



November 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 ∞



November 12th, Edible Palms with Keith Zimmerman.

Local palm expert and effcinado Keith Zimmerman will speak on the varieties of palms that have edible fruits and other parts. Many people are unaware of how delicious some palm fruits are. Come learn about edible palms.

1:00PM – 2:00PM – Social Hour

2:00PM – 2:30PM – Potluck

2:30PM – 3:30PM – Speaker

3:30PM – 4:00PM - Raffle

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Tamika Arcangeli	Odessa
Katie Falcon	Tampa
Samantha Uttech	Tampa
John Schneider	Tallahassee
Carrie Gephart	Riverview
Sharon George	Sun City Center
Jennifer Harkins	Tampa
Autumn	Masson
Jim	Hale
Jude	Dietrich

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

October 2023 USF Plant Sale

Awesome weather, an incredible selection of plants for sale, colorful displays, and smiling volunteers made for a fun weekend at the fall USF plant sale.



Photo: D. Provencher



Photo: Club Website



Photo: Club Website



Photo: Club Website



Photo: Club Website



Photo: Club Website



Photo: F. Engelbrecht



Photo: F. Engelbrecht



Photo: F. Engelbrecht

∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda

We are still having a rain shortage here. Cooler weather is finally here, so that helps. In fact, we had 49 degrees F one recent morning (10/19) which surprised me. Luckily, it didn't seem to faze our soursop tree which is holding fruit and blooming.

None of the true cherimoya flowers set fruit.

The squirrels beat me this year – I got only two pecans for my troubles.

I was invited to speak at the Manatee Club in August. I covered Winemaking and provided samples of my latest dry red, made with several kinds of purple grapes with sixteen pounds of jaboticaba thrown in.

We have so many ripening persimmons currently. Izu beats Fuyu in taste and tree performance. Izu is non-astringent, so it can be eaten either firm or soft ripe.

I finally got a fruit to form on the Purple Haze dragon fruit cactus. Although on the small side, it was an attractive color and quite nice: sweet, and having a berry-like flavor.



Purple Haze Dragon fruit – photo P. Zmoda

The Tree of Life in Peril



The African baobab is an amazing species of tree, dating back 200 million years ago. Also called the “tree of life”, their immense size, and incredible lifespan have earned them being a symbol of positivity for thriving in a land where little else will.

There are over 300 uses for various parts of the tree. The nutritious leaves are boiled and eaten like spinach. The seeds are roasted for a coffee substitute, or pressed for oil. The fruit can be used for juice, jam, or beer, and has six times the vitamin C of an orange, making it an important nutritional complement in Africa. The flowers are edible, and roots are used to make a red dye. The taproot can be eaten like a carrot. The bark is used for rope and baskets. There are also medicinal uses. The hollow trunks hold precious water, or can be sculpted out to make shelter.

The tree also provides shade and is an important part of African culture. Not just the income from trading baobab products, but entire markets are held within the shade of such trees. Baobabs are also a critical part of the ecosystem in the dry savannas, providing food, water, and shelter for animals, birds, lizards. The flowers are pollinated by bats. Many insects also thrive within the tree’s environment.

Farmers are cultivating the baobab, but the work is painfully slow. It can take 15-20 years for a baobab to fruit, and there is much variation in the quality and nutritional properties of the fruits. It takes years to find the best trees to cultivate. Branches from those trees with desired qualities are grafted onto mature trees, and these can fruit in only five years.

Unfortunately this cultivation process can’t happen fast enough. The tree of life is in trouble. Nine of the thirteen oldest and largest baobab trees in Africa have died in just the past decade. These trees, carbon dated to between 1,100 and 2,500 years in age, appear to be victims of climate change. As the ponderosa and pinyon pines in the American West are dying at increasing rates, the warming of the planet is taking its toll in Africa too. Hopefully, somehow, the remaining baobabs will be monitored for their health, and cultivation will provide fruit that will become as common in supermarkets as apples and oranges.

In the U.S., only parts of South Florida and California show promise for growing baobab commercially. The trees will not tolerate freezes. However, despite their size, the trees will grow in containers for many years, and are often used for bonsai surprisingly. These can be grown anywhere as long as they are protected from frost.



Baobab fruits - Aida Cuní Sanchez



Harvested fruit in African village



The seed chairman, Bryon Provencher, with two of the baobab seedlings he grew.



DECEMBER 2ND & 3RD
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
9 AM - 5 PM
\$5 CASH PARKING PER CAR
(FREE PARKING FOR CLASS ATTENDEES)

8 WORKSHOPS OVER 2 DAYS
 (\$25 PER DAY FOR 4 WORKSHOPS)

FOOD FOREST DESIGN, PLANTING & CARING
FOOD OVER PHARMA
FORAGING & ENJOYING WILD EDIBLES
MAKE YOUR OWN HEALTHY FERMENTED FOOD
MICROBE SOLUTION TO IMPROVE SOIL & PLANT HEALTH
GROWING VEGETABLES SUCCESSFULLY
LEARN TO SEE THE BIRDS WE HEAR

**Food Trucks,
 Music &
 KIDS ACTIVITIES
 PHOTO BOOTHS AND...**

VENDORS

Sign up via EventBrite.com
 "Learn & Grow Festival"

23630 SR 19 Howey In The Hills 352-536-3112
www.anaturalfarm.com insta : @anaturalfarm

∞ Club Notes ∞



Got an idea for a topic or a speaker? The link below is a Google Form for Speaker Requests for 2024. Or scan the QR Code for access the form. Either way, just fill it out with your ideas for topics and speakers.

<https://forms.gle/m3MBQfvLMADkimW7A>

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: **November 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