

# RFCI

#### September 2022

## 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 ♥3



<u>September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2:00pm, Josh Jamison</u> - Our speaker will be Josh Jamison, the primary grower and horticulturalist at Cody Cove Fruit Farm and Nursery in Babson Park, FL. He was the garden manager at the HEART Village in Lake Wales from 2013-2022, working as an educator and managing the diversified demonstration farm.

Cody Cove is a small family farm whose goal is to provide nutritious food to the community and promote sustainable agriculture through

offering high quality plants and produce. Its focus is on collecting elite edible plant varieties from around the world and making them available to home gardeners, small farms and beyond.

He will discuss unusual vegetables, and grafting figs and tomatillos.

The Fall Plant Festival - October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> at USF. This is a big fundraiser for the Club, and a whole lot of fun for members to participate in. Volunteers are needed to help set up for plant sale on Friday October 7<sup>th</sup>, and to man the Club's booth on Saturday and Sunday.

A sign-up sheet for members who would like to help out will be at the September meeting, along with more information about the event and how you can help.

#### & Welcome New Members &

Karen Jones Port Richey

Luke and Leah Weaver Lutz

President: Hillary Cosenza; Vice President: Dylan Chadwell; Secretary: Jager Mitchell; Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher



**Note**: The scheduled speaker for August, Dr. Gary Vallad, was unable to present due to illness, and his talk on tomatoes has been rescheduled to March 12, 2023.

Two days before the Club's meeting we lost our Guest Speaker, and our Club's President, Hillary Cosenza, did not want to disappoint the club members; thereupon, Hillary made a last-minute push and was able to get Amanda Streets, (owner of Living Roots Eco Design in St. Petersburg) as our Guest Speaker. Amanda came prepared with her digital screen presentation on Florida Native Plants.

There was a large selection of native plants for club members to view or purchase at the meeting, and if in the future you are looking for native plants for your yard; Amanda might have the plant that fits your project. Thanks for coming Amanda on such a short notice. - *George Campani* 

#### Edible Florida Native Plants Speaker: Amanda Streets



For the August meeting, Amanda Streets of Living Roots, gave a wonderfully informative discussion on utilizing Florida's very own edible plants in the landscape.

Native plants are built for Florida's weather and environment and are often the host plants for native butterflies, and attract other pollinators as well. Native wildlife depend on the food sources these plants provide. Some of these plants are becoming endangered, and need protection. Many are beautiful additions to your landscape, and all these factors make them great choices for the garden.

Amanda emphasizes the importance of absolutely positive identification of the plant before you consume it. There are many excellent resources for learning plant identication, see list below.

The top plants on Amanda's list for edibles are some of those you actually would want to eat, as they taste good. Here are some of her favorites:

Elderberry – berries are edible, used to make various beverages, cook them first.

Yaupon holly – the berries are toxic, but the leaves are used to make tea. Yaupon holly is the most caffeinated plant in North America.

Simpson stopper – edible berries

Muscadine grape – edible fruit

Maypop – the native passionfruit, the fruit is edible, and leaves are used for tea.

Blueberry – native species of blueberries are not only beautiful plants, but have edible fruit.

They enjoy growing under pines, or use pine mulch.

Blackberry – thorns, yes, but the fruit is tasty.

Marlberry – tasty fruit, good for jam, likes shade Beauty berry – another shade plant – brilliant purple berries are edible

Red mulberry – fruits are tasty, red to black, just don't plant near water lines due to aggressive roots.

Bird pepper – yes, the birds love them, but they can be used as you would any hot pepper

Lamiaceae – native herbs from this family such as Florida betony, wild basil, dotted horsemint, and calaminthe, can be used same as other herbs.

Spiderwort – eat the purple flowers, leaves are used topically same as aloe.

Cocoplum – the large plum-like fruits are edible, and well as the nut inside.

Sea grape – edible berries, used for wine and jam, plant is salt tolerant.

Coontie – the roots are edible, although harvest would have to be minimal so as to not harm the plant.

Pine – there are 7 native pine species, the needles, bark, and nuts can be eaten.

Violets - the white or purple flowers and the leaves can be eaten. Shade plant.

Prickly pear cactus – pads and fruits are edible, (once de-thorned)



There are many resources for purchasing native plants.

Florida Association of Native Nurseries (Your county) Native Plant Society Florida Wildflower Federation Local nurseries specializing in natives

Just remember, whether you are foraging in the wild, or purchasing from a nursery, be sure of the identification of the plant before consuming. Even those selling plants can make mistakes.

**Amanda Streets** 

Living Roots Eco Design - Vegetable gardens, eco-friendly landscaping, florida natives, plant nursery

4950 38th Ave N St. Petersburg, Fl 33710 LivingRootsEcoDesign.com Garden@livingrootsecodesign.com

(727) 337-4877

#### At the August meeting – photos by George Campani













#### **AVOCADOS**

Many members stopped to view the avocado display on Sunday. The avocados were labeled and supplied by Jerry Coronel and then staged by, Rochan Premraj, for members to view. The different shapes and sizes made for an interesting display. Included in the display were the large Choquette avocado, the long Wilson avocado, the small Joey avocado, and the pear-shaped Lula avocado, just to name a few. These different varieties of avocados are grown in our area, and this "informational display" might be helpful when looking to grow avocados. Great Display! – *George Campani* 



#### >> What's Happening ☞

#### by Paul Zmoda



Various avocados – photo – Paul Zmoda

Yellow passionfruit drop from the treetops sporadically, so I never know how many I will get on a day-to-day basis. Pindo palm fruit, on the other hand, are quite predictable – not only can I see the large, bright orange clusters, but they continuously produce a large crop about every two weeks. When they begin to drop off, I can shake off the ripe ones easily.

Speaking of large crops — "Kari" starfruits are ready and falling. Starfruit trees are reliable producers and will crop several times a year. They also rebound quickly from damaging freezes and get right back to making fruit with little delay.

We are eating avocados daily now for weeks but it appears the feasting is about to end. Brogdon, Zutano, Poncho, Mexicola Grande and Fantastic produced very well this year. With luck, Duke, Hall, Golden, and Choquette will join in next year.

I planted some persimmon rootstocks in the orchard to get established before I field-graft in the spring.





Seed Table and Speaker Amanda Streets with Club President Hillary Cosenza and Vice President Dylan Chadwell – photos George Campani

### In Memoriam

Founder of Harris Citrus Nursery in Lithia, Paul Leo Harris, 94, passed away May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In 1984, Paul started Harris Citrus Nursery and enjoyed many years of producing many different types of citrus. He worked with many Rare Fruit clubs, passing his knowledge of citrus to anyone who wanted to know. He also worked with local machinists to develop a specialized watering system for the groves, and also developed a walk-through spray down station that is now used throughout the citrus industry.

#### లు Club Notes ఆ



<u>Spanish Eyes Lavender</u> – To the person who asked about a lavender that would grow in Florida, this is the one I have in my Dade City garden. It was a superbloomer all spring long, and has survived our summer. It even reproduced from seed.

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 <a href="mailto:bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com">bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Submissions for the next newsletter due by: September 22nd.

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#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Download and fill out a membership application from: <a href="https://rarefruit.org/membership/">https://rarefruit.org/membership/</a>, and send with check of 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

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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.