



# RFCI

November 2013

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

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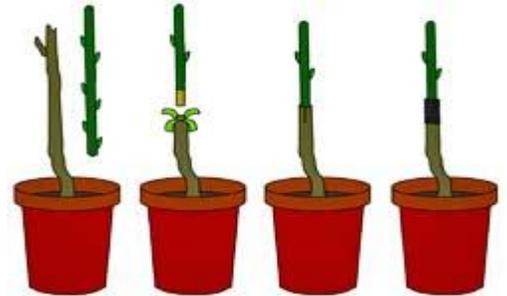
<http://www.facebook.com/TampaBayChapterRareFruitCouncilIntlInc>

Meetings are held the second Sunday, 2:00 P.M.  
at the Tampa Garden Club, 2629 Bayshore Blvd.

## ∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

**November 10<sup>th</sup>:** Grafting Workshop. This hands-on workshop will teach you how to do your own grafting. Knowledgeable members will show you methods of grafting. You must bring your own tools such as knives and tape, and compatible rootstock and scions to the workshop.

If you do not have plants to graft, that's fine; you are welcome to learn by watching the activities. There will be plenty of plants for raffle, the seed table, and of course, plenty of food! Also, bring your thermometer for calibration – see Paul's article.



**December 8<sup>th</sup>:** Holiday Social at 1pm – Party starts an hour earlier than the usual meeting time.

## ∞ New Members ∞

Gabriel Carrasquillo Tampa  
Norman Freeman Tampa  
Joe & Zynap Camera Pinellas Park

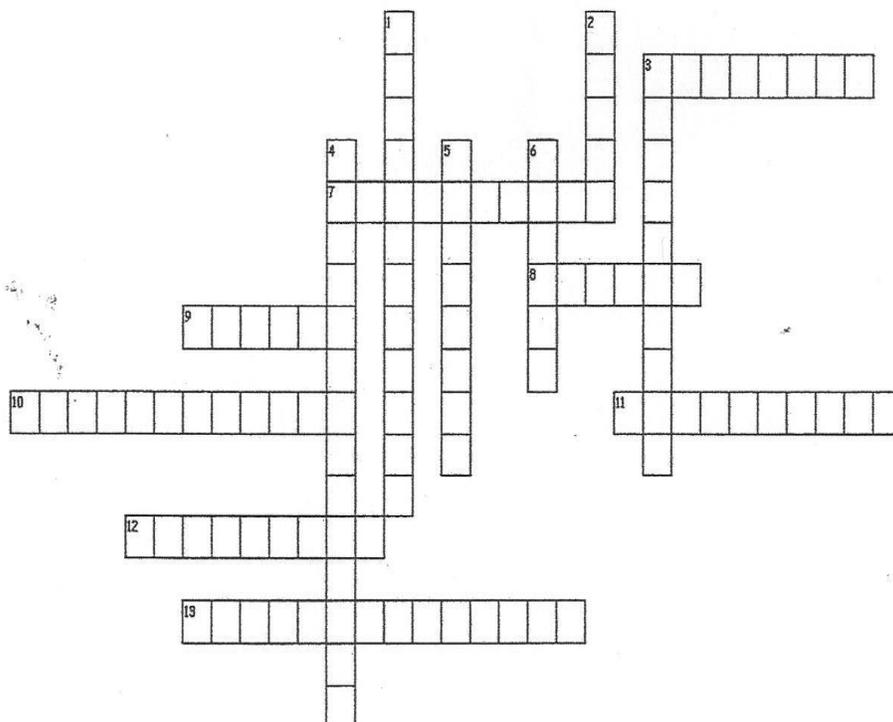
Sylvester Carol Holder Tampa  
Klist Shalpe St.Pete  
Peter Schreuder Tampa



**President: Thom Scott; Editor: Denise Provencher; Photographs: Fred Engelbrecht  
Membership: Bryon Provencher; Production/Distribution: Denise Provencher**

