



RFCI

November 2015

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>
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 ∞



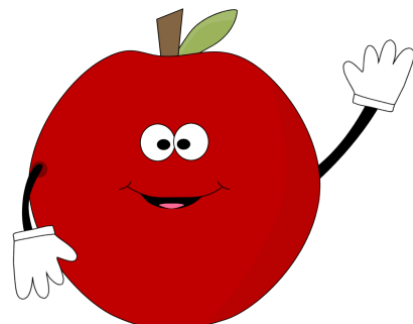
graft

November 8th, Grafting Workshop. Learn the skills you need to graft the varieties of fruits you want. There will be demonstrations and videos on the various techniques of grafting. Bring your questions about grafting. There will also be plants for sale, plant raffle, great buffet, and the seed table will provide seeds for fall and winter planting. **Note: The meeting will be in the Mary Martha rooms 201 - 203, which are located in the building to the right as you drive in.**

December 13th, Christmas Social. The Club's annual holiday event, with loads of food, holiday cheer, gifts, and more.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Andy Firk	Arcadia
Emelda Fabic	Tampa
Dan Sakuta	St. Pete
Judith Champagne	Brandon
Steve & Bea Jordan	Zephyrhills
Charlotte Stertzner	Valrico
Stacy Blethen	Tampa
Charles & Christine Bright	Land O Lakes



President: Fred Engelbrecht; Program Manager: Tom Schaefer; Secretary: Ed Niklas, Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher; Photographs: Fred Engelbrecht

Pictures from the USF Plant Sale



☞ What's Happening ☞

by Paul Zmoda

Our Kari carambola (starfruit) is giving us its second crop of the year. Less in number than the spring crop, these juicy beauties are much larger. I neither fertilize nor water my carambola tree.

Due to a surplus, I'm having to get creative with recipes for Orinoco plantains. One recent winner is Pastolones, a Latin version of lasagna, using the semi-ripe fruit in place of flat pasta. Yummy!

On Facebook gardening groups, such as Tampa gardening swap, we cover all sort of topics, one being fertilizer. Local governments have enacted bans against merchants selling certain fertilizers during our rainy summer months to help keep the runoff to a minimum into our valued waters.

I usually have on hand 6-6-6, 2-8-10, 0-50-0, 20-20-20, calcium nitrate, ammonium sulfate, Ironite, dolomite, two fish emulsion formulas, Tara 14, manganese, as well as magnesium sulfates. There are several others, such as the "Blue stuff", "Bloom booster Blue stuff", and "Acid lovers Blue stuff". All have their place. As fertilizers are expensive, I tend to stretch my supplies.

Going back to keeping our waters clean - why flush away gallons of safe, clean, drinking water, just to pee? Think about that. Why would you pay to get rid of free fertilizer?

Many, local gardeners are seeing the light and endorse using human urine as fertilizer. Peppers, annona, pineapples, bananas, and others respond quickly, turning a darker green, and accelerating in growth.

Give pee a chance.

New plantings - zoysia grass plugs, and "gold dust" crotons.

Additional information:

It is interesting to note that the US lags behind other industrialized countries as far as using urine as fertilizer. Urine contains all the essential elements that are necessary for plant growth: nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. Scientific studies are showing that using urine for agricultural purposes will reduce waste water usage, waste volume overall, and provide more sustainability for agriculture by reducing chemical use. Backyard gardens also benefit.

For more information on "peecycling" check the following:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/human-urine-is-an-effective-fertilizer/>

<http://modernfarmer.com/2014/01/human-pee-proven-fertilizer-future/>

<http://www.nwedible.com/how-to-use-pee-in-your-garden/>

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/02/140202-peecycling-urine-human-waste-compost-fertilizer/>

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2014/04/05/urine-crops-fertilizer.aspx>

∞ Persimmons ∞



Now is the time of the year for the persimmon harvests! You will find the fresh fruit in market stands now. But, they are very easy to grow at home. This often overlooked fruit is an excellent dooryard fruit tree for the Florida homeowner. These tough trees are widely adaptable to the many soils found in Florida, and to our climate. *Diospyros* is often translated as “fruit of the gods” or “food of the gods.”

