



RFCI

October 2024

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

Meetings are held the second Sunday, 2:00 P.M.
at the HCC Brandon Campus, Room 206/208
10451 Nancy Watkins Dr., Tampa, FL 33619

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

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

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

October 12th and 13th (set-up Friday 11th) USF plant sale!!

No regular meeting.

Sign-up with the link below as a volunteer your time or sell plants!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0849A9A923A7F5C07-50877345-usfplant>

If you are selling plants, you must **be present** at the Sale as long as you have plants there for sale. **No Citrus** plants. All plants must be **edible**. All plants must be healthy, no disease or insects, properly identified and labeled. Cultural information is very helpful to buyers. **No** invasive, weedy, or prohibited plants.

If you have your own table, chairs, or canopy, please bring them.

All set up must be done on **Friday**, anytime between 9am – 3pm, you may drive your vehicle into the Gardens to unload, set up and leave. **No set-up** on Saturday or Sunday allowed.

When **pricing your plants**, remember the Club gets 10%, and USF gets 20%, so price accordingly.

You must bring a completed **Plant Manifest** for Susan, or you will not be able to sell.

Please **signup ahead** of time, as this will help us make sure all duties and time slots are filled.

Plus, your name will then be on the list of who gets into the Gardens **Free** as a volunteer over the course of the weekend without having to pay the \$10 admission fee.

Maps for our booth location in the Plant Sale, and for the new parking areas at USF due to construction, are on page 24-76.

Plant Manifest is on page 24-79.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Marquito Stanko

Babson Park

Kay & Carl Ferraro

Tampa

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

All About Bananas

Speaker Josh Jamison

Josh Jamison, of Cody Cove Farms, returned once again for September, to a very large crowd to speak about bananas. Bananas are considered the world's most important fruit economically, but they are also one of the best for home-growers too.

Bananas are a top choice for home-gardeners because they are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Productive | Bear fruit within a year or two |
| Diverse (many varieties) | Ornamental |
| Have broad appeal | Have many uses (food, fiber, leaf wrap for cooking, medicine, edible flowers) |

Bananas are a symbol of the tropics. In the 1500's, explorers introduced them to Florida. Wild varieties originated in Asia. The wild fruit is small, tasteless, and full of seeds. But when 2 major wild species crossed (Balbisiana and Acuminata), the opportunity for hybridizing began.

Bananas grow quickly, and begin producing in as little as one year. The plant itself is not a tree. It is made of a pseudo stem (trunk), the underground portion is a corm, and the group of stems arises from a "mat". The new stems are called pups, or suckers.

On average, there are 40 leaves produced before a flower will occur. Just before the flower begins, you will notice smaller leaves, and a "flag leaf" which looks noticeably different than regular leaves. The flower stalk will grow longer and hang down. Flowers will be visible on the stalk, and then tiny fruit.

The better care the plant receives, the better the fruit. Bananas like lots of water, fertilizer, especially potassium, and not to be overcrowded. Protect them from wind, and cold, and provide plenty of sun. Compost/mulch on top will help conserve water. This can be mulch, wood ash, lawn clippings, compost, or manure.

Cold interrupts the growth cycle. Choose cold tolerant varieties if you are in an area that gets frost or freezes. If a freeze is eminent, the stems can be wrapped to protect them.

In the event of a hurricane, cutting leaves in ½ to reduce wind resistance can help prevent against toppling over.

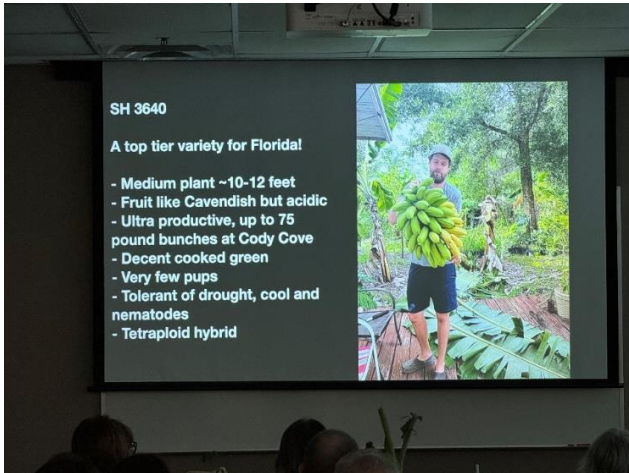
It's time to harvest when ONE fruit is turning yellow, cut the whole bunch and bring it inside to finish ripening. Enjoy!!

Treat bananas well, and they will treat you well!



A very well attended meeting.

Meeting photos by George Campani



The SH3640, a new, amazing banana choice for Florida.

Josh, and Club President Dylan.



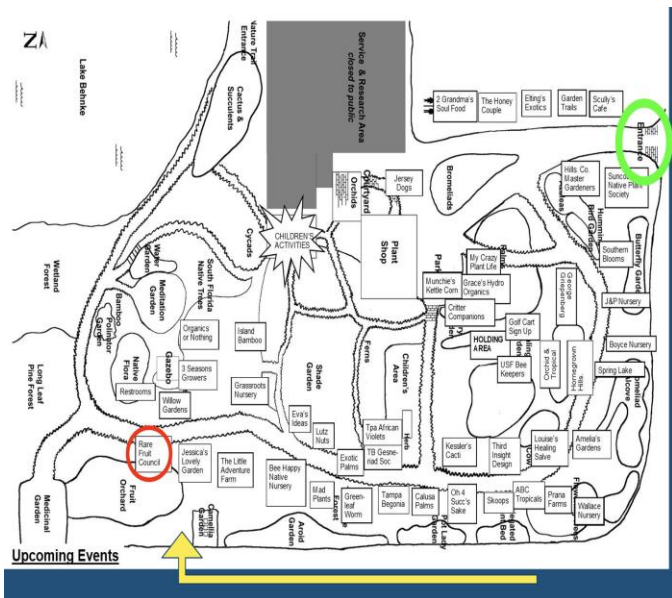
There were lots of seeds, and of course LOTS of banana plants provided for sale by Cody Cove Farm. There were many selections that are excellent for Florida growers, including a few of the SH3640, a highly desirable, but difficult to obtain variety.

