



RFCl

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

December 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 ∞



Members' Holiday Party

The Oaks at St. Mark's Event Venue

13312 Cain Road

Tampa, FL 33625

Sunday, December 07, 2025

1pm-5pm

Please RSVP by December 4th



No regular meeting this month. Join us in making this year's holiday party a delicious and memorable event! This year's holiday meal will be potluck style, so please sign up to bring your favorite dish. The Club will provide some staple items. To make sure we have a balanced variety, choose a category below: Main Dishes, Side Dishes, Desserts. If your dues have lapsed, please renew before the party so your name will be on the list.

Please use the link below to sign up that you are attending, and to help set up the tables, and/or take down after the party. Also use this link to sign up your dish – main, side, or dessert. There will be winners for the best in each category.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B4FA4AE23ABFD0-60542181-holiday>

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

☞ In Memoriam ☞

Long time Club member Paul Mitchell passed away on July 30, 2025. Paul loved growing all kinds of plants at his home in Tampa. Paul was also a lifetime member of Tampa Bay Orchid Society. He had left a number of his books related to fruit growing to the Club members to share and read. These were distributed at the November meeting.

☞ Welcome New Members ☞

Kaoru Yamanouchi

Tampa

Citrus – Recent Releases by the CREC Citrus Breeding Team With speaker Dr. Jude Grosser



Jude Grosser with a CUPS protective cover.
Photo: George Campani

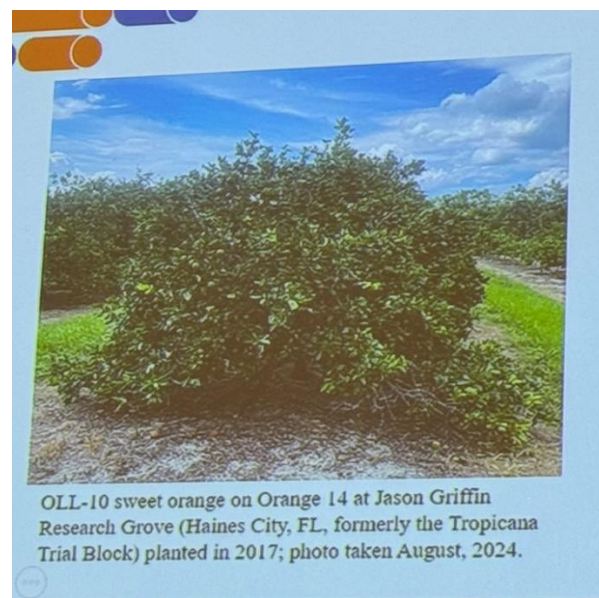
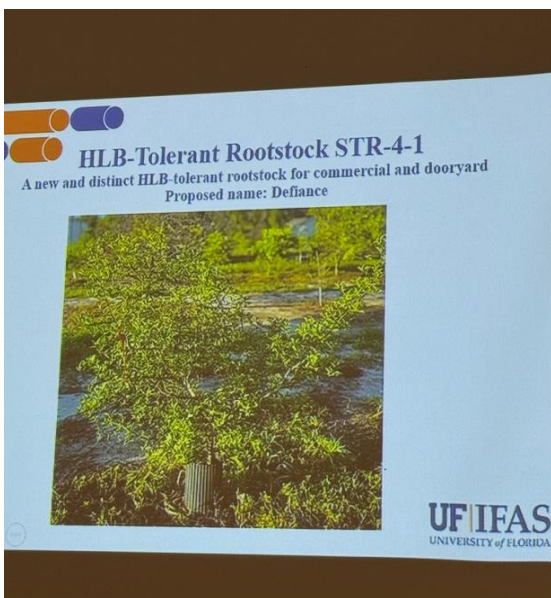
In November, the Club had an exciting opportunity to have Dr. Jude Grosser of the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center speak about recent developments in cultivars of citrus. Dr. Grosser's research program in citrus variety improvement strives to develop new cultivars that can thrive in both commercial and home gardens.

After Citrus Greening disease decimated the Citrus industry in Florida, the State now produces only about 10% of what it did prior to the arrival of the disease. Brix levels have also done down, along with the general quality of the fruit.

