



# RFCI

October 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

---

## ∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

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

See you at the Plant Sale!

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.



Contact Tom Schaefer at, [tschaefer5@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:tschaefer5@tampabay.rr.com), or 813-777-0019.

For a schedule of workshops, activities, and speakers at the Sale, go to  
<http://gardens.usf.edu/data/fallfest.pdf>

**November 8th, Grafting Workshop.** Learn the skills you need to graft the varieties of fruits you want.

**December 13th, Christmas Social.** The Club's annual can't miss event with loads of food and holiday cheer, gifts, and more.

---

## ∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Scott Petersen      St. Petersburg

Donna McAvene      Sun City Center

---

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

## ∞ Unusual Edibles for Florida ∞

### Speaker: Andy Firk

September's speaker, Andy Firk owner of The Bamboo Grove Farm in Arcadia, spoke about some of his favorite edible plants that can be grown in Florida. There were so many interesting plants to discuss; Andy promises to return to discuss more of them. He has been a wildcrafter since he was 15, when he gathered wild herbs for the Herb-Pharm and other herbalists while living in CT, NY and then FL. Hiking and traveling across Florida have helped him amass a collection of thousands of wild plants.

In 1993, he started a two acre food forest homestead, named Bamboo Grove, in Arcadia, Florida. The property is home to over 230 heirloom fruits, 40 clumping bamboo species, medicinal plants, rare native plants, a nice collection of perennial vegetables including 30 true yams, culinary herbs, and more.



His goal is to amass a collection of over 1,000 useful plants. His homestead is also home to a small permaculture plant nursery. All are welcome to call first and get a tour of the food forest and get some free plant propagations. He has given away over 12,000 potted plants so far and has hosted over 13,000 visitors to his humble garden!

He specializes in true yams, edible cacti, clumping bamboos, cold hardy fruits, and culinary gingers and will travel anywhere in the state to obtain new, rare and useful plants. He has presented slideshows to many clubs and organizations.

He hosts four large garden parties each year. On October 24th, there will be a plant swap event at the Bamboo Grove. There is a \$5 donation; all are welcome to visit the farm for this event.

His deepest field of study has been the wild edible and medicinal plants that grace Florida. He has a book on Florida wild edible plants that will be out in 2016.

Bamboos are certainly one of Andy's favorite groups of plants. 99% of all bamboos are edible; it's just a matter of choosing varieties that taste good. Some types are intolerably bitter, and some are quite delicious. Bamboo is also used as a renewable source of timber, and the tall varieties make an excellent windbreak. Some can become over 100' tall. There are also

running and clumping types, a factor to consider when choosing bamboo. Clumpers will stay more in a "clump", as opposed to running bamboos, which could cause a problem with neighbors. The edible bamboo shoots are loaded with fiber, antioxidants, and potassium. Some varieties can be eaten raw; others are traditionally steamed for best flavor and texture.

Another group of plants that has many choices is the banana family. There are many great varieties for central Florida, both fresh eating and cooking varieties.



Edible cactus is an overlooked group of plants, but there are so many types that are edible, they are worth growing. Some are grown for their edible pads, called nopales, others for their fruit, called tuna. Some are very thorny, others have almost invisible little spines or hairs called glochids that must be removed before eating. Many cactus are also more hardy than dragonfruit, and are an excellent choice for the parts of Florida where freezes occur.

Glochids on the Teddy Bear Cactus

Another group of plants of interest include the gingers. There are 200 species of edible gingers. Mango ginger is particularly good. It has the flavor of mango, but isn't quite as pungent as some gingers. We are familiar with cardamon as a spice, but the leaves are great to wrap food in for cooking, as the spicy flavor of the cardamon will impart itself into the food.

The bunya nut however, is one of Andy's favorite foods. He likes to poke a hole in the nut to prevent exploding, and then baking them for 20 minutes at 350 degrees. If you haven't tried them, you must! The tree is a close relative to the monkey puzzle tree, and originates from Australia. The cones are enormous, and can be up to 22" long and weigh many pounds. They have naturalized throughout southern Florida.

These nuts are so very good, the Aboriginal tribes would stop their wars during harvest time to enjoy the ripe nuts!



For more information, check out the farm's website:

<http://www.bamboogrovefarm.com/>

To visit Andy's Facebook page, go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/andy.firk>

Next page is a layout of Andy's garden. Visit the webpage to see more.



