



RFCI

April 2017

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, McLoughlin Center,
821 S. Dale Mabry, Tampa

⌘ Upcoming Programs and Events ⌘



April 9 - USF Plant Sale - No regular meeting! See you all at the USF Plant Sale. Stop by our booth and buy that special plant you've been looking for. 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 14 - Olives, Michael Garcia, Pres. Olive Growers of Florida (It is also Mother's Day)

⌘ Welcome New Members ⌘

Anthony Moran	Tampa
Karen Ebert	Tampa
Mark Randall	Thonotosassa
Dana & Gim Koay	St. Petersburg

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

New Board of Directors

Here is the Tampa Bay current Board of Directors for 2017 - 2018, as voted in at March's meeting. Board meetings are held after each regular meeting. Members are welcome to attend, and if you are interested in being a board member, or serving on one of the Club's activity committees, please attend one of the meetings.

Tom Schaefer -President
Fred Engelbrecht - Vice President and Program Manager
Susan McAveety -Treasurer
Sandra Kischuk Secretary
Jerry & Cora Coronel -Manager Plant festival
Steve Lohn - Photographer
Bill Vega
Jerry Amyot
George Campani

Grafting Demonstrations

A large, attentive crowd listened to information and demonstrations on grafting fruit trees at March's meeting. Grafting is one of the best ways to get the varieties of fruits you want to grow for free.



∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda

Twenty five years!!!! Three hundred articles of "What's Happening" have now appeared monthly in your RFCI newsletter. I never get tired of the topic of fruiting plants; each morning finds me eager to go outdoors to see what's happening.

I am still pruning - it really never ends. We ate a nice bunch of 'Mysore' bananas. These are small and sweet. Meyer lemons are doing fine and are always available for kitchen use.

The grafting demonstration at our last meeting was fun. I did some more, later at home.

Florida's 2017 citrus crop forecast has dropped to 67 million boxes, according to the USDA. This is lower than it's ever been in recent history.

New plantings: grape, grafted black sapote, custard apple, two Ilamas, a starfruit from a rooted cutting!, fig, grafted loquat, jackfruit, pole beans, and four kinds of okra.



It's Spring! Check out your local Extension Service class and event schedule. Learn something new!

http://pasco.ifas.ufl.edu/events_calendar.shtml

<http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu/fyn/>

<http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/index.shtml>

∞ Local Events ∞

Annual Loquat Festival - April 8th, 8am to 2pm Florida Loquat Festival, Frances Avenue Park, 6156 Louisiana Ave, New Port Richey. Free. Celebrate the loquat with locally made products, kids' fun, plants, music.

☞ 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
Lohn	Brownies	Englebrecht	Spanish rice
Coronel	Bibingka and pasta salad	Campani	Brownies
Guterrez	Cole slaw and bread	Shenoi	Rice pilaf
Trangas	Salad	Campbell	Chicken and chips
Amyot	Gluten free cookies	Krotz	Mushroom squash crustini
Hartzler	Orange cookies	Strain	Fruit salad
Sweet	Ice cream	Clarke	Spicy port, coleslaw, lemon cake
Topping	Lemon spring cake	Tamura	Fruit salad
Male	Salad	Saceda-bigelow	Quiche
Somlu	Papayas	Frances	Fruit tray



☞ 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
Tomato	Schaefer	
Raspberry	Schaefer	Billianna
Red passion fruit	Lohn	Billianna
Red passion fruit	Lohn	Pino
Jackfruit	Provencher	Mallard
Cuban mangosteen	Provencher	Davis
Cuban mangosteen	Provencher	Mallard
Everbearing mulberry	Zmoda	Davis
Malibar spinach	Schaefer	Randall
Cuban oregano	Black	Davis
Pineapple	Frances	
Tomatoes	Billianna	Lohn
Shampoo ginger tubers	Premraj	
Dragonfruit	Provencher	Campbell

The following fruit bits are excerpts from the website listed below. Each bit shares some history about the fruit, and times of the year to expect harvest in Florida.

<http://www.cookmixmingle.com/food-recipes/in-season-florida-fruits-vegetables-april/>



Bell peppers, which are actually fruits, originated in Mexico, Central America, and South America. Today, most green bell peppers sold in the United States are grown in Florida. Red, which have more than twice the vitamin C of green peppers, and yellow variations are just ripened green peppers and tend to sweeten during the process. Seasonal availability in Florida is November through May.

Blueberries are native to North America. Before the 1900s, the only way to enjoy was to find them in the wild. Native Americans used them for food, medicine, and dye for baskets and cloth. They would smoke the berries, also called star berries, to preserve them for winter and consumed a jerky made of dried berries and meat. Today, 95% of the world's blueberries are grown in North America. Once picked, blueberries no longer ripen and if not stored in a cool dry place, can mold in 12 hours. Seasonal availability in the state is April and May.

Cantaloupes are in season April through June. It's likely that they originated in the Middle East or India but have been growing along the Nile River Valley since ancient times. In the 1700s, they were cultivated in Cantaloupo, Italy where they received their name. A good source of vitamin C & A, cantaloupes are related to watermelons, honeydews, cucumbers, pumpkins, and squash.

Corn was domesticated over 9,000 years ago in Mesoamerica and is now the third largest human food crop outside of wheat and rice (also fruits)! There are five varieties, all which were known to the Native Americans prior to the arrival of European settlers: popcorn, flint corn, dent corn, flour corn, sweet corn. Corn is in season from October through June.

