



RFCI

June 2026

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

Meetings unless otherwise noted are held at 1:00pm:
The Oaks at St. Mark's Event Venue.
13312 Cain Road Tampa, FL 33625

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

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

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

June 28th – Please note the date!! Our very own Paul Zmoda will be talking about wine making. Paul is an avid grower of grapes, and so many other fruits, and makes his own wines from the fruits he grows. Learn the secrets to productive grapes and delicious wines from this iconic grower. Tasting available.



Social hour - 1:00p-2:00p

Potluck - 2:00p - 2:30p

Introduction/Speaker - 2:30p-3:30p

Raffle/Closing: 3:30p-4:00p



July 12th – The Great Annual Mango Tasting! Cutting and preparing will begin at noon. Please use the sign-up link below to sign up to help with preparations for this deliciously anticipated event.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B4FA4AE23ABFD0-64284775-mango>

Welcome New Members!

Anna Dearborn

Karen Horii-Stever

Lisa Scholder

Maureen Smith

Thonotosassa

Wesley Chapel

Temple Terrace

Largo

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

The Florida Fungi Food Forest

Presented by The Mad Mycologist – Sebastian Munevar

For May's meeting there was a change in presenter when Andrew Johnson was unable to make the meeting. Sebastian Munevar stepped in and presented a wonderfully organized and detailed discussion on inoculating your food forest with gourmet and medicinal mushrooms. The discussion was clearly engaging, and many members were excited to start their own mushrooms at home.

Sebastian clarified the two primary ways of growing mushrooms, the mushroom patch, and the mushroom log, explaining the pros and cons of both. The patch is a spot in your garden bed where the inoculate is placed in the soil, and the log is where holes are drilled into a section of log, and inoculate is placed within the holes and sealed in.

Oyster mushrooms are an excellent choice of mushroom for the home grower. They come in various colors, have a meaty flavor, and are very versatile. The pink oyster mushroom for example, can even take sun!

Always try to use native varieties, if possible, as they can take our climate conditions, and are not invasive. Local sources are your best option for getting the starter blocks.

Mushrooms have some pretty incredible health benefits, and growing them fresh yourself is a great way to make the most of those benefits. Mushrooms are very versatile to cook with, they can be freeze-dried, and dehydrated as well to extend the harvest.

Local sources:

Mountain Priest Mushroom Farms:

grows and sells mushrooms like Lions Mane, Golden and Blue Oysters, King Trumpets and more, wholesale and retail to the public. 2525 Dr. MLK St. N, Saint Petersburg, FL (727) 410-2726 luckieb@icloud.com

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Mountain-Priest-Mushroom-Farms/61565688480357/#>

Zephyrgills Mushroom Farm

7530 Fort King Rd Zephyrhills, FL 33541 Phone:(352) 424-1360

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Zephyrgills-Mushroom-Farm/100090387130200/>

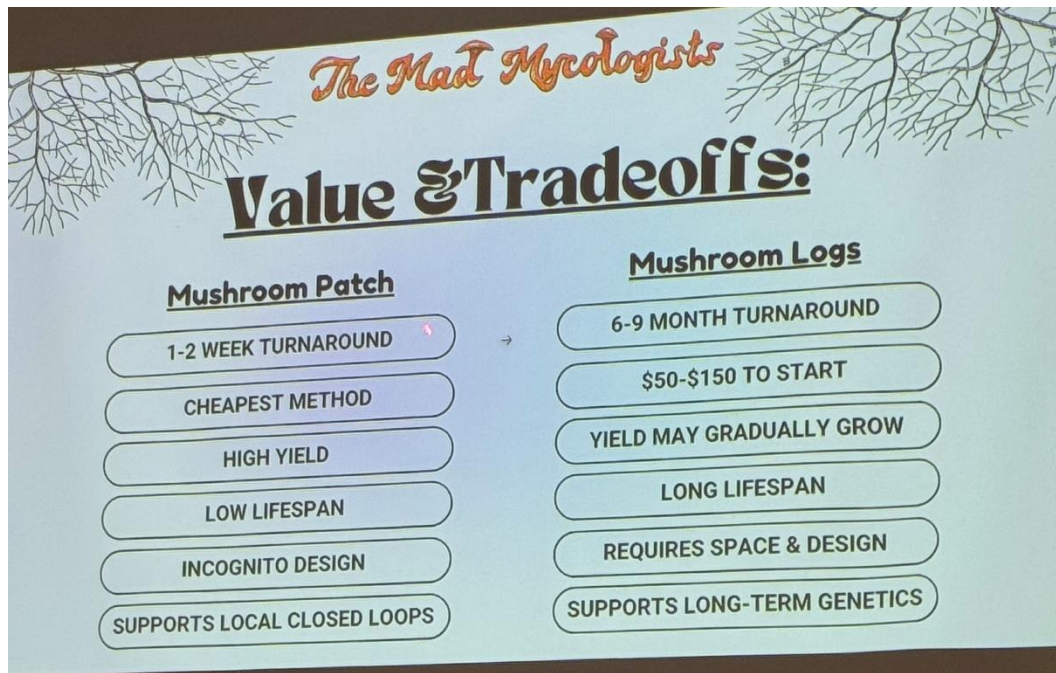
Petrichor Mushrooms - Sarasota

Hello@drinkpetrichor.com (941) 735-4885

<https://www.facebook.com/PetrichorMushrooms/>

Here is a link to the itemized shopping list for starting your mushroom log.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1igM-ay5rK1kxI4koHhOp5ud1Hu81W3QyxPOlouWPtr8/edit?usp=sharing>



Above: The differences between a mushroom patch in your garden bed, or growing mushrooms on a log.
 Below: Club President Chris Ramirez (left) with speaker Sebastian Munevar (center) and Club Vice President Paul Branesky (right) Photos: George Campani





Members enjoying the meeting.