## ∞ Puzzle Fun! ∞

Created By Member Joni Hartzler



- Across
3. Dragon Fruit
  7. Aspirin derivative
  8. Apple
  9. Japanese Plum
  10. Meeting Day
  11. Owner Unbelievable Acres
  12. Star Fruit
  13. Published Author Member
- Down
1. Donate plants for
  2. Longtime President
  3. Newsletter Editor
  4. Annual Dues
  5. New President
  6. Large Fruited Herb

Answers on page 6

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## ☞ What's Happening ☞

by Paul Zmoda

Everything is so green and growing well; this was a great summer. Carambolas are cropping again and looking good. We got a modest crop of tropical guavas, both white and red – always appreciated.

Wine making is going well: Two gallons of Blac Du Bois grape wine is clearing nicely. Seventy pounds of Il Primo grapes are waiting in the wings, frozen, until there is room to start a new batch. All of our Il Primo grape juice has been sold to area high-end restaurants. Our best yield ever and the chefs really are surprised and pleased to find it as a local product.

We've been eating Atemoyas lately from our tree. The tag said 'Gefner', but I and others have our doubts. At any rate, they are perfect in every way. If a flavor can be loud, this one's a roar!

Did you know that most thermometers are not very accurate? We all are heard quoting the low temperatures we saw each winter, but what does that mean when your thermometer is off by up to five degrees? Mass produced (cheap) thermometers have a lot of error built in. More accurate ones can be quite expensive but are not in general use by homeowners. At our November meeting, if you would like your thermometers calibrated, bring them and I will determine the correction value.



New plantings: Mexicola Grande Avocado, tea, Natal Queen pineapple, ornamental bromeliads, winter salad greens, onions, tomatoes, herbs and peas.

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## ☞ The USF Plant Sale ☞

The fall plant sale at USF was another success! The weather was pleasant, there was a constant flow of people, and visitors to our section were pleased with the wide selection of plants available. Passersby were intrigued by the “praying hands banana” and stopped to ask questions. Nearly 300 cups of juice were sold by our enthusiastic juice ladies. We thank all our new volunteers for their help during this weekend sale. The plant sales are a great opportunity for learning about plants, and enjoying the social time with other club members, as well as raising funds for the Club.

∞ Pictures from the USF Plant Sale ∞



## ☞ Sex and the Single Papaya ☞



Home growers of papayas often wonder why they did not get fruit from their papaya plant. They may get excited to see golf ball size fruits forming on their plants, but are later disappointed to see these unfertilized fruits abort and fall to the ground. The grower isn't doing anything wrong; nor is there anything wrong with the plant. A little sex education in papayas just might help in understanding what is happening.

Papayas have three sexual forms that any plant can appear as: male, female, or hermaphrodite. Male papayas have flowers that appear in large numbers on a drooping cluster called a peduncle. Males, of course, have no ovary, but instead have stamens bearing pollen that will pollinate the flowers of a female plant and therefore, make the fruit. Female flowers have ovaries that are receptive to receiving the pollen from the male plant, either by insect delivery or wind borne. When the pollinization is successful, the fruit will grow. Hermaphrodite plants have both ovaries and stamens, and can fertilize themselves, requiring no other papaya plants to be in the vicinity. Hermaphrodite plants are the most desirable for dependable fruit production. However, hermaphrodites are a bit unstable, and can change their sexual status; possibly to due to a change in weather or moisture levels.

It is recommended to have several papaya plants, as the sex of the plant cannot be determined when the plants are small. This will greatly enhance the chance of having a fruiting plant.