New cultivars are being developed by cloning, seedling selection, and rootstock selection. These new varieties are selected for their qualities that are desired, such as easy peel, sweetness, and of course resistance to greening. There are also different varieties suited for different purposes, such as fresh eating, juicing, general commercial use, and those that will ship long distances well. Some are updated versions of older classic favorites.

Jude discussed many of these citrus in great detail, including: sweet oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruit. He reminds anyone growing a citrus that the roots are where the most effort at protection against greening starts. Greening destroys the feeder roots, which results in the eventual decline of the tree. Ensuring ample organics in the soil, using a product like biochar, for example, can help strengthen the tree's defenses.

His trees at home are not under CUPS protection, nor does he use any other commercial treatment for his trees. It is his hope that proper variety selection, proper nutrition, especially at the root level, will maybe someday even make CUPS and other specialized treatments unnecessary and that home and grove can once again grow citrus successfully.



Left: One of the newest rootstock STR-4-1, an HLB tolerant rootstock for both commercial and home growers. It may be called Defiance.
 Right: Healthy looking grove in Haines City.
 Photos: George Campani

Snapshots of the November meeting Photos: George Campani



∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda

Another year almost done and what a year it was. We got the earliest frost here that I can remember: November 12th. Only 38 degrees F, yet frost on the roofs, cars and lawn. No damage to any plants though, as I had spent quite a bit of time the days before preparing to cover the most tender ones. I have quite the collection of sheets, bed spreads, blankets and comforters, which are heavily relied upon to save the day (or night) from Jack frost.

We are in between avocado crops – only Choquette is still hanging. Most persimmons are done for the year also, except for ‘Winterset’, and the native ‘Turkey lake’ which is dense, sticky and sweet as dates – not large as persimmons go, but really appreciated for eating, as well as for the seeds which will be turned into superior rootstock for grafting later.

Many rooted cuttings have been potted up – grapes, passionfruits, etc., and loquat, palms, and Annona seedlings are going into larger pots. The large soursop has been moved indoors for the winter and is really looking healthy – nice and green and flowering and setting lots of fruit. Speaking of annonas – the last true Cherimoya came off with a gentle tug. This one was pollinated with green sugar apple pollen on June 29th so it took about 18 weeks to ripen. The seeds should make Atemoyas when grown out. The cherimoya fruit itself is quite good – sweet and tasting like caramel and cream.



Cherimoya *Annona cherimola*
Photo: Paul Zmoda



All about BANANAS

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT BANANAS

Bananas are harvested green because they keep ripening even after they are picked.

An average American is said to consume more than 28 pounds of bananas/year.

Despite that fact that bananas love a tropical climate, they are grown in Iceland too, by heating the soil with geysers.

NUTRITIONAL FACTS

POTASSIUM

Potassium helps in the building of muscles and protein synthesis, by stimulating nerve impulses for muscle contraction.

Also potassium-rich food is said to reduce the risk of hypertension, stroke and high blood pressure.

VITAMIN B6

Vitamin B6 helps in the synthesis of antibodies in the immune system apart from red blood formation, protein metabolism and functioning of the central nervous system.

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C helps the body to defend and heal against infections. This vitamin also proves valuable in the synthesis of the connective tissue, absorption of iron and the formation of blood.

Bananas contain 3 natural sugars, sucrose, fructose and glucose along with dietary fiber; thus giving an instant and substantial boost of energy.

No other fruit contain more digestible carbohydrates than bananas. This is very advantageous because our body burns off calories from carbohydrate more easily and quickly than calories from fat or protein.

AND, BANANAS DO NOT CONTAIN ANY SODIUM, FAT OR CHOLESTEROL.

∞ Club Notes ∞

Blinds needed! If anyone has any of those inexpensive 1" window blinds, metal or plastic, that they are not using anymore or are going to throw away, the seed chairman could sure use them to replenish the stock for labels. If you have any of these old blinds, don't throw them out, please bring them to the seed table at the next meeting. Thank you! Seed Chairman



It's that time – to start planning for, and locating citrus fruits for the Citrus Celebration in February 2026. If you, or someone you know would have some fruit to share for this important event, the Club needs fruits! Any and all varieties of citrus are welcome.

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: **December 22nd.**

∞ 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
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