

MANATEE RARE FRUIT NEWS

Manatee Rare Fruit Council

August 2007

Bleeps from the “Veep” (Abe Epstein):

Back in February there was an article in the “Jerusalem Report” Magazine describing the destruction of The Northern forests of Israel that resulted from the rocket fire (over 4000 rockets landed in Israel) launched by Hezbollah forces in Lebanon this past year during the so-called Lebanese war. Almost half of these forests were destroyed by fires ignited by these rockets. Many of these forests were approaching maturity, having been planted by Jewish settlers about 100 years ago. Since back in my real life I had been a practicing Forest Pathologist, I got the idea that I might be able make some contribution to the Israeli reforestation project. They bought the Idea, and so, on May 8th I flew to Israel on El Al Israel Air Line out of Miami. Doris was to have gone also, but she had sustained an injury from a fall in Venice, Italy at the end of our cruise a week previous. She was advised by her physician not to go, and so she cancelled her trip.

I was there for 12 days. I spent the first four days attending and participating in the Bar Mitzvah of Doris’ Grand Nephew and the induction of his cousin into the Israeli Elite Parachute Corps. Both of these ceremonies were held at the Wall remaining from the destruction of the first Jewish Temple, and I have to tell you - It impressed me greatly.

I then spent 7 days with the J.N.F. Forestry Group consulting with them on the damage that resulted from multiple forest fires caused by numerous rockets fired into Israel. Fires started on hill tops did little damage, however, rockets which landed at the bottom of forested hills caused the loss of thousands of acres of trees; almost half of Israel’s total forested areas. Almost all of this was in the North which has some of the most spectacular vistas of hills, lakes, and valleys. I got a personal tour by the head of the Northern Forestry Section which included many of the burned areas as well as some undergoing predation by insects and diseases, the National Forest Nursery (which is spectacular and as modern as tomorrow) run by an Ethiopian Jew who got his forestry training in Russia prior to immigrating and becoming an Israeli citizen. The Ethiopians (over 140,000 have been settled in Israel) who have some education are very well integrated into Israel’s society. My host, Paul Ginsberg, originally from New York City, and studied Forestry at Syracuse, also showed me a number of archeological digs of ancient Jewish synagogues dating from the time of the destruction of the first temple.

The Jewish farmers of Israel are doing an outstanding job of growing an amazing array of crops (fruit, vegetables and grains and excellent dairy, poultry and beef operations. There was an unbelievable array of fruit crops - all of the fruits that we grow here in Florida; including huge banana plantations under vast plastic tents (to conserve water) are grown in the valleys and temperate zone crops on the hill tops. Their Horticultural technology is really top-notch. I was in seventh heaven with Israeli food - an unbelievable diversity of salads and dairy products, almost enough to convince me to become a vegetarian! and the cheeses, and yogurts were so-o-o delicious!

At first I was a little uneasy with all of the post high school teenagers who go into the army (both boys and girls) and who must carry their M-16 rifles with two cartridge clips of ammunition attached to their guns slung over their shoulders wherever they go. However by the end of my stay I found them to be comforting. There was no graffiti, signs of drug abuse, and the kids were really well behaved, helpful and attentive. Maybe army service isn’t such a bad thing?

Anyway - it was a great trip, I saw a lot and I came away very proud of my fellow Jews. And another good thing - El Al is an all - Boeing airline, so I didn’t have to fly on any of the cheaper stuff. I found that sort of comforting when we were out over the middle of the Atlantic. We left Ben Groin Airport at 1:30 AM on one of the newer Boeing 767s - a really great aero plane - inside, and out, and with my usual window seat, I was able to navigate my way along the North African coast until we reached Gibraltar where the coastline suddenly veered south. From then on it was a race to beat the sun to Miami - which we lost by about 2 hours. The only negative - was that Doris was not able to go with me.

