



# RFCl

<http://www.rarefruit.org>  
[Tampa.Bay.RFCl@gmail.com](mailto:Tampa.Bay.RFCl@gmail.com)  
<http://www.facebook.com/TampaBayChapterRareFruitCouncilIntlInc>

September 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

### ∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞



**September 14<sup>th</sup>, Mulberries!** “Fruit Tree Addict” Jan Doolin will speak on mulberries. She grows over 200 fruit trees, with 50+ varieties of mulberries in her Zone 9B garden. She will explain which ones do best in Florida with low chill hours, best propagation methods, and how best to grow these easy and bountiful fruit trees.



Social hour - 1:00p-2:00p  
Potluck - 2:00p - 2:30p  
Introduction/Speaker - 2:30p-3:30p  
Raffle/Closing: 3:30p-4:00p



### ∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Rajagopal Appavu Tampa

Rachael & Luke Cronin-Gruender Tampa

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

## *The Grafting Clinic*

At the August meeting, expert members once again took to the demonstration tables to show other members the techniques of grafting, a skill so essential in growing your orchard. Hillary Cosenza, Ko Chang, and Chris Ramirez were demonstrators this year.

Photos From Michelle James



Photos from George Campani





---

## ∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda

As the days get shorter, some temperate fruit trees are starting to wind down. This is most noticeable in the leaves. They turn colors and show curling, crispiness, and finally dropping. Persimmons, both native and Asian, are starting to show color in their fruits – a sign that ripening is under way, and the days of feasting are not far off.

Speaking of feasting, we are eating Brogdon avocados at every meal. They are nutritious, filling, and delicious. We look forward to their bounty each summer.

The Purple Haze dragonfruit flowered several times. I futilely hand-pollinated just in case, but this cultivar is not self fertile. What could I do? Eat the flower buds is what to do. Years ago, when I found out that dragonfruit flower buds are sold in Japanese markets, I asked why not? Steamed for a few minutes until tender, they are not bad, and remind me of asparagus.

I bottled half (3 gallons) of my latest wine, and will bring some to my father's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party. Should be a good time.



Chateau Zmoda Dry Red Blend: Photo – Paul Zmoda

---

---

## Mango Growers Summit 6/10/25



Hope some of you were able to attend the virtual mango summit in June. There were loads of great information on grafting, variety selection, fruit drop, and other topics.

Here are a few takeaways from the session:

- Florida has 3,644 acres under mango production in 23 counties.
- In the US, Florida, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico are where mangoes are grown.
- Mangoes are the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in production of fruits worldwide.

- Florida has a long history of mango growing, but is seeing a renaissance with more intense, diverse flavors, and cultivars.

- Boutique growers, who grow more unusual varieties of mangos are in high demand with the consumer. Commercial growers are limited in the varieties they can offer.

- As a grower, whether on a large scale or home grower, you must be able to graft. This allows more varieties in a smaller space with fewer trees for the home grower, and the only way to grow large quantities of trees for commercial production.

- Air-layering, cuttings, and seeds do not work reliably.

- The rootstock you pick decides the size, uniformity, disease resistance, and fruit quality. Turpentine still the most popular rootstock, but Piva, Sabre, and 13-1 are also used.

- When to graft has changed. It used to be recommended in the summer months, but night time temps are too high now with climate change. March – June, and then in the fall are now the recommended times.

- Mango varieties must be chosen that accommodate the “new” climate.

- 95% of resold mango trees in the retail trade come from Zill’s Nursery.

- Mangoes have the lowest requirement of nitrogen of any tropical fruit. They find and use nitrogen very efficiently. Once in the trunk of the tree, it can take years to use. Recommendation is to use nitrogen only when getting young trees established, then discontinue.

- Fruit drop is normal. Don’t be alarmed when you get very lush flowering, and then the panicles dry up with no or little fruit. Typically, one or even no fruit per panicle is normal. There are one to four thousand flowers per panicle, so that doesn’t sound like much fruit, but it is normal. Pests, disease, temperature, and other factors can affect the amount of fruit set. Many of these factors we cannot control.

- Pollinators were reduced by hurricane Milton, and growers have had some reduction in fruit noted.

- Keep trees irrigated in spring when fruit set is occurring.

Resources:

[www.mango.org](http://www.mango.org)

[www.mangofeedsafety.org](http://www.mangofeedsafety.org)

[www.mangosustainability.org](http://www.mangosustainability.org)

[ntello@mango.org](mailto:ntello@mango.org) for questions

---

The **Harmony's Dragons** first meet up on August 2nd at the Natural Farm and Education Center in Howey in the Hills was so much fun for all who attended. There was much dragon fruit tasting, food, plants and dragon fruit cuttings, and lecture. Great opportunity for meeting people and fun, fun, fun.... Our own Club member **Ko Chang**, dragon fruit grower, was the coordinator for this event, Sonia and Luc Duytsche were hosts at the Center.



Photos: Sonia and Luc Duytsche



---

## ∞ 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](mailto:Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com) Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **September 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