



# RFCI

March 2024

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>  
[Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com](mailto: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 ∞



**March 10<sup>th</sup>: Mangoes with Ian Campbell from Mango Men Homestead** - Ian has spoken to our Club previously, and we learned so much we had to bring him back again! He will speak on grafting mangos and on the interspecific Wango hybrid breeding program.

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

**April 13 and 14 – USF Plant Sale** - The University of South Florida Botanical Gardens hosts their annual Spring Plant Festival, and it's a big and fun fundraising event for the Club. **Volunteers** will be needed Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> to set up the Club's sale area, as well as during the plant sale to man the booth, assist customers with sales, and of course, make juice. **Sign up** at the March meeting.



## ∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Barry Frost Seffner

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

## The 2024 Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair on Sunday, February 18, 2024

Write-up and photos by George Campani

The Club's Citrus Celebration was once again in the Special Events Center Building located in the Florida State Fair Grounds. This location gives us the needed space for foot traffic to stop and enjoy our annual event. The day began with rain and the public 10:00 A.M. entry into the Fair Grounds being cancelled, to reassessed for a 3:00 P.M. opening. The Club's volunteers had extra time to socialize, experience our citrus display, sample a few fruits, and enjoy Mary Ann Branesky's delicious cooked lunch. The Club cancelled the event for Sunday and enough volunteers decided to try again the next day.

Monday began with our Club's volunteers preparing for our citrus tasting event by placing the cut citrus in their labeled trays, and then the tasting trays were laid out in a nice display for tasting by the Fairgoers. There were over 20 varieties of citrus (from large pummelos, mandarin, oranges, limes, to small kumquats) for Fairgoers to sample and please their palate.

Some of the fruit for tasting was quite novel like the 104 Orange Hybrid (not yet named); the OLL-8 Orange (not yet named); and the 914 Grapefruit Hybrid (not yet named) – all three citrus varieties were developed by the University of Florida's Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred. A "special thanks" to the Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred for their special donation to our event.



A special thanks to Tim Sallin, from IMG Citrus, Inc., for his donation of a carton of March White Grapefruit, and 2 boxes with the following bags of citrus inside: Ray Grapefruit, Royal Mandarin (Temple), Honey Tangerine (Murcott), Flame Grapefruit, Star Grapefruit, Valencia Orange, and Tango Mandarin. A special thanks to Dundee Groves in Dundee, Florida for their donation of Valencia Oranges and Pink Grapefruit.

There was Orange Juice, thanks to the persistence and dedication of juice maker Paul Branesky as he once again made fresh delicious orange juice. Paul also Chaired the Citrus Celebration Committee, making such changes as putting white butcher paper on the tables. This helped with labeling citrus and additional notes.

One of the Club's goals at the annual event is to further public interest in Citrus. The Club once again had a Citrus Display Area where many varieties of citrus are displayed on open tables for viewing by the public. There were large pummelos, citrons, kumquats, the interesting looking Sanbokan Lemons; etc. Club volunteers periodically man the Display Tables where there were discussions on pummelos and the cacao bean - thanks Scott. Tom was there with the Tree Defender and informational handouts on fighting greening - thanks Tom.

