



RFCI

January 2022

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

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

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

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞



January 9th, 2PM, Citrus and CUPS: Laura Waldo, Scientist from the CUPS Program at UF/IFAS will speak on Florida Citrus and the CUPS program of growing citrus. CUPS (Citrus Under Protective Screen) is one of the newer ways growers are fighting against Greening and other citrus problems, while producing high quality fruit with less fertilizer, water, and pesticides. Learn about this innovative way to protect our beloved citrus. Homeowners may benefit as well by protecting their individual trees with Individual Protective Covers.

Feb 10-21, 2022 Florida State Fair – The Citrus Celebration will be on February 12th, a Saturday, a change in day. The Club's display will be set up for the 10 days of the Fair. Sign-up for volunteers will be at the January 9th meeting. If available, tickets will also be at the meeting.

March 13th – Lychees and Longans - Steve Cucura owner of Fruitscapes Nursery in Bokeelia will discuss lychees and longans. Steve is a member of the Rare Fruit Council, and you may know him as being supplier of tropical fruit trees for the Club's USF plant sales.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Kevin A. Morejon
Linda Culhane
Nicolette Tiedemann

Tampa
Clearwater
Tampa



In Memoriam

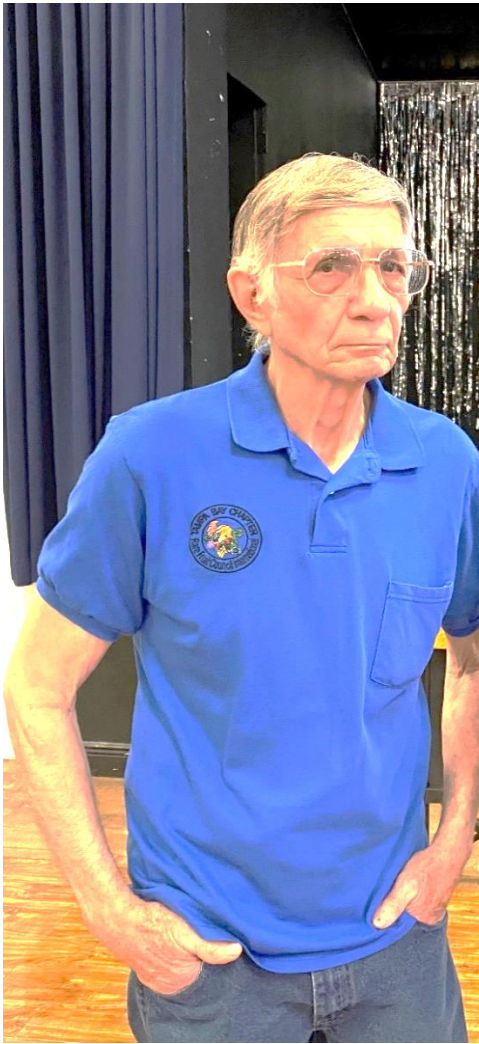


Robert Dickey – member since 1990, husband of Verna Dickey, and avid gardener.

President: Mike Sweet; Vice Presidents: Cora Coronel and Paul Branesky; Secretary: Jager Mitchell;
Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher

Holiday Social 2021
Photos - George Campani





☿ What's Happening ☿

by Paul Zmoda

Happy New Year from Flatwoods Fruit Farm!

I won a small jackfruit seedling at our plant raffle in 2017. It is making male flowers now.

I gave both Surinam cherry trees a heavy pruning. Some trunks were three inches in diameter, and twenty feet tall. Now at five feet, the fruit will be easier to pick.

I picked a nice, perfectly shaped soursop from our potted tree which is indoors for the winter. It was a full two pounds – juicy and good.

The biggest white sapote tree is loaded with flower buds.

The vegetable garden is filled with all kinds of produce: tomatoes, peppers, onions, corn, salad greens, broccoli, cabbage, and more.

Next to the house is an Arabica coffee shrub. It is covered with fruit, called “cherries”, that ripen at different times, and should be picked often.



Coffee fruit “cherries” photo: Paul Zmoda

? Member Questions?



Question: I noticed several young twigs on my mango girdled with almost laser precision, resulting in the death of the twig. What's this?

