



RFCI

March 2023

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 Unity North Tampa Church,

19520 Holly Lane, Lutz, FL 33558

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

Important - Change in meeting location!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Please read!

Beginning with our March meeting, and for the foreseeable future, Club meetings will be at the following location.

Unity North Tampa Church
19520 Holly Lane
Lutz, FL 33558

Unity North Tampa Church is right off North Dale Mabry Highway, just north of Tampa, and easily reachable from all major highways such as I75, 275, Route 41, or 589.



March 12, Tomatoes in Florida. Dr. Gary Vallad, a vegetable pathologist at UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, will speak on growing tomatoes.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

William Martinez

Spring Hill

Carolyn Cheatham Rhodes

Clearwater



In Memoriam



Mary Lohn, wife of Steve Lohn, members since 2003.

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

The Club's Horticultural Display at the State Fair:

By George Campani

The Club's Horticulture Display Committee was busy once again this year at the State Fair. The Horticulture Display is a 10ft-By-10ft area where the Club displays fruit trees during the entire Florida State Fair located in the Florida Center Building. This year's "Display Theme" was plant varieties grown by members of our Club in the Tampa Bay area. These plants were enjoyed by many fair goers as they stopped to look at Rochan's (potted) Mango Tree with its panicles on full display; and his Sapodilla Tree (potted) with fruit on it. There were three (potted) Loquat Trees all displaying fruit on the tree to catch the eye of many fair goers. Some fair goers were interested in cold hardy avocados and we had a (Potted) Fantastic Avocado Tree on display. There was a Lychee Tree, Passion Fruit plant, and Achacha (Yellow Mangosteen) plant all for the public to view.

One great conversation piece was the Citrus Tree Defender - it covers citrus trees with white screening to protect the tree from the psyllid that can spread the citrus greening disease. The Tree Defender was installed on the front corner of the Display for all to see. Note the oranges were fake. Great job Tom!



A special thanks to the Club's Horticultural Display Committee for their hard work:

Paul Branesky, Tom Schaefer, Jager Mitchell, Hillary Cosenza, Charles Novak (supplied the Tiki Bar), Jerry Amyot, Fred Engelbrecht, George Campani, and Scott Petersen who worked and manned the Club's Horticultural Display.

A special thanks to the Club Members that supplied the trees for the Club's Horticultural Display: Jene Van Butzel, Rochan

Premraj, Tom Schaefer, and Chris Ramirez.



The 2023 Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair on Sunday, February 19, 2023

By George Campani



The Club's 2023 Citrus Celebration has once again met the challenge when the Florida State Fair moved the date for the Citrus Celebration from the first Saturday to the second Sunday of the State Fair; making earlier producing varieties of citrus harder to obtain. Furthermore, the problems of HLB (Greening) that attacks citrus trees were exasperated this year by Hurricane Ian that damaged trees and cut fruit production of commercial growers and home growers as well. All this did make getting citrus fruit a bit more challenging. Invariably, we did get enough varieties of citrus to show the public that citrus has many different tastes that are quite different.

The challenge of a new location at the State Fair (Special Events Center Building) was once again met by our members working together to make this annual event run smooth. A new floor plan, fruit cutting and tasting tray layout were quickly coordinated, which included the juice making set-up. There were over 20 varieties of citrus to sample for tasting and a large sitting area with round tables for Fair Goers to enjoy their fruit and juice.



The Citrus Celebration would not be complete without its "fresh squeezed juice" and Paul Branesky through his persistence, was able to obtain the Juicy Crunch Tangerines (a Citrus Celebration favorite) and made fresh squeezed juice for the many Fair Goers to enjoy. Paul - "It was delicious! Great Job." Note, Paul ran out of juice early this year.

Also included in the Citrus Celebration was an area for our "Information and Citrus Display Tables" that gave the "Fair Going

Public" not only many varieties of citrus fruit (everything from large Pummelos to small Kumquats) to view and have discussion on, but in addition, we had the new handout "Home Citrus Educational Series" (supplied by the University of Florida IFAS) on citrus in the home landscape. For the Fair Going Children we continued to hand out the "Florida Citrus Activity Book" (lesson and coloring), once again, supplied by UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred, FL.

This new location turned out to be a good location for foot traffic, and the members enjoyed its larger space.





Over the years we have lost not only club members that have supplied citrus for the Club's Citrus Celebration, but many commercial suppliers as well. This was a tough year for citrus growers; so, a "special thanks" to this year's citrus suppliers: W.G. Roe and Sons in Winter Haven, Florida (was our biggest supplier, once again). They donated citrus for tasting: Tango Mandarins, Juicy Crunch Tangerines, Autumn Honey Mandarins, Honey Belle Tangelos, Hirado Buntan Pomelos, and Hamlin Oranges. They, also supplied the Juicy Crunch Tangerines for our juice.

Dundee Groves in Dundee, Florida donated: Red Grapefruit and Valencia Oranges.

Ridge Island Groves in Haines City supplied: Red Navel Oranges, Navel Oranges, Orlando Tangelos, and Juicy Crunch.

IMG Citrus in Vero Beach, Fl donated: Marsh White Grapefruits, Ruby Red Grapefruits, Valencia Oranges, and Tango Mandarins.

Thanks, also, to the Club members that donated citrus, jackfruit, and starfruit.

