



RFCl

August 2025

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

Meetings unless otherwise noted are held at 2:00pm:
The Oaks at St. Mark's Event Venue.
13312 Cain Road Tampa, FL 33625

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Tampa.Bay.RFCl@gmail.com

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

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞



August 10th Propagation and Grafting Clinic 1:30 to 4pm –

This workshop will help you develop your skills for grafting fruit trees, essential to maximizing your orchard. Learn different methods of grafting, which ones work best for which trees, the tools to do the grafting, and how to do the grafts correctly to enhance your success. This class will also cover cuttings, and marcotting (air layering). This workshop is always highly anticipated and enjoyed by all, whether you are a beginner or experienced propagator. If you have rootstock and scion material you may bring it to the workshop. Demonstrations will be conducted in 15-minute presentations on each topic.

This workshop will run from 1:30pm to 4pm. Please note the slight change in start time of this meeting.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Doris Bober San Antonio

Susan Carey Tampa

President: Chris Ramirez; Vice President: Paul Branesky, Secretary: Hillary Cosenza;
Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher

Mango and Tropical Fruit Tasting Festival - Before the Tasting

By George Campani

The Mango Festival on Sunday, June 22, 2025 went off without a problem and there were 22 varieties of mangoes for tasting at our Annual Event. The mango samples were delicious and plentiful, and members returned (many times) for additional samples. (See last month's newsletter for more info on the tasting.)

The Mango Festival is made possible because of the hard-working Club Members that came in early to help make this event a big success by cutting up mangos, then placing the mangos in numbered trays—to later be sampled by our members. This volunteer work is a good way to become familiar with different varieties of mangos. Then it is on to tasting and socializing. In addition, there were also: lychees, hog plums, and Jamaican Cherry tree fruits for sampling. There was much to be tasted and enjoyed by the many members that attended.

Not all the fun is on the day of our Annual Event. Some Club Members go out to get Mangos; days before the Annual Event. On such an adventure to Pine Island (still recovering from hurricanes two years ago) Paul Branesky met the owners of Promised Land Mangos, David and Carol, who introduced him to the Smith Mango and the Early Gold Mango; and, yes, after sampling these mangos our Annual Event had the Smith Mango and Early Gold Mango for tasting, thanks Paul!

Then it was on to "Stanley's Mangos." Even though the retail store was closed that day they helped Paul get much needed mangos for our event. Paul was able to purchase Nam Doc Mai Mangos, Glenn Mangos, Maha Chanook Mangos, Carrie Mangos, and Valencia Mangos. Thank you, Karen and Rene!

Then on to the "Mango Factory" for the purchase of Irwin Mangos, Cecil Mangos, Haden Mangos, and Valentus Mangos—a great addition to the collection. Hope to see you next year Doug Flowerree!

Then after a quick stop by "Gathering Grove" to pick-up some Brahm Kai Meu Mangos, it's heading back with a full load.



During the same week Chris Ramirez and Bindi Shukla were traveling on the East Coast of Florida to gather mangos. There they visited "Tropical Paradise Grove" where they purchased many mangos. They were invited inside by the owner for a tasting experience to learn about the Alampur Baneshan Mango. There the owner cut-up a less ripe Alampur Baneshan Mango for a tasting experience, and the taste was pear like. Then onto the ripe Alampur Baneshan and the taste was smooth, fibreless, and sweet. There was additional discussion on the spice tastes of the Indian Mangos, then more tasting. Learning new information can be a fun experience and Chris Ramirez and Bindi Shukla enjoyed their experience, and we all were able to enjoy the Alampur Baneshan Mangos at our Annual Event.

Then it was onto "Hidden Acres" for the purchase of Fairchild Mangos, Southern Blush Mangos, and Van Dyke Mangos. Great trip! Then homeward bound.

A special thanks to:

Kip Weinhold for his generous donation of Pickering Mangos, Duncan Mangos, and Valencia Pride Mangos to our Annual Event. The Mango Committee's interest in purchasing mangos led us to Kip Weinhold's yard in Sarasota. Kip has a beautiful large yard of tropical fruit trees that interested Paul and the Committee Members and we were treated to a tour by Kip, of his plantings. Among his plantings are mango trees, citrus trees, jackfruit trees, longan trees, a sapodilla tree, atemoya tree, and plum trees. Kip gave an informational guided tour of his many trees and a history of the property, which included some tasting. Thank you, Kip!



