



RFCI

September 2015
TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL,
INC.

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<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

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞



September 13th, 50 Unusual Edible Plants for Florida,
Andy Firk, naturalist, and owner of Bamboo Grove, in Arcadia, will speak on some unusual edibles you can grow in Florida. Andy has a variety of fruits, bamboos, nuts, grasses, and unique items on his farm, some from far corners of the globe. Plants will be available for sale.

October 10th and 11th: USF Plant Sale, no regular meeting.

We will need club members to help with this event. It is an important fundraiser for the club. Members are invited to attend, help with set up on Friday, to assist in the sale on Saturday and Sunday, to donate or sell fruiting plants, to enjoy the camaraderie and to visit other exhibits.

If you plan to sell plants, please note that members cannot sell citrus, non-fruiting plants or herbs. Members selling plants must submit a manifest listing their plants and prices. Manifests will be available at the September meeting. Plants must have a label with the name of the plant, the price and the seller's initials.

There will be more information at the September meeting.



∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Gary Trangas	St. Petersburg	Tyler Parke	Plant City
Jean & Leon Kass	Gulfport	Joy Gates	Ellenton
Hillary Markey	Tampa	Larry Llona	Tampa
Jennifer Hughes	Temple Terrace		

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

∞ Preserving What You Grow ∞

Mary Keith PhD, LD
University of Florida IFAS/Hillsborough County Extension

Mary Keith presented the Club with an extremely informative presentation on preserving your produce at the July meeting. Here are some basics from her presentation.



Cleanliness and Fruit Selection.

One of the first rules is keeping everything clean! Your hands, knives, shears, baskets, and trugs can all harbor dirt and bacteria.

Wash fruit **JUST BEFORE YOU USE IT**. Keep it dry until use. Water and moisture can promote bacterial and mold growth.

Use potable water to clean with. Water in hoses can be stagnant, stale or contaminated.

Refrigeration: Tropical produce often does not need, or like, refrigeration. If you do refrigerate, keep the temperature between 34 and 40 degrees, cold enough to slow bacteria and mold growing, but not cold enough to cause cold injury.

When selecting fruit to preserve, use fresh, firm fruit.

Discard moldy, decayed, soft fruit.

Preservation options:

Freezing - Pros - top quality, long term. Cons - higher costs, concern about power outages, and the food is not ready to eat.

Canning - Pros - good quality, lower costs, it's ready to eat. Cons - takes more time, space, heavy, and fragile. Must use enough acid to properly preserve.

Sweet preserves - Pros - taste. Cons - high sugar, or if using sugar free methods - then loss of color, must use enough acid.

Drying - Pros - takes up little space, light weight. Cons - loss of nutrition, texture, higher costs, storage.

Freezing -

As long as the freezer is on, the food is safe. Factors affecting quality include length of time food is frozen, type of packaging used, temperature variations, and the type of food itself. Recommended storage times for different foods are for top quality.

Freezer/frost burn results when moisture moves out of food and refreezes on the outside. This is a result of the freeze/thaw cycles of the defrost feature of the freezer. When the

food starts to thaw on the outside, the moisture moves to the outer edges, re-freezes and causes burn.

To prevent frost burn, and off-flavors;

Pack fruit pieces in sugar syrup or fruit juice. Toss the fruit with the sugar, allowing it draw in the juices.

To make sugar syrup, use from ½ cup - 4 cups of sugar to 4 cups of water, bring to a boil, then cool.

Pack fruit in container, cover with the syrup, leave at least 1 inch of headspace in the container.

Deep freezers are best. Automatic defrost freezers are more likely to promote frost burn.

Don't overload with too much fresh food at one time, or it will freeze too slowly.

Use freezer weight plastic. Seal with minimum air space.

