

RFCI

August 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 ⌘



August 9th - Mycorrhizae and biochar – The Club's former President and member, Tom Schaefer, will speak about the benefits of mycorrhizae and biochar for soil fertility and plant health. His talk will include using commercially available mycorrhizae and biochar products. Biochar, a form of charcoal designed specifically for soil enhancement, has been celebrated for its ability to improve soil structure, enhance water retention, and support a thriving ecosystem of soil microorganisms. Learn how to improve your harvest.

Welcome New Members!

Nick Winger
Amin Ruchi
Margie Hernandez
Lita Lee
Dixie Resnick
Keith Sheppard

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

Driving to the farms to get the fresh mangoes is always a fun field trip.



**The Tampa Bay Rare Fruit Council's 2026 Mango Festival:
Written by George Campani**

This year's Mango Festival was on Sunday, July 12, 2026, and this year's location for the Club's Mango Festival was the Oaks at St. Mark's Event Venue in Tampa. This grand event is for our Club Members to take time to enjoy the many, many different varieties of mangos grown right here in Florida, and they have conversations on their experiences with growing mangos with other Club Members.

New members and many Floridians do not realize that there are so many varieties of mangos grown in Florida. The reason is that they are not usually sold in their local supermarket. Therefore, to highlight Florida's locally grown mango varieties, our Club does an Annual Mango Tasting Event that this year had over 25 varieties of locally grown mangos for tasting which included: Haden, Nam Doc Mai, Maha Chanook, Mallika, Coconut Cream, Brahm Kai Meu, and many other varieties, just to name a few. These locally grown varieties of mangos are known by the mango enthusiasts in our Club. They look forward to this event every year and they were not disappointed once again with these sweet, low-fiber fruits that are a delicious treat. The Club's "mango mavens" not only look for the lowest fiber and sweetest mangos; they look for the mango varieties that display subtle hints of other fruit or spice flavors that make for an interesting and unique mango.

For example, some say the following mangos have complex flavors: Coconut Cream Mango has a hint of coconut flavor. Lemon Zest Mango has a hint of citrus flavor. Southern Blush Mango has a sweet taste with a hint of fruit flavor.

Many members look forward to this Event every year for these unique tasting mangos, but everyone's tastes are a little different. And we do not get the exact same varieties every year. If you have not tried these lesser-known mangos-- most with sweet and low-fiber and some with subtle hints of fruit or spice flavors-- you might find this Event a must for next year's calendar.

Not all the fun, however, is on the day of the Event; the Mango Committee Members go out and purchase mangos from the growers. Some Committee Members go to the West Coast (Pine Island) to procure mangos, and the other group go to the Southeast Coast. This adventure can lead to finding new varieties, tasting new varieties, and to explore for new suppliers.

A Special Thanks go out to the growers that supplied mangos for our Event.

The Pine Island Growers:

Tommy Devoe, from **Devoe Fruit Farms**, gave the committee a tour of his farm and went out of the way to supply us with: Fruit Punch Mangos, M4 Mangos, Venus Mangos, Lil Gem Mangos, Juicy Peach Mangos, Tebow Mangos, Crème Brillee, Lemon Zest, Maha Chanook Mangos, 0-15 Mangos, Raw Honey Mangos, Pina Colada Mangos, and Fruit Cocktail Mangos. Thank You Tommy Devoe and Kris Devoe.

John Brosseau, from **Gatherings Grove**, gave the committee a tour of his farm and, also went out of his way to help supply the Club with many hard-to-find varieties: Irwin Mangos, Haden Mangos, Choc-Anon Mangos, Zill Mangos. Thank You, John Brosseau.

Karen, from **Stanley's Mangos**, helped us in the Store with the purchase of the following mangos: Brahm Kai Meu (our biggest purchase that day), Coconut Cream Mangos, Cac Mangos, Lemon Meringue Mangos, and Sunrise Mangos. Thank You Karen Olsen, Manager, and Bill O'Malley, Owner.

Charlie Ho, from **Hot Tropic Fruit Farm**, helped us with the purchase of Nam Doc Mai Mangos, Carabao Mangos, and Neelum Mangos. Thank You Charlie Ho, Owner.

