August 2018

RFCI

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the

RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, INC.

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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 ∞

August 12, 2018, 2:00 p.m. Dr. Nick Place, Director of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) will discuss the University's role in Florida's agricultural development. Dr. Nick T. Place was named Dean and Director of University of Florida/IFAS Extension in September 2012. He is a Professor in the Agricultural Education and Communication Department in the UF /College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS). He oversees the Florida Cooperative Extension service found in 67 counties, 13 Research and Education Centers, 15 special Institutes and programs and Y departments across the Sunshine State.

September 9th, 2:00pm, Growing Fruit Trees in Containers with Will Wright of Tropical & Rare Fruit Trees, LLC. There are many advantages to container growing, and some challenges too. Learn how to grow and fruit many fruiting plants and trees in containers.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Donna Zacharczyk	St.Petersburg
Kim Straub	Temple Terrace
Ann & Mark Rhodes	Hudson
Romagene Vaccaro	Tampa

∞ What's Happening ∝

by Paul Zmoda

My main activities now revolve around grapes: putting up bird netting, harvesting, making wine, potting up rooted cuttings, etc.

I also began to pot up some air layers, started in early May, such as 'Guthrie' plum, and longan.

Okra has performed well for us in the summer heat. A fruit in the Mallow family, okra is fast growing and can be prepared in many ways – soups, fried, pickled – I even put some on a pizza! Cultivars I grow are Cowhorn, Clemson spineless, Louisiana, German Giant, and a red colored one.

New planting – a grafted mango from an unnamed seedling.

July Fruit Tasting

So many, many thanks to the volunteer ladies and gentlemen who came very early, and tirelessly washed, cut, served fruits, and then washed and cleaned the kitchen and serving areas. Thanks to the members who donated mangoes and other fruits for the tasting. Thanks to Roshan and Maya Premraj, Bill Vega, Bob Latimer, and George Campani who picked about 400 pounds (21 varieties) of mangoes. And thanks to all other members who were in one way or another involved in organizing this wonderful event. We really appreciate your help, time and effort, without which this affair would not have been possible.

Jerry and Cora Coronel - Mango and Fruit Tasting Committee

Mango preparation – photo by George Campani

Jackfruit – photo by George Campani

Taking a break! photo by George Campani

Fruit Preparation – photo by George Campani

Lychee table – photo by Bill Vega

Mangoes – photo by George Campani

Look at all these mangoes to taste! photo by George Campani

Another “mile long” fruit tasting table - photo by George Campani

Member questions

Can mangoes, avocadoes, and citrus be grown from cuttings?

You can, the advantages and disadvantages of starting these fruits from cuttings, seeds, and grafting are shown below.

Mango:

Cuttings: It can be done, but it is not the best way to get a new mango tree. The root systems are rather weak on trees grown from a cutting. But, if you would like to try, choose cuttings from a mature tree, preferably collected at a time when the tree is not fruiting. Apply rooting hormone to the cutting and pot up in moist soil. There is about a 40% chance of success with mango cuttings. The same weak root system problem applies when air layering mangoes.

Seed: Growing mangoes from seed is generally very easy, however, mangoes do not come true from seed. The fruit could be superior, equal, or inferior from the tree the seed originated from. The fruit could be wildly different than expected. Seedlings will take 8 – 10 years to produce fruit.

Simply allow the mango seed to dry a day or two after enjoying the fruit, then carefully cut the inner seed kernel out of the husk with a sharp knife. Plant the seed about 1 inch deep in potting soil with the concave side facing down. It takes about 1 – 3 weeks for the seed to sprout. Keep the pot moist and transplant to a larger container or plant in the ground before the roots become pot-bound.

Importantly, seedling mangoes make excellent rootstock for grafting. Their roots are strong.

Graft: Grafting is the best and most reliable way to get a mango tree of the variety you want to have. That's why when you go to purchase mango trees, they are grafted. The benefits of a strong root system from the seedling tree, and the partially mature scion(cutting) you will use to graft onto the seedling, ensure a strong healthy plant with the qualities you want. Plus, grafted varieties fruit much quicker than seedling or cutting trees, often in as little as 3 -5 years.

To do your graft, start some seedling mangoes as above. When the seedling tree's stalk is about ¼ - ½" thick, it is ready to use as a rootstock. Obtain the cutting scions from the trees you want to grow and graft them to the seedling. There are several graft methods that will work for this, such as veneer, shield, patch and root grafts. The most common is probably the veneer graft. This whole grafting process will take about 6-12 months.

Citrus:

Cuttings: For the backyard grower, taking the time to master the technique of growing citrus from cuttings can be well worth the effort. Many varieties are hard to find, and being able to grow your own can be most rewarding. Some varieties of citrus, such as Orlando tangelo have been known to taste better and produce in 3 years or less when propagated by cuttings.

One problem, however, is that citrus are highly regulated in Florida, and obtaining registered, true-to-type, disease free citrus wood is usually reserved only for the commercial trade. To make it harder, the citrus found in retail stores is often mislabeled as to cultivar, so starting with this can lead to continued mislabeling. If you are able to obtain true parent material, cuttings can be a great way to get the citrus varieties you want.

Seed: Citrus grow easily from seed, but it can take many years, 5 – 13, for a citrus tree to be old enough to produce fruit. The fruit will not come true from seed. The quality and type of fruit from a seedling tree can be very different than the fruit the seed itself came from.

Grafting: Again, the most reliable and fastest way to get the variety you want. Hardy citrus rootstock is used in grafting, helping to provide the hardiest trees.

Avocadoes:

Cuttings: Avocado trees can be started from cuttings. Take cuttings in the spring, treat with rooting hormone, and pot up in a soil mix. It should take about 2 weeks to begin to root. When you give a gentle tug, and there is resistance, the cutting has probably rooted. It will take 7 – 8 years for them to produce fruit.

Seed: As children, most of us probably have started an avocado tree by seed. It's ridiculously easy and fun for kids. But how many of these trees produced fruit? These trees often are very slow to produce fruit, if they ever do. Like many fruit trees, the seedling trees will not produce true to variety.

Graft: Grafting once again is the best and most reliable way to get the variety you want in as short a time as possible.

In summary, it is possible to take cuttings or grow from seed these particular fruits, but you must weigh the length of time it will take for the tree to produce, and the fact that the fruit may or may not be great tasting, and decide if this is what you want to do. It can be a fun project for sure, you may end up with a new variety! But, if you want a sure thing in a much shorter time, grafting is the best option.

There are many detailed videos online, information on our Club website, and of course live demonstrations to learn from at our grafting workshop to help you with your grafting skills.

ꕥ Club Notes ꕥ

Members looking for plants, seeds:
(Contact Tom Schaefer @ 813-777-0019)
Jan Elliot looking for Paw-Paw seeds
Bob Grauer looking for Black Sapote tree

Send in 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: **August 22nd**.

ꕥ Membership information ꕥ

NEW MEMBERS
Download and fill out a membership application from: https://rarefruit.org/membership/,
and send with check of 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.

Here is Walter Zill from May's Club meeting, discussing Mangoes. Photo by George Campani

The wonderful work that Walter's family did in the past developing some of the mango varieties that are famous today, certainly contributed to our enjoying the fruit tasting!

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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