

February 2021
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 ∞



February 21 – Club Members Plant Sale – from 9 – 2 at the Legion Parking lot. We had so much fun at the last sale, we're doing it again! Members may bring their own plants, fruits and vegetables to sell, and other garden items that they would like to re-home, such as pots, tools, books, etc., even craft items for the garden. The membership and seed table will be there, stop by, say hello, renew, and pick up some free seeds and find something new for your garden. Mask required. Plans of course, are dependent on COVID-19 status.

NOTE: The Kumquat Festival has been postponed until March 27th. The 24th annual Festival will still take place in Downtown Dade City from 9 – 5.

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.

The rescheduled dates will be announced as soon as they are permitted through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The Florida State Fair competitions, entertainment, carnival, and other attractions and activities will now be scheduled for April 2021, pending COVID-19 health status.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Joe Havian Lakeland

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

It's been a bit cooler lately. This can be a good thing for some temperate fruit trees like peaches, olives, apples, and others. It involves a thing called 'chill hours.' This generally refers to the number of hours some trees need below approximately 45 degrees F to form flowers and fruit. Not enough chill hours for some means no fruit. Too little chill hours could result in trees blooming too early in the year, and freezes occurring soon after can ruin flowers and tiny fruits. If you are contemplating buying fruit trees that need a certain number of chilling hours, be sure to know how many your place gets on average, and match your purchases to that.

I have been pruning our grapes once they have dropped their leaves. This annual event is required of grapes, and to a lesser extent, deciduous fruit and flowering trees.

After hand-pollinating our Gac flowers, I managed to get two perfectly ripened fruit. Gac is related to bitter melon, and that invasive weed – balsam apple. Inside the fruit lies a large amount of gooey, red arils, rich in lycopene, the nutritious component which gives tomatoes their red color. I mix the extract with orange juice for breakfast.



Photo: Paul Zmoda

2021 is the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables



The United Nations is marking 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, spotlighting their vital role in human nutrition and food security, we well as urging efforts to improve sustainable production and reduce waste. In a message launching this campaign, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that we are not consuming enough fruits and vegetable. Fruits and vegetables are the cornerstone of a healthy and varied diet. They provide the human body with an abundance of nutrients, strengthen immune systems, and help to lower risks for a number of diseases. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect the health and livelihood of people across the world, we must come together to ensure nutritious food reaches everyone, leaving no one behind.

The pandemic has many concerned about food, and how we can change habits and become more knowledgeable about creating less food waste.

Just how much food do Americans waste? Here's some "food" for thought: The United States is the global leader in food waste, with Americans discarding nearly 40 million tons of food every year. That's 80 billion pounds of food and equates to more than \$161 billion, approximately 219

pounds of waste per person and 30-40 percent of the US food supply. Most of this food is sent to landfills; food is the single largest component taking up space inside US landfills. In fact, it makes up 22 percent of municipal solid waste (MSW).

WHY DO WE WASTE SO MUCH FOOD?

With 37 million people across America — including 11 million children — suffering from food insecurity, why do Americans waste so much of their food abundance? Getting to the bottom of what causes food waste in America is a challenge that traverses the complex landscapes of socioeconomic disparities, confusion, and ingrained beliefs, layered with human behaviors and habits.

Compared to the rest of the world, food in the United States is plentiful and less costly, and often this contributes to a general sentiment of not appreciating or valuing it the way other cultures around the globe do.



Americans are often impulsive in their food purchases, unrealistically assessing how much food is required, and as a result buying more food than they need or buying food they won't actually eat.

Our take-out society doesn't use food in its entirety the way our ancestors used to. We underutilize leftovers and toss food scraps that can still be consumed or composted.

Composting isn't part of our food-prep routine, so we continue to add fuel to the fire in increasing the sheer size of US landfills.

Major reasons for food waste at home include:

Food spoilage. This includes improper storage, lack of visibility in the refrigerator, partially used products, and misjudged food needs.

Misunderstood food labels. Such terms as 'sell by', 'best if used by', 'expires on', etc. also contributes to food being discarded when it is still usable, rather than risking illness.

Such terms are not federally regulated, and are only suggestions for peak quality, rather than 'throw out' dates.

Over-preparing. Having too many left-overs that are not consumed or frozen for later use results in 1/3 of household food waste. Sometimes people just forget to eat them.

Overbuying. Sales and bulk purchases result in buying too much, and having it spoil before it can be used.



Poor planning. Impulse purchases, and not planning out the week's meals can result in items not being used in a timely manner.

What can we do at home?



