



RFCI

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

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

September 2023

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

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 ∞

September 10th: Mulberries with Josh Jamison. Josh is the primary grower, horticulturalist and nursery worker at Cody Cove Fruit Farm and Nursery in Babson Park. Josh's experiences with hundreds of crops, travel to tropical countries and Florida agricultural sites, has given him much knowledge with edible food crops of the world. Josh has spoken to our Club previously, and he is back! He will share his knowledge about mulberries in Florida.



1:00 – 2:00pm Social Hour

2:00 – 2:30pm Potluck – feel free to bring a covered dish

2:30 – 3:30pm Speaker

3:30 – 4:00pm Raffle – feel free to bring a plant

October 13th (Friday - set-up day) Saturday - October 14 and Sunday - October 15 USF Plant Sale. One of the Club's biggest fund-raisers and a lot of fun. Volunteers needed for this event. Mark your calendar. More information at the September meeting.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Brian Wilder St. Petersburg

Jennifer Healy Land O Lakes

Carlos Holguin Tampa

Peggy Bolden Dade City

Wipa Watson Brandon

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

Finger Limes

With speaker Dr. Manjul Dutt

Dr. Manjul Dutt, assistant Professor at UF/IFAS Citrus Research Center in Lake Alfred, spoke at the August meeting about finger limes. He brought twelve young trees of new varieties for the plant raffle table. His research involves developing new varieties of citrus, including finger limes, which he has been working on for 10 years. Crosses with other citrus varieties have yielded varieties that are excellent choices for Florida.



Finger lime fruit (Credit: USDA)

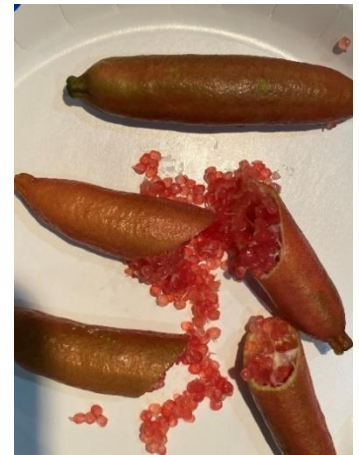
This interesting little fruit, originally from Australia, has taken the culinary world by storm, with demand far exceeding availability. A single fruit, if you can find one, can sell for as much as three dollars. While still a niche crop, finger limes are definitely an interesting fruit to grow, whether you grow them commercially or just have one in a pot on your patio.

Finger limes are quite tolerant to HLB, certainly a desirable trait in a world of greening. Only one tree is needed to get fruit. Fruiting begins as early as two years, and by six years of age, a tree can produce 80-90 fruits. The trees themselves are small, making management and harvesting easy. They produce very well in a container.

Since they are originally from a rainforest environment, they love Florida. The fruits themselves are tart, making them useful for many culinary endeavors. Each fruit is filled with flavorful vesicles “caviar” of juicy tartness that just burst in your mouth. Each variety has a unique flavor profile. These globular vesicles distinguish them from other citrus.

Finger limes are easy to grow. Treat them similar to other citrus. They can adapt to sun, shade, container growing, in the landscape, or even indoors. Dr. Dutt uses Osmocote, and a 20-20-20 Miracle Grow fertilizer regimen on his plants.

When purchasing trees, be sure to purchase plants on rootstock for your area. If growing in central Florida, the rootstock will need to be different than if growing in south Florida. Be leery of internet purchases, which may inferior varieties, or incorrect rootstock. It is best to purchase from reliable Florida growers.



Red finger limes Photo George Campani

To reach Dr. Manjul Dutt with any questions: manjul@ufl.edu
 University of Florida site: australianlimes.ifas.ufl.edu

Sources for finger limes:

Brite Leaf <https://www.briteleaf.com/product/finger-lime/> Purchase individual plants.

Philips Rucks Citrus Nursery <https://ruckscitrusnursery.com/> may need to buy bulk

Southern Citrus <https://southerncitrusnurseries.com/> commercial nursery

☞ What's Happening ☛

by Paul Zmoda

This hot weather is just what our tropical fruit trees like. We could use a little more rain, though. If I don't check our Barbie Pink guava daily, I'm liable to miss some that suddenly puff up and ripen. Fruit flies usually hit them, so I end up throwing a lot of them in the trash – not the compost. I should be bagging them.