Cucumbers, which are actually a fruit, are 96% water! Thought to be poisonous, they were originally grown in India around 1500BC, and consumed with their skins scraped off to let the poison out. Despite this fear, they spread throughout Asia and were also cultivated by the Egyptians where they assisted travelers crossing the deserts due to their water content. Alexander the Great brought them to Europe from Asia. Columbus brought them to the Americas, and by 1494 they were being grown in Haiti, then North America by the mid-16th century. There are five broad groups of cucumber varieties: Middle Eastern & Asian, which are relatively small, European, typically long and slender, American, which tend to be short/thick and coated with wax to slow moisture loss, and the so-called Armenian cucumbers which are really an elongated African melon.

Eggplant is believed to have originated in India where it's considered to be the King of Vegetables. It was taken to Africa by the Arabs and Persians during the Middle Ages, eventually finding its way to Italy in the 14th century where it was called "mala insana" or "crazy apple". Ancient Persian philosophers thought that eating them caused all sorts of ailments from pimples to epilepsy. They're in season from November through June.

Guava's origins are unknown, but believed to be from an area extending from southern Mexico into Central America. They're a good source of Vitamin A, Folate, Potassium, Copper and Manganese, and a very good source of Dietary Fiber and Vitamin C. "The guava is to South Florida what the peach is to Georgia". Guavas are available year round.

Oranges, the primary source of vitamin C for most of us! Believe it or not, oranges are technically berries since the official definition of a berry is "a fleshy fruit produced from a single ovary." They originated in what is now Malaysia and made their way throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Greece and Rome. The Greeks prized them as foods from the Gods and called them "golden apples". During Queen Victoria's reign, oranges were handed out as gifts. In the 1560s, Spaniards planted orange trees in Florida.

Papaya, actually is classified as a berry. They're thought to have originated in Mexico and Central America. Spanish explorers transported the seeds to the Philippines, Malacca, India, as well as other South and Central American countries. The most popular variety is the "solo" or "Hawaiian" papaya, shaped like a pear. The papaya's seeds are edible and both its leaves and seeds have been used for medical purposes. Florida and Hawaii are the only states which grow papaya. You'll find them in season here from February through June.

Peas have been found by archaeologists in ancient Egyptian tombs. Sugar snap peas, which are a cross between English and snow peas, were probably developed in the late 17th century, but they did not become commonly available until the 1970s. They're in season from November through May.



Squash, one of the oldest known crops, comes from the Narragansett Indian word askutasquash, meaning "a green thing eaten raw." Every part of the squash plant, from leaves to shoots, can be eaten. They're a good source of minerals, carotenes and vitamin A, with moderate quantities of vitamins B and C. They're available from October through May.

Star fruits are believed to have originated from Sri Lanka or the islands of Indonesia (the Moluccas). When Spanish and Portuguese explorers arrived in Asia they adapted the Indian word karambal and renamed the fruit carambola. In 1887, they were introduced to Florida followed by the Caribbean islands, Central America, South America, and Hawaii in 1935. They're in season from January through April.

Strawberries include over 600 varieties! In 1714, a French naval officer found a flowering strawberry plant in Chile. It was sent to France where the plant crossed with a North American strawberry plant resulting in a much larger berry than those grown elsewhere. Today's berries are their descendants. During Napoleon Bonaparte's rule, Madame Tallien bathed in the juice of fresh strawberries – she used 22 pounds per bath. Today, California provides 80% of strawberries grown in the US. You'll find them in season in Florida from December through April.

Tangerines originated in the North African city of Tangier in Morocco in the 19th century. The first batch of tangerines was brought to America when the Italian consul in New Orleans decided to plant some on the grounds surrounding the consulate. From New Orleans, the tangerine was taken to Florida and it became a commercial crop like other citrus fruits. They're high in vitamin C, have many of the same health benefits as oranges and typical availability in Florida is September through May.

Tomatoes, which are a fruit formed out of a flower, are South American natives. The reason they were labeled as vegetables rather than fruits has to do with import taxes. Tomatoes were cultivated by the Incas and Aztecs since 700 AD. Most people in Europe believed them to be poisonous, as such popularity was slow to develop. Following European acceptance, its popularity grew in the US. Thomas Jefferson grew tomatoes in his garden in 1782; by 1812 they were frequently used in New Orleans cooking. Grow your own tomatoes!

Watermelons are 92% water, 8% sugar and 100% delicious. They're believed to have originated from Africa, and likely to have been cultivated over 4000 years ago. Watermelon seeds were recovered from the tomb of King Tutankhamen. Watermelon popularity in the US is likely due, in large part, to African slaves who would plant watermelons in the cotton fields to enjoy in July and August while they worked. August 3rd is celebrated as National Watermelon Day.

∞ 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, recipes, or questions about growing fruits - please send them to bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **April 22nd**.

∞ Membership information ∞

NEW MEMBERS

Download and fill out a membership application from: <https://rarefruit.org/membership/>, and send with check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI to: Tampa Bay RFCI, 39320 North Ave., Zephyrhills, FL 33542.

RENEWING MEMBERS

Send check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI and mail to: Tampa Bay RFCI, 39320 North Ave., Zephyrhills, FL 33542.



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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