The following fruits are good to freeze the puree or pulp of:

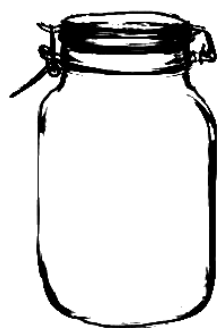
Atemoya, monstera, cherimoya, saponilla, guanabana (add lemon juice to preserve color). Sugar added to the puree is helpful. Adding the lemon juice or ascorbic acid will prevent darkening. Papaya can get off-flavors from oils in the skin, so peel carefully.

Good to freeze in pieces, or slices - in juice or syrup: pineapple, mango, papaya, carambola.

Good to freeze whole, dry or with sugar : longan, lychee.



Canning:



The most important factor for safe canning is having enough acid. Canning is great for fruits, jams, jellies, sweet preserves. Botulism (*Clostridium Botulinum*), is a major concern when canning. This bacteria produces a neurotoxin, and grows in air-free environments, like a sealed jar. This is why the PH must be less than 4.6.

Use any kettle that is deep enough for the jars plus 2 inches of water above the jars. There must be a rack under the jars to protect the jars from the heat shock from the pot. There should be enough room in the pot for the boiling.

Fruits with enough acid on their own include pineapple, citrus, and yellow passionfruit.

Mangoes, papaya, and figs do not have enough natural acid.

Other fruits, we do not have directions for safe canning.

Processing time varies depending on the food, but must be hot enough, long enough, to remove air from the jar, inactivate enzymes, kill spoilage bacteria, and kill pathogens.

To make jams, jellies, and sweet preserves, three ingredients are needed to gel: sugar, acid, and pectin. Sugar is the preservative and pectin sets the jelly.

Drying/dehydration:

To safely dry fruits, enough water must be removed so microorganisms can't grow, and the moisture must be kept out. Drying keeps all the sugars, minerals and proteins, but sensitive vitamins and phytonutrients are often destroyed. This makes dried fruits lower in nutrition and higher in calories.

Fruits should be peeled, sliced, and cored, keeping the size as uniform as possible. Lemon juice or ascorbic acid keeps slices from darkening. Dip the fruit in half juice/half water, or 23x500mg vitamin C in 2 cups of water. Dip for 10 minutes, then drain. Arrange the fruit on the drying racks.

There are different methods of drying. Food dryers/ovens cost more, but give better products. Best temperature is 140 degrees with moving air, humidity below 60%.

Sun and air drying are perfect for herbs, and some fruits. Pre-treatment for fruit is often necessary to protect color and flavor, such as sulfur, steam, sugar, or ascorbic acid.



∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda

Who could have foreseen the rains we have experienced recently? Good for replenishing our aquifer, but not good if you were unlucky enough to step out of bed and make a splash. We fared pretty well overall, although our septic system protested by the "burping" that the flushed toilet did.

Some plants are loving it, like Asimina triloba, Gac, and Jackfruit. Others are dying, like papaya, raspberry, and moringa.

The cacao seeds came up in only ten days! The seedlings were potted up on the twenty-sixth day. Their growth rate is amazing. Our soursop tree opened five flowers; I don't normally see them until fall through winter.

All American Persimmons have ripened. 'John Rick' is a much better quality than 'Meader'. The longan crop is fabulous this year. When the crow "air force" arrives, I have to go out and defend them, or they would eat every one!



New plantings: dwarf Cavendish and bonanza bananas.

☞ News of Interest ☜

Great news for honeybees! A breakthrough in honeybee immunization has been discovered after a 15-year study on a bee blood protein known as vitellogenin. Scientists from Arizona State University, University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä and Norwegian University of Life Sciences discovered the process of how bees immunize their offspring and what it could mean for vaccinations. The findings explain how immune system priming occurs through vitellogenin because bees lack antibodies. The process is interesting.

In honeybee colonies, the queen has food brought to her by worker bees. While gathering pollen and nectar, worker bees can also pick up pathogens. The pollen, nectar and pathogens are transformed into “royal jelly,” which is food that is only eaten by the queen. Any bacteria picked up from outside that is in the royal jelly is digested and stored in the queen’s “fat body” which functions similarly to a liver. The bacteria are then bound to the protein vitellogenin and carried to the developing larvae through the blood. Thanks to vitellogenin, baby bees’ immune systems are primed against infection. Moreover, scientists now believe they understand how to vaccinate bees.



