



April 2016

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>
Tampa.Bay.RFICI@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 ⌘

April 9th and 10th - The Spring Plant Sale at USF Gardens! There will be no regular meeting. This sale is a big fundraiser event for the Club. If you would like to volunteer for Friday set-up, volunteer at the tables at the Sale, or if you need a manifest emailed to you for your plants that you are selling, please contact USF plant sale coordinator members Jerry or Cora Coronel at jencofarm@aol.com or 727-403-1756. We'll see you at the Sale! Bring your friends, buy some great plants!



May 8th - The History of the Tampa Bay Chapter of RFICI.
(Rescheduled from the March meeting) The May meeting is an organizational meeting of our club's history: where it came from, where it is, and where it's going. A Power Point presentation and interaction will be led by Tom Schaefer. Come learn about the Club itself. Happy Mother's Day!



⌘ New Members ⌘

Charmant & Guilene Theodore

President: Sandra Kischuk; Program Manager: Tom Schaefer; Secretary: Joe Porter, Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher; Photographs: Fred Engelbrecht

☞ Composting with Worms ☜

Debra Black

RFCI Club member, Master Gardener, and home Urban Food Forest grower, Debra Black, spoke about composting with worms at March's meeting. Debra is from Africa, and lives in St. Petersburg, where she gardens, and teaches others about the benefits of using worms to get great composting material.

The worms: The type of worms generally used for composting are different than regular worms, or the earthworms you find in your garden. They are called red wigglers, and are very efficient at making compost. The castings the worms produce are rich in nutrients. The worms themselves multiply quickly.

Housing: Composting worms absolutely need to be contained. There are many pre-made housing options available, and you can build your own. Debra demonstrated the plastic bin system, and discussed various systems one can use to house composting worms. The important factor to keep in mind when selecting or designing housing, is ease of harvest of the castings. Harvesting trays should be easy to reach. Make sure the system is designed to supply sufficient oxygen to the worms. The housing must also offer protection from critters, who would be more than happy to eat your worms if given the opportunity!

Placement of the housing: Keep the worm house in the shade at all times. If the temperature is going to be below 40 degrees, bring them into a protected area so they don't get too cold.

Feeding the worms: These industrious little critters will chew their way through kitchen scraps and similar matter. But there are some important considerations when giving items to the worms. They enjoy left over produce and plant matter. Rice, pasta, and bread are safe to use. The material is usually layered, using coconut choir, cardboard, newspaper, or oak leaves. If the bin starts to smell, add more leafy material. If recycling tea bags, remove the staple first.

Do not use horse manure. The de-wormer given to the horses can injure them. Do not put frozen items into the worm bins. Do not use citrus, bay, or magnolia. Do not use course



material such as hard shells. This could injure worms. Do not use oyster shell, as it is too salty.

Using the compost: Castings are an excellent addition to your potted plants and vegetables. Add one part castings to ten parts soil. Make a tea from the castings using old panty hose to filter the larger particles out. Use one part tea to 10 parts water. This tea makes great fertilizer, and also repels insects. Use the tea right away. It does not store well. There is a market for worm castings, so you could always share your extra with friends, or even sell it.

Resources:

For plans for a cheap and easy worm bin, that even apartment dwellers can use, see this article. <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost/easywormbin.htm>

<http://www.redwormcomposting.com/reader-questions/vermicomposting-in-florida/>
Blogs, questions, buy worms and supplies, newsletter.

<http://www.bestbuyworms.com/id1.html>

Mike and Dee Blaha's Masaryktown, FL, family worm business, bins, worms, lots of information.

<https://www.facebook.com/Worm-Farms-in-Florida-128295417238755/?ref=nf>
Worm farms in Florida.

Additional information

The tutorial article below is from the University of Florida's Online Composting Center.
<http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/compost-info/tutorial/worms.shtml>

Vermicomposting: Composting with Worms



Vermicomposting is the process of using worms to produce rich compost from kitchen wastes. One pound of worms can turn 65 pounds of garbage into garden compost in 100 days. Vermicomposting is the way to go if you live in an apartment or if you generate mostly food scraps. The best diet for your worms are food scraps that are of plant origin. This includes vegetable and fruit trimmings, coffee grounds, pasta, bread, cereal, tea bags and other paper products. Plate scrapings are also acceptable. Animal products such as meat, eggs cheese, etc. are best kept to a minimum to prevent odors.

Step 1: Make a Worm Bin



Materials Needed

- 1 - 18 gal. plastic or styrofoam container with lid
 - window screen (can be old)
 - Duct tape
 - sections of newspaper, shredded paper, or paperboard (cereal boxes)
 - water
 - a couple of hand-fulls of sand or soil
- Electric drill with 1 inch spade bit
 - ½ to 1 pound of worms*
- * **Just any worms won't do!** Locate red wigglers or African Nightcrawlers. These worms are excellent composters and thrive in a worm bin environment. Red wigglers reproduce more quickly and are smaller than African Nightcrawlers; both are good fish bait. Local worm farms or bait stores can usually provide these types of worms.

Worm Bin Construction

1. Drill 4 holes (2 holes per side) about 4 inches from the top of the bin.
2. Cut small pieces of screen large enough to cover the holes and tape them to the inside of the bin using duct tape.
3. Make a bedding by shredding paper lengthwise into 1 inch strips to fill the bin 1/3 full.
4. Spread sand or soil over the bedding.
5. Pour the water over the newspaper strips; stirring the bedding as you moisten it.
6. Dump worms out of containers onto surface of bedding. After 2 hours, remove any (dead) worms that have not wiggled down into bedding.

