.

Our passionfruit is doing great. *Passiflora miniata* makes a very tasty fruit if hand-pollinated. It blooms heavily in the cooler months, but some flowers are present all year long. This species is easily confused with *P. vitifolia*, as both have large, red flowers, but the leaves differ in that *P. miniata* leaves are not lobed and those of *P. vitifolia* are three lobed.

Members Plant Sale November 8th

Plant sales were as brisk as the winds from T.S. Eta at the members plant sale Sunday morning. The wind didn't keep people away at all. It was so good to see members we had not recently seen due to Covid. Spirits were up as shoppers found that special plant, a good garden book, fresh produce, or handmade garden art. Members were able to pick up some free seeds from the seed chairman and say hello. It was wonderful to see everyone having a nice time, even behind those masks!



Photo: George Campani



Photo: George Campani



Photo: George Campani



Photo: George Campani



Photo: George Campani



Photo: George Campani



Photo: George Campani



Photo: George Campani



Photo: D. Provencher



Photo: D. Provencher

Thank you volunteers!

Volunteers did a wonderful job planting, pruning, and cleaning up weeds in the Club's Memorial Garden at USF on November 8th. Fresh mulch was spread around all the trees. Jerry and Cora donated an Avocado, Sapodilla, Cherry of the Rio Grande, and a Jackfruit. The Club itself donated a Mango tree. Kim Hutton, the manager of the Gardens was very pleased with the end result - a fresh, new, clean look.

Volunteers: Jerry and Cora Coronel, Roshan Premraj, George Campani, Jager Mitchell, Paul and Maryann Branesky, Chris Ramirez and his mother Patty, Hillary Cosenza, Angela Rodriguez, Scott Petersen, Tom Schaefer, Yuko Kubo, and Yoshimi Tamura.

A really BIG Thanks to all volunteers for their hard work!!



Member Questions

Question: We just bought a home in St. Pete with an enormous old mango that really needs a heavy pruning, as it is too close to the house and electrical wires attached to the home. Can we give this tree a hard prune and still have it regrow?

Answer: Yes, mangoes can take a moderate or even a severe prune and bound back to produce. A season or two may be lost of fruiting, but the end result is worth it, as the pruning will clean out dead or weak growth, open the canopy, and provide for easier harvest.

Certainly, due to the dangers of the proximity of the tree to the house and power, a professional should be consulted.

Pruning is normally done after fruiting season for the tree, and should be finished by the end of December, no matter the variety. Mangoes fruit on mature wood; branches that are 6 weeks old or older.

In the future you can maintain the tree at a better height yourself. Fruit trees in general benefit from pruning, not only to keep shape, and make the tree more productive, but also to make it easier to access the fruit.



Trees available for sale to members:

Avocados in 3-gallon pots, ready to plant, \$25 each.

Varieties:

- Bacon
- Choquette
- Duke
- Golden
- Jenco
- Lila
- Mexico Grande
- Red

Also:

Cherry De Rio Grand	\$25 each
Jackfruit	\$25-30 each
Maha Chanook Mango	\$30 each

Thank you, Regards

Cora 727-403-1756 call or text

∞ Club Notes ∞

Contributing to the newsletter is a great way to share what you are doing in your garden with other members, learn what other members are growing, and get your questions answered.

Your submissions for the newsletter, pictures, notes of interest, events, tips, recipes, questions, etc. are especially needed - please send them to bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com
Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **December 22nd.**

The Club would love to hear from anyone interested in joining the Board. It's a great way to learn the goings on within the Club and being involved in planning events, such as the plants sales, farmer markets, fruit tastings, and the Citrus Celebration at the State Fair.

Note: The election of the new Board members will be rescheduled when regular meetings resume. If interested, please come to the next meeting once meetings resume.



∞ 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, 12722 Prosser Rd., Dade City, FL 33525

RENEWING MEMBERS

Send check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI and mail to:
Tampa Bay RFCI, 12722 Prosser Rd., Dade City, FL 33525



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.

Tampa Bay RFCI
12722 Prosser Rd.
Dade City, FL 33525