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“We are patenting a way to produce a harmless vaccine, as well as how to cultivate the vaccines and introduce them to bee hives through a cocktail the bees would eat,” Dalial Freitak, a postdoctoral researcher with University of Helsinki. “They would then be able to stave off disease.” American foulbrood, a disease that is highly contagious and kills honeybee larvae, is one of the dangers that could someday be eliminated by a bee vaccine. “Because this vaccination process is naturally occurring, this process would be cheap and ultimately simple to implement,” said Gro Amdam, a professor with ASU’s School of Life Sciences. “It has the potential to both improve and secure food production for humans.”



Help our Monarch butterfly by providing habitat. For 15 free milkweed seeds send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Live Monarch Foundation - Seeds, 3993-C8 Yamato Rd. No. 1015, Boca Raton. FL 33434

Or go to: Livemonarch.com/free-milkweed-seeds.htm. There you can order lots more seeds, and learn about monarchs, and about how we can all help save them.

The fight against citrus greening gained momentum with a \$1 million boost in state funding for a University of Florida research project. A microbial based product is being developed that is infused with patented plant defense inducers and beneficial bacteria strains, and is hoped to result in a cure for the disease. The UF Citrus Research and Education Center is also working to create a greening resistant tree by targeted genome engineering. The goal is to locate the genes within the citrus trees that are activated by greening, and remove these genes for alter them to activate the tree's immune defenses against the infection. Since 2007, Florida has lost nearly \$ billion in revenue from citrus crops, and 100,000 acres of citrus groves.



☞ August 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.

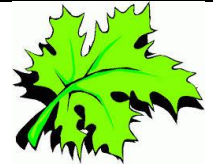


Name	Item	Name	Item
Campani	Pasta salad	Latimer	Cookies
Rolando	Watermelon	Clarke	Coleslaw
Davies	Penne w/meat sauce	Deming	Limequats
Conradt	Cucumber salad	Lohn	Brownies
Engelbrecht	Chicken salad	Coronel	Mango bread/banana bread



☞ August 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
Moringa	Vega	Black
Sweet potato	Vega	Petersen
Red sugar apple	Black	
Basil	Clark	Lohn
Dragonfruit	Porter	
Papaya	Young	Sweet
Plantains	Sweet	Lohn
Surinam cherry	Sumner	Riley
Persimmon	Branesky	Male

∞ Club Notes ∞



The new “reception table” at each meeting, where Tom has items for sale, information and a signup sheet.

From Steve Lohn: Of interest to members is the information about Shawn Steed. He gives class on horticulture issues, some of which would be of interest to our members. They can check his programs on his blog:

www.hortagent.blogspot.com

Contact information:

Shawn T. Steed

Multi County Environmental Horticulture Production Agent II UF/IFAS Extension

5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584-3334

Telephone: 813.744.5519 x 54147 / Fax: [813.744.5776](tel:813.744.5776)

Email ststeed@ufl.edu / web: www.tiny.cc/envirohortprod

Online Magazine: www.hortagent.blogspot.com

We welcome your submissions for the newsletter, please send them to bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com
Submissions for September newsletter due by: September 23rd.

∞ Local Events ∞

Taste of Honey, Sept. 19th from 3 - 5pm, at the USF Botanic Gardens. Taste over 100 exotic and unusual honey products from all over the world, live music, door prizes. Tickets \$20.
<http://gardens.usf.edu/honey/>

Pasco County Master Garden Plant Sale, October 3rd, 9am - 1pm. Great selection of fruits, berries, natives, all kinds of plants. Pasco County Fairgrounds. Cash or check. Bring a wagon.
http://pasco.ifas.ufl.edu/events_calendar.shtml#October





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
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