

# RFCI

July 2015

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>  
[Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com](mailto:Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com)  
<http://www.facebook.com/TampaBayChapterRareFruitCouncilIntlInc>

Meetings are held the second Sunday, 2:00 P.M.  
at the Christ the King Church, 821 S. Dale Mabry,  
Tampa

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## ⌘ Upcoming Programs and Events ⌘

**July 12th, Fruit Tasting Event!** No speaker for this month. We will be sponsoring a fruit tasting, and members plant sale. If you have fruit, or if you know where the Club can procure any and all varieties of rare fruits, please contact Tom Schaefer (813)777-0019, or Paul Branesky (727) 515-6073 for fruit questions. Paul is the main contact for providing the fruit for the tasting, so please coordinate with him for that. We would like to have as many varieties of rare fruits as possible for the tasting. Only bring ripe, ready to eat fruit!

We will need members at this event for preparation and service. Please assist in our member sponsored events to help educate others. Help will be needed to clean up after the event as well. If you would like to help, please contact the above persons.

Members with fruit trees and fruiting plants that they would like to sell at this event, may bring them along. Members will be responsible for pricing, labeling, and selling their own plants. There will be an area for the plant sale and the plant raffle.

Members of the Christ the King Church will also be invited to participate as guests at the Fruit Tasting, which will be from 2-3pm. After the Tasting event, we will have the usual buffet and plant raffle for members only, so bring your food items for the buffet table, and plants for the raffle table.



**August 9th, Preserving the Harvest.** The speaker is Mary Keith, a retired Hillsborough County Extension Agent. She will be presenting a talk about canning and preserving.

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## ⌘ Welcome New Members ⌘

Angela Strain

St. Petersburg

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

## Pomegranates for Florida With Cindy Weinstein



Cindy Weinstein, President of the Florida Pomegranate Association spoke about growing these fruits here in Florida. Cindy is also founder of Green Sea Farms in Zolfo Springs, where she grows 125 varieties.

Growing pomegranates here in Florida is still fairly new as an industry, and much research is still being done to determine what varieties will thrive best in our climate. There are over 2000 varieties in the world, including bush, erect, and weeping growth habits, sweet or tart fruit, hard or soft seeded, and ornamental varieties. The display Cindy had set up at the meeting showed the amazing diversity of the flowers, especially the beautiful colors. She also included

many hand out materials describing the many varieties she has available, with the various attributes of the plant and the fruit, so for those interested in growing pomegranates, the correct purchase can be made depending on what characteristics one is looking for. Available for purchase at the meeting were dozens of nice size plants that perform in this area.

Cindy described a year of growing a pomegranate tree. In January, the trees are dormant, a necessary part of their cycle. If the plant does not go totally leafless on its own, the leaves must be removed, either manually or by use of chemicals. It is not known specifically how many cold hours are needed, but dormancy is a must. In February, it's time to prune before the leaves appear. It is important to remove suckers, tip upper branches, and manage several leader branches. Don't remove more than 1/3 of a limb (hardcut). Also remove any crossing or rubbing branches, as these damage the bark, and the resulting wounds allow fungus to get in. The result should be a fairly open canopy. Fertilize with a good 20-20-20, as pomegranates are heavy feeders. Micro nutrients should be applied 3 times per year. If you

find there are only male flowers, be sure to apply enough fertilizer, and that problem should resolve.

Spring will see new growth. In Central Florida pomegranates break dormancy in March. Buds form 3 weeks after leaf flush, and by April plants will set fruit. In June, the tree concentrates on growing the fruit. Fertilize again with a mix with more potash and phosphorous, but less nitrogen.

