



# RFCI

October 2018

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

<http://www.rarefruit.org>  
[Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com](mailto: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

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## ∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞



**October 13 and 14<sup>th</sup> Plant Sale at USF!!!** It's time for the Club's fall plant sale at USF's big horticultural festival.

Volunteers are needed for this fun event.

There is NO regular meeting this month. Come to the plant

sale! Buy more plants! Be sure to stop by the Club's Memorial Garden sign while you are shopping.



**November 11<sup>th</sup>** – Grapes for Florida! Our Club's very own Paul Zmoda, grape expert, will be speaking about grapes that will grow here in Central Florida. Paul knows a lot about growing grapes, and has extensive plantings of grapes at his farm.

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## ∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Jager Mitchell	Plant City
Krystin Damico	Seffner
Dane Watt	Dover
Earl Gardner	Kenneth City

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*As of the writing of this newsletter, long time member Bill Vega is in the ICU at Brandon Regional Hospital. Please send your prayers his way. We will update as information becomes available.*

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President: Tom Schaefer; VP and Secretary: Cora Coronel; Treasurer: Susan McAveety,  
Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher

## ∞ Growing Fruits in Containers ∞

Will Wright of “Tropical and Rare Fruit Trees, LLC”, Master Gardener, and Society Chairman of the Tropical Fruit Society of Sarasota, spoke about container gardening. His well-organized and very informative discussion focused on fruiting plants.



*Photo by George Campani*

**There are so many advantages to raising plants and fruit trees, in containers. Here are some of them.**

- Container growing gives you maximum control over the conditions that plant is exposed to.
- It's easier to protect your plants from cold.
- You can grow plants from all over the world, plants you never dreamed you could grow.
- Container growing is perfect for limited spaces.
- If you move, you can take your plants with you.
- It allows you the opportunity to customize the best growing conditions for a particular plant.
- For some plants susceptible to nematodes, growing in containers is the best way to grow them.

### **Some considerations to keep in mind:**

- Choose the right plant. Dwarf varieties are an excellent choice. Trees that want to grow to be 100' tall make poor candidates in the long term for growing in a container. Their root systems would eventually be too large.
- Choose quality containers, preferably strong, lightweight ones.
- Go as large as possible with the container size, upsizing as the plant grows.
- Be familiar with the specific region where the fruit tree is from. Determine what the soil is like in that area; whether it is volcanic, rocky, rich mountain soil, moist, dry, or

from a forest floor with lots of decomposed plant matter. Know the soil conditions and what you may need to add to make it suitable for that plant.

- Remember, even a small island can have significant differences in rainfall and sun conditions, elevations, and temperatures in different parts of that island. It is important to know what the conditions for the particular plant were like in its native home.

## Containers

- Fiberglass containers are strong, lightweight, and good for many plants. They may cost a bit more, but could be worth the extra dollars.

- Plastic pots certainly are readily available, have the best range of sizes, are very cost efficient, and are also very lightweight. Virtually any plant can be grown in plastic pots. One drawback is that some plastics break down in sunlight quicker than others, or can fade in color.

- Clay pots are heavy, especially in large sizes, but have excellent breathability for those plants who prefer that.

- Structural pots, such as hypertufa are strong and lightweight.

## Soil mixes

It is easy to blend your own mixes to suit specific plant needs. You will want to keep



*Photo by George Campani*

your mix lightweight, well-draining, with a good balance of organic and inorganic ingredients. Osmocote Blend is one of Will's favorite soil mix bases.

- Perlite, sphagnum and horticultural vermiculite can be added to your organics to keep the mix lighter and add volume. Peat moss can help hold moisture. A mix of only compost can become heavy and compact as the ingredients continue to decompose and be consumed by micro-organisms. You want to keep the soil from compacting, as the air spaces between particles are very important in getting air to the roots.

- Gravel and sand are heavy, but may be helpful to add weight at the bottom of containers to stabilize the container.

## Fertilizers

- Time release fertilizers are great to use on container plants. Preferred are fertilizers certified for use in Florida that will help prevent the discharge of fertilizer runoff into the waterways.

- Use less fertilizer, as less is needed when the plant is containerized.

## More tips for success

- Remember, many tropicals start their life in the shade of multi-level forests, so they don't need too much sun to get growing.
- Always be sure to have the fruit tree in a big enough container so the roots don't dry out or fill the container too quickly. It's healthy roots that make the fruits!!
- Go dwarf! Many fruits have varieties that stay small.
- Use casters to make moving larger pots easier.

