



# RFCI

October 2020

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 American Legion Post 111,  
6918 N. Florida Ave, Tampa 33604

## ∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

**October:** The Fall plant sale at USF has been cancelled at the discretion of the University, so we will not be at the University's plant sale. But, keep reading!

**November 8<sup>th</sup>** - Although there is no USF plant sale for October, the Club is making plans for a "members only" plant sale, seed distribution, and a speaker (possibly on grafting). Members can sell their own grown fruits, fruit trees, vegetables, plants, tools, grafting supplies, yard art, etc. at the sale; any garden items they would like to share with other members. So, get your plants ready, more information in the next newsletter.

**November 14<sup>th</sup>**, members are needed to help refresh the Club's Memorial Garden at the USF Botanic Garden. More on this next newsletter. Mark the day if you would like to help out with this important project.



**January 10, 2021** Douglas Phillips the Blueberry Extension Coordinator from the Horticultural Sciences Department- IFAS- University of Florida, has agreed to be our guest speaker for January 10, 2021.



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



There are other events that are beginning to pop up such as the **Palma Sola Botanical Park's Fall Plants & More Sale on Saturday, October 3rd from 8 am to 3 pm**, will feature native and exotic plant vendors, as well as artisans in wood, pottery, textiles, jewelry. There will be food—barbecue, sweet treats and music. A lovely day in the park wandering among the vendors and greeting old and new friends.

Social distancing and face masks encouraged.  
The park is at 9800 17th Ave. NW, Bradenton, FL 34209.  
941-761-2866, or email [palmasolabp@aol.com](mailto:palmasolabp@aol.com)

There are other local events planned as well.

**In February**, there is the **Florida State Fair**, scheduled for February 11<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The Club has the display at the **Citrus Celebration**. Watch for more updates on the Fair and how you can help with the display.

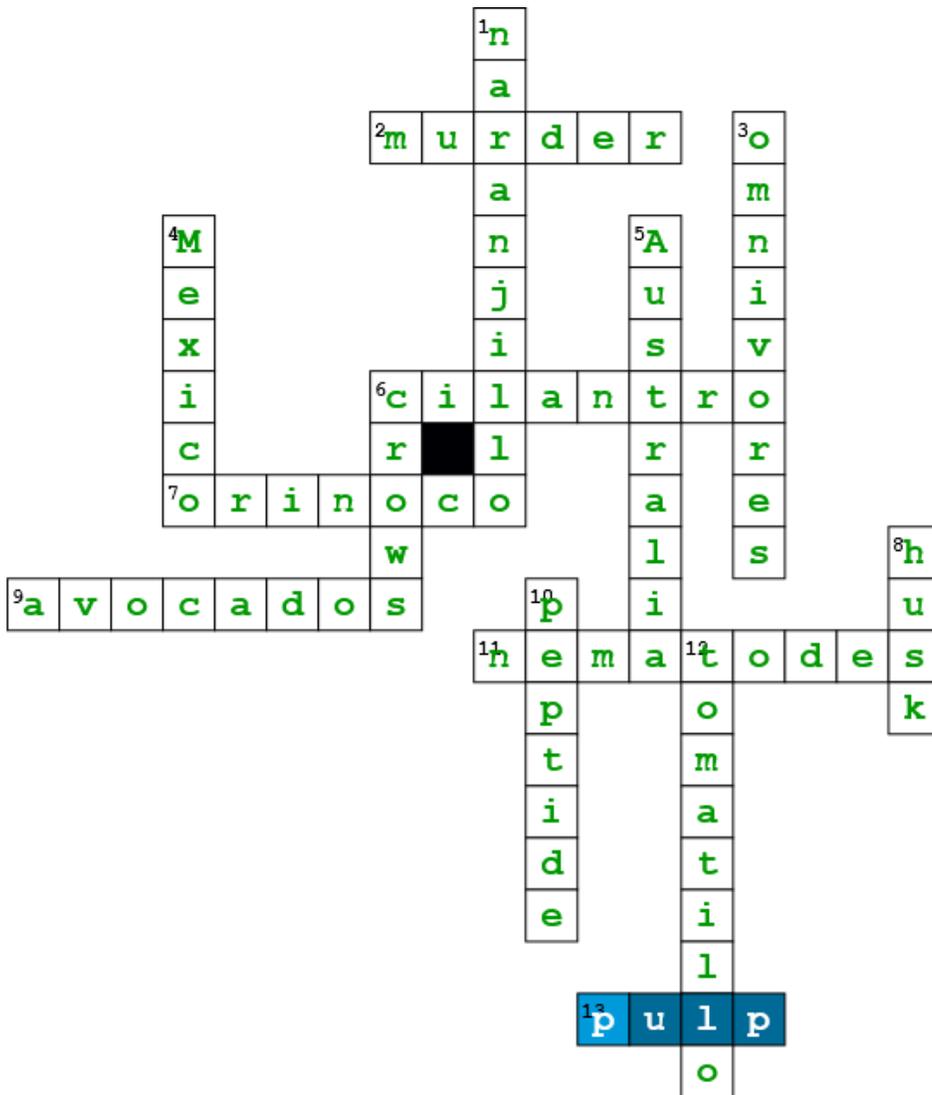
**In March**, the Florida **Strawberry Festival**, a tradition like no other! March 4-14, 2021.