In September, give a final fertilization for the season. Fruit will be maturing. As winter months arrive, the plants will need

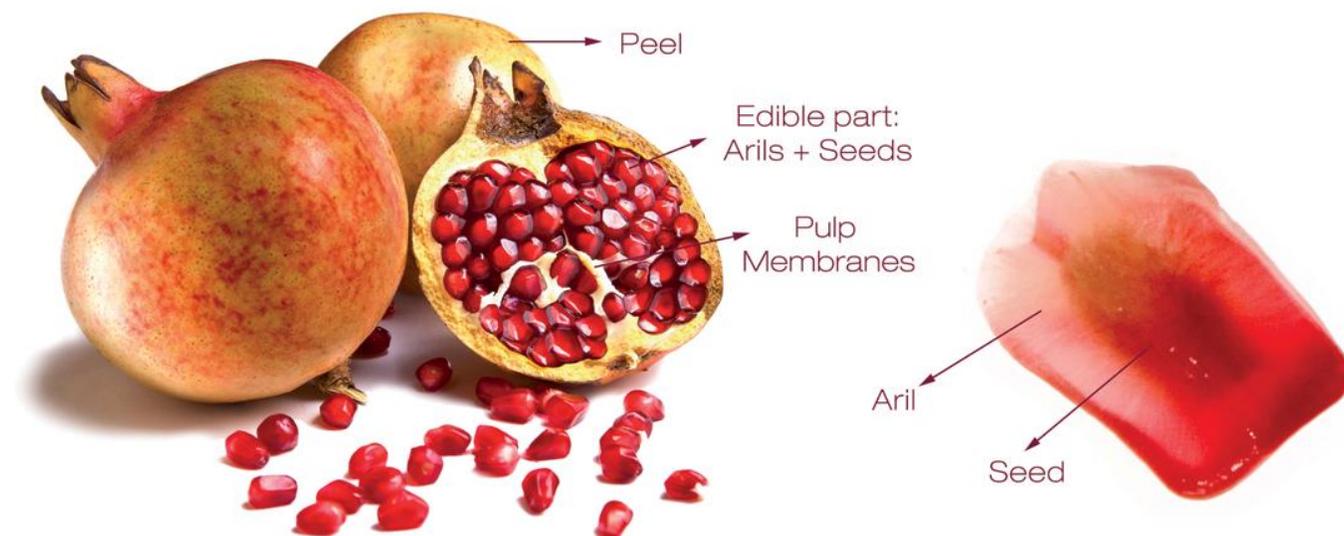


less water, and go into their rest period.

Some other growing points to remember: Compost is always good to apply, both at the time of planting, and then as a mulch. Compost discourages nematodes, which are a problem

in Florida's sandy soil. Do not use pine bark mulch. Any time leaves are yellowing, the plant may need food, so if you haven't applied fertilizer in a while, do so at this time. Green-up will occur in as little as 2 days. Barrier bags are helpful in preventing sunburn, bugs, and fungal damage. (See note on page 7 of this newsletter.)

Pomegranates are hermaphrodites, containing both male and female flowers. The male flowers are smaller and V shaped, while the female ones have a peanut shape. The first day the flower opens, it has the best chance to get pollinated. Good pollination must occur, or the fruit will be lopsided. There are about 800 seeds in each fruit. The fruits are self-pollinating, and when mature will develop slight ridges in the shape. Fruits ripen in the fall, September to October.



There is quite a bit of diversity in color, and taste, as well as other characteristics. The outer hull can range in color from white to black. The seeds within can be rock hard to soft. The taste can range from fairly neutral to very acidic, and the flavor from sweet to tart. The soft seeded varieties can be eaten whole. Harder ones can be ground, as they still are loaded with all the healthy benefits. The exact color of the arils inside the fruit can vary according to the local area where the plant is growing. In general, the darker the color, the more antioxidants.

Resources and information:

<http://www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/pomegranates>

Articles "Pomegranates for Now". Botany, culture, uses, recipes, health benefits, sources.

