



January 2025

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 HCC Brandon Campus, Room 206/208
10451 Nancy Watkins Dr., Tampa, FL 33619

œ Upcoming Programs and Events œ



January 12th - Beneficial Insects in Your Ecosystem "Craig and Celeste Welch from Sulcata Grove in Sarasota will return to share their knowledge about beneficial insects and their role in creating a balanced and healthy ecosystem in your garden. Topics will include beneficial and pest insect interactions, along with pesticides use, and environmental balance." Sulcata Grove produces fruit trees, seeds, eggs, honey, dried fruit and much more.

Sunday, January 12
1:00-2:00 Social Hour
2:00-2:30 Potluck
2:15-2:30 Club Updates
2:30-3:30 Speaker
3:30-4:00 Raffle

February 16, 2025 Time to start planning for next year's Citrus Celebration!!!!

Next year's "Citrus Celebration" will be on Sunday, February 16, 2025 in the "Special Events Center Building" -- in the Florida State Fairgrounds. The "Citrus Celebration" is an annual production put on by our Club's volunteers. At the Florida Fair, we work preparing many varieties of citrus for tasting, we hand out information for growing citrus, and we have many educational displays. Since there is always a need for more volunteers, try joining us for this Annual Event! Use this sign-up link or the QR code for volunteering at the Citrus Celebration,

[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0849A9A923A7F5C07-53251299-tbrfci/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0849A9A923A7F5C07-53251299-tbrfci#/)



œ Welcome New Members œ

Raymond Leferriere
Colby Mathis

Zephyrhills
Clearwater

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

The 2024 Holiday Social
Photos by George Campani





☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda

Happy New Year! I hope 2025 is better than all the past years put together. I am still cleaning up after the hurricanes, but it's under control and I can give attention to other things now.

With cooler weather comes pruning. This is something you shouldn't skip or put off. Just tackle a few trees at a time, and by springtime your gardens will be in top shape. Our true cherimoya is about done flowering now, but I have hand-pollinated all, and now have about five small fruits to show for my effort. I am still eating our native persimmon fruit and saving the seeds, of course, since they make excellent rootstock for grafting selected cultivars later. After cleaning the seeds, I put them in Ziplock bags with some moist sphagnum moss to stratify for two months in the refrigerator. This treatment simulates the winter cold needed before germination can begin.



I planted a new grape vineyard area to test rootstocks compatible with our high-water table. We are still getting lots of pecans from our tree. One nut tree that only gave us two ripe fruits is the "Dana White" macadamia nut tree. This air-layered tree is a memorial tree made by one of our late RFCI presidents, Thom Scott.

"Dana White" Macadamia – photo Paul Zmoda

The following is a reprint of a September 1999 newsletter article about a trip to beautiful Costa Rica by Charles Novak and Jimmy Lee. Who authored this article is unknown, but it is still an enjoyable read today.

COSTA RICA by Charles Novak & Jimmy Lee

Charles started with a synopsis of their trip to Costa Rica with two other of our club members, plus a lot of rare fruit members from south Florida. He gave the trip to Costa Rica a rating of 5 or 6. They did not spend a lot of time visiting the fruit trees of the area, which was a negative as far as Charles was concerned. The country itself was beautiful. Jimmy made a comment about the meals in Costa Rica, and Charles added that every meal seemed to be black beans & rice. It became so continuous that "even a hamburger from McDonald's would have tasted good." He said when you have black beans & rice at every evening meal, you soon start craving for almost anything else. If you go to the local restaurants in the area, Charles said he can guarantee you'll have black beans & rice and plantains.

Right after they landed in Costa Rica, they were herded onto a bus (air conditioned like a Greyhound, well-appointed and new) in which they went up to one of the volcanos, many of which are presently active. Charles had slides of the volcanos and the beautiful plants and foliage in the area. He wanted to bring back seeds of everything they saw and he did bring back a lot of them, but many plants did not have seeds so he was tempted to break off limbs to bring back, which Charles has been known to do. Jimmy indicated that Charles is so dedicated that even at 1:00 in the morning, he was still cleaning seeds.

Charles showed us a slide of a beautiful flower of a tree they call the poor man's umbrella because the leaves on this plant get up to 7' across, bigger than an umbrella. In the slide we saw Jim trying to get under the leaves because he said Charles was too rich to be called a poor man and Jimmy said he would meet the criteria. Their guide took them through the volcanic rain forest and they were amazed at how fast and luscious things are growing. The soil and the weather are ideal for plants.

They had slides of an active volcano. We could see them looking down into the volcano from which smoke was rising. It last erupted in 1973. Up there on the mountain it was very cold and coming from our warm weather, they were both freezing. There were lots of carambolas growing in the area and Jim was busy trying different ones, but he complained they were all pretty sour, probably just random seedlings. There were more beautiful flowers than exotic fruit and the slides indicated this, but one tree that really fascinated Charles was a hardwood papaya tree. The papaya tree was very large and sported a lot of papayas but the guide indicated it was a hardwood tree, so I guess even a papaya can develop hard wood.

They also went on a river cruise and saw a lot of white-faced monkeys and other animals and lots of different kinds of birds, but very few fruiting trees on the river. They saw a lot of different kinds of hummingbirds and many iguanas, particularly behind the restaurants where the iguanas were dining on the restaurant scraps and garbage.

