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<http://www.facebook.com/TampaBayChapterRareFruitCouncilIntlInc>

January 2021
TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL,
INC.

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 ∞



Hoping for a return to normal in 2021!

January 16th – USF is planning (depending on Covid, of course) an **Edible Fruits and Herbs day from 9-2**. Our Club will be there selling fruiting plants. This date will be confirmed by USF once the University reopens for the semester in January, so you will receive an updated email.

If USF does not have a sale, the Club may plan to have another plant sale at the Legion parking lot, as we did in November. So, if you missed that sale and the opportunity to pick up your free seeds, plan on attending this sale.

NOTE: the Florida State Fair has been postponed until April. Watch the newsletter for more information on dates, and the Club's participation in the Citrus Celebration.

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

Happy New Year readers! Let's hope 2021 is better than the last one. I want to thank all the RFCI members who continue to work hard behind the scenes despite the Covid issue. Thanks to our Club President, our board members, and a special thanks to our editor of the newsletter.

I covered our mango house with plastic before the weather turned cold. The Glenn mango and cacao trees inside will be much happier.

My caper plant produced quite a few fruits, thanks to hand-pollinating the exotic looking flowers. Once these caper berries ripen, they begin to split open, revealing numerous seeds the size of mustard seeds. Getting the seeds to sprout is a real challenge – they must be soaked in hot water, then cold stratified, and then soaked in hot water again before planting. Germination is sporadic over many weeks.

Our large, potted soursop tree was sprayed with neem oil and moved indoors for the winter. It is looking good and is flowering often, and setting fruit.



☞ Up in Dade City ☜

Denise Provencher

Our plants have adjusted well to their new home, as have we. We are trying several additions to our fruit collection, including the low-chill cherries mentioned in a previous newsletter. Low-chill apples and pears are also new to our plantings. We purchased trees with at least 1" caliper trunks, as these are mature enough to plant now and will take the cold this coming winter brings. Arbosana olives are another new addition. This Spanish cultivar is proving to perform well in Florida. We also purchased several super hardy avocado selections grafted this past summer by the Coronels. See note on page 7. These trees are hardy to the teens, and will be planted after this winter as they are still very young. Occasional updates will be posted about these fruit trees to help others who are interested in growing them.

As we have been preparing our beds for planting, it is noticeable that the soil here is different than what we had in Zephyrhills. Looking on our County website we located the soil data information and found we have "Arrendondo fine sand/Tavares urban land complex". This is formed from sandy and loamy marine sediments and is prevalent in Central Florida sloped areas. It is well drained, and rapidly permeable. Much of this area was covered with citrus groves before greening happened, and is good for growing. If you look at your county web site, you should find your local topographic and soil type information. This is most helpful to help you decide what amendments you may need to add for best garden performance.

Our property has a long slope with a 30' difference in elevation from top to bottom. It will be interesting to see if a few extra chill hours can be obtained at the lower elevations, as cold air settles. Thermometers placed in various locations will help us determine any possible thermal differences.

Start the year off with healthy fruits!!

It's that time of year; when many of us are looking to the New Year as a time to make those resolutions to start doing something more healthy to improve our lives. With 2020 now in the rear view mirror, let's hope 2021 is better for all of us. Let's look at how various fruits can improve health. Eating delicious and nutritious is something that we can all try to do.

Pineapple: If you're looking for a tropical fruit packed with excellent health benefits, look no further than the pineapple, rich in vitamin C and manganese. The best reason to eat pineapple, however, is an enzyme called bromelain, which you can only get by eating this tasty fruit. Bromelain helps you absorb antibiotics, stops diarrhea, and may even fight diabetes, heart disease and cancer, according to a study by Biotechnology Research International. It also shortens the healing time after surgery, and is used for treating inflammation and sports injuries. If you're looking for ways to incorporate more pineapple into your diet, try putting it on your pizza, cutting up a pineapple and eating it as a snack, or adding it to your smoothies. You can also put in on your oatmeal, add it to beef tacos, or chop it up into some salsa.



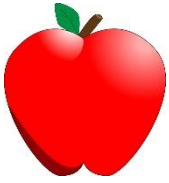
Blueberries: Blueberries have more antioxidants than most other fruit or vegetables, so grab a handful if you want to stay young longer. Antioxidants may reduce the effects of aging by counteracting damage to your DNA. All berries have incredible health benefits, but blueberries take it to another level. One cup of blueberries contains 4 grams of fiber and only 15 grams of carbohydrates. In that cup, you'll also get 24 percent of your daily recommended vitamin C and 36 percent of the recommended dose of vitamin K. Due to their high fiber content, they'll fill you up without adding much to your caloric intake. Studies have also found that blueberries can improve your memory, have anti-diabetic effects, and may reduce muscle damage after a rigorous workout. In addition, blueberries can help prevent urinary tract infections. Want to eat more blueberries? Put them in your guacamole, mix up some delicious blueberry pancakes, or sprinkle them into your salad.