- Preplan and write your shopping list before going to the grocery store. As you write your list, think about what meals you will be preparing the following week, and check your fridge to see what items you already have.
- When at the store, buy only what you need and stick to your shopping list. Be careful when buying in bulk, especially with items that have a limited shelf life.
- If available, purchase “ugly” fruits or vegetables that often get left behind at the grocery store but are safe to eat. **“Ugly” produce has physical imperfections but are not damaged or rotten.** “Ugly” fruits and vegetables are safe and nutritious and can sometimes be found at discounted prices.
- When eating out, ask for smaller portions to prevent plate waste and keep you from overeating. You can also request a take-away box to take leftovers home instead of leaving food on your plate.
- Check the [temperature setting](#) of your fridge. **Keep the temperature at 40° F or below to keep foods safe.** The temperature of your freezer should be 0° F.
- Use the [FoodKeeper App](#) for information on how to safely store different foods to maintain freshness and quality.
- Refrigerate peeled or cut veggies for freshness and to keep them from going bad.
- Use your freezer! Freezing is a great way to store most foods to keep them from going bad until you are ready to eat them. Check the [FoodKeeper App](#) for information on how long different items can be stored in the freezer.
- Create a designated space in your fridge for foods that you think will be going bad within a few days.
- Check your fridge often to keep track of what you have and what needs to be used. Eat or freeze items before you need to throw them away.
- If you have more food on hand than you can use or you need, consider donating your extra supply of packaged foods to a local food pantry or a food drive.
- Learn about food product dating – Many consumers misunderstand the purpose and meaning of the date labels that often appear on packaged foods. Confusion over date labeling accounts for an estimated 20 percent of consumer food waste.

[FoodKeeper App](#)

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app>

The **Big** and the **small** of it!

The world's biggest fruit.....is a pumpkin.

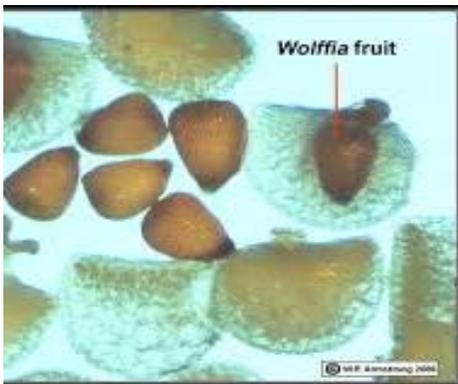


According to the Guinness World Records, the heaviest pumpkin record is 2,624.6 pounds, a record now held by Mathias Willemijns from Belgium. That's heavier than a small car!

These large fruits became curiosities, most notably in 1893 where a 365-pounder from Ontario, grown by William Warnock was exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair. In 1900, Warnock took the prize at the World's Fair in Paris with the first 400 lb. pumpkin.

For the next 70 years, little changed in this maximum weight. Finally, in the 1970s and 80s, records started being smashed ... I mean squashed, when Howard Dill of Nova Scotia bred the 'Atlantic Giant' pumpkin, which is the basis for all giant pumpkins today.

The world's smallest fruits.....are produced by the world's smallest flowering plants. Wolffia, minute rootless plants of the duckweed family (Lemnaceae), float on the surface of quiet streams and ponds. The fruit is only .7 – 1.5 millimeters in size (see microscope photo below), and is one-seeded. Wolffia is thought to be the world's next superfood, as it packs a real nutritional punch. It's packed with protein and omega-3 fatty acids, and tastes like watercress. In Asia, it is referred to 'watermeal', or 'spinach caviar', and is used in soups, omelets, smoothies, and even on its own.



Member Questions



Question: I am new to the Tampa Bay area. Can I grow jackfruit in the ground in Brooksville?

Answer: Yes, BUT with some considerations. Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) is a tropical fruit needing temperatures above 32 degrees F. Leaves are damaged at 32 degrees F, branches at 30 degrees F, large limbs and tree death can occur at 28 degrees F. Brooksville experiences temperatures in the 20's regularly in the coldest months, even teens have occurred in a bad year. You could try tenting or constructing a temporary structure when cold weather is expected, growing the tree in a greenhouse, or in a large container that could be moved to a temperature safe area. The space will need to be heated. The tree will also need to be kept pruned, which would need to be done no matter where in the world you grow it. This will keep it at a size you can keep covered, or moved, as well as harvest size. There are gardeners growing them in North Florida in greenhouses, so it is possible. In the Songkhla Province of Thailand,

young jackfruit trees are planted over large stone or metal plates, blocking the growth of the tap root, resulting in clusters of fruit in clusters around the base of the trunk.

The following University of Florida publication has a list of cultivars you will find helpful in selecting the right one for your needs. 'Black Gold' is a dwarf variety, easily maintained to 8' or so, and may be a good option to try, and is readily available in Florida, and our Club sales.

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG37000.pdf>

Love tomatoes?



University of Florida/IFAS is looking for help from tomato lovers through a new program where you can grow and taste new, unreleased varieties of tomatoes. For a nominal fee that is used to cover the research, and the cost of creating and mailing the seed packets, tomato lovers can provide feedback on flavor and growing data to the UF/IFAS lab. The project is led by Horticultural Sciences Professor Harry Klee. The research has two major goals: to identify the science behind fruit flavor quality, and learning how to produce a better tasting tomato.

[Klee Lab - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences - UF/IFAS \(ufl.edu\)](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG37000.pdf)

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∞ 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: **February 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.

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

Varieties:

Bacon	Choquette
Duke	Lila
Golden	Jenco
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

Or see us at the February 21st plant sale!

∞ 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:
 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
12722 Prosser Rd.
Dade City, FL 33525