A Special Thanks go out to The East Coast Growers:

Tropical Paradise Grove, Lake Worth Corridor, supplied: Angie Mangos, Bailey's Marvel Mangos, Dot Mangos, Duncan Mangos, Mallika Mangos, Edward Mangos, Southern Blush Mangos, and Zill Mangos. There the owner, Muriel, gave a tour of the grove which included a discussion (with Chris) on the colder weather this year helping with fruit set. Thank You Muriel.

Truly Tropical, Delray Beach, supplied: Carrie Mangos, Cushman Mangos, Coconut Cream Mangos, and Dupuis Saigon Mangos. Thank You Chris

Hidden Acres Mango Farm, in Davie Florida, supplied: Fairchild Mangos, Springfels Mangos, and Pickering Mangos. Thank You Steve.

A Special Thanks, once again to Club Member, Kip Weinhold, for his generous donation of Pickering Mangos, Cogshall Mangos, Alfonso Mangos, Fairchild Mangos, Lemon Meringue Mangos, and Duncan Mangos for our Mango Festival. Kip has a beautiful large yard of tropical fruit trees and once again let some members assist him in picking mangos, as they got a tour of his yard. While there, our members got to sample some hard-to-find mangos like Ugli Betty, and Dot. Thank you, Kip.

Also, while there, Paul acquired a 54 pound jackfruit which he cut up and generously handed out at the Mango Tasting Event. Thank You, Paul Branesky!

A "Special Thanks" to the hard-working Mango Committee Members: Chris Ramirez, Club President; Paul Branesky, Club Vice President; Hillary Cosenza, Club Secretary; Avi Stern, Board Member; Rochan Premraj; Kip Weinhold; Ko Chang; Charlie Crowley; and George Campani.

The Day of the Annual Mango Tasting on Sunday could not happen without the hard-working Club Members that come in early to help. Thank you for making this Day a Big Success!

Mango Tasting 2026 Photos: George Campani





☞ What's Happening ☞

by Paul Zmoda

Typical summer, fruit growing weather – except one part is missing. Long days? Check. Intense sun? Check. High daily temperatures? Check. Daily rainfall? Uh, no! We are still in a drought and it shows.

This dry weather is very much like that in the Mediterranean and California when it comes to grapes. This means low fungus pressure and superior ripening characteristics, such as Brix (sugar content), and flavor profiles. As each grape variety comes into maximum ripeness, I pick the clusters, inspect them, rejecting any bad fruit, and then freeze until having enough for wine making.



Tomato and okra seeds are up and ready to set out in the garden. Thai soldier long beans are loving the weather and providing enough daily to eat and freeze for the future.

Lots of rooted cuttings are getting potted up as established ones are getting up-potted. Back in the woods, the native elderberries are ripening. I occasionally use them in my red wines for the tannins and color that they provide. I collected a few pounds.

Elderberries Photo: Paul Zmoda

Citrus Expo 2026



Citrus, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Expo

Dates: Wednesday, August 12, 2026 - Thursday, August 13, 2026

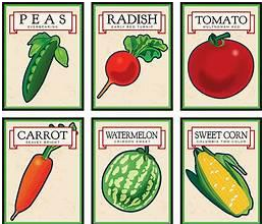
Venue: Caloosa Sound Convention Center, 1375 Monroe St Fort Myers FL

<https://citrusexpo.net/>

<https://citrusexpo.net/register/>

The Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo is a premier education and networking event designed to serve today's citrus, vegetable and specialty crop growers, along with the industry professionals who support them. The Expo brings together growers, researchers, agribusiness leaders and solution providers for two days of practical learning, meaningful connections and industry-driven conversations. The Expo's seminar program is developed in collaboration with growers, university researchers and industry experts to ensure sessions address real-world challenges and opportunities. Educational sessions are paired with a robust trade show, creating a space where ideas, innovation and relationships come together.

∞ Club Notes ∞



Fall and winter seeds are in! The seed chairman says come and get 'em! There will be an abundance of seeds available at the August meeting for your fall and winter gardens. Now is the beginning of the seed planting time for these crops.

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.**

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