## Favorite fruits for containers

- Pineapples make perfect container fruits.
- Miracle Fruit is a small shrub perfect for a large container, add peat to acidify the soil mix.
- Annonas fruit very well in containers, they are deciduous, so they will be bare in winter.
- Almost all berries make great container plants.
- Figs love containers as it protects them from nematodes.
- There are many varieties of mangoes that are dwarf, allowing easy culture of mango trees.
- Mulberry, avocado and papaya work well too. There are dwarf varieties.
- Citrus are great in containers too. Meyer lemon is one of the most greening resistant varieties, as are finger limes.

## ☞ What's Happening ☞

by Paul Zmoda

We are getting a nice steady supply of persimmons – Rosseyenka, Sheng, and Honan Red. These astringent types must be soft-ripe before eating.

Another tree giving up its bounty is our white sapote. It flowered in late winter, but set not a single fruit. I was surprised when it flowered again in June. This time it set a large crop. We enjoyed several dozen 'Fantastic' avocados as bananas began providing in earnest.

I planted many native persimmon seeds in tall citri-pots. They came up in two weeks and will be used as rootstock later when I graft persimmons.

Dragonfruit cacti are blooming and setting fruit nicely.

New plantings: tomatoes and lots of fall/winter veggies.

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## *From the President: Tom Schaefer*

*Thanks to Will Wright for a very informative presentation on growing our plants in containers.*

*Our plant sale is next month at USF. Your help is appreciated. Wear your rare fruit tee shirts when you come to assist everyone. This is a good learning experience for our new members. Ask questions of our senior members about growing various plants. Listen while they talk to the consumers asking about specific plants. That is exactly what I did when I joined the club many years ago. I enjoy the relationships I now have with so many people. Give it a try!*

*Hopefully we will start drying out soon. So much rain this summer! Hopefully a good fall and winter to come (not sure where the break is there!).*

*Don't forget to consider joining our board of directors. We always need help to organize everything and put our plans into action. Please talk to any of the officers or board members if you have questions or join us after our next general meeting to see the interactions.*

*Thanks to all for helping our club moving forward! See you at USF!*

*Tom Schaefer*

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This was the line to get into the USF Plant Sale during a previous year. Let's hope for great weather and a great crowd! Photo by Fred Engelbrecht.

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## September 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
Silk floss tree	Vega	
Cranberry hibiscus	Vega	
Longevity plant	Vega	
Tamarind	Coronel	
Sugar apple	Soylu	
Dragonfruit	Putnam	
Vanilla orchid	Mitchell	Dickey
Dwarf everbearing mulberry	Mitchell	Dickey
Okinawa spinach	Mitchell	
Longevity spinach	Mitchell	
Surinam cherry	Black	
Chinese pagoda flower	Provencher	
Maniot	Provencher	
Purple yam	Provencher	
Sugar apple	Provencher	
La lot leaf	Provencher	
Elephant foot palm	Provencher	
Mango seedling "wise"	Provencher	
Edible cactus	Provencher	
Cassava	Mitchell	
Purple dragonfruit	Mitchell	
Greater galangal	Mitchell	
Longan	Gil	
Natal plum	Gil	
Starfruit	Gil	
Crooked mulberry	Gil	
Cattleya guava	Sumner	Ramon
Ackee	Premraj	
Orangeberry	Premraj	
Date palm	Fotopoulos	Mitchell
Cuban oregano	Vaccaro	
Chocolate mint	Vaccaro	Campbell

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## ☞ September 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
Campani	Brownies	Latimer	Beet salad
Vega	Rice	Premraj	Rice and chicken
Soylu	Turkish potato salad	Coronel	Pulled pork and rice
Putnam	Brownies	Black	Roasted potatoes
Mitchell	Mixed tropical fruits	Jacob	Brownies
Bowman	Green beans, pineapple	Clarke	Potato salad, ham
Clarke	Caesar salad, pumpkin tart	Wheeler	Keitt mangoes
Graves	Sour cream coffee cake	Lancaster	Juice
Robinson	Juice	Campbell	Salad
Hayes	Coconut cream pie	Petersen	Bananas, rambutan
McAveety	Guacamole	Dickey	Oat bars with guava jelly

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## ☞ Club Notes ☜

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](mailto:bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com) Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **October 22nd.**

If you are missing a badge, please stop at the desk by the door when you arrive at the meeting, there is a sheet there to sign to replace a missing badge, or report that you do not have one.

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## ☞ 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.

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***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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Tampa Bay RFCI  
39320 North Ave.  
Zephyrhills, FL 33542