Watermelon: There's a good reason you can find watermelon at most barbecues — not only is it delicious, but it also helps you stay hydrated, as it's 92 percent water. Watermelon boasts numerous other health benefits, including lowering blood pressure and helping with muscle soreness. Watermelon contains a wide variety of nutrients, including vitamin C, potassium, copper, vitamin A, and vitamin B5. Watermelon's claim to fame, however, is the high level of citrulline you can find in the white part of the watermelon rind. In your body, citrulline turns into the amino acid arginine, which helps many of your internal organs, including your lungs and reproductive system. If you're looking to eat more watermelon, try tossing it with feta cheese, making gazpacho, or layering it with mozzarella for a sweet caprese salad. Yum!



Apples: Wonderful apples are cheap, readily available, delicious, and healthy. They may be good for weight loss, as they contain a high percentage of water and are also high in fiber (there are 4 grams in a medium sized apple), so they fill you up without filling you with calories. One study found that subjects who had apple slices before a meal ate an average of 200 less calories during the meal. Apples peels and flesh also contain polyphenols, a type of antioxidants that have been shown to reduce the risk of strokes and heart disease. There are five times more polyphenols in apple skin than in the rest of the apple, so don't throw that part out! If you're wondering whether all apples have the same nutritional benefits, they don't. Skip the green apples and go for the red ones, as most of the polyphenols are found in red apple skin. There's always room for more apples in your diet, and a million ways to cook with them. Add them to your sandwiches, make them into a tasty slaw, or add them to your baked goods.



Grapefruit: You'll be surprised to learn how many nutrients are packed into grapefruit. Just half of a grapefruit contains 64 percent of your daily recommended vitamin C, as well as small amounts of protein, vitamin A, manganese, thiamine, folate, and magnesium. In a 2006 study, researchers found that when participants ate half a grapefruit before each meal, they lost an average of 3.5 lbs. in 12 weeks, most likely because of grapefruits' high fiber and water content.



Plus, half a grapefruit contains only 52 calories, making it one of the lowest-calorie fruits. Grapefruit also contains a large variety of antioxidants. One of these is lycopene, which has been shown to reduce the risk of cancer in a number of studies. Grapefruit contains flavonenes as well, which have anti-inflammatory properties. Grapefruits are acidic and sour, so the idea of eating them raw may not appeal to you. In that case, try sprinkling them with mint leaves, honey, and a bit of salt.

Avocado: As if you needed another reason to love avocado, let's take a look at some of the reasons you should be super excited about them. According to one study, an avocado not only contains high amounts of vitamin E, potassium, and iron, but they're also high in fat. Why is that good, you ask? Because it's monounsaturated fat, and it's the kind that helps lower your cholesterol. There's more, too. The potassium in avocados helps manage blood pressure and fight fatigue, and they're also high in omega-3 fatty acids, which help you reduce the risk of heart disease. There's vitamins B6, C, and D, too, which your immune system needs to keep you healthy. Some of the types of fat in avocados have even been shown to help protect against certain types of cancers. Avocados are high in calories — one can contain about 400 — but as a part of a healthy diet, they're a must. Try it for breakfast as avocado toast, or filled with an egg and baked.



Lemon: In 1747, British researcher James Lind made history with some of the first controlled medical experiments ever conducted. He was trying to find a cure for scurvy, and found lemons worked so well that within a week, the patients he was treating were back on their feet. Today, we know why: A single lemon gives you 139 percent of your daily vitamin C. LiveScience says that's not the only good thing there is about lemons, either. They're low-calorie, fat-free, and full of folic acid that's been shown to help protect against strokes and improve cardiovascular health. For anyone who's prone to kidney stones, they'll help you there, too. Half a cup of lemon juice a day has been shown to prevent the formation of stones, and studies have suggested, you're also helping your body protect itself against high cholesterol and even cancer.



Some claim lemons help aid in digestion, and while some nutritionists have debunked the idea lemons and lemon water help with weight loss, lemons are a great way to add flavor to water if you're trying to keep hydrated, no sugar needed.