Oriental persimmon (*Diospyros kaki* L.) has been grown in Florida for many years. There were once 22,750 persimmon trees grown commercially in Florida, but due to marketing problems, the industry fizzled out.

There are two general classes of persimmon fruit, astringent and nonastringent. The astringent types should be completely soft and ripe before eaten. Sometimes these are called the "puckery" fruits, because you will pucker up if you eat one before its ripe! But, when ripe, they are wonderful, sweet, and juicy. The nonastringent types stay firm, and can be eaten before they get softer.

***Diospyros virginiana*: Common Persimmon**

The common persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), also called "simmon", possumwood, and Florida persimmon, is a slow-growing tree of moderate size found in the southeastern United States. The wood is close grained and sometimes used for special products requiring hardness and strength, and is excellent for precise work such as natural wedding bands. Persimmon is much better known for its fruits, however. They are enjoyed by people as well as many species of wildlife for food. The glossy leathery leaves make the persimmon tree a nice one for landscaping, but it is not easily transplanted because of the taproot. Several cultivars are available with improved fruit size

and quality. In native persimmon areas, top working or grafting on suckers is a good way to get superior cultivars into bearing quickly. One staminate tree seems sufficient to pollinate at least 23 pistillate trees of the same race. The pulp is very astringent when not ripe, but after a frost in the fall, when the fruit turns yellow orange, the flesh is pleasing in taste. The fruit is eaten by many species of song birds, and wild animals. Seeds and fruits are generally low in crude protein, crude fat, and calcium but high in nitrogen-free extract and tannin. The inner bark and unripe fruit are sometimes used in treatment of fevers, diarrhea, and hemorrhage. Indelible ink is made from fruit.



***Diospyros kaki*: Japanese Persimmon**

The most widely cultivated species of *Diospyros* is the Japanese persimmon, or kaki. The kaki is among the oldest of cultivated plants, having been known for its uses in China more than 2000 years ago. In rural China, it is seen as having mystical powers that can be harnessed to relieve headache, back pain, and foot pain. The fruit is sweet, slightly tangy, with a soft texture. Being an astringent type, it is best eaten when fully ripe, and the high content of tannins has been reduced. It should be very soft, and can be scooped out with a spoon. There are many cultivars available, including some such as "Fuyu", which does not contain tannins even when still firm.

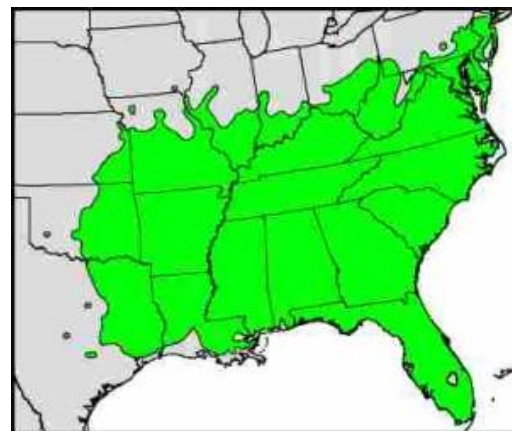
***Diospyros texana*: Texas Persimmon**

Texas persimmon is native to Texas, Oklahoma, and parts of Mexico. It is also called black persimmon, or chapote in Spanish. The one inch black fruits are edible, but have an unappealing number of seeds, although the wildlife and birds find them delectable. In Mexico, the fruits are used to make a black dye.

More persimmon facts:

Persimmons are a member of the Ebony family, and this fruiting tree has many, many uses. The fruit, actually the largest native berry in North America, can be eaten out of hand or cooked in various ways. This small tree makes a great backyard fruit tree, in Florida, usually staying 8-10 feet tall, but occasionally reaching 20 feet tall. They are a native tree, found in many areas of the southeast portion of the United States. Persimmons do not like to grow in the forest. They like to grow along the edges of things; fields, roads, rivers, railroads, fences, and trails.

The Persimmon is usually the last tree to leaf out in the spring and the first to lose its leaves in the fall, a strategy to thwart predatory insects. Shaking a persimmon tree is the standard way of collecting the fruit. Process them by rubbing them through a colander. The pulp can be used to make jelly, syrup, beer, wine, liquor, bread, pancakes, pudding, molasses, fruit leather, dried fruit and ink. The pulp can also be frozen and eaten like ice cream. A peanut-like cooking oil can be squeezed from the seeds. Persimmon pulp can be interchanged for bananas, weight for weight.