They took some pictures of churches and noted that the people are very religious and crime is almost non-existent. It's safe to walk by yourself into the markets and on the streets.

They visited a hot spring and really enjoyed it because the water was so warm up in the mountains. The water is heated by the volcanos and as one climbs up the mountain, the water gets hotter and hotter to a point where it's unbearable. A little further up where Charles was standing, he could see the lava flowing. Jim told him he better be moving along if he didn't want to get burned. He had a couple pictures of the volcano actually exploding, which were very interesting.

From there they went to a research center where they are attempting to collect all the germ plasma of coffee beans and cacao and many other kinds of fruit trees. They saw some lychee trees 60' to

70' tall but unfortunately, there were no lychees at this time. However, there were some rambutans and this was a first time tasting of rambutans for Charles.

Charles had a slide of a jackfruit tree and he commented that Costa Ricans hardly know what to do with jackfruit; they don't eat them. The tree was loaded but "who cares?" In these gardens they are collecting all of the varieties they can find of the annatto, or lipstick tree. Some were really beautiful with small pods and others were huge. Charles thought that the small podded plants would be nice dooryard fruit for Florida but unfortunately, the seeds he collected were not fertile. He bought a soursop at a market for about three & a half dollars American which was a first for him again. He indicated it was an absolutely huge fruit and very good for eating out of hand. It's also used for making good juice and ice cream.



Hopefully everyone's plants and trees are recovering from the hurricanes. Here is some UF/IFAS information to help you help your plants and trees get a good start to the year.

Types of damage to plants and trees from a hurricane:

Wind damage: Strong hurricane winds break branches, strip leaves, and even uproot entire trees, disrupting the plant's ability to photosynthesize and affecting its overall health.

Flooding impact: Heavy rainfall from a hurricane can lead to flooding, which can drown roots and suffocate plants, causing them to wilt and potentially die.

Saltwater intrusion: Coastal areas can experience saltwater surge during a hurricane, which can damage plants by disrupting their water uptake and causing salt stress.

Soil erosion: Heavy rain can also erode topsoil, depriving plants of essential nutrients.

How to manage plants after a hurricane (IFAS recommendations):

Remove debris: Clear away broken branches and fallen leaves to prevent disease spread and promote new growth.

Prune damaged areas: Carefully trim broken or damaged branches, making sure to cut at a proper angle.

Monitor for disease: Be vigilant for signs of fungal diseases and take necessary control measures if needed.

Water appropriately: Depending on the soil moisture, provide supplemental water to plants that may have been affected by drought conditions after the storm.

Fertilize cautiously: Avoid applying fertilizer immediately after a hurricane, as it can stress plants further; wait until new growth appears.

Our Next Local Field Trip is Scheduled!



When: SUNDAY, JANUARY 26th 2025, 10-11am

Where: The Fat Beet Farm, 13830 W Hillsborough Ave, Tampa, FL 33635

Plenty of free Parking. This is a drive yourself event.

Cost: \$17.50 per person

The Fat Beet Farm is an amazing local farm. their goal is to grow using green initiatives, learn, eat, and connect around the garden table.

“We strive to be a resource for our community. We educate about the potential of farming in Florida, and are a model of sustainability for future generations. We provide wholesome, thoughtful, and scrumptious food to the public, and a memorable space for unforgettable private events. We demonstrate how to nurture our beautiful Florida land while also making the most of its bountiful possibilities.”

A tour of their farm will provide an opportunity to see how the farm has overcome obstacles of coastal farming, such as saltwater intrusion. This 1-hour walking tour includes the vegetable gardens, composting, vermiculture, chickens, the biodigester, bees, microgreens, aquaculture systems, wetland and coastal preservation, and more! There is also the delicious restaurant where we will enjoy lunch after the tour. Sandwiches and salads include farm fresh ingredients. Fresh produce can also be purchased.

Can't wait to see you there!! We can add more tickets if additional people want to attend, but **ticket sales end Saturday, January 11, 2025, so be sure to sign up before the 11th.**

LINK to Reserve Spot 🍷🍷

<https://checkout.square.site/.../AB73E33VZLABZAHLO6AWUXSS>

MORE INFO 🍷🍷

<https://www.fatbeetfarm.com/about-fat-beet-farm>



∞ Club Notes ∞



Long time member Charles Novak has about **50 named pineapple plants** that club members can have. The plants are in the ground and will need to be dug out. The named pineapple plants came from the USDA in Hawaii. Please email him at charles.novak@gmail.com to set up a time to visit.

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 support 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!

Please check the address label of your paper newsletter, or the message page of your newsletter email for your membership renewal date.

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: **January 22nd**.

To view a short video recap of the Board Members private tour of the **CUPS Program** at the **UF Citrus Research Center**, follow the link here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1BbX3DGX5k&t=340s> During the visit, we had the opportunity to: learn about innovative citrus-growing techniques designed to address modern challenges, taste several unique and promising citrus varieties firsthand, and gain valuable insights and inspiration as we prepare for our upcoming **Citrus Celebration** in February.

∞ Membership information ∞

NEW MEMBERS

Download and fill out a membership application from: <https://rarefruit.org/membership/>, and send with check or money order for \$25 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 \$25 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 make quick, 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
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