



RFCI

JULY 2020

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 American Legion Post 111,

6918 N. Florida Ave, Tampa 33604

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

No meeting for July. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, the Club meeting for July has been cancelled. The health and safety of our members is top priority. It is possible in the coming months, a speaker may present a video conference as a replacement for face to face meetings until the situation is safe to meet in person. Please watch the Club website and the newsletter for details concerning future meetings, video conferences and other news. The current situation will be assessed again for August.

Please follow the health guidelines of local, state, and federal agencies and stay healthy.

Get your learning fix. While we are waiting for meetings to resume, here are some interesting videos to watch in the comfort of your home on different aspects of fruits and growing in Florida.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoomfsGpG_w

UF/IFAS researcher Jim Olmstead talks about developing Florida blueberries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtOOPa6tD8s>

Why wild citrus in a forest is a big deal, with Pete Kanaris. Greening and how much healthier citrus growing in the understory of oaks are.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwhApzs_5Ow

UF/IFAS pomegranate fruit tasting, from Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred – learn which varieties you may be interested in growing through this virtual taste test. Informative.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ac17aWAuX4E>

UF/IFAS Sugar Belle citrus – the development of this greening resistant variety of citrus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9gppt99MwM>

UF/IFAS Stone fruits with Mercy Olmstead who has spoken at the Club previously. Learn how and when to fertilize your stone fruits.

President: Fred Engelbrecht; Vice Presidents: Cora Coronel and Kenny Gil; Secretary: Jager Mitchell; Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher

∞ What's Happening ∞

by Paul Zmoda

This is proving to be the year of the White Sapote here. More fruit than ever, but they seem to be a bit on the small side. The smooth and creamy flesh around the large seeds tastes like lemon custard to me (see my photo below).

Our huge (fifteen foot plus) grumichama tree had nearly a thousand flowers on it which attracted many pollinator insects. As in years past, it set no fruit. Since the tree is very healthy looking, it must be a self-fertility problem. I bought another specimen and planted it in the vicinity.

Lots of Orinoco bananas are hanging and we are getting to eat some desert bananas as well.

I finished grafting all the starfruit and persimmon rootstocks that I had on hand – most have taken.

New planting: grumichama and Meyer lemon.



SUMMER VEGETABLES IN FLORIDA

Florida gardens are unique in that many growers have their off-season in the summer. Florida's summer sun takes a toll on traditional crops familiar in more northern gardens. Some of following crops, however, can withstand the heat and keep your vegetable garden productive.

VEGETABLES

For summer gardens to be successful, summer vegetables in Florida need a good start that enables them to stand up to disease and insect pressure in the humid, hot weather. To learn how to prepare and care for your garden, see our information on [vegetable gardening](#).

Some of these crops require earlier planting, but will keep producing in summer heat. Others can be planted and established right in the middle of hot weather. (The dates listed are outdoor planting dates.)

LIMA BEANS



Recommended varieties: Fordhook 242, Henderson, Jackson Wonder, Dixie (Speckled) Butterpea, Early Thorogreen

North: plant through the summer until September; **Central:** plant until May; **South:** plant until May.

EGGPLANT



Recommended varieties: Black Beauty, Dusky, Long, Ichiban, Cloud Nine

North: plant until August; **Central:** plant until April; **South:** plant until March.

OKRA



Recommended varieties: Clemson Spineless, Emerald, Annie Oakley II, Cajun Delight

North: plant until August; **Central:** plant through the summer until September; **South:** plant starting in August.

SOUTHERN PEAS (FIELD PEAS, COW PEAS)

Recommended varieties: California Blackeye No. 5, Pinkeye Purple Hull, Texas Cream

North: plant through the summer until September; **Central:** plant through the summer until October; **South:** plant starting in August.

PEPPERS



Recommended varieties: *Bell:* California Wonder, Red Knight; *Sweet:* Sweet Banana, Mariachi, Cubanelle; *Hot:* Jalapeño M, Cherry Bomb, Hungarian Hot Wax, Long Cayenne, Habañero

North: plant until May, then again starting in July; **Central:** plant until April; **South:** plant starting in August.

SWEET POTATOES



Recommended varieties: Centennial, Beauregard, Vardaman

North: plant until July; **Central:** plant until July; **South:** plant until July.

WATERMELON



Recommended varieties: Jubilee (Florida Giant), Crimson Sweet, Sugar Baby, Mickey Lee

North: plant until May, then again starting in July; **Central:** plant until April; **South:** plant until April.

