



January 2014

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.

œ Upcoming Programs and Events œ

**January 12:** Peter Chaires, executive director of the New Variety Development and Management Corporation will speak on new and exciting Citrus varieties.

**February 6 - 17: RFCI Horticulture Display at the 2014 Florida State Fair:**

**Calling all Volunteers:** We need your help during the month of February. February is a big month for our club and for the Tampa Bay area because we welcome the Florida State Fair.

**RFCI Florida State Fair Exhibit:**

We need volunteers to man this year's display at the Florida State Fair, February 6 - 17. In return, you will receive admission tickets to the Fair. We will have a volunteer signup sheet at the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**February 9<sup>th</sup>: Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair:**

We will be hosting the Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair. This event has been very popular with the public because it gives them the opportunity to sample many varieties of citrus. Please plan to help. A signup sheet will be available at the January meeting.

This year, it is critical for members to donate citrus fruit (as many varieties as possible). Our main sources for fruit in the past are no longer available. If you have citrus to donate (or know of someone who will donate fruit), please contact Paul Branesky (727)341-2605, Sally & Jimmy Lee (813)982-9359, or any Board member.

We also need volunteers to help prepare the fruit for sampling. A signup sheet will be available at the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, or you may contact one of the members listed in the above paragraph. Volunteers will receive admission tickets to the Fair. Look for more information in the February newsletter.

**March:** Larry M. Schokman, Director Emeritus, for the Kampong, of the National Tropical Botanical Garden. Larry has written a book on the plants and fruits of the Kampong, which he will have available for purchase at the meeting at COST to members (\$35.00), a huge savings over the retail price for this beautiful, hardcover book. He will also autograph the books for you. So remember to bring money for the amount of copies of this book that you want to buy.



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

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**∞ New Members ∞**

Perry, Joe, Francie, Leslie Gaglianos

Tampa

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**∞ Holiday Social ∞**



President Thom Scott addresses the crowd

Delicious food and colorful, tasty desserts were the star attraction at the Social. There were really nice gifts including bottles of wine, and beautiful plants.



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## ☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda

### *Happy New Year!*

We are so much luckier than most of the USA in that we have had warm weather linger longer. I bought a truckload of potting soil from Mother's Organic Humus Company in Seffner, Fla. This product looks pretty good to me. I potted/repotted about 200 specimens and then tucked the tender ones inside our enclosed greenhouse for the winter.

I also planted dozens of seeds: dwarf pawpaws, wild plums, peaches, and wild coffee.

This summer's air layered plants got potted up also – olives, starfruit, and white sapote.

Our last guava of the season was huge. We're still getting nice carambolas. Now is the time to prune all of your trees and vines.

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Member Steve Lohn is quite excited to share this picture of his grafted sapote fruit sapling he obtained at November's workshop. Not only did it put out new leaf growth in a mere week, but the plant needed repotting as the roots had filled the pot. Way to go!

(photo Steve Lohn)



Founding members Judson Newcombe  
And Bob Heath (photo Steve Lohn)

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## ∞ Cool as a Cucumber ∞

Cucumbers really are cool. Here's a bunch of facts from a variety of on-line sources about this amazing member of the melon family that you may not have known.

The cucumber is scientifically known as *Cucumis sativus*, and is a member of the Cucurbitaceae family of fruit-bearing plants that includes melons, cantaloupes, and squashes, and gourds.

Cucumbers originated in India, and finally made their way to North America by the mid-1600s. They are available year round, with Florida and California being the primary producers in the winter months. Florida produces the most cucumbers. The long, dark green, smooth-skinned garden varieties of cucumbers are the most widely known, but there are many colors, shapes, sizes, and textures. There are hundreds of varieties, but virtually all can be divided into two basic types: slicing and pickling. Slicing cucumbers include those varieties cultivated for eating in fresh form. Pickling cucumbers can be eaten fresh, but their smaller size and thinner skins are what make them perfect for fermenting and preserving in jars. Pickling is basically a process of preventing food spoilage that involves soaking in a liquid and/or fermenting.

One half cup of cucumber has only eight calories.

The largest individual cuke fruit recorded is 59 pounds.



### **Health benefits:**

Cucumbers are 95% water, perfect for rehydrating your body and skin. Eating them will provide B vitamins, and vitamin C (especially in the skin of the fruit). Cukes are loaded with vitamins, trace minerals, and phytonutrients such as cucurbitacins, lignans, and flavonoids. These provide antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer benefits.

It's the cucurbitacins that give the cucumbers a bitter taste, and can cause burping in some people. Most of the cucurbitacin is at the stem end of the fruit.

Place a slice over puffy eyes and the anti-inflammatory properties will help reduce puffiness.

The silicon and sulfur in cucumbers help to stimulate hair growth.

Press a slice of cucumber to the roof of your mouth with your tongue for 30 seconds, the phytochemicals will kill odor causing bacteria.

To avoid a hangover in the morning, eat a few cuke slices before going to bed. The sugar, B vitamins, and electrolytes replenish nutrients, reducing the intensity of hangover headache.

Cucumber is an excellent diet food for those looking to lose weight. The high fiber and water content are effective in aiding digestion and making you feel fuller.

A cucumber a day is regarded as a remedy for chronic constipation.

Cucumbers contain a hormone needed by the pancreas for producing insulin and has been found to be beneficial to diabetic patients. Research has also shown cukes work effectively at reducing cholesterol levels, and treating both high and low blood pressure.