This and That

Hello all Manatee Rare Fruit Club Members:

At the July meeting Peter Ray and Ray Jones spoke about "Air Layering and All Other Forms of Layering". They spoke about what plants do well with air layering, and a step by step process of how to do it. Thanks Pete and Ray for a very informative presentation.

I attended ECHO Super Saturday on July 7th and had a wonderful time. They had a classroom setting where you learned about subjects such as Fruit Tree Care, Introduction to Grafting, Hurricane Proofing Your Landscape, and a couple others. They had tours of the fruit tree orchard, the arboretum and their bamboo collection. I took the tour of the orchard and had an opportunity to see many varieties of mangos, avocados, sugar apples, atemoyas, cherimoyas, papayas, sapodillas, a large varieties of citrus, Macadamia nut trees and many others. Due to hurricanes and heavy rains, which causes flooding and standing water conditions, they plant everything on mounds a few feet high. They build rows of mounds and plant in the center of the mounds. They also mulch everything including citrus. They had a dozen or so varieties of mangos for tasting. The entrance was free and the mango tasting was only a \$ 1.00 donation. They had food concessions that were reasonably priced. There was also a plant sale. They have a wonderful gift shop stocked with Neem products, books, seeds and much more. They are having their Fall Super Saturday on October 6th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. It will be a free day of mini-workshops highlighting topics such as Hurricane-proof landscaping, Freeze protection, Fall Fruit Tree Management and Winter-bearing fruits and Herbs. ECHO is only a little over an hour away, maybe we can group to go down and car pool. Below is a link to their web site. Please visit and learn about the wonderful work they do to help feed the world.

Steve Lohn sent me an email from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that an Oriental fruit fly (*Bactrocera Dorsalis* Complex) was found in Valrico Florida. The fly was found in a trap hanging in a sweet orange tree the second week of July during a routine inspection. Here is the web address to the full article <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/press/2007/07122007.html>.

Also at our last meeting it was brought up that Carambola commonly know as Star Fruit may cause serious problems for people with Kidney Disease. The exact cause is not known yet, but if you have kidney disease you should consult you physician or the Kidney Foundation for further information.

As always your input is still requested... This newsletter, just like the club, is at its best when all the members get involved. If you have suggestions or have found a gardening product, web site, etc., that you think will be of interest to other Club Members, or know of an appropriate community event, please feel free to contact me for its inclusion in the newsletter. Please have all information to me no later than the 20th of the preceding month. The best way to reach me is through my email at dwallace@ewol.com, but I can also be reached at 756-2276.

Dale

July Plant Raffle

Donor

Jon Goings
Norma Troy
Norma Troy
Norma Troy
Abe Epstein
Pete Ray
Mike Halley
Dale Wallace
Dale Wallace
Pete & Cass Robertson
Pete & Cass Robertson
Pete & Cass Robertson

Plant

Kwai Muk
Dragon Begonia
Hawaiian Papaya
Hawaiian Papaya
(2) Mexican Oregano
(2) Tamarillo
Seagrape Jelly
Emperor Lychee Seedling
Emperor Lychee Seedling
Coconut
Lime
Hot Peppers

Winner

Sally Lee
Melody Ludwig
Melody Ludwig
Betty Kearns
Tracy Hooper
Pete Robertson
Cely Doriot
Cass Robertson
Betty Kearns
Sally Lee
Mary Gayle Martin
Tracey Hooper

MRFC Calendar	
Monday, August 13, 2007 6:30 p.m.	Board meeting at the County Fairgrounds in Palmetto.
Monday, August 13, 2007 7:00 p.m.	Our regular monthly meeting at the County Fairgrounds in Palmetto. Our speaker for August will be Bob and Vivian Murray, from Treehouse Nursery in Pineland Florida and their program is "The Litchee and its relatives"
Monday, September 10, 2007 6:30 p.m.	Board meeting at the County Fairgrounds in Palmetto.
Monday September 10, 2007 7:00 p.m.	Our regular monthly meeting at the County Fairgrounds in Palmetto. Our speaker for September will be Richard Campbell, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Tropical Fruit Research Director, and his program is "The Mango from A to Z".

