



RFCI

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

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

December 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 ∞



RSVP by December 1st

Additional information on this event is on pages 2 and 3 !

Please read and respond!

No regular monthly meeting.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Zachary Langer	Valrico
Charmine Vickers	Brandon
Julie Garcia & Eric Foecking	Zephyrhills

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

Members Holiday Social – More Information



We are having our Holiday Party at the Regent in Riverview this year, and hope you will join us for this special event. Please note the location, as it is NOT our usual meeting place.

It's going to be fun! We've got so many exciting things planned.

This event is for active TBRFCI members only. **Maximum of 2 attendees per membership.**

The Club will be providing the entrée. Members are welcome to bring hot or cold dishes and desserts. No alcohol, please.

Bring a plant for the raffle!!!!!!

Volunteers are needed to help decorate and set-up: Please arrive at 10-11AM.

All members must RSVP by December 1st. It's so easy! Please RSVP by one of the following methods.

Click on the QR code and fill out the information requested.

Or:

Follow the link below for the form to be filled out:

<https://forms.gle/U3qrToFPvHbiWTG78>

Or:

Reply by email to: Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

Or:

Call/Text Hillary at 727-709-8848

For email/call/text responses, please provide the following:

- 1-Provide your name and your guest's name (maximum of 2 attendees per membership).
- 2-Select entrée – either Chicken Piccata or Eggplant Parmesan.
- 3-If you are bringing a dessert or side dish, please indicate what the dish will be.



There will be an ugly Christmas sweater/shirt/funky outfit contest, so wear your worst one!



There is also a holiday dessert contest, so bring your best one.
There is also a best side dish contest, so bring your most delicious one.

Winners will receive a prize.



For all members bringing a plant for the raffle, you will receive a raffle ticket for the plant raffle.



Edible Palms for Central Florida



With Keith Zimmerman



Dylan Chadwell VP, speaker Keith Zimmerman,
And Hilddary Cosenza, Club President – photo George Campani

November's meeting had Keith Zimmerman MD, speaking about one of his favorite plants groups, Palms! Many people do not realize that among these icons of the Florida landscape, some have edible fruit, and will grow here in Central Florida. Here are some of his favorites.

Butia odorata – the Pindo or Jelly Palm. This iconic palm with its blue/gray foliage can be grown anywhere in Florida as it is hardy to zone 8. The tree itself is just the right size even for smaller yards. Many can be seen in the front yards of older neighborhoods as it was commonly planted locally. The tree is very drought tolerant and very easy to grow. The fruit is delicious, tasting similar to apricot, and can readily be eaten fresh, or made into jelly.



Sabal – this Florida native has fruit that tastes like molasses. *Sabal Mexicana* has bigger fruits. Sabal, being a native, is very well-adapted to Florida weather. Sabal is also hardy throughout Florida.

Serenoa repens – Saw palmetto – another native, the fruit is used medicinally, but tasting like rotted cheese with tobacco juice.... is considered less than palatable.





Syagrus romanzoffiana – Queen palm – this common palm seen everywhere in Florida has edible fruit. The taste is similar to jelly palm mixed with Play-doh. Hardy through zone 9.

Phoenix dactylifera – Date Palm – this enormous date palm has edible fruit, but is difficult to grow here due to its being susceptible to Lethal Bronzing. This palm disease has taken out many stately specimens. Hardy to zone 9. ***Phoenix reclinata*** – a smaller tree will still provide fruit, and the ***Phoenix roebelenii*** or Pygmy palm, the smallest of all – are alternatives.



Salacca wallichiana – Snake Fruit – hardy to zone 10 – has a peach/pineapple taste to the fruit.

Borassus flabellifer - Toddy Palm – has edible fruit of a jelly-like texture reminiscent of pond apple.



Bactris gasipaes – Peach Palm – fruit must be cooked, tastes like tomato soup. May be purchased canned in stores. Hardy to zone 10.

Hyphaene Thebaica - Gingerbread Palm – from the Middle East, this branching palm's fruit does taste like gingerbread. Sacks of the fruit were buried with Egyptian mummies to enjoy in the afterlife. Hardy to zone 9.



Adonidia merrillii – Christmas Palm – this beautiful, versatile palm from the Philippines has brilliant red fruits during winter, hence the name. Some cultures eat the fruit, but containing alkaloids, eating the fruit is not recommended. Zone 10.

Cocos sp. The coconut palm, one of the most important crops of the tropics. These palms are not cold hardy below 27 degrees, and are found in South Florida or warmer parts of Tampa Bay and Pinellas County. If protected from the cold, their range can be extended. There are many varieties available, but many are not suitable for Florida due to cold sensitivity, or falling over in high winds that they are not used to in their native range. Palm diseases have also destroyed many specimens.

Fiji Dwarf is the most recommended variety, as it shows possible immunity to Lethal Yellowing, and being short, it is easy to harvest and protect from cold.



To reach Keith Zimmerman with any questions at all about palms, feel free to contact him at: keitht.zimmermann@gmail.com

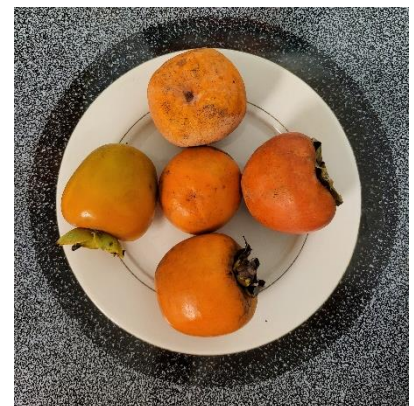
⌘ What's Happening ⌘

by Paul Zmoda

We need rain badly. I must irrigate often or plants are in danger of drying out. A reader, Eric Bina, came to visit while traveling from the Midwest to Naples, Fla. He was interested in our persimmons, but brought bushels of pears and left me some. 'Bartlett' was soft and tasty. 'Kieffer' was very hard, but I cooked slices of them in sugar and water with some cloves and they turned out excellent for a post-prandial dessert. My own pear tree, 'Hood' gave us the second fruit in 25 years – not a good track record. It was small and not sound.

Persimmons, on the other hand, are in full swing. So soft, sweet, and delicious. The batch I brought to the last meeting didn't last long. A few 'Barbie Pink' guavas ripened to perfection – not a big crop, like in the summer, but very much appreciated and enjoyed.

Our vegetable gardens are struggling to maintain health because of this drought, but I am pleased with our crop of sweet corn. I planted a row of 'Golden Bantam' on September third. By seventy days, this old-timey heirloom provided some nice, tender cobs from plants that held up to three ears apiece.



Persimmons - photo by Paul Zmoda

∞ Club Notes ∞

School Garden plant donations needed! Member Jenni Healy at garden@learninggate.org has a wish list of plants for her school garden. If you have any of the following to share, please contact her: Figs, Blueberries, Thornless Blackberries, Ever-bearing mulberry, Kumquat, Jujube, Lemon



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/m3MBQfvLMADkjmW7A>

Elections return in March!!!! If you are considering becoming a board member or future executive for the Club, feel free to attend a board meeting and learn more. Good news!! Board meetings are now being held during the social hour between 1pm and 2pm at our monthly meetings. Stop by and meet the current board members and learn how you can contribute to the Club.



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: **December 22nd.**

happy
HOLIDAYS!

∞ 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