**In April**, the **Spring plant sale at USF** will hopefully resume, and the Club will participate in this wonderful event.



Wm Paul Mitchell is the winner of the mug for solving last month's puzzle. Congratulations!

Here is the solution to the puzzle.



## ☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda



A few months ago we drove up to North Carolina to help my parents move to an ALF in Pennsylvania. Most of their plants would be left behind but I was able to get cuttings of a large fig tree, and some rooted, native passionfruit that I originally gave to them over thirty years ago. Both are doing well here.

I thawed out all my grapes and started a batch of wine. It is being made in a dry, red table wine style.

Our Bill Vega memorial custard apple tree (a seedling from his large, potted specimen) produced a few flowers for the first time.

Dragonfruits are setting well on the commercial, white, Vietnamese variety. They need no help with pollination and grow to the size of softballs. These

are good freshly sliced with some lime juice, or I've taken to dehydrating until chewy.



If you would like to learn more about chill hours for your area, check this website. Weather data and history is presented here in various formats, with chill numbers for areas throughout Florida. Just click on the station closest to your location, and then click on Graphs/Data for more specifics.

For example, it was interesting to learn that for Dade City the historic average for recorded chill hours was 285. But, the winter season before last, there were only 188 chill hours, and last winter's season, there were only 137! There were no freezes! No wonder so many tropicals never stopped growing!

Understanding chill hours is important in selecting fruits for your area. A chill hour is defined as being between 32F and 45F degrees in temperature.

The chilling requirement of a fruit is the minimum period of cold weather after which a fruit-bearing tree will blossom. It is often expressed in chill hours.

<http://agroclimate.org/tools/Chill-Hours-Calculator/>



Miracle Fruit (*Synsepalum dulcificum*), really is a miracle for those suffering from loss of taste associated with chemo and radiation treatments for cancer, and for patients of Covid-19 who have experienced loss of taste. These patients are able to enjoy food once again, improving quality of life and health by consuming the fruit before meals. Miraculin, a naturally occurring protein in miracle fruit, masks unpleasant tastes, changes flavor profiles, and increases palatability of food. This is critical for patients who cannot taste, or consume enough food to maintain health. Testimonials and scientific studies are demonstrating what a help miracle fruit is for those who lose taste and appetite due to illness and medical treatments.

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## Member Questions

**Question:** My fig has a rusty coating on many of the leaves, which later fell off. What is the problem?

**Answer:** Figs are easy trees to care for, and relatively disease free trees. Fig rust however, is one of the problems fig trees can get in Florida's humid climate. Figs originate from dry Mediterranean climates. The first signs of fig rust are small yellow/green spots or lesions on the upper surface of the leaf that turn reddish brown as they enlarge. Heavy infestations of rust can cause leaves to fall prematurely. This does not affect the fruit. Unfortunately, once you see the rust on the leaves, it is too late to apply any control measures for this season. Remove the fallen leaf debris if possible, as the next season's spores lay in wait to attack next year's leaves. Mulch helps too. There are currently no chemical controls approved for fig rust in Florida. The classic Bordeaux mix is recommended by various authors to be used as a preventative fungicide during the dormant season, before the lesions appear on the leaves. The Bordeaux mixture is a mix of copper sulfate, lime, and water in a 1:1:10 ratio and is considered an organic pesticide. Neem also fights rust.



Fig rust on leaves. Credit: UF/IFAS.

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### What do the numbers on fertilizer mean?

 <b>N</b>	 <b>P</b>	 <b>K</b>
<b>NITROGEN</b>	<b>PHOSPHORUS</b>	<b>POTASSIUM</b>
greens up plants	reaches down to the roots and helps produce blooms	promotes all around wellbeing
JUST THINK: ↑ UP ↑	↓ DOWN ↓	← ALL AROUND →
<b>NITROGEN</b>	<b>PHOSPHORUS</b>	<b>POTASSIUM</b>

### Understanding Fertilizer Numbers

- N**
  - Nitrogen
  - for plant color and growth
- P**
  - Phosphorous
  - for fruit & flowers
- K**
  - Potassium
  - for strong roots

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## ☞ 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](mailto:bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com)  
Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **October 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 in November.

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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, 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:  
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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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