## ☞ What's Happening ☞

by Paul Zmoda

From my single Ilama fruit, I obtained 20 seeds. I used a dry crystal form of gibberellic acid, and followed the enclosed directions for a soak in two lots - 7 ppm, and 350 ppm. They both sprouted and came up in only 28 days. In the past, I followed recommended practices and the 2014 seeds started to come up in 18 months.

Dragonfruit cacti are continuing to bloom and set fruit through the summer.

Chestnuts are ripening and I collect them when they fall. Steamed for 20 minutes, they are sweet and tasty.

One standard sized Orinoco banana gave up a modest crop of angular, green fruit. These slightly under-ripe bananas are great fried in oil.

Carambola 'Kari' is making loads of starfruit again - large, sweet, and delicious.

New plantings: Vegetable garden - arugula, peas, beans, mustards, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli, and more.

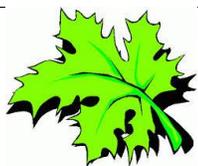
## ☞ September Tasting Table ☞



*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
Vega	Chicken noodles	Coronel	Palitaw and banana bread
Joy	Chinese chow mein	Black	Rice
Premraj	Rice w/beans	Shenoi	White mung bean curry
Lohn	Starfruit	Niklas	Chicken dip
Newcombe	Carambola au chocalat	Latimer	Pastries
Trangas	Chicken salad	Clarke	Baked chicken
Chinnery	Garlic bread	Nguyen	Roasted chicken
Ferreira	Sweet potato casserole and jakfruit	Sweet	Key lime pie
Johansson	Starfruit	Peterson	Longan
Oliver	Coffee cake	Kirby	Sweet potato salad
Hartzler	Deviled eggs	Krotz	Grape salad
Davies	Chicken picatta and rice	Mcaveety	Pineapple coconut drink
Gerstein	Olives and almonds		



## ☞ September Plant Exchange ☞



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

Plant	Donor	Winner
Moringa	Vega	Mcavene
Papaya	Vega	Mcaveety
Egg plant	Black	Black
Monstera delicious	Musgrave	
Maple sugar hibiscus	Porter	
Culantro	Porter	Sweet
Red sugar apple	Black	
Papaya	Premraj	Riley
Queen crape myrtle	Zmoda	
Brugmansia	Zmoda	Payne
Papaya	Lohn	Cutro
Carambola	Lohn	
Philippine tree pepper	Provencher	
Loquat	Provencher	Trangas
Pink banana		
Bromeliad	Dexter	
Papaya	Kirby	
Red mumbin	Kirby	
Mint		Provencher
Quenepas spanish lime	Clarke	
Surinam cherry	Branesky	
Tomato	Payne	
Pineapple	phillos	

## ☞ Club Notes ☞

We welcome your submissions for the newsletter, please send them to [bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com)  
 Submissions for next newsletter due by: October 19th.

---

## Fried Plantains

**Cheryl Smith**

### Ingredients

3 plantain bananas, each peeled and cut into 3 pieces  
2 - 3 cups vegetable or peanut oil  
Salt



### Directions

In skillet, heat oil to 350 degrees F. Fry plantain, turning until all sides are lightly golden. Remove from skillet and place between 2 pieces of paper towel and press to flatten. Return to skillet and continue to fry until crisp. Remove and salt lightly.

---

## ∞ Local Events ∞

**October 8th - 6:00 - 7:30pm. Sustainable Living - Minor Changes, Major Impact.** Learn how small lifestyle changes have a big impact for a healthy life. Free - register at [sustainablelivingoldsmar.eventbrite.com](https://sustainablelivingoldsmar.eventbrite.com) or call 727-562-4970. Oldsmar library.

**October 10th - Cooking and Preserving Peppers.** 10am. Free. Dunedin Public Library 727-298-3080x1707. [dunedincommunitygarden.com](https://dunedincommunitygarden.com)

**October 15th or 29th, 9-11am. Tropical Fruit/vegetable tour.** Free. Pinellas County Extension Service, Largo 727-582-2100. [growpinellas.eventbrite.com](https://growpinellas.eventbrite.com)

**October 17th 9am - 1pm. Introduction to Aquaponics.** \$25. Pinellas County Extension Service, Largo 727-582-2100.

**October 24th 11am. Florida's Wild Edible Plants.** Master Naturalist Peggy Lantz will show and tell edible weeds from her yard. Free. Unity Church of Palm Harbor, 1960 Tampa Rd., Palm Harbor, 727-784-7911.

---





***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  
39320 North Ave.  
Zephyrhills, FL 33542