Community Calendar	
Thursday, August 16, 2007 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	<p>Rain Barrels Workshop. A hands-on class where participants learn about water conservation, capturing rainwater, and other FYN principles. This workshop includes assembly of a rain barrel from a kit that you take home and use to capture rainfall and reduce runoff.</p> <p>Minimum workshop size is required; workshop sizes are limited. Cost is \$40.00. Materials included. For more information, please contact Cheryl Werner at (941) 722-4524. All workshops take place at the Manatee County Extension office in Palmetto.</p>
Tuesday, August 28, 2007 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	<p>Landscape Makeover: Ground Covers, Grasses, and Vines. This is an educational program for homeowners offering a slide presentation on ground covers, grasses, and vines used in landscape design.</p> <p>This FREE program will be at the Manatee County Extension office in Palmetto. For more information, please call (941) 722-4524.</p> <p>Please Note: In the Landscape Makeover series, "The Plan" plus any one of the other three classes in the series will satisfy the education requirements for the Rebate Program.</p>
Saturday September 1, & Sunday September 2, 2007 Saturday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday a.m. - 4 p.m.	<p>USF Cactus & Succulent Show & Sale - The USF Botanical Garden is proud to welcome back the Central Florida Cactus & Succulent Society and the annual labor Day weekend Cactus & Succulent Show and Sale. Great plants and great people. This is a free event! Call 813-974-2329 for more information.</p>
Saturday September 1, 2007 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	<p>ECHO - Growing Grapes in Southwest Florida. Taste and see 18 varieties of muscadine grapes in ECHO's vineyard. Learn valuable tips on increasing production of this versatile fruit. Cost is \$ 20 per person.</p> <p>These classes are limited in size, so registration is encouraged. To register for one of the following workshops, please call the Edible Landscape Nursery at (239) 567-1900 or email Tim Watkins at twatkins@echonet.org. ECHO is located at 17430 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33917</p>
Sunday, September 30, 2007. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	<p>Sarasota Fruit & Nut Society Annual Tree Sale. Philippi Estate Park, 5500 S. Tamiami Trail at Constitution Blvd., Sarasota. Free parking, free admission and thousands of plants!!!</p>
Saturday October 6, 2007 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	<p>ECHO – 6th Annual Fall Super Saturday. Come join them in the nursery for a free day of mini-workshops highlighting topics such as Hurricane-proof landscaping, Freeze protection, Fall Fruit Tree Management and Winter-bearing fruits and Herbs. Costs is FREE</p> <p>ECHO is located at 17430 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33917</p>

MRFC July 9th 2007 Meeting

Those Present: 45 plus one new member, and two guests (from Switzerland).
Called to Order: 7:05 PM
Secretary Report: Minutes from last meeting were accepted as printed
Treasurer report: The statement balance was \$15,562.90.

NOTE:

Bud Connet could not be present, hence these minutes were taken, and are presented by Abe Epstein in Bud's stead.

OLD BUSINESS:

President Jon called for expression of appreciation for the excellent job performed by Betty Kerns in managing and coordinating the highly successful plant sale and to Scott Peterson for arranging the recent bus trip to Homestead - the attendees responded with resounding applause! - Both were highly successful and much appreciated.

Peter Ray reported that the land issue at the Palma Sola Park has been resolved to our satisfaction. The only issue remaining to be resolved is when the installation of an irrigation system will be accomplished.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ray Jones has suggested the establishment of a scholarship supporting a student interested in pursuing advanced study in a plant science related to our general field of interest. This suggestion generated much vocal support. A committee consisting of Ray Jones, Abe Epstein, Brian Clooney, and Larry Rued will meet to formulate, and submit a scholarship proposal to the club.

The Florida Department of Agriculture has issued a notice banning the planting of Orange jasmine (*Murraya paniculata*) because it has been shown to be a host for the psyllid which is the vector for the "citrus greening" disease agent.