Seed and membership table

Photos: George Campani

∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda



Black Sapote Photo: Paul Zmoda

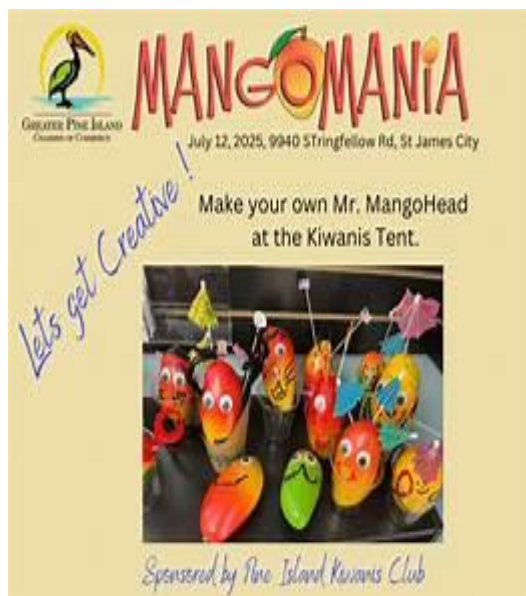
It's still very dry here; only about a half inch of rain in all of April. Established grapes don't mind much – their roots go deep and find the water they need. Most are holding plenty of fruit – even some of the newer vines. I even thinned the crop on a few.

We are feasting on tomatoes daily. The garden is providing pole beans as the corn ears are showing and the okra is starting to produce. I already ate two soursops and there are four more hanging.

Most of the persimmons I grafted are growing well. So well in fact, that I was able to plant two out already: 'Nikita's Gift' and D.E.C. Goliath. I found a spot for a newer grape: 'Blanca Nieves', which means Snow White.

Some friends came to visit and brought a huge black sapote. It was ready to eat in two days and it was amazing – dark brown like shoe polish, smooth and sweet. Now I want to grow that one.

It's Mango season! Of course, the Club's mango tasting is on July 12th, and we'll see you ALL there! But, if you need more mangoes, here are some Mango events near and far to consider adding to the mango joy.



Pine Island

MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival 2026

July 11, 2026

9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

9940 Stringfellow Rd
St James City, FL 33956
United States

Info@pineislandchamber.org 239-283-0888

<https://fairchildgarden.org/events/mango-festival/>

SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
JUNE 13 & 14, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

THE SUMMER'S
JUICIEST WEEKEND IN MIAMI



Florida Mango Festival is June 27th, 2026

Save the date! 🍷🍌
Join us in West Palm Beach, Florida for the mango event of the year.
Experience an unforgettable celebration of flavor as you taste extraordinary mangos at their peak and meet the passionate growers behind them.
Discover Florida's finest small, independent farms, explore rare and exceptional varieties, and immerse yourself in the sights, aromas, and energy of mango season like never before.

<https://floridamangofestival.com/>

THE ULTIMATE

MANGO Mania

THE ULTIMATE MANGO EXPERIENCE

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 2026

TASTE UP TO 150+ MANGO VARIETIES!

Main Speaker
SHANNON WHOBREY
Right-Hand Man to
Chris Wenzel of Truly Tropical

ALL ABOUT MANGOES
• Growing mango trees in Florida
• How new mango varieties are created
• Grafting and mango farm development
• The story behind Truly Tropical

Special Talk
LOUISE E. KING
Horticulturist,
Fruit & Spice Park
Rejuvenation of
Old Mango Trees

Your Ticket Includes

- FREE CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
- UP TO 150+ MANGO VARIETIES TO TASTE
- BAG OF MANGOES TO TAKE HOME
- SMALL-GROUP PRESENTATION & Q&A
- FREE ADMISSION TO FRUIT & SPICE PARK (AFTER EVENT)
- FREE PARKING

SCHEDULE
9:00 AM
Doors Open & Free Continental Breakfast
10:00 AM
Presentations
Afterwards
Mango Tasting Experience
Explore Fruit & Spice Park

TICKETS
\$60 IN ADVANCE
\$75 AT THE DOOR
BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE AT tfsr.org/imm

LOCATION
UF/IFAS Extension
Miami-Dade County
1870 SW 28th ST
Homestead, FL 33030
Free Parking

Proceeds benefit projects at Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead, FL, home to over 200 mango varieties and hundreds of tropical fruits.
PRESENTED BY THE TROPICAL FRUIT & VEGETABLE SOCIETY OF THE REDLAND

∞ 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: **June 22nd**.

Need some 1 or 3 gallon size used black pots? I have quite a few extra if you need some.
deemail@tampabay.rr.com

Reminder about raffle plants: Please be sure to properly identify and label your raffle donations. It is important that the person receiving the plant knows its identity and what parts are edible, how to grow, etc. The emphasis is on edible plants of course, as we are a fruit club. Please, no invasive plants.

∞ 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