NEW OUTLOOKS

New gardeners in Florida are often frustrated by garden failures in the summer. Good summer vegetables in Florida have to keep producing and thrive in muggy heat. Choosing appropriate crops and adapted varieties is the first step in ensuring a successful harvest.

If you are looking for new or alternative ideas, generally crops and varieties from Southeast Asia, another humid subtropical zone, will do well in Florida's climate. Also look to tropical varieties from Caribbean countries to the south.

One hurdle gardeners face is the desire for the summertime tomato. Tomatoes are not considered a summer crop in Florida, mainly because of physiological limitations — tomatoes will not set fruit if nighttime temperatures are above 70°F. Cherry tomatoes will sometimes keep producing in the summer.

If you would prefer to not grow a garden during the summer, take advantage of the heat by [solarizing your garden soil](#) to kill weeds, pathogens, and nematodes in preparation for fall planting.

If you have questions about vegetable varieties for your area or cultural recommendations for different crops, contact your [local Extension agent](#)

Adapted and excerpted from:

S. Park Brown, et al, "[Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide](#)" (SP 103), Horticultural Sciences Department (revised 10/2015 and 01/2016).

"The Summer Vegetable Garden," UF/IFAS Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology (accessed 05/2013).

∞ Club Notes ∞

Your submissions for the newsletter, pictures, notes of interest, events, tips, recipes, questions, etc. are especially needed - please send them to bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com
Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **July 22nd**.

The Club would love to hear from anyone interested in joining the Board. It's a great way to learn the goings on within the Club and being involved in planning events, such as the plants sales, farmer markets, fruit tastings, and the Citrus Celebration at the State Fair.

Note: The election of the new Board members will be rescheduled when regular meetings resume. If interested please come to the next meeting once meetings resume.

If anyone knows of a farm stand that sells lychee fruit, or a U-pick farm for lychees, please let me know: bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com

∞ Membership information ∞

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, 12722 Prosser Rd., Dade City, FL 33525

RENEWING MEMBERS

Send check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI and mail to:
Tampa Bay RFCI, 12722 Prosser Rd., Dade City, FL 33525

Please note as of March 1st, please send memberships to the new address above. We have moved!

Your local Extension office may have cancelled classes during the Covid crisis, but there are video classes you can sign up for. Check your county website for more information. If your county isn't listed below simply type in your browser inserting your county in place of the ones below.

Pasco

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/pasco/>

Hillsborough

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/hillsborough/>

Pinellas

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellas/>

- Topics: | [Food Shopping](#) | [COVID-19 \(Novel Coronavirus\)](#) | [Handling and Storing Fruits and Vegetables](#)

COVID-19 and Food Safety FAQ: Is Coronavirus a Concern on Fresh Produce?¹

Natalie Seymour, Mary Yavelak, Candice Christian, and Ben Chapman²

CDC, FDA and USDA are not aware of any reports at this time of human illnesses that suggest coronavirus can be transmitted by food or food packaging. However, it is always important to follow good hygiene practices (i.e., wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meat from other foods, cook to the right temperature, and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

IS THERE GOING TO BE A PRODUCE SHORTAGE IN THE UNITED STATES?

- There is no shortage of food in the United States, although local stores may not have normal inventory while supply chains adjust.

SHOULD I TAKE ANY PRECAUTIONS WHILE EATING FRESH PRODUCE?

- COVID-19 is not known to be caused from eating contaminated food, so safety of fresh produce should not be a concern relative to this new virus.
- Follow good food safety practices whenever preparing, storing, or consuming foods.

SHOULD PRODUCE BE WASHED BEFORE EATING? SHOULD SOAP OR A DISINFECTANT BE USED?

- Washing produce before consumption is always a good practice.
- Produce should be washed or soaked in cool running water.
- It is **not** recommended to wash produce with dish soap or any detergent.
- It is **not** recommended to treat produce with chemical disinfectants at home.

COULD EATING FRESH PRODUCE THAT HAS BEEN CONTAMINATED CAUSE COVID-19?

- There is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 is spread by eating food that might inadvertently contain small amounts of virus.
- Produce has not been identified as a risk factor in the transmission of other respiratory virus outbreaks.

WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY IF YOU DO INGEST CORONAVIRUS THROUGH FOOD?

- Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of the virus directly by eating food that might inadvertently contain virus.
- Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person to person through respiratory droplets. It may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose, but this is not thought to be the major way the virus is transmitted.
- In commercial food production, processing, and preparation, there are many best practices that are routinely followed as per federal, state, and local regulations. Regulations are designed to prevent foods from becoming contaminated with microbes from the environment, including viruses.

For more info, visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov



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
12722 Prosser Rd.
Dade City, FL 33525