Avocadoes are the real stars now. Big Brogdens, medium-sized Mexicola Grandes, or tiny Fantastics keep us well supplied with healthy, creamy goodness. A second round of dragonfruit flowers produced even more than the first blooms. They don't take long to ripen, but when they are, I scoop out the middle and douse it with Mexican lime juice. Really good on a hot day.

I had three pond apple seedlings sitting around and I decided to graft some true cherimoya onto them. All have pushed the buds by two weeks. They even have little flower buds growing. The large tree that I took the budwood from (and gave a light pruning), began to flower too.

New plantings: peppers, tomatoes, and a finger lime.



Dragon fruit – photo Paul Zmoda

August Meeting – Photos by George Campani



The Technical “Crew” getting things up and running



Dr. Dutt, Hillary Cosenza, Dylan Chadwell



Full meeting Room

RARE ENDANGERED - **Netted pawpaw (*Asimina reticulata*)** is

a deciduous flowering shrub found in pine and scrubby flatwoods, sandhills and coastal scrub habitats throughout peninsular Florida. It blooms late winter through spring, producing many flowers that attract a wide variety of butterflies. Netted pawpaw's



Photo by Mary Keim

fragrant showy flowers are creamy white with six petals. The plant is a larval host for the Zebra swallowtail and Pawpaw sphinx moth. The fruits, which appear in spring and summer, are a favorite of birds and small mammals. Humans can eat them too – if you can find a ripe one before the animals do!

Plants prefer dry to moist well-drained sandy soils. Full sun. Very small bush – only 2-4 feet tall.



Image by Classic Deluxe

Common PawPaw (*Asimina triloba*) fruit is the largest edible fruit native to the U.S. and can weigh up to a pound although 5 to 7 ounces is more typical. Flowers are dark maroon. Trees are long-lived, deciduous, 15-20 feet tall. Prefer shady understory, regular moisture.

Find the pawpaw fruit icon  hidden somewhere in this newsletter. Email me to tell me where you found it. First three to email me get their choice of a year old seedling of the netted pawpaw or the common pawpaw at the September meeting. Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com



From the Seed Chairman: Seeds are in!

Members should pick up their garden seeds for fall and winter planting now. See you at the seed table! Planting guides for garden seeds are also available if you do not already have one.

Up and coming: A web site for tropical fruit information.

Matthew is reaching out to other fruit lovers. He is creating the website as described below, and would love input on tropical fruits for his website. If you have information, or know of some experts who would have relevant information, feel free to reach out to him at the email below.

Hello fellow fruit lovers,

I am reaching out because I have been working on a passion project that I believe could be of some value to fellow RFCI Members. I am a University of Florida Master Gardener Volunteer. I started a website last year called TropicalTreeGuide.com where I am documenting different cultivars of tropical fruit (what they taste like, their growth habits, disease resistance, etc.).



I started TropicalTreeGuide.com because I was frustrated with the lack of cultivar-specific information for different fruit trees. As an example, Valencia Pride & Pickering are two completely different cultivars of mango in every sense of the word... but there was nothing out there that would have told me that! So, I decided to document both my own experiences as well as the conversations that I've had with more experienced growers who have a ton of great information that isn't universally known.

The purpose of the website is to provide a free resource to folks who are looking at something like a mango tree, but have no idea which cultivars they should consider. That way they don't buy a Valencia Pride Mango for their small yard, for example.

I currently have 43 different mango cultivars documented with plans to add more and expand into other fruit as well (Avocado, Lychee, etc.).

I would be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you for any information that you can provide on this topic.

Matthew Rowlings tropicaltreeguide@gmail.com

∞ Club Notes ∞

Technology is here! You can renew your membership safely and securely through Square on the Club's webpage, as well as on the Facebook page.



Reminder about bringing in Raffle Plants: Please NO poisonous, noxious, or invasive plants. If you are not sure about a plant, leave it at home. Please identify and label the plants correctly.

ALWAYS WANTED:

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 Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **September 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.
Dade City, FL 33525