The silica in cucumbers promotes joint health by strengthening connective tissues. Cucumber juice mixed with carrot juice can reduce uric acid levels, thereby reducing gout pain and arthritis pain.

Cucumbers contain lariciresinol, pinoresinol, and secoisolariciresinol, three lignans that have a strong history of research for reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, as well as fighting certain cancers, such as breast, uterine, ovarian, and prostate cancers. Cancer cell development and survival can be blocked by the cucurbitacins in cucumbers.

**Selecting and storing:** When purchasing cucumbers, select those that are firm, medium to dark green, and do not have yellowing, soft spots or wrinkly ends. Organic, or at least unwaxed cucumbers are best if you plan on eating the nutrient packed skins. Both organic and conventionally marketed cukes may be coated with wax, but the conventionally processed cukes may contain unwanted chemical contaminants in the wax. You may wish to remove the skin of those cucumbers. It is safe to consume the wax of organically grown and processed cukes. Cucumbers will store best, up to a week, in the refrigerator.

**Other neat uses for cukes:**

A few slices of cuke in an aluminum pie tin will drive garden pests away from your garden.

Try rubbing a cucumber slice on your mirror to prevent fog-up when showering.

Cuke rubbed onto areas of cellulite will tighten skin and make it appear smoother.

A green way to clean faucets, sinks and stainless steel is simply using cucumber to rub the surfaces. It will remove years of tarnish and bring back shine, but it's also perfectly safe on your hands.

Unwanted crayon, marker and pen marks can be removed with a slice of cuke. Out of white-out? It can also be used to "correct" a mistake on a document.

If your shoes need a shine that lasts and repels water, try rubbing them with cucumber.

Studies have shown that a steam "facial" over a boiling pot of cucumber relieves stress in preparation for that important college exam. The nutrients released in the steam will do wonders for your facial skin tone.

Squeak no more! A little cuke rubbed on a squeaky hinge will quiet it down.



Who said cukes were just for the salad?!





### **Varieties:**

From: *Cucumber Varieties A Brief Guide to Types of Cucumbers*, by Molly Watson at <http://localfoods.about.com/od/summer/tp/cucumbertypes.htm>

Garden varieties. These are the most common cucumbers in North America. They are relatively smooth skinned and dark green. They are perfect for fresh eating.

Armenian cucumbers are long, thin, and slightly variegated in darker and lighter shades of light green or a yellowish-green. They are delightfully crunchy and are delicious simply sliced and eaten raw. They have very soft seeds and a thin skin, requiring neither seeding nor peeling for eating. They are not good for pickling.

English cucumbers (a.k.a. hot house cucumbers) are long, thin, with a dark green skin. They are often sold wrapped in plastic at supermarkets, but you can find unwrapped ones at farmers markets (despite their alias, these cucumbers do not require a hot house or plastic wrap to grow). This cucumber has a mild, almost non-existent flavor, and is prized for its thin skin and minimal seeds. Like Armenian cucumbers, English cucumbers are best sliced and raw and are not good for pickling.

Persian cucumbers are very similar to English cucumbers. So similar, in fact, that they are pretty much visually indistinguishable from fresh, not-wrapped-in-plastic English cukes, except that they come in a greater range of lengths - some shorter, some longer, and sometimes have slightly bumpy skin like a Kirby. Persian cukes have a mild flavor and thin skins - they're great for salads, or use slices of them to scoop up dip.

Lemon cukes are yellow, round, and look like lemons. They are sweet, without that bitter edge that most cucumbers have, have thin skins, minimal soft seeds, and are flavorful. They are tasty raw, but make delicious pickles too.

Kirby cucumbers are usually short and always bumpy. They have a range of skin color from yellow to dark green. Kirbys are nice and crunchy for eating raw, but flavorful enough to be perfect for pickling too. These are sometimes even sold under the name "pickling cucumbers."

### **Newer varieties:**

While most cucumbers are vining, there are also bush types available. These varieties take up less space than traditional viners, and can be productive grown in containers.



There are also varieties that have taken out the “burp”. These varieties produce fruit with less of the compounds that make them bitter and that produce the burping.

There are even varieties that are crosses between melons and cucumbers, producing a plethora of unique flavors, shapes and colors.

Some of the newer varieties of cucumbers are called gynoecious, or all-female, types. These plants produce only female flowers (fruit) and are pollinated by the male Standard cucumbers set between 10 to 20 flower. The benefit of growing that the plants yield more fruit and



(the flowers that produce male flowers for each female **gynoecious** cucumbers is usually produce fruit earlier. **parthenocarpic** cucumber. are usually grown in a to set fruit. The resulting without a pollinator. If grown

Another variety if cucumber is the These cucumbers are also all female, but greenhouse and do not require pollination cucumbers are seedless when grown outdoors they can be pollinated and will have seeds.

**LEASE or SALE: All or part of 65+ acres at NE corner of US 41 & Sunset Lane, Lutz. Some timber, some Cypress, oaks, diversity of vegetation. Many ferns and native plants. Terms negotiable. Call 813/988-1772. Water available. Excellent nursery/growing area. Being offered by a RFCI member.**

### 🌀 Notes 🌀

If you have changed your address or email address, don't forget to let us know! We are getting a few returned emailed copies and mailed copies. Please update your information.

Important: Check your Newsletter address label for your membership renewal date. Membership is \$20 per year.



**Local event:** January 25<sup>th</sup>, 9 – 5, Kumquat Festival, Downtown Dade City, kumquat treats, plants, herbs, arts and crafts, entertainment, more. FREE, (352) 567-3769.



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