



RFCI

October 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 ⌘

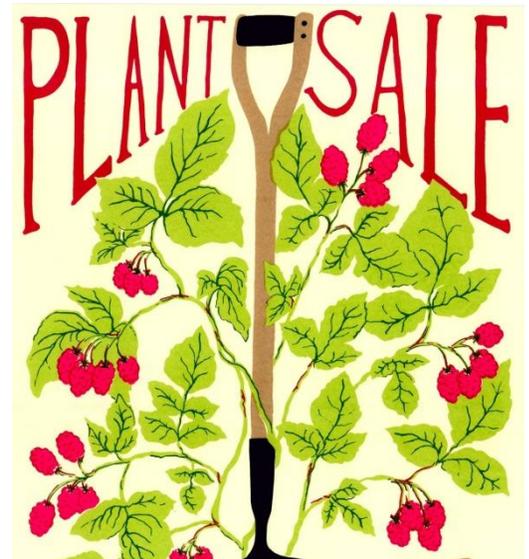
October 14 and 15th - The Plant Sale at USF!!! Last chance to sign up to volunteer at the Plant Sale!!! We need your help starting Friday afternoon on the 13th to set up, and on Saturday and Sunday for the sale. What better way to spend part of a weekend than at a Plant Sale!

Contact Cora at 727-403-1756 or jencofarm@aol.com for details about volunteering for this next sale.

For those members helping out with the set-up on Friday, please arrive around 1:00pm.

For members helping out at the Sale on Saturday and Sunday, you can pick up your tickets Friday around 2:00pm. Call Bill Vega 813-300-7597 for ticket pickup.

A plant manifest is on page 6 for those bringing plants.



⌘ Welcome New Members ⌘

Betty Walk Pearson

Pinellas Park

Elias Aguero

Tampa



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

☞ A note from the President ☜

Tom Schaefer

Hurricane Irma.....September 10, 2017....what can I say that hasn't been said. Hopefully you had a big sigh of relief after it passed. It could have been much worse. Thank goodness Jose turned north! Without knowing exactly where Irma was headed, it was difficult to prepare. Most of my time was spent prepping the house, not my plants and trees. I hope everyone stayed safe and was spared any devastation from this storm. I spoke to a number of members who were without power for days. Cleanup can last for weeks. Hopefully your home and fruit trees survived. Now we have to tend to the aftermath. Working outside this time of year can be brutal. The heat and humidity can take its toll, so please be careful, stay hydrated, and take your breaks. Please contact your family, friends, and neighbors to make sure of their safety. Thank you to all those who reached out to help others!

We plan to reschedule our September speaker, Greg Gude, for a future presentation on kumquats this coming year.

Don't forget we do not have a general meeting in October!!!

The USF Fall Plant Sale will take place Saturday, October 14th from 10am - 4pm, and Sunday, October 15th, from 10am - 3pm. We will need a few volunteer helpers to set up on Friday, October 13th at 1pm. We will unload plants from our supplier (if he has not been devastated by the hurricane), as well as members bringing their plants and items for sale. Help is needed from our members for the Sale on Sat. and Sun. which is one of our Club's major fund raisers. This is an excellent learning experience for those wanting to learn more about the plants we grow. Listen to discussions of growing conditions and expectations with potential customers as well as ask questions of our more knowledgeable growers.

Make sure you complete a plant manifest when you bring your plants or items for sale. We can only bring fruiting plants and fruit items such as jams and jellies. The manifest must be checked on arrival by Tom and at the end of the sale before a check can be issued. A copy of the manifest is enclosed in this newsletter.

Contact Cora Coronel if you have questions about helping with the sale, 727-403-1756.

We are considering starting a Club photo contest again. Details are being prepared. If you are interested, please check our sign-in table at the next meeting. The contest has taken place for several years and we look forward to more contests in the future. Rules are being compiled by Fred.

Stay safe and best of luck in the recovery stage.

Tom Schaefer

☞ What's Happening ☞

by Paul Zmoda

The biggest news was hurricane Irma which led to the cancellation of our September meeting. I hope you got through the storm with minimal damage, as we did. None of our vehicles or buildings were damaged, thanks to good fortune and days of preparation and planning.

Several of our fruit trees were leaning and were staked back. One 25 foot olive tree had to be cut back by 50% before it could be propped back up. Most of the garden vegetable plants were either blown down, drowned, or both.

Just a day or two before we evacuated, we got to harvest a perfectly ripe, three and half pound soursop. Also ripening just in time was our only pink Ilama fruit and one sugar apple. We picked most of the dragon fruit just in case.

☞ Recovering the Garden after the Storm ☞



Most of you are probably cleaning up your yard and landscape after our unwanted guest, Hurricane Irma. The landscape surely looks different, and the cleanup will take weeks.

Both home and landscape will need to be carefully assessed, and a plan put in place for prioritizing the work needing to be done. Take care of the most urgent damage first, of course, but assessing the survival of some plants may take time to determine, depending on the type and extent of damage done.

There are many types of damage to look for as you go through the process of assessing your yard.

Wind damage - both to plantings, and your home. Breaking limbs, downed trees, defoliation, and heavy debris left behind resting on smaller plants will be abundant. Root damage is also a concern for any tree or plant that experienced a lot of movement due to wind.

Water damage - flooding that has left plants underwater for a time, or washed away soil from the roots, beaten tender foliage down, and oversaturated the area soil are some ways water damages plants.