Kiwi: Everyone suffers from a little bit of gastrointestinal distress sometimes, and it turns out there's a secret weapon in your fruit bowl that can make you feel better: the kiwi. Studies have found that the fiber present in kiwi has a massive impact on not only aiding digestion, but in improving how well your body absorbs nutrients. There's also evidence that it helps alleviate the pain of constipation, reduce bloating and discomfort, and increase overall gut health. Studies from Massey University suggest it's an enzyme called actinidin that allows kiwis to be an invaluable addition to any diet. Thanks to the presence of that enzyme, regularly snacking on a kiwi will help make your entire digestive tract more efficient, from start to finish. And another study from the Taipei Medical University went even farther, finding that after adding kiwi to their diet for four weeks, participants who suffered from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) saw improvement in their symptoms.



Jackfruit: You definitely don't have to be a vegetarian or a vegan to enjoy some meat-free meals, and if you're looking to expand your cooking repertoire to more fruit- and veggie-centric dishes, you should look into keeping jackfruit in your kitchen. Jackfruit is some super weird stuff: according to the AP, it's catching on big-time as a meat substitute. That's because when it's not yet ripe, it can be shredded just like you'd shred pulled pork or chicken. The idea of fruit as the main component in a savory dish might sound weird, but it's got a neutral flavor, absorbs whatever seasonings you want to use, and has a texture that holds up. It's super versatile, too: use it in gyros or tacos, make some faux crab cakes, use it in dips or soups, or even pile it on pizza. Really! And once it's ripened, it's still good: that's when you want to use it for dessert. There's still more good news: it's good for you, too. Medical News Today says that jackfruit is full of vitamins and nutrients, and that it's also been found to help lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure, and balance blood sugar levels. It even supplies the body with what it needs to maintain the health of skin, bones, and blood vessels. It's even full of good fiber that can help keep you regular. That's a lot of good stuff packed into this tropical fruit.



Pomegranates: You should definitely pick one up at the grocery store for a late-night snack, or even breakfast. Why? They're packed full of goodness. Pomegranates contain about three times the amount of antioxidants that you'll get in either green tea or red wine. Studies have also suggested that pomegranates can help fight inflammation, and lower your blood pressure and risk of heart disease. When another study looked at whether or not a daily glass of pomegranate juice might help improve memory, results were promising. Healthline calls pomegranates one of the healthiest fruits in the world, and that's a pretty big claim. The reason, they say, is that pomegranates contain two unique compounds: punicalagins and punicalic acid. That's what gives them most of their health benefits, and it's possible there's still more to be discovered: pomegranates have even been linked to an increased success rate in fighting certain types of cancers.



Here's a tip to make getting all those pomegranate seeds out easier: score the skin, and break the fruit into quarters. Submerge in a bowl, and start gently breaking it apart. The seeds will sink and the inedible pith will float. Easy peasy!

Read More: https://www.mashed.com/69014/fruits-you-should-shouldnt-be-eating/?utm_campaign=clip

Member Questions



Question: Is there such a thing as blue strawberries? I see them listed on eBay, and would like to try growing them.

Answer: It's a hoax. Save your money. Just photoshopped pictures of electric blue strawberries are what you are seeing. The story behind blue strawberries is interesting though. Supposedly, there was an experiment that actually did take place, where strawberries were genetically altered with spliced genes from the Arctic flounder, which has a natural "anti-freeze" to keep it from freezing in frigid waters. The goal was to make the strawberries freeze resistant, hence not needing all the protection on cold nights. The experiment apparently failed.

Question: I purchased a soursop at the plant sale and leaves got frost damage. Is the plant ok?

Answer: Annonas such as soursop, or sugar apple are very cold sensitive, and may suffer leaf damage in the cold weather, whether or not frost is involved. They should recover just fine once warm weather returns. Bringing them under cover during cold nights will help.

Question: Is there a blueberry that is good for an area that hardly gets any chill hours.

Answer: Yes, Biloxi is the perfect answer for areas with little or even NO chill. Needing less than 150 chill hours it should perform well in your south Tampa location. In fact, Biloxi will not perform well where there are more than 100-150 chill hours as this cultivar needs to remain evergreen, and too much cold will cause winter leaf drop. Biloxi is available online.

∞ Club Notes ∞

Contributing to the newsletter is a great way to share what you are doing in your garden with other members, learn what other members are growing, and get your questions answered.

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: **January 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.

Trees available for sale to members for excellent prices:

These are big, beefy, healthy plants, grafted by the Coronels. Perfect for your garden.

Avocadoes in 3-gallon pots, ready to plant, \$25 each.

Varieties:

	Bacon	Choquette	
Duke			
	Golden	Jenco	Lila
	Mexico Grande	Red	

Also:

Cherry De Rio Grand	\$25 each
Jackfruit	\$25-30 each
Maha Chanook Mango	\$30 each



Cora 727-403-1756 call or text

∞ 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



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
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