A special thanks to U.F. Citrus Research and Education Center for their Educational Handouts.

Thank you to our Club President, Hillary Cosenza, for her hard work and a great job.

A "Special Thanks" to Paul Branesky for being the Juice Maven and keeping his tradition of juice making.

A special thanks to the volunteers that gather fruit at the Citrus Arboretum (in Winter Haven) for the Citrus Celebration's Information and display tables: Hillary Cosenza, Alice Stein, Carmen Goodwin, George Campani, Charles Novak and Paul Branesky.

Thanks to the many hard-working volunteers that made the Citrus Celebration a big success. It could not happen without the hard-working volunteers. Thank you: Hillary Cosenza, Tom Schaefer, Verna Dickey, Alice Stein, Paul Branesky, Allen Susi, Mary Ann Branesky, Debbie Campani, Kenny Gil, Dylan Chadwell, George Campani, Mike Sweet, Kathy Godwin, Robert Godwin, Yuka Topping, Yoshimi Tamura, Ricki Bowman, Joy Bowman, Bill Baron, Suzanne Baron, Ray Tiedemann, Paul Zmoda, Anni Ellis, Patty Moore, Shellie Sweet, Elizah Penn, Gabriel Penn, Sarah Penn, Joel Penn, Ana Bowman, Jerry Bowman, Tiffanie Kremer, Raffina Dindial, Ugar Soyly, Sher Curtis, Maya Premraj, Rochan Premraj, Julene Clarke, Susan McAveety. I apologize to those I have missed.

Thank you to Brenda Gregory (State Fair Coordinator) for her hard work.





Note regarding photography for this newsletter. All photos of the Fair display and Citrus celebration provided by George Campani. Thank you, George!

✧ What's Happening ✧

by Paul Zmoda



6 gallons of fermenting wine
Photo: Paul Zmoda

I wish this nice, moderate weather was like this all year. It makes working outdoors so pleasant, rather than sweaty chores. I made a fourth burn pile of branches large and small. The ashes were spread lightly throughout the orchard and vegetable gardens. The winter veggies are giving way to the summer staples. Loquats are pretty nice this year. The cold weather of last month seems to have kept the fruit fly population low.

The Minneola tangelo tree gave us enough fruit for 2 gallons of juice. Speaking of juice – I thawed two years' worth of frozen grapes plus 16 pounds of jaboticabas and started what looks to be a nice batch of red wine. I planted dozens of pawpaw and ginkgo seeds and up-potted several smaller air-layers of guava, longan, and white sapotes. New Planting: Lemon seedling.

Plant Sales and Fruit Festivals



Strawberry Festival – Thursday March 2 to Sunday 12, 2023 With about 11,000 acres — mostly in west-central Florida — strawberries are worth \$399 million annually in Florida. That represents 10% of the national strawberry value and most of the domestically produced winter crop in the United States. <http://www.flstrawberryfestival.com/>



Blueberry Festival

Brooksville's annual festival is full of one-of-a-kind products, unique local artwork, gifts and decor from near and far, and well... *a lot of blueberries*. Come and explore Downtown Brooksville and see the unique finds our local makers have for you on April 29th & 30th, 2023. <https://www.brooksvilleblueberryfestival.com/about>



Florida Loquat Festival: Celebrating Florida's Urban Fruit

Mark your calendars for our 10th Annual LOQUAT FESTIVAL! March 18, 2023
 Frances Avenue Park 5580 Frances Ave, New Port Richey, FL 34653 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
<http://floridanaturecoast.org/County/Pasco/LoquatFestival/LoquatFestival.aspx>

PLANT SALE

Who: Lavoy Exceptional Center's Agriculture Program (4410 W Main St, Tampa, FL 33607)

When: Saturday, March 11th, 2023, 8am to 12pm or until sold out

Where: The plant sale will be held on the bus-ramp of Lavoy Exceptional Center .

Please come and support the special students and the CTE Ag program at Lavoy Exceptional Center, as we sell plants to raise money to...well...grow more plants! Cash only.



? Member Questions ?

Question: Is it true that elderberries must be cooked before eating?

Answer: Yes, some foods, like cassava and almonds, green potatoes, and ripe elderberry fruits contain trace amounts of cyanogenic glycosides (CNGs). CNGs are compounds that can break down into cyanide. A healthy person can consume these foods if they're properly prepared. Still, some people are more sensitive to CNGs than others.

Heating elderberry juice and straining out the seeds will help you avoid consuming CNGs. Boiling temperatures are often achieved if you're making jams, jellies, pies, or baked goods. It is not necessary to heat the fruits to boiling, however.

Other parts of the elderberry plant contain higher amounts of CNGs, sometimes at levels toxic to humans. This includes unripe berries, stems, leaves, and possibly the seeds, too. Examine fruit clusters carefully and remove any unripe berries. Strain out the seeds as you prepare the fruits.

Another point of caution comes from elderberry's white flower clusters. These look very similar to water hemlock, one of Florida's most poisonous plants. As always, we urge gardeners to be certain of their plant identification before tasting any foraged foods. Source:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/fruits/elderberry.html>



∞ 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: **March 22nd**.

∞ Membership information ∞

NEW MEMBERS

Download and fill out a membership application from: <https://rarefruit.org/membership/>, 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



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
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Dade City, FL 33525