Local Plant Event



Rootstock Plant & Garden Festival is one of Bok Tower Garden's biggest events! Shop from more than 45 amazing vendors and celebrate the start of the Florida gardening season. Get your home garden or landscape ready for the season. Enjoy live music on the Terrace and more.

Event Date & Time Saturday, October 5, 2024 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Location Picnic Area Price Free for BTG Members / \$20 for non-member adults
TBRFCT's Club member Food Forest Finds will be there!



Our location at USF will be the same as last year.

Areas for parking.

What's Happening

by Paul Zmoda

It's still really hot out – that's not the problem – it's now too much rain, too often. Not much I can do about that, but it's a little better than a severe drought. The smaller loquat and white sapote trees are showing their displeasure with wilting leaves.

This weather is great for rooting cuttings: figs, passion vines, grapes, and others are ready to pot up in no time. A few air layers got potted. These include quince, che, and longan. I planted Anonna, passionfruit, and jackfruit seeds.

Avocados are about done; one avocado tree that's REALLY done is our six-year-old 'Duke', which died after well over ten inches of rain. It's a shame since it gave us about fifteen nice fruits and was really taking off.

Longans are really productive this year, but on the small side. Thinning them early might have prevented that. We got a fourteen-pound jackfruit. It was ok. Persimmons are turning color, and the non-astringent 'Izu' is the first to be ready. It is crunchy and sweet. So many pecans are hanging in small, green clusters. Amazingly, no squirrels have bothered them, knock on wood.



Jackfruit – photo P. Zmoda

Summer Fun? Weevils!

Written by George Campani, Club Member



The Sri Lanka Weevils have found a new home in my Guthrie Plum Tree: One bright sunny morning in August I noticed my Guthrie Plum tree's leaves were being eaten in a notching pattern (see photo), and it was not too hard to find the culprits, because on the tree's green leaves there were many white weevils (see photo). Not only are these weevils not hard to spot; in my opinion they are not hard to catch. I discovered I could just cup my hand from under the leaf when grabbing the weevil located on the leaf—as they sometimes fall into my cupped hand. (see photo left taken by George showing the bug, and also the sculpted, scalloped appearance of the leaves.)

Furthermore, I observed, when attempting to grab the weevils they sometimes escape (or try) by falling to the ground, and sometimes they move to the other side of the leaf or branch; and they can fly-- but usually do not.

The Sri Lanka Weevils sure did like that Guthrie Plum tree, as I picked these bugs off the tree for 10 days. I did not find any weevils on the fruit trees located around the Guthrie Plum tree; however, I will continue to look for these pests on the other trees--but good riddance for now!

After catching a weevil—one method to get rid of this pest is to squash the bug on a hard surface. Just another adventure for this side-yard grower.

The Sri Lanka Weevil was detected in Florida in the Pompano Beach area of Broward County back in 2000. Since then, it has spread across much of the state, and consumes more than 150 plants, causing significant damage to some crops, including many fruits. The adult is 6.0 to 8.5 mm (1/2 – 1/3 inch) in size, with the female being slightly larger than the male.

Egg, larvae, and pupae stages are all under the soil surface, so management is difficult, as they are unseen. The adults fly, hide, and feign death, or drop to the ground, so chasing them down to destroy is challenging. Pesticides are of little use. Hand collection works well, drown them in soapy water, or squish against a hard surface.



photo Anita Neal, UF



Note: Beginning January 1st, 2025, annual dues will rise to \$25.00. It has been a very long time since we raised our rate, but expenses are always rising, so eventually it becomes necessary. We hope you understand. Your dues supports all the wonderful programs, guest speakers, workshops, seed table, field trips, holiday party, and educational materials that the Rare Fruit Club brings you. Thank you for your support!

∞ Club Notes ∞

Tampa Bay Rare Fruit YEARBOOK!!!!!!

Tampa Bay Rare Fruit YEARBOOK!!!!!!

I am working on a Tampa Bay Rare Fruit **YEARBOOK** for this year, 2024!! I need **ALL MEMBERS** to help make it as amazing as possible!! Here is what I need and am looking for:

- 1 Member Photo (or 2 for joint memberships) like in a traditional yearbook, your Name, and what Year you joined TB:RFCI
- Photos from any 2024 TB:RFCI EVENT, like the Citrus Celebration, Plant Sales, Mango Tasting, or even fun photos you took during our monthly meetings!

Please email any photos and information to KCTBRareFruit@gmail.com

Thank you for your help!!!

-KC Gonzalez, Secretary

Yearbooks Pre-Orders can be taken now (\$20, link on the Members Only Facebook Group) and we are planning a Yearbook Signing Party at our March Meeting.

Make sure to submit your photo and order your yearbook soon!!!

More details will be in the next newsletter! Find some great photos to share in the yearbook!

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 Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **October 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.

Tampa Bay RFCI
12722 Prosser Rd.
Dade City, FL 33525