Answer: The twig girdler beetle. According to the University of Florida, this pest does not usually seriously harm healthy trees, but it is best to gather up and burn or bury any of these twigs now, as the eggs that being laid in the broken off twigs will

hatch in 3 to 4 weeks, and feed inside the twig until next summer. They will then pupate in August and September after which new adults will emerge.



Question: The leaves on my annatto tree suddenly appeared with scalloped edges. No insect was observed, but what is doing this, and is it harmful?

Answer: The leaf cutting bee is the culprit. About the same size and appearance to honey bees, this solitary bee will create these artistic carvings in broadleaf plants to get nesting material. Leaf cutting bees, as their name implies, use 0.25 to 0.5 inch circular pieces of leaves they neatly cut from plants to construct nests. They construct cigar-like nests that contain

several cells. Each cell contains a ball or loaf of stored pollen and a single egg. Therefore, each cell will produce a single bee. Leaf cutting bees construct these nests in soil, in holes (usually made by other insects), in wood, and in plant stems. A diversity of cavities, such as shells of dead snails, holes in concrete walls (like those produced for hurricane shutters), and other holes in man-made objects are used as nesting sites.

Most leafcutter bees overwinter in these nests as newly formed adults. In the following spring these adults chew their way out of the nest. Leafcutters are solitary bees and do not live in large groups or colonies like honey bees. Leafcutters do not aggressively defend nesting areas like honey or bumble bees. Their sting has been described as far less painful than that of a honey bee. Leaf cutting bees will only sting if handled and therefore are not a stinging danger to people.

They are important and very efficient pollinators of many fruits and vegetables, and are used by commercial growers to pollinate their crops. The damage they do to broadleaf plants may decrease the aesthetic appearance of plants, but this does not harm the plant any. Insecticides are not effective, as the bee does not eat the leaves it cuts.

Question: Are there any members of our Club that grow the low-chill kiwis that are supposed to grow in our area – Vincent (female) and Tomuri (male)? I would like to try them, but would appreciate any tips from someone who grows them.



Answer: Members? Anyone growing kiwi?

SPACE PEPPERS

CNN - The International Space Station hosted a taco bash for astronauts as they celebrated the harvest of the first chili peppers grown in space. The crew finally had a chance to taste test the peppers after initially kicking off the plant experiment on the space station in July. Plant Habitat-04 is one of the most complex plant experiments on the orbiting laboratory to date because peppers take much longer to grow than the previous experiments, which included lettuces, flowering zinnias and radishes.

After growing for four months, the peppers were harvested on Friday by NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei. Next, they were sanitized before the crew settled in to taste some of the red and green chilis and take surveys about the flavor and texture.

Pepper plants self-pollinate, so they are easy to grow, and they are a pick-and-eat crop that doesn't have to be cooked. They also contain low microbial levels, so they are safe to eat raw. Following the taste test, NASA astronaut Megan McArthur made her "best space tacos yet: fajita beef, rehydrated tomatoes & artichokes, and HATCH CHILI!"

Humans have been living and working on the space station for 20 years. The bulk of their meals are prepackaged, though sometimes astronauts receive fresh treats from resupply missions. Those care packages, however, will be much more limited on longer deep space missions, including traveling to the moon or Mars.

The longer that packaged food is stored, the more it loses nutrients like vitamin C and vitamin K. Peppers provide a great source of vitamin C, as well as other key nutrients, and these chili peppers tested well on Earth in environments simulating what the plants might experience on the space station.



So far, astronauts have successfully grown 10 different crops on the space station since 2015 and had the chance to sample each one.

∞ Club Notes ∞

Avocado trees! Get your avocado trees! Cora and Jerry have been busy grafting a wide variety of avocado trees, now available to members.

Choose from Duke, Mexicola Grande, Lula, Choquette, Munroe, Hall, Super Haas, Brogdon, and Bacon. Any tree \$30.

There are choices that will be hardy in all parts of our area. Ask which is best for your growing zone. Cora 727-403-1756



Members who would like the latest  Mango variety list  produced and updated by Ken Roll may contact him at KENNETH_D_ROLL@homedepot.com and request the latest version.



Don't be shy! Show off your garden accomplishments! 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.**

∞ 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.
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