Step 2: Vermicompost! Care for Your Worms

Feeding

One pound of worms can process ½ pound of kitchen scraps a day. Feed them daily, weekly or as desired. Cutting the scraps into small pieces allows the worms to consume them faster. Bury the scraps under the bedding; rotate where you bury them. You may add more bedding every once in a while.

Temperature

The ideal temperature for worms is between 60-80 F. So place the bin in a shady area, not in direct sun.

Moisture

Check the moisture when adding kitchen scraps. If too wet, add more bedding; if too dry, add water. Worms like more moisture than you might think. Experiment with moisture levels.

Darkness

Keep the lid on your bin. Worms do not like light and the closed bin will not attract flies.

Step 3: Harvesting Compost and/or Worms



After two or three months, the worms will have converted the bedding and food scraps into a rich, dark compost. There are two ways to harvest it:

1. Gently push the compost to one end of the bin and fill the empty side with moistened, shredded newspaper. Place kitchen scraps into bedding. The worms will eventually leave the compost and migrate towards the food. The compost can then be removed.

2. To harvest the worms and compost at the same time, dump the contents of the bin onto a piece of plastic. Allow the worms time to retreat to the middle of the pile away from the light, then scrape off the outer layer of compost.

Repeat this procedure until all the compost is harvested and mostly worms are left.

Share some of your worms with others, go fishing and/or return them to the bin filled with fresh, moistened bedding. Add 1 cup of soil or sand and some food. Begin again!!

☞ What's Happening ☜

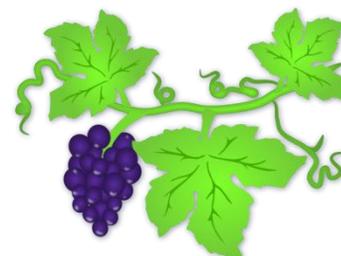
by Paul Zmoda

Wow! This month marks twenty four years of "What's Happening".

Each morning, I can't wait to go outside and see all the changes from the day before. My first stop is usually with the grapes. Some have well over a foot of new growth growing rapidly. Very soon the tiny flower buds will become tiny, new fruits.

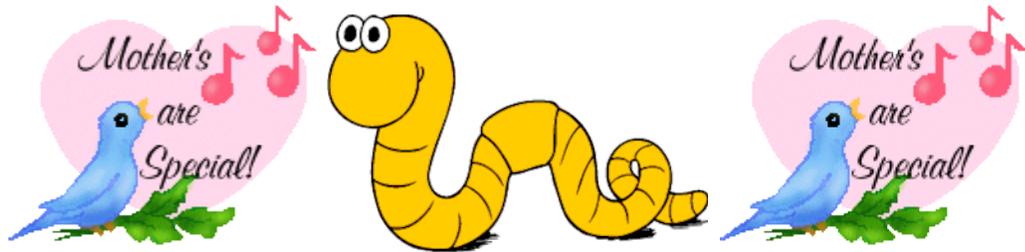
The largest white sapote has bloomed for the second time, as has our 'Glen' mango.

New plantings: pole beans, turnips, tomato shoots, a longan, a grafted loquat, Italian cypress, Chinese pumpkin, pyracantha, and a bed of amaryllis and rain lily bulbs.



☞ Club Notes ☜

We welcome your submissions for the newsletter, pictures, notes of interest, events in your area, tips you've tried or learned that you would like to share with others - please send them to bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com
 Submissions for the next newsletter due by: April 22nd.



☞ March 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.

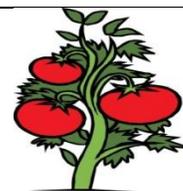


Name	Item	Name	Item
Vega	Chicken and noodles	Premraj	Vegetable chow mein
Premraj	Ice cream bananas	Coronel	Carambola bread, fried rice
Branesky	Strawberries	Saceda	Collard greens casserole
Sweet	Deviled eggs/olives	Sweet	Edamame and grain salad
Gary	Baked beans	Krotz	Grape salad
Hartzler	Worm dirt pudding cups	Newcombe	Starfruit yogurt
Cimafranca	Roast chicken, broccolini salad	Ruth	Caramel bread
Black	Baked plantains	Nick	Pie/salad
Clarke	Ham, spinach	Chinnery	Baked chicken
Grossman	Potato skins	Payne	Shrimp salad
Mallard	salad		



☞ March Plant Raffle ☞

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



Plant	Donor	Winner
Culantro	Vega	Black
Queen crape myrtle	Zmoda	Kischuk
Pindo palm	Zmoda	Saceda-Bigelow
Cherimoya	Zmoda	Peterson
Cheyote	Branesky	Cimafranca
Ice cream banana	Premraj	
Comfrey	Porter	Theodore
Scallions	Porter	
Miracle fruit	Gerstein	Oliver
Miracle fruit	Gerstein	Black
Longevity spinach	Black	
Crown of thorns	Dexte	
Bromeliads	Oliver	Provencher
Philipine tree pepper	Provencher	
Pink banana	Provencher	Sakuta
Kidney beans	Clarke	
Basil	Davies	Dexter
Surinam cherry	Oliver	
Ginger	Hartzler	
Red pineapple	Krotz	
White sapote	Kirby	Peterson
Loquat	Kirby	Davies
Devil's backbone	Evitt	
Cherimoya	Soto	
Loquat	Orr	Kischuk
Lychee	Kroslak	
Spinach	Grossman	Porter



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