Photos provided by Chris Ramirez

The day of the "Mango and Tropical Fruit Festival" on Sunday could not happen without the hard-working Club Members that made this Annual Event a big success. It was a great experience!

Grafting and Hybridizing Dragonfruit

Speaker Ko Chang



There were a lot of dragonfruit lovers at July's meeting, where Ko Chang returned to the podium, this time to discuss methods of grafting and hybridizing dragonfruit. He brought lots of plants with him to sell, and members were crowding the table to get the varieties they wanted for their gardens.

There are many benefits to being able to graft dragonfruit. Grafting gives you the ability to have many varieties in a smaller space, especially rare and unusual ones. Ko discussed the many methods of grafting with excellent slide photographs to demonstrate techniques.

Ko then talked about hybridizing, where a cross is between 2 varieties. The challenge is waiting for the seedlings to grow and fruit and then selecting only the very best ones! It takes 3 – 5 years from seed to get those first fruits.

Ample time was allowed for the many questions from the audience. Some key points:

There are early, mid-season, and late varieties to keep the fruit coming throughout the warm season. There are even varieties that have multiple fruiting spurts throughout the season.

Buy your plants from reliable, disease-free sources.

Use a shorter trellis to get plants fruiting earlier.

Dragonfruit plants can take about 2 days/nights of 30 degrees before suffering a lot of damage.

Protect from winter winds and cold, but if you cover them, don't let them get baked in the sun under the cover.

Roots are shallow, less than 12". One or two plants in a 15 Gallon pot is good.

Fruit does not ripen once picked, so let it ripen on the stem for the very best and sweetest flavor.

To contact Ko with your questions, or make arrangements to visit his farm:
 Harmonys.dragons.2021@ gmail.com Phone #321-888-7397

If you missed Ko's presentation, you can view it online for 30 days after the meeting at the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DrciZjTrJ/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

There you can see more details on the pictorials about grafting techniques.

The July Meeting – photos by George Campani





(Below) The different types of grafts for dragonfruit.



☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda

The summer heat and rains are here and everything is growing at a rapid pace. The daily morning pollination of the Annonas has given way to lots of enlarging fruits – colorful sugar apples, cherimoyas, and only one Ilama. No soncoya flowers again this year.

Many pounds of grapes were harvested, cleaned, and frozen for future wine making. I am installing more grape trellises to hold a slew of newly rooted vines obtained from the germplasm repository collection in Davis, California.

Our white sapote gave us some very large fruit. I guess it was a pollination issue that kept them small in the past, leading me to believe it was a seedling tree rather than a named variety: 'Bonita Springs'. It is a delicious fruit similar in color, texture and taste to flan.

Ripe Java plums are raining down. I got one perfectly ripened *Monstera deliciosa*, and a few tasty 'Frederick' passionfruit dropped. Avocados have begun to be ready just as the mangoes finish for the year. Good eats!



White sapote – photo Paul Zmoda



Hey everyone! Please remember to sign in when you arrive at the meetings. This is important in helping the Club track attendance numbers.

Plus, you get free raffle tickets if you bring plants for the raffle table or food!!!!

Don't miss your free raffle tickets! Say Hi to Hillary at the Sign-in table. See you next month!

∞ Club Notes ∞

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: **August 22nd**.

USF Plant Festival – Saturday October 11 and Sunday October 12, 2025.

Our Club will once again participate in the USF Fall Plant Festival on Saturday, October 11 and Sunday, October 12, 2025. Set-up is on Friday, October 10, 2025 for the Plant Sale.

This early announcement is for those Club Members interested in selling plants and those Members looking to purchase plants.

Also, the Club is looking for **volunteers** (and those selling plants) to help at the sale, and sell juices. If you have not attended a USF Plant Festival and you like plants, you should enjoy the interesting display of plants to purchase or just walk around and learn.



Address of the USF Botanical Garden: 12210 USF Pine Drive, Tampa, Florida

There will be a volunteer sign-up sheet at the next meeting. You may use the link below to sign up for Friday set up and plant set up, and Saturday and Sunday morning and afternoon shifts.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B4FA4AE23ABFD0-57634667-usffall>

∞ Membership information ∞



Both new and renewing members can make quick, secure credit card payment using Square. Use this QR code

Check your newsletter email or address label for your membership renewal date.

Prefer using a check? Use address below.

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



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