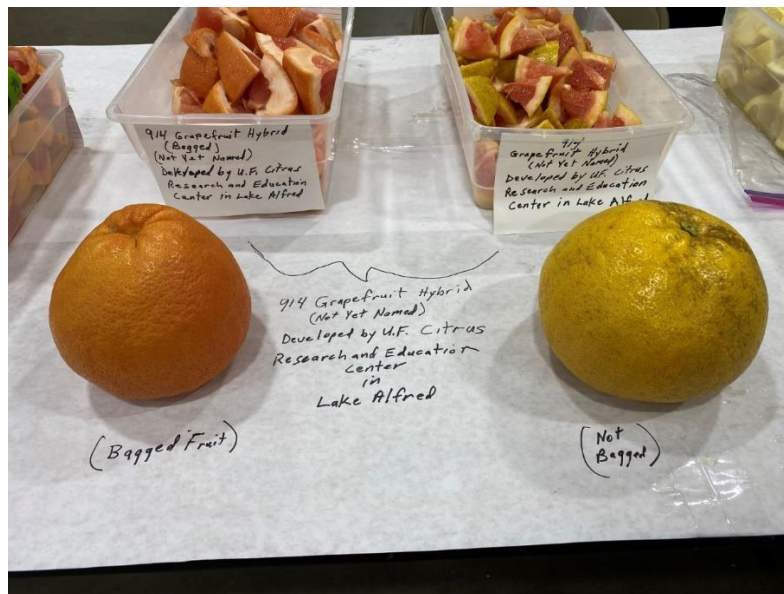


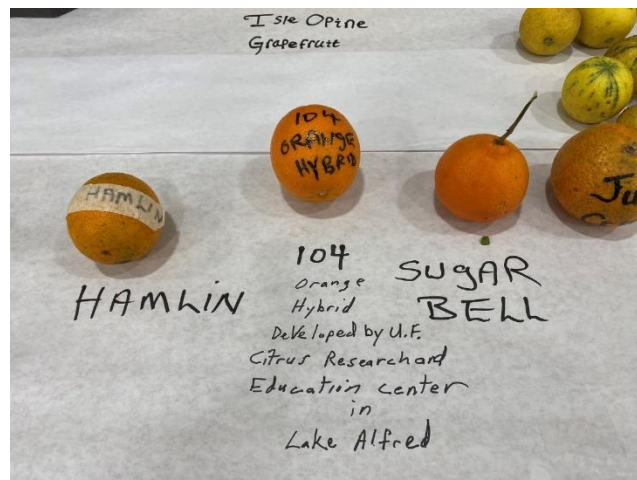
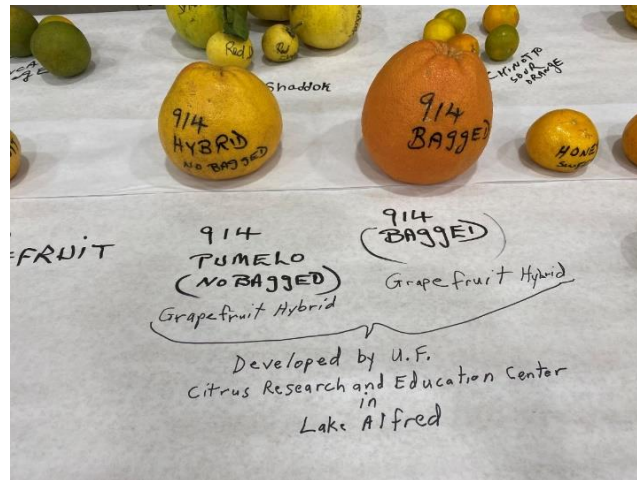
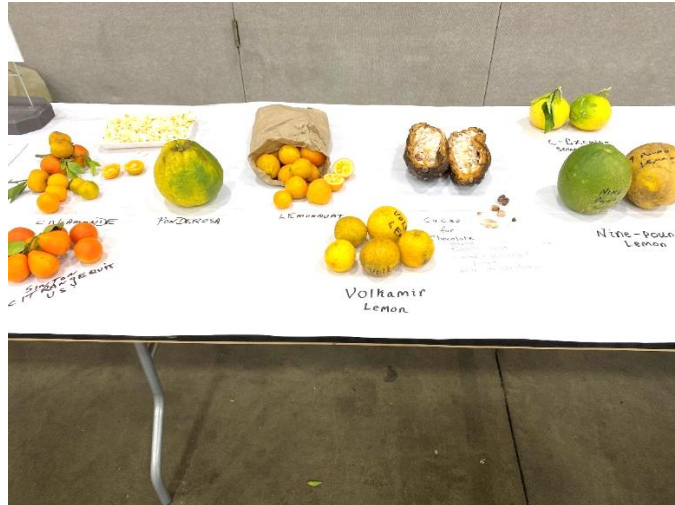
In addition, at the Display Tables: for the Fair going Children, we continued to hand out the “Florida Citrus Activity Book” (lesson and coloring), and for the homeowners there was the “Home Citrus Educational Series” both donated by UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred, Fl.

A day late, but another successful event, thanks to the many hard-working volunteers that made the Citrus Celebration a big success. It could not happen without them. Thank you: Paul Branesky, Mary Ann Bransky, Allen Susi, Debbie Campani, Tom Schaefer, Verna Dickey, Alice Stein, Dylan Chadwell, George Campani, Paul Zmoda, Yuko Topping, Yoshimi Tamura, Joel Penn, Sarah Penn, Elijah Penn, Gabriel Penn, Rochan Premraj, Maya Premraj, Scott Peterson, Claudia Champ, Hannah Pflieger, Jon Cosenza, Chris Ramirez, Carmen Goodwin, Patricia Moore, Patty Quinby, Robert Latimer, Dottie Latimer, Shellie Sweet, Kristina Aguire, Charles Crowley, Gina Abed, Adam Abed, Judith Vidal Beasle, Mieko Similima, Marie Basil, Allen Male, Judith Beasley, Soledad Burnside, Jeremy Burnside, Jerlyn Spicer, Al Spicer, Allen Agbanlog, Terry Agbanlog. I apologize to those I have missed. A special thank you to Brenda Gregory (State Fair Coordinator) for her hard work. Thank you to our Club President, Hillary Cosenza, for her hard work and a great job.