Salt damage - Salt, both from wind blown salt water, and flooding from storm surge raising salinity levels in the soil can cause massive damage to trees, ornamentals, and your lawn.

Take Pictures

You will want a record of what happened, what plants were damaged, and just some pictures for posterity. Even if you think damage is minor, you may need pictures for insurance purposes. If you do have significant damage, check with your insurer to see what help is available.

Clean Up Damaged Trees

One of the first assessments you will need to make is tree damage. Check your home, roof, windows, etc for damage. Look for downed trees and large limbs. Also look up for caught hanging limbs that could present a danger when they fall. Damaged and downed trees are one of the most dangerous outcomes of storms. Call professionals to remove large trees, do not try to do it yourself, it may too dangerous. Smaller trees may need just cleanup. Defoliated trees should recover and regenerate new leaves. Some plants may be able to be staked upright such as banana plants, or young trees may need staking to prevent further damage to roots that were pushed around during strong winds.

Damaged Shrubs, ornamentals, and flowers

Shrubs and hedges may require pruning, and clean up. Landscape ornamentals may need to be trimmed back or removed, but most are pretty tough and will regrow with a little pruning. Some flowering plants may bloom off schedule due to the affects of the storm.

Clear Leaves

There will probably be a lot of raking of leaves, and smaller clumps of twigs. These can be easily composted. Be sure to get your gutters and roof valleys cleared as well as drainage piping and ditches where clogging could have occurred from the tremendous amount of rain. Don't blow them into the street, as they may clog street drains.

Prune & Remove the Damage

After dealing with major damage, (such as fallen trees) move on to removing snapped branches, bent or damaged growth and broken leaves. Also, clear away any build up of mud and debris that is clinging to the trunk or basis of plants/trees. This will help reduce the risk of secondary infection from high mud levels and dead plant materials. If plant residue is left on or leaning against other plants, it will usually begin to rot and in doing so, it will cause other plants to rot as well.

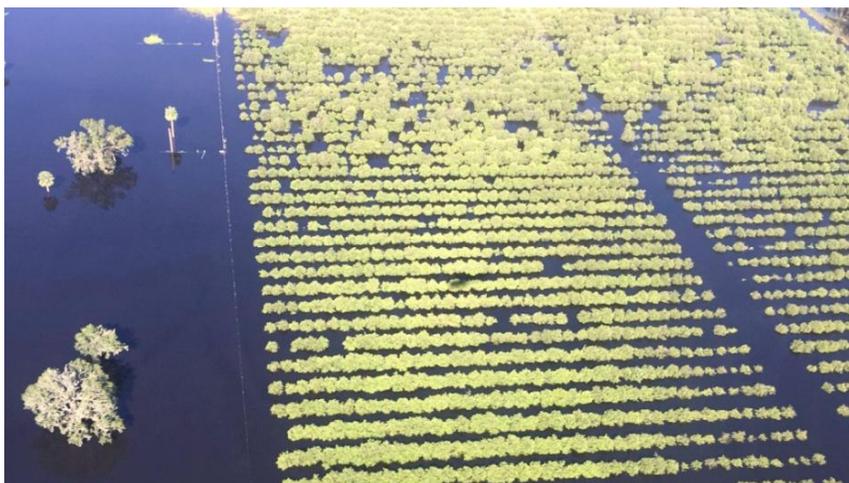
Remember to go slowly. When trying to prune and clear away a wind damaged garden, do the least pruning necessary at first. Over time, your garden will let you know what needs to be removed and what can stay. Improvement can happen within a week after the storm passes. New shoots will form, new buds will develop, and these are essential keys to tell you how a plant is responding to storm damage.

Recycle

While storm damage is never pleasant it can open up new areas in the garden, allowing for change as well as providing fertile compost for a renewal of beauty as the garden recovers. Try to look for a silver lining as you clean up, maybe a new view, richer soil, or a chance to take your garden to the next level. It can be a new and exciting experience. Think compost, compost, compost.

<http://hort.ufl.edu/woody/documents/EP300.pdf> - University of Florida article discusses caring for storm damaged trees, restoring them to health

Hurricane Irma wiped out half of Florida's citrus crop.



The Sunshine State expected to harvest 75 million boxes of oranges this year. That number is looking decidedly slimmer after Irma knocked fruit off trees, flooded fields and groves, and broke irrigation pipes.

Hurricane Irma took out an estimated 50 percent of the season's citrus crop statewide, USA Today reports. Based on reports from the field, losses may be even higher in South Florida.

And yes, that's likely to hike up the price of your orange juice. Florida

produces nearly half of U.S. citrus, despite recent declines in productivity. Since 2005, the state's citrus harvest has fallen by 70 percent partly due to citrus greening, a disease that cuts yields and makes fruit more bitter.

The hurricane also damaged other crops in the southern and central parts of the state, especially tomatoes, strawberries, and sugar cane.

Though Florida's agricultural outlook is not pretty, things are even worse in the Caribbean. Irma stripped entire islands bare of vegetation and posed a serious threat to food security. The storm flooded fields and destroyed crops in places like Haiti and Cuba, where many people are subsistence farmers.



☞ Local Events ☞

October 28th - 33rd annual fall garden extravaganza - downtown Munn Park - 201 East Main St, Lakeland - over 50 vendors - everything garden related, free.



☞ 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: **October 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
39320 North Ave.
Zephyrhills, FL 33542