



RFCI

June 2022

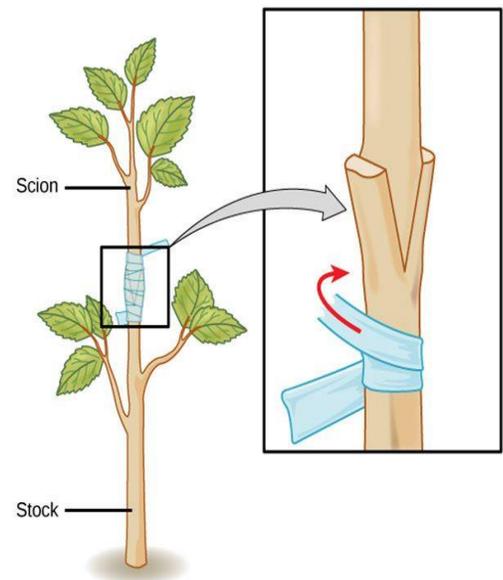
TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL,
INC.

<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 ∞

June 12th, Grafting Workshop. The long-awaited workshop where you can learn the very important skill of grafting is finally here! We will have our member experts Paul Zmoda, Charles Novak and Jerry Amyot discussing and demonstrating various techniques on grafting fruit trees. Many fruits may grow fine from seed, but certain of our favorites, such as mangoes, avocados and others, should be grafted for best performance and selection of most desirable qualities. Grafting is not difficult, and will afford the opportunity to “grow” your collection of the most desirable fruit varieties with just a little effort.



∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Asuman Soylu Tampa

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



The Buzz About Bees



Speaker

Todd Truby



Photo provided by Angela Rodriguez

May's speaker was Todd Truby, vice president of the Pinellas Beekeepers Association. Todd is a busy bee himself, caring for 20-30 hives, selling nucleus hives and honey, conducting bee removal and relocation, as well as educating the public on these marvelous flying pollinators.

Pollinators are those who help plants transfer pollen between male and female parts of a flower, and include butterflies, bees, beetles, wasps, bumblebees, hummingbirds, mammals, and even humans!

Keeping bees in backyard hives is an important pastime, as 84% of beekeepers are actually backyard beekeepers. Commercial beekeepers manage 92% of the hive colonies, even though they comprise only 5% of beekeepers.

Interesting facts about bees:

- 20% of the world's food production is dependent on honey bees.
- Pollination benefits include higher percentage of fruit set, and larger fruit.
- Bees can fly up to 3 miles away from the hive to forage.
- Bees in commercial colonies are employed all over the country, and are loaded on semi trucks for delivery where ever they are needed to work.
- There are 50,000 to 60,000 bees in a healthy hive. Two to three thousand of these bees die daily.
- Only the female bee has a stinger. When she stings, the barbed stinger remains in the victim, and a muscle attached to the stinger will continue to pump venom into the victim for a period of time. Hence, why it is important to remove the stinger as quickly as possible. The female bee dies after stinging.
- The male has reproductive organs in the place of a stinger. Most male bees, called drones, will never have a chance to mate. Those who are "lucky" enough to mate will die after mating.

- The queen is the only female who is allowed to reproduce. A queen is designated before she even hatches from the egg, and is fed a special diet of royal jelly to make her bigger.
- The queen is a true egg machine, producing half a million eggs in her 2-3 year life span.
- The average worker bee lives only 6 weeks. The wings wear out after about 500 flight miles. These poor gals need a better warranty!
- Bees maintain their hive temperature at 92 degrees.
- The average bee makes 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey during her short life.
- Honey doesn't spoil. Honey found in Egyptian tombs has been found edible even after thousands of years.
- Bees have five eyes.
- Remember! If you have bees that need to be removed, call an expert on bee removal in your county, do not call an exterminator!