Florida Pomegranate Association  
 6360 Johnston Rd. Zolfo Springs, FL 33890  
 863-604-3778  
[www.FloridaPomegranateAssociation.org](http://www.FloridaPomegranateAssociation.org)  
[flpomegranate@gmail.com](mailto:flpomegranate@gmail.com)

## *2015 Annual Meeting*

Friday, October 23, 2015, 9:00a-3:30p  
 Citrus Research and Education Center  
 Ben Hill Griffin Jr, Auditorium  
 700 Experiment Station Rd., Lake Alfred, FL 33850

\*\* *Notice* \*\* Sponsor and Exhibitors Registration Please Visit  
<https://2015flpomegranatesponsor.eventbrite.com>

October 23, 2015 the FPA will hold their Annual Meeting at CREC in Lake Alfred, FL. FPA is scheduling a variety of educational programs discussing pomegranate production and essential cultural practices. John Preece, Research Leader at the National Clonal Germplasm Rep/ARS/USDA/UC and Glenn Wright, Ph.D., Extension Horticulturist for the University of Arizona, The School of Plant Sciences, Yuma Agriculture Center, are our guest speakers. The Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (GCREC), IFAS/UF pomegranate research team will be presenting the latest research information for Florida pomegranates. All current and prospective pomegranate growers and enthusiasts, commercial investors, nurseries, Master Gardeners, and interested homeowners are encouraged to attend.

## ⌘ What's Happening ⌘

by Paul Zmoda

Longan fruits are setting and growing very well on all six trunks of our tree. Last year my unique seedlings longan fruit matured around October - very late as longans go.

Our white sapote made hundreds of flowers in late winter, but only one good fruit developed. I attribute this to lack of proper pollination. To remedy this, I top-grafted two different seedling scions, so that in the future, there will be pollen available to make filled out fruit.

I had some excitement recently when I found a recluse spider here in Tampa. I posted my photos of it on an entomology Facebook site where many people doubted my suspicion. I was invited by JoAnn Hoffman to use the macroscopic camera at the Hillsborough County Extension Office to examine the spider in detail. We determined that the species is most likely *Loxocoles ruescens* - the Mediterranean Recluse Spider. To confirm, we shipped the specimen with the close-up photos to Dr. G. B. Edwards in Gainesville.



Our Thai Olive - *Elaeocarpus sylvestris* finally opened the flowers which had been tiny buds for months. Many pollinating insects were interested, so I hope to get fruit this year. If not, I top-grafted some Japanese Blueberry - *E. decipiens* - onto it to provide cross-pollination in the future.

Lots of cuttings have been set into rooting boxes and lots of seeds planted.

I found out that a Passionfruit that I had long called *Passiflora coccinea* is actually *P. miniata*.

New plantings: Pond apple, sword beans, hedgehog gourd, and orinoco banana.

## What's Growing in My Garden By Steve Lohn



What's growing in my garden? Would you believe my two most difficult producers? The first are Mangoes, which don't like the weather this far north. Even though I'm just one county north of Manatee, the temperature does drop low enough to kill the trees. My mango tree is actually producing enough fruit, that I may share some of it with friends. The other plant I have issues with is my dragon fruit, as I have so many trees that I have run out of sunlight and dragon fruit need lots of it. Last year all my dragon fruit plants gave me four fruit. This year I've already counted fourteen fruit. Grapefruit, avocado, lemon, and lime are coming



along; this looks like it's going to be a good year for me. My Surinam cherry trees did well, I picked the last of them the week of the plant sale. Loquats also did well enough that we all enjoyed them, and I was handing them out to the kids on the block. At the plant sale we bought, an Alma Fig tree and a Mauritius Lychee.

## The Galapagos Tomato *Solanum chessmanii*



At June's meeting, the Seed Chairman brought in some seedlings of the Galapagos Tomato. This small, wild tomato native to the Galapagos Islands is an interesting fruit. The fruits are yellow-orange in color, cherry tomato size, and with a good, typical acid tomato flavor. Some say the flavor makes that of other tomatoes pale by comparison, as it is more intensely sweet, salty, and complex than many cultivated varieties. The bushy plants are 3-5' tall, resistant to a number of tomato pests, and quite

ornamental in the garden. Fruits are fast to ripen, and are ready to eat in 50-60 days. Of particular importance to Florida gardeners is their ability to take our weather, soil conditions, and even salty seafrent exposure. In fact, unlike other standard tomato varieties that stop setting fruit when the heat gets turned up, they require hot weather to set fruit. In their

native area, they grow naturally on nearly soil-less, exposed rocks along the coast, where they are a favorite food of the Galapagos Tortoise.