Star fruit has been implicated in the intensification of kidney malfunction in some individuals. Sorry - I did not get the source of this information, however I do not advocate panic at this point - hopefully, if this report is true, more information will be forthcoming.

SPEAKERS:

We were treated to a couple of our "in - house stars" - Peter Ray, and Ray Jones giving us their best on a very important aspect of vegetative propagation of a number of our tree fruit varieties - "layering". Lots of good information and tips for propagating by variations of this method.

ADJOURNMENT:

Adjourned to the Tasting Table at 8:45 PM. Followed by a concerted attack on the "tasting Table" and a spirited rendition of the monthly "Plant Raffle" so ably conducted by the irrepressible Spencer Salser.

Roberta & Steve Harris's Plant Recommendations for Palma Sola Park

Annona: custard apple – soursop - sugar apple, avocado (2-3 cultivars), banana (several cultivars). Initially, we could plant more bananas to take up some of the space. As we get additional plants, we could decrease the bananas and sell them at the plant sale. Barbados cherry, canistel, carambola, dragon fruit, Eugenia: cherry of the Rio Grande - grumichama - Surinam cherry, figs - several cultivars, jaboticaba, jackfruit, longan, loquat, lychee (several cultivars), mango (several cultivars in a dedicated area), miracle fruit, monstera deliciosa, mulberry, night blooming cereus, papaya, passion fruit, peach/nectarine/plum, persimmon - several cultivars, pineapple, rose apple, sapodilla, black sapote & white sapote, star apple and tamarind.

Roberta and Steve

What's Growing & Blooming in Our Yards?

By Peter Ray

Despite dusty dry conditions, we have quite a number of trees bearing fruit.

Lychee production was fairly good, though there were problems with fruit dropping from the drought, then splitting when some rain would finally come. At season's end, the crows found me and obliterated the remaining fruit.

Avocados also dropped a lot of fruit, I think due to insufficient moisture, but several varieties have a reasonable fruit set. My avocados are unfortunately biased toward the later season varieties, so none are ripening now. I have planted several trees of the earlier varieties "Doni" and "Miguel", but they are not up to fruiting size yet.

My planting of Hawaiian Solo papayas produced some delicious fruit, but unfortunately some of it was protein-enriched with Papaya Fruit Fly larvae. I had not seen this bug on my place before, and think I am now getting it under some control by carefully harvesting fruit a little ahead of maturity and allowing no fallen fruit to remain on the ground. This breaks the life cycle by preventing the larvae from exiting the fruit and burrowing into the soil, then emerging as more flies to infest more fruit. Sometimes infested papayas can be used if you catch them just right. The larvae tend to confine themselves to the seeds until the flesh ripens. If you cut the fruit when it's just ripe enough, the larvae can be tossed out with the seeds. Of course, that mess should be enclosed in a zip-loc bag and put in the garbage, never outside. Mango bloom was peculiar this year. Rosigold and Vallenato both produced double blooming. The last of these varieties is ready now, as are the first of Kent, Zill, and Ice Cream. Looks like a good year for Keitt, and Lancetilla, which will be along a little later.

Persimmons are putting on a modest crop this year, after none at all last year, and a bumper crop the year before.

I've just put on an application of Fruitlizer, which Brian Clooney has on hand again. Of course, weed control never ends, even in a drought. I'm starting to see Roundup resistance in Brazilian Peppers. Mulching with wood chips has been some help in weed control and drought resistance. The lychee trees have been topped at about eight feet. If they're allowed to get much higher, harvesting becomes difficult (but not for the birds and squirrels).

A bit of rain, at last, has come in the last few days. Perhaps we can quit worrying about drought now, and start watching for hurricanes.

If you are interested in writing July's "What's Growing & Blooming in Our Yards" please contact me at 756-2276, or email dwallace@ewol.com or speak to me at the meeting.

