



RFCI

February 2022

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 ∞



Feb 10-21, 2022 Florida State Fair – The Citrus Celebration will be on February 12th, a Saturday, a change in day from previous years. Come enjoy the Fair and stop by our booth and say hello to our hard-working volunteers. If you can't see us then, the Club's display will be set up for the entire 10 days of the Fair.

NO regular meeting this month. See you at the Fair!

March 13th – Lychees and Longans - Steve Cucura, owner of Fruitscapes Nursery in Bokeelia, will discuss lychees and longans. Steve is a member of the Rare Fruit Council, and you may know him as being supplier of tropical fruit trees for the Club's USF plant sales.

∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Anni Ellis Tampa
Debbie Reinhold Palm Harbor
Gregory James Palm Harbor
Tiffanie Kremer Seminole



In Memoriam



Dr. Park Judson Newcombe, age 91, founding member of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the RFCI, passed away on 12/29/21.

President: Mike Sweet; Vice Presidents: Paul Branesky; Secretary: Jager Mitchell;
Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher

Judson was an accomplished teacher, professor, author, world traveler, horticulturalist, and chocolate lover! He also served in the Army. He made an impact on so many people. He was VERY involved with the RFCI in earlier years!!

It was on December 3rd, 1978, a group of 14 individuals, including Dr. Newcombe, met to discuss creating a new chapter, the West Central (Tampa Bay) Florida chapter. On May 8, 1979, official recognition was granted as the 3rd chapter of the RFCI, (the Palm Beach Chapter was 2nd, after Miami, the first). On July 26, 1982, the Chapter was approved for Non-profit status. Other chapters and off-shoots followed throughout Florida, and even the world.

We can never thank him enough for the opportunities and education on fruiting plants that the RFCI has offered members here in the Tampa area. He will certainly be missed.



Judson, (middle) with 2 other founding members, Irene Rubenstein passed 2019 (L), and Bob Heath, passed 2014 (R).



Photo on Left: Long time member Jerry Amyot (R), with Judson at one of the past USF plant sales.



Photo on Right: Judson on left with Bob Heath and Bob's daughter Paula.

Photos by Fred Engelbrecht

Citrus Under Protective Screening

With speaker
Laura Waldo

Laura is a biological scientist III, M.S., at the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, FL. She spoke about the latest research being conducted on the Citrus Under Protective Screening (CUPS) Program.

CUPS is a new citrus production system for growing HLB-free fresh fruit. It works by screening out the psyllid insects that carry and spread the HLB disease.

Since starting in 2014, there are now 23 varieties of citrus in the Lake Alfred CUPS 1.3 acre research area.

There are challenges to growing citrus under the screen covers.

The light is more diffused from the screening.

The environment under the screening is warmer than outdoors and the heat index inside can rise to 120 degrees plus.

There is a higher humidity level inside the screening.

These factors create opportunity for more disease, and for extremely tiny insects such as thrips, mealy bugs, scales, mites, miners, and rollers to thrive inside.

The cost is higher - \$1.00 per square foot, or \$43,000 per acre to set up the CUPS system.



The UF/IFAS CREC CUPS facility near Lake Alfred, FL.

The focus of the fruit production under a CUPS system is for the fresh market.

There is a learning process when it comes to successfully raising citrus under screening.

- Growers must learn when to apply nutrients and when to apply pesticides – during new growth flushes when insects are more active, for example.
- How to get the highest yield within the space
- How to get the best and most attractive color on the outside of the fruit
- Keeping sugar levels in the fruit up
- Getting the highest juice quality and percentage

Oak leaf extracts are being applied as research has shown there is benefit to using the oak leaf for citrus health and fighting HLB.

Events such as hurricanes damaging the screening, or simple tears in the screening, can allow the psyllids to get into the enclosures, so close monitoring must be done.

If you would like to try some of the most HLB resistant citrus varieties, Laura recommends the best varieties of citrus for homeowners to grow is the Sugarbelle tangerine and the Jackson grapefruit.

Brite Leaf Citrus Nursery has both Jackson Grapefruit, and Sugar belle Tangerine.
<https://www.briteleaf.com/>

To reach Laura Waldo with any questions:

ljwaldo@ufl.edu



For home owners to protect young trees:
Screen mesh covers for individual trees, perfect use for homeowners to protect young citrus trees, can be found at: <https://thetreedefender.com/>
This website describes the product and has a list of locations where you can buy them.



Large scale CUPS system near Polk County, FL

☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda

We just had a half inch of much needed rain – a nice birthday present for me. I finished pruning the majority of our grapes. Most of the avocados are in bloom, as well as the Glenn mango and both Surinam cherries. White sapote fruits are pea-sized now.

I mixed up a few gallons of fish emulsion and minor elements and gave all our citrus a thorough foliar feeding. Doing this can keep some citrus alive and producing despite having HLB (greening disease).

Yellow passionfruit are still falling now and then, and I got to eat my first papaya from the plant I seeded last February. We are getting so many grape tomatoes lately that I dehydrate some and freeze many gallon-sized ziplock bags more for those days in the future when I feel like cooking down a pot of spaghetti sauce.

Soon, if all goes well, I will pick my first ever custard apple from the tree I started with a seed from Bill Vega's large specimen.



Custard Apple – photo by Paul Zmoda

Looking for festivals, fairs, and other fun things to do?

The [Florida Fruit](#) and [Vegetable Festival](#) website is sure to have something for you.

It's a great list of fruit and vegetable related events throughout Florida from January to December. Check it out!

<https://www.pickyourown.org/FLfestivals.htm>

? Member Questions?

Question: I noticed what looked like burned areas on some of my avocado leaves, and when I turned the leaf over, there were lots of black bugs. What are they?

Answer: The avocado lace bug (*Pseudacysta perseae*) is a pest that has become increasingly significant to avocado plants since the early 1990s. The avocado is the main host for this pest in Florida. The avocado lace bug does damage to avocado leaves with its piercing-sucking mouthparts. This pest attacks the underside of the leaves where it feeds by extracting chlorophyll and other plant fluids. This causes destruction of plant cells and leads to the chlorotic and necrotic damage you see in the photos below. When looking at a tree with this pest you may observe leaves that look brown and “scorched”.

If you discover that your avocado has this pest there are a few controls at your disposal. A strong jet of water will dislodge them from the plant, but may not kill them. This is probably most effective if the infestation is minor. Insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils are effective controls if they are applied directly to the insects. Monitoring for this pest in the future will be necessary and the treatment will need to be repeated as necessary according to the label. Of course, the mechanical control using the jet of water can be used anytime.



Avocado Lace Bug Damage – (L) top of leaf



(R) Underside of leaf

∞ 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.**

∞ 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

FLORIDA'S SPORTS COAST

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START A NEW FAMILY TRADITION AT THE ANNUAL
KUMQUAT FESTIVAL®

SATURDAY, JAN 29, 2022 • FROM 9 A.M. TO 5 P.M. • DADE CITY, FL.

From the car and truck show to kumquat pies, the 2022 Annual Kumquat Festival packs a load of fun into a single day at the heart of charming downtown Dade City, Florida. With 300 vendors, delicious food from local restaurants, vendors and food trucks, an interactive Kid's Coral, farmer's market, and even kumquat beer, it's a day that is as entertaining as saying the name of the quirky little fruit it honors.

BETTER YET, ADMISSION IS FREE!



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