



February 2014

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

TampaBayRFCI@tampabay.rr.com

<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 ∞

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

Last Call for Volunteers:

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.

February 8th: Volunteers receive admission tickets to the Fair. **All members planning on helping with the fruit preparations, please contact one of the board members at the phone number listed below to confirm plans for the washing on February 8th.**

February 9th: Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair:

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.



March: Larry M. Schokman, Director Emeritus for the Kampong, of the National Tropical Botanical Garden will be speaking on the fruits of the Kampong. 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

∞ New Members ∞

Dan & Dacia Mitchell	Tampa
Larry & Phyllis Dalton	Lecanto

∞ New and Exciting Varieties of Citrus ∞

Peter Chaires, executive director of the New Varieties Development and Management Corporation (NVDMC), excited members at January's meeting discussing the work his organization is doing in creating new varieties of citrus. The NVDMC was formed in 2005 as a not for profit organization whose purpose is to get growers of citrus timely access to new citrus varieties. The NVDMC also provides financial support to breeding programs, and acts as a central licensing source for nurseries, growers and packers. They have a very active program for identifying, propagating, and developing new varieties that can be grown commercially. The goal is to restore Florida's competitive position in the citrus industry. Seventy five percent of funds are used for researching viable commercial varieties.



New varieties include such characteristics as: extended maturation dates, disease resistance, easy peel, low-seed or seedless qualities, and longer availability seasons. Florida's climate is unique with its humidity, heat, and freezes. This presents challenges in breeding varieties to withstand these conditions. Some of the newer varieties include:

Sugar Belle – This Honey Bell and Clementine cross is hardy to 15 degrees! The fruit resembles Honeybell, but matures 4-6 weeks earlier, and has a very robust and distinctive flavor. Trees are very vigorous. Seed count can be greatly reduced through certain horticultural practices, reducing seed count to less than 3 per fruit. This variety shows some tolerance of Alternaria.

Tango – This tangerine is ready to harvest early November – January, is easy to peel, and is a small size tree, making picking easier. Tango is also a seedless variety.

Valquarius – A true Valencia, matures in January, and is showing promise as a productive new commercial variety.

Early Pride – Nearly seedless, this variety has a complex lineage of tangerine, orange, and grapefruit, and ripens in November. It is very low seeded. This would be one of the first crops of the season to ripen.



There are also California varieties that are under evaluation in Florida. Some of these varieties may be available to homeowners to grow. They include Tahoe, Yosemite, and Shasta. Gold Nugget is another variety under consideration. It is not related to the first three. It's fruit is ugly (pebbly and bumpy texture) but it's the most seedless variety. Willow Leaf is a disease resistant variety also undergoing trials.

A South African blood orange, Ruby Valencia, is undergoing evaluation in Florida. It produces a large amount of lycopene in the walls of the juice vessels in the fruit. It must be eaten fresh to take advantage of the lycopene. Juicing leaves the cell walls behind, and the

lycopene content is lost.

An important and unique program of NVDMC is the Fast Track program. Normally, it takes about 17 years to go through field trials for new citrus varieties, but Fast Track speeds this process up, and gets promising varieties to commercial growers quicker.

In Tier One, growers are invited to participate, paying a fee to select varieties that are of interest to them to grow. In Tier Two, more trees of the best performing varieties for a grower can be obtained by paying a royalty fee. In Tier Three, the program is open to other growers, even ones who did not participate in Tiers One or Two. Some varieties being tested do not even have a name yet, just a number. The trials are looking for varieties with exceptional characteristics, such as flavor.

Some varieties for the homeowner come out of the program too, if the variety maybe is not perfect for commercial use, but would work for the backyard grower. The NVDMC is always looking for people interested in citrus.

Numerous opportunities are available for evaluations. They are also always seeking natural mutations or sports of citrus fruits that could be developed into commercial varieties. For example, a seedless snack variety was developed from a seeded form offering from our group's very own member George Campani.