The ability of the Galapagos tomato to thrive in a wide variety of growing conditions is amazing! One grower in Alaska is successfully growing them under artificial light conditions in the long, dark winters of that part of the country. Other growers in Idaho and Canada report this tough little tomato to be the first one producing at the start of the season, and the last one still going at the end of the season. In Texas, this little fruit keeps growing even with a typical summer of 40 days at 110 degrees or better.



They are so tough, they can be grown in saltwater, and are often used in aquaponics research. This tomato can handle 8-10 times more salinity than other tomatoes. Their hardy qualities have been most useful in parts of the world with greatly limited growing abilities, including access to fresh water, and harsh conditions, and are often used by breeders for their desirable traits to create new, and vigorous cultivated varieties.

We're hoping members will grow this tomato and let us know how well it performed

for them in their garden.

Photos: Dr. Alan Tye [www.arkive.org](http://www.arkive.org) Galapagos tomato on rocks on Galapagos Islands.  
Saline aquaponics field trials. Cindy Scott Heirloom Seeds

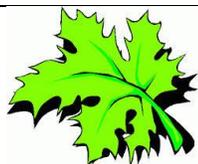
## ☞ June Tasting Table ☜



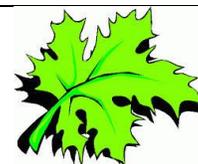
*This is a sampling of the wonderful offerings at the buffet table. Thank you to the following folks for their tasty offerings and to all those who did not sign the sheet. Members who donate food receive a ticket for the plant raffle.*



Name	Item	Name	Item
Coronel	Bibingka, peach cake	Campani	Mac salad
Zmoda	Kimchee	Lohn	Pecans and walnuts
Latimer	Brownies	Clarke	Quiche, brownies, muffins
Clarke	Strawberry cheesecake	Davies	Ziti and meat sauce
Chinnery	Baked chicken	Conradt	Cantalope
Drake	Dawn dewa salad	Orr	Cabbage salad
Soto	Cake	Sweet	Ice cream, potato salad
Ferreira	Banana nut bread	Vega	Pasta



## ∞ June Plant Exchange ∞



Here is sampling from the plant raffle table. Thank you to everyone who brought in plants to share at the raffle.

Plant	Donor	Winner
Fig cuttings	Coronel	
Papaya	Vega	Jarrell
Tomato	Vega	Black
Starfruit	Musgrave	Gamboni
Curry	Musgrave	Clarke
Loquat	Zmoda	Clarke
Sugar palm	Provencher	Badger
Atreano fig	Starke	Oliver
Red sugar apple	Black	Conradt
Genoa fig	Ferreira	Young
Black sapote	Orr	Badger

## ∞ Notes ∞

At the July meeting we will be taking pre-orders (without payment) for fruit trees for the USF Fall plant sale, so if there is something in particular you would like this is the time to order.

At the meeting, Tom Schaefer mentioned a product (Nylon Maggot Barriers) on the internet for “bagging fruit” such as papaya and peaches against insects. This keeps the insects from infecting the fruit. Past meetings have discussed using paper bags, panty hose, etc, but this seemed like a good inexpensive alternative. The website is:

[http://www.territorialseed.com/product/Nylon\\_Maggot\\_Barriers](http://www.territorialseed.com/product/Nylon_Maggot_Barriers)

Maggot Barriers are a proven alternative to pesticides, traps and paper bags, and will protect fruit from infestations of apple maggot flies and codling moths. Apply barrier when fruit is smaller than 1 inch in diameter and they will expand with the growth of the fruit, creating a physical barrier to insect infestations. Maggot Barriers are made from 100% nylon. ZIN497 is a heavier weave with double the thickness for larger fruit, or heavier infestations of codling moths. 144 count pack is \$14.95.

288 count pack is \$21.50. It will be more cost effective to do one large order of these barriers. All who are interested please contact Tom Schafer, at [tschaefer5@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:tschaefer5@tampabay.rr.com), or 813- 681-3540 to arrange to place an order. You do not have to order an entire package if you don't need that many.





***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.*

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