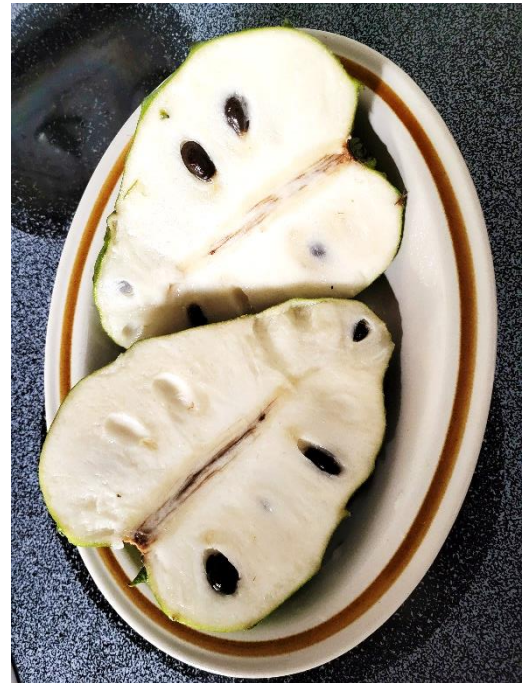
## ☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda

Enjoy the cool weather while it lasts – soon we will be roasting. We are racking up the chill hours that many fruit trees require to bloom. I finished 99% of pruning, and 100% of spraying fungicides and insecticides on dormant trees and vines. Avocadoes are blooming heavily along with the mangoes, as grapevines and pawpaws are waking up.

I was indoors, sitting next to our potted soursop, when the large fruit suddenly dropped off. Luckily it didn't smash. I allowed it to further ripen one more day before making a whole quart of ice cream from the two-pound Annona.

I received some unusual budwood from Englands Nursery. I immediately grafted five medlars onto loquat seedlings and by two weeks they were budding out nicely. I also received some native American persimmon sticks, but I want to wait until the root-stocks wake up to begin grafting.



The 2-pound soursop fruit – photo P. Zmoda

## It's Spring!!! Time for area Plant Sales and Events

**Manatee Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council is having their annual Sale Saturday, March 23, 2024, 9 AM - 2 PM** Same venue as last year: Premier Sports Campus, 5895 Post Blvd, Lakewood Ranch, FL 34211

Selected expert vendors from all over Florida, free admission, free parking, and public restrooms close to the sale area. We recommend that you **bring a cart or wheelbarrow, if possible**, to haul your purchases.

Please note that vendors will collect payment directly for their own sales. Many will be accepting credit cards, but it's best to bring cash just in case, so that you don't miss out on your favorite must-have trees. There will be no ATM available at the site.

**Spring Obsession: Lakeland Munn Park** March 9, 2024, 8am – 3pm. The 20th Annual Spring Obsession, Garden and Art Festival. Enjoy a Free family day of activities while exploring the many flowers and plants for sale, attend garden presentations, location is 210 E Main St, Lakeland, FL 33801. Their web site is

<http://springobsession.org>



**GREENFEST 2024**, March 9 and 10, 2024 - 9 am-4 pm each day, on the lawn of the Tampa Garden Club 2629 Bayshore Blvd., Tampa. Plants, garden tools, and garden needs. Over 50 vendors.

<https://www.tampagardenclub.com/event/tampa-greenfest/>

**Florida Loquat Festival – April 6<sup>th</sup> – 10 – 3pm (Note different date and location from previous years)**

Loquats, loquat trees will be for sale fresh, Baked items for sale, Deserts for sale, Food vendors, Pets are NOT allowed, Free parking Grand Blvd & Bank St, New Port Richey, FL. Phone: (727) 849-1626.

Email: [ddecham@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ddecham@tampabay.rr.com).

**Blueberry Festival in Brooksville**, April 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 1112 E Jefferson St., Brooksville

<https://brooksvilleblueberryfestival.com>

**St. Petersburg – Arbor Day/Green Thumb Festival** –April 27 and 28 from 9am – 4pm at Walter Fuller Park, 7891 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N, St. Petersburg - bringing plants and people together with more than 120 vendors, many activities.

<https://www.stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb/>

## ∞ Club Notes ∞

### Always appreciated:

Member contributions to the newsletter! What 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](mailto:Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.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 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

**Both new and renewing members can also make a secure payment using Square. See the October posting link on our Facebook page, or the link on our Website.**



***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.*

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