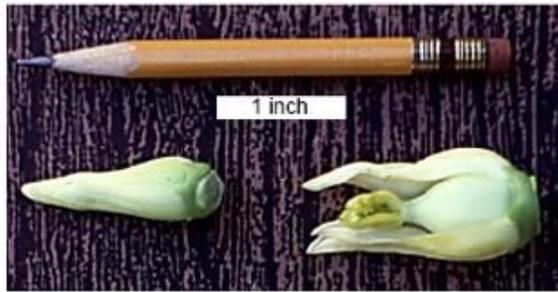
For further information on growing papayas, and pictures, check out the following:

University of Florida Publication HS11 entitled Papaya Growing in the Florida Home Landscape.  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG05400.pdf>

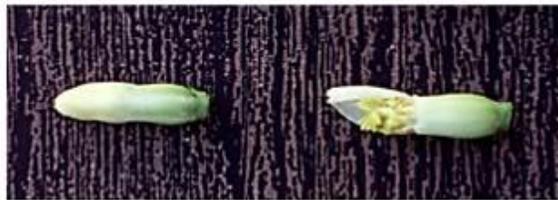
College of Tropical Agriculture article entitled: Why some Papaya Plants Fail to Fruit  
[http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/F\\_N-5.pdf](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/F_N-5.pdf)

Picture from *C. L. Chia and Richard M. Manshardt, Department of Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences.*

## The three types of papaya flower



**Female**  
conical bud; petals free; large ovary with prominent stigma; no stamens; does not form fruit unless pollinated



**Hermaphrodite**  
cylindrical bud; petals fused at base; contains both ovary and stamens; self-fertile



**Male**  
slender, spoon-shaped bud; petals fused at base; contains anthers but no ovary; cannot develop into fruit

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### Answers to puzzle on page 2:

#### Across

3. Pitahaya
7. Willowbark
8. Annona
9. Loquat
10. FirstSunday
11. GeneJoyner
12. Carambola
13. MonicaBrandies

#### Down

1. Raffleticket
  2. Novak
  3. Provencher
  4. Twentydollars
  5. TomScott
  6. Papaya
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## ✂ Extra, Extra, Read all about it! ✂

Monica Brandies has been busy this summer writing in the Tampa Tribune about our very own Club members! In the Brandon News (a weekly publication from the Tampa Tribune), she wrote about B & B Hobbies, Bob and Becky Gerstein's fruit growing business, and Bill Vega's nursery in Seffner. Here is a brief synopsis of her articles for those who do not get the Brandon News section of the paper.

*July 17, 2013.* Monica wrote about the Gerstein's start in the nursery business. When oak trees in their yard had to be removed, the now sunny yard opened up an opportunity to grow fruits that they couldn't find anywhere else. Now the Gersteins have 100 kinds of fruiting plants available for sale. Many of the trees growing in their yard are already fruiting, some having been planted only a few years ago. One nectarine produced 200 fruits this spring, and it's only been in the ground for three years.

The Gersteins owe their very healthy plants and trees to the soil. Loads of compost and manure are mixed in, both for pots and for planting. There are also two shade houses that convert to greenhouses for the winter. Temperatures have dipped to 18 degrees, and nothing has been lost. Bob also studied drip-irrigation, and installed a system on timers to water the plants. They can even go on vacation and not worry.

To visit the Gersteins nursery at 2116 Ramblewood Court in Brandon, call first (813-681-2386). They have not only plants, but supplies you can't easily get except wholesale. They also have tons of enthusiasm and knowledge to share.

*August 14, 2013.* Monica visited Bill Vega's nursery in Seffner and stated she had never seen so many plants growing on only a quarter an acre, and everything is thriving and producing! Bill tells of his father's banana farm in Puerto Rico, where Bill was helping out as soon as he could walk. Bill enjoys the tubers from Yam Vine and says they are even better than potatoes. His passion vine has covered an old oak tree and produced 3 crops this year and about 6,000 fruits. He waits till the fruit falls to the ground. He freezes some and makes juice.

Monica states she didn't see any weeds, but lots of plants, all producing something good. Bill also has containers that move into a shade house/greenhouse in winter. Rain barrels collect water, about 1,000 gallons, and this is connected to the irrigation system. He feeds his plants with a 10-10-10, or a 4-6-8 citrus fertilizer, and composted manure. Bill enjoys spending his days in his garden. He says it keeps him young.

If you would like to visit, please call ahead 813-300-7597.



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## Notes

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