New Varieties Development and Management Corporation website:
www.nvdmc.org

Citrus Research and Education Center website:
www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu

Florida Citrus Grower website:
<http://fdocgrower.com>

☞ What's Happening ☞

by Paul Zmoda

We had a few cold days in January but no frost yet since early 2012. Pruning dormant fruit trees and vines is a time consuming, yet important part of horticulture. Each winter finds me outdoors trimming my specimens. Deadwood is removed and competing/crossing branches are dealt with. General tree shaping is accomplished using thinning cuts, heading cuts, or both. Certain tree groups benefit from appropriate pruning styles. Central leader, modified leader, and vase shape are some of these styles. Spraying your finished trees with horticultural oil, insecticides or fungicides may be called for. I dispose of the majority of prunings at the county brush site, but keep certain, select pieces to propagate new trees later via cuttings or grafting.



My peach seeds and wild plum seeds are coming up after storing in the refrigerator for a while. Also sprouting are the mayhaw seeds I collected in Atlanta back in October.

Back in our woods, I've noticed that "wild" citrus trees – those that have grown from discarded fruit – are healthy, green and productive, despite growing in heavy shade. What gives? My citrus grove area, only 350 feet away is dying due to citrus greening disease. Are seedling trees stronger? It seems that way; their fruits are normal looking and tasty.

I've been dehydrating lots of tomatoes to pack in olive oil.

New plantings: Blackberries and yuzu citrus trees grafted by yours truly, turnips, broccoli, fennel, dill, radishes and peas.

☞ January Tasting Table ☞



Thank you to the following folks for their tasty offerings and to all those who did not sign the sheet. Members who donate food receive a ticket for the plant raffle.



Name	Item	Name	Item
Lohn	Starfruit	Ukpe	Zucchini bread
Vega	Chicken pasta	Scott	Salmon pasta salad
Lee	Chinese pastry	Coronel	Palitao
Novak	Cookies, bananas, papayas	Bigelow	Potato au Gratin
Ross	Pineapple passionfruit pie	Nina	Fig bars
Maya	Basmati rice	Newcombe	Carambola
Shigemura	Tamale pie casserole, apple strudel	Kirby	Pumpkin fritters
Lavalette	Sweet rice cake	Dexter	Hummus & chips
Davies	Chicken picatta	Johansson	Mixed vegetables
Branesky	Rice and beef potato carrot stew		



∞ January Plant Exchange ∞



If you win a plant in the raffle, please remember to sign the sheet when picking up your plants.

Plant	Donor	Winner
Passionfruit	Vega	Lohn
Passionfruit	Vega	Conroy
Passionfruit	Vega	Ross
Loquat	Vega	Dexter
Pineapple	Vega	Payne
White sapote	Bigelow	
Apple cactus	Provencher	
Cuban mangosteen	Provencher	
Parmenteria edulis	Provencher	
Santol	Provencher	Ferreira
Orangeberry	Provencher	
Holy basil	Davies	Dexter
Dragonfruit	Wolff	
Passionfruit	Novak	
Guava	Novak	sumner

∞ Local Events ∞

Our local extension services are offering many classes and workshops to help you get your gardens ready for spring. Most are free! Here are a few offerings. Check the County websites for schedules of all offerings.

Hillsborough County:

2/5 6:30pm - Composting and Organic Gardening Workshop, Bloomingdale Library, 1906 Bloomingdale Ave, Valrico.

Pasco County:

2/4 6:30 - 7:40pm - Getting your Spring Vegetable Garden Started. Free. Hudson Library, 8012 Library Rd., off Fivay Rd., Hudson

3/8 9:00 - 10:30am - Blueberries and Blackberries, find out which varieties grow best in the Pasco County area. Free. Land O' Lakes Community Center, 5401 LOL Blvd., Land O Lakes



Pinellas County:

4H Club Spring Sign up for school age children. Program to teach children how to grow and eat fresh produce. Contact Jean Rogalsky - email: jrogalsk@pinellascounty.org

Extension office websites:

<http://pasco.ifas.ufl.edu/index.shtml>

<http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu/index.shtml>

<http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/>



∞ Enjoy these beautiful antique citrus packing labels ∞
When advertising was truly an art. Today these labels are collectors items.



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 sold by a RFCI member.

∞ Notes ∞

Please remember to wear your badge at all meetings! Thank you.

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.

Tampa Bay RFCI
39320 North Ave.
Zephyrhills, FL 33542