For more information:

Todd Truby vicepres@pinellasbees.com

True Bee Honey 936 Highview Dr., Palm Harbor, FL 34683 407-618-3428

<https://pinellasbeekeepers.buzz/contact-pba/>

<https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/honey-bee/>

Gainesville Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab



Photo provided by Angela Rodriguez



Photo provided by Angela Rodriguez

☞ What's Happening ☜

by Paul Zmoda



Photo: Paul Zmoda

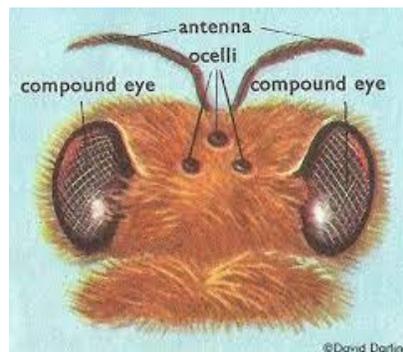
So far spring has been typical here: warm-to-hot and not too wet or dry. I'm still trimming back branches killed by the freeze. The black sapote, even though damaged, is putting out some flowers on the new growth. All other persimmons are setting fruit; it appears that 'Izu' will have an excellent crop only three years after grafting. Our blackberry crop was on the small side this year because I let the weeds crowd them. I cleared a new spot and planted five more.

I grafted a mango and several persimmons. I potted up some new dragonfruit pieces I received in a trade.

While checking one of the bluebird houses, I found a tiny, sleeping bat inside. The bluebirds are using another nest box, so it can stay.

Early each morning, I check the vegetable garden. I always hand pollinate any newly opened female squash blossoms. This particular squash (see picture) is a small, Chinese Moschata type similar to calabaza and seminole pumpkins.

The Eyes of the Bee



©David Darling

? Member Questions ?



Question: is there really a pink pineapple and where can I get one to grow myself?

Answer: Pinkglow™ pineapples, botanically classified as *Ananas comosus*, are a rare, pink-fleshed variety belonging to the Bromeliaceae family. The cultivar was created by Del Monte Fresh Produce, and was officially released to consumers in October 2020. Pinkglow™ pineapples are cultivated in “ultra-limited” quantities, as it takes approximately two years to grow the variety. Each pineapple is harvested by hand to ensure quality. The fruits obtain their rosy tone from carotenoids, specifically lycopene, which are pigments naturally found in the flesh that give fruits their pink-red hue.

Pinkglow™ pineapples are branded as a luxury fruit, known as the rare “Jewel of The Jungle,” and are shipped in an ornate gift box with a certificate of authenticity to exemplify that it is one-of-a-kind. The fruits are always shipped with the crowns removed, so the plants can be regrown at the farm, so you will not be able to get a starter from the crown yourself. There are places online where you can order the fruit itself. Hopefully soon, the fruit and maybe the crowns too will be more available.

Question: How do I tell the difference between male and female squash or cucumber blossoms?

Answer: It’s important to know this answer so you can increase yields with hand pollination. Male flowers have longer, thin stems below the blossom, and protrude out farther from the plant. There are often more male than female flowers, and they form first and earlier than the female flowers. In the center of the bloom there is a long narrow protrusion called the anther. It is covered in pollen.

The female flower is the one that will produce the fruit, and this is visible in the shorter, swollen stem behind the flower. This is the embryonic fruit. There are fewer female flowers on the plant, and they form a few weeks later on the plant than the males.

The center of the blossom is wider, usually orange, and contains the stigma that receives the pollen from the male.

Using a Q-tip to transfer pollen from the male to the female will increase fruit yield.



Club Opportunities

The Election Committee is looking for members that want to serve on the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors serve a "one year" term and our Club will have elections at the meeting this June.



We are also looking for members to serve on the following committees:

Social Committee (includes trips, special events)

Guest Speaker Committee

Food and Beverage Committee (for meetings)

History Committee

Citrus Celebration Committee

USF Plant Sale Committee

Membership Committee

Mango Celebration Committee

If members would like to serve on the Board of Directors or on one of the Committees, please contact one of the members on the Election Committee.

George Campani kamp177@yahoo.com or Paul Branesky paulbranesky1@aol.com

Or get your questions answered at the June meeting, social hour starts at 1pm, a great time to chat. Plan to stay after the June regular meeting to attend the Board meeting to learn more about these opportunities.



And finally, any member who would like to open their garden for other members to visit and learn from you, please forward your interest to the editor bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com I will be compiling a list of those who would like to share their gardens. Please include your name, what your specialty is if you have one, what plants you grow, and what time of the year is best for visiting. We have had some of our expert Club members share their gardens in the past (before Covid times) and members had lots of opportunity to learn about plants they were interested in growing, challenges and triumphs, great gardening tips, and so much more!

∞ 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: **June 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



Hey, wait for me!!!!



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