Another use for a persimmon tree is reportedly as a remedy for the itch of poison ivy. Remove a few twigs from a persimmon tree, cover with water, and boil for 20 minutes. Strain and cool the liquid. Several applications is said to dry the rash. The leaves are loaded with Vitamin C for a healthy tea made from dried leaves. In fact, the longer the dried leaves are stored the better the tea tastes. Dry the leaves in a slow oven for two hours.

To make the seeds into a coffee substitute or extender, clean them and roast them in the same slow oven. You can also throw the tough fruit skins into a blender, put the slurry on a cookie sheet and dry them along with the seeds and leaves in the same oven. The seeds were even used as buttons by the Confederate Army during the American civil war. There are few trees more versatile than the persimmon.

Sources of persimmon trees:

<https://www.justfruitsandexotics.com/JFE/product-category/fruit-trees/persimmon/> Visit the nursery in Crawfordville if you'd like a day trip or have trees shipped. They have 33 varieties listed.

<http://askthegreengenie.com/> Located in Gainesville, this nursery visits numerous locations regularly in the Tampa Bay area. Pre-order your trees for pickup in your area.



Persimmon Bread

3 ½ cups sifted flour
 2 to 2½ cups sugar
 1 ½ teaspoons salt
 2 teaspoons baking soda
 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 cup melted unsalted butter and cooled to room temperature
 4 large eggs, at room temperature, lightly beaten
 2/3 cup cognac, bourbon or whiskey
 2 cups persimmon puree

2 cups walnuts or pecans, toasted and chopped
 2 cups raisins, or diced dried fruits (such as apricots, cranberries, or dates)

Optional: Orange zest or orange extract



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter 2 loaf pans. Line the bottoms with a piece of parchment paper or dust with flour and tap out any excess. Sift the first 5 dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center then stir in the butter, eggs, liquor, persimmon puree then the nuts and raisins. Bake 1 hour or until toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Persimmon Pudding

2 cups pureed persimmon pulp
 2 eggs
 1 ¾ cups condensed milk (unsweetened)
 2 cups sugar
 ¼ cup melted butter
 2 cups flour
 ½ cup chopped walnuts

Stir condensed milk, sugar, butter, flour, and persimmon puree well and pour into glass baking dish. Sprinkle top with chopped walnuts. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes at 375F. Serve warm or cooled to room temperature. Delicious topped with a crème Anglaise or rum.

Jack-o-lantern remix Pumpkin Seed Hummus <http://thechalkboardmag.com>

Wondering what to do with all those pumpkin seeds after Halloween? Pumpkin seeds are loaded with nutritional value. Try this easy and delicious recipe perfect for the holidays.

1 ½ cups pumpkin seeds
 3 garlic cloves
 1 tsp smoked paprika
 1 can white beans, drained
 ½ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling
 1 lemon, juiced
 1 tsp salt



Preheat oven to 350°F. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, add pumpkin seeds and spread evenly. Roast for 10-15 minutes.

In a food processor, add pumpkin seeds, garlic, olive oil, paprika, white beans, lemon juice and salt. Blend until smooth. Adjust olive oil and salt to desired taste.

Serve, drizzled with olive oil and a sprinkle of smoked paprika.

⌘ Club Notes ⌘

We welcome your submissions for the newsletter, please send them to bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com
 Submissions for the next newsletter due by: November 20th.

⌘ Member Questions ⌘

Question: What is making my dragon fruit fall off the plant before they ripen?

Answer: Immature dragon fruits can turn yellow and fall off for a number of reasons, many to do with stress. The continually very wet conditions of summer, especially this past summer can cause rot, and fruit loss. Lack of sufficient pollination can be a cause. Chances are the flowers getting ready to bloom now will develop fruit. It takes about a month for the fruit to ripen. Hand pollinating using a tiny paint brush or your finger will ensure adequate pollination. Dragon fruit cactus are easy to grow. Providing adequate support structure for the plant and keeping them from freezing are important. Adding compost or fertilizer, especially in spring and summer will help ensure healthy plants.



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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