July Tasting Table

Donor

Betty Kearns
Betty Kearns
Farrell Baker
Pete & Cass Robertson
Pete & Cass Robertson
Patrick & Melody Ludwig
Patrick & Melody Ludwig

Food Item Donated

Strawberry Blueberry Cake
Orange Juice
Jaboticaba
Coconut
Mango Bread
Baked Bean Succotash
Pimento Cheese Sandwiches

The Suriname Cherry

By Gene Joyner, Extension Agent - Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service

Surinam cherry or pitanga (*Eugenia uniflora*) is native to Brazil and is quite popular for growing in the warmer regions of central and south Florida. This is a very fast growing large shrub or small tree which grows to about 20 or 25 feet if unpruned. The leaves are waxy, glossy green, up to two inches long and the leaves are beautiful coppery red when immature.

The common usage of this plant in the landscape is for hedging which it does an excellent job. It can also be trained as a single trunked small tree and the fruits that are produced are quite good to eat. Usually during the spring months the heaviest flowering occurs and the ½ inch white flowers are produced in abundance. Later flowering may occur during the summer and early fall as well.

Fruit season is primarily late spring through early summer and the fruits are about 1 to 1 ½ inches in diameter, slightly ribbed and range in color from orange to various shades of red to deep purplish-black. The flesh color generally is the same as the outside skin color and the fruits contain one or more large white seeds. Fruits can be eaten as a fresh fruit right from the bush or they make excellent jellies, jams, or even home wine. Fruits can be frozen well, too, and used at a future time.

Surinam cherry grows over a wide range of soil conditions, but prefer a slightly acid pH for best growth. Trees will freeze at about 30 degrees, but do come back. Young plants may be injured at 32. For best fruiting grow in as much sun as possible. Heavily shaded plants will grow but not produce a lot of fruit. If you're close to coastal areas, except for direct dune line exposure, they hold up well and if they are damaged by salt wind they recover quickly.

Propagation of Surinam cherry is easily accomplished by seed. Superior varieties occasionally are grafted, but the average nurseries sell only seed grown plants.

The only major problem of Surinam cherry is insects attacking fruit and the Caribbean fruit fly in some years gets a high percentage of the crop. Birds also enjoy the fruit and may in some landscape areas be a problem competing for the fruit.

July's Garden Calendar

By Gene Joyner, Extension Agent - Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service

This month is a very important month and officially begins our hurricane season which runs until the end of November. Hopefully this year we'll be spared again any direct hits. Also the long anticipated summer rains usually start in June and hopefully that activity will occur shortly.

Make sure that you help your plants get ready for the summer season by giving a good fertilization this month. Use a good quality complete fertilizer and apply it evenly over the drip edge area of your trees for best results.

If you want to put out new plants, many communities have severe water restrictions still in place, but new plantings can be watered for the first 30 days so that does enable you to plant things right away and hope that the rains arrive shortly and after that the plants should not have any problems about moisture.

If you're doing propagation such as budding, grafting, air layering, or rooting cuttings, those activities should work well this time of year. Also many people are planting seeds harvested earlier in the early and seeds germinate quickly with our warm soil temperatures.

Many things such as mangoes and lychees bloomed later than normal so don't expect early crops from these plants. We will get a good crop in many cases, but just a few weeks later than what we normally had expected. The same is true for longans which flowered in early May in some cases so it will be late summer or fall before those come into season.

If you have questions about things to do in the landscape to help your plants for the upcoming stress of the summer months, check with fellow members at monthly meetings or contact your local county Extension office.

Board & Committee Chair 2007

President	Jon Goings (941-723-9795) email: j.jonbirgittegoings@verizon.net
Vice President	Abe Epstein (941-798-8806) email: ahepstein10@aol.com
Secretary	Bud Connett (941-798-8935) email: buddymar@juno.com
Treasurer	Mary Gayle Martin (941-350-8599) email: mgtt@netzero.net
Speaker Chairman	Ray Jones (941-729-5985) email: raycat2@verizon.net
Tree Sale Chairman	Betty Kearns (941-723-9879) email: BKearns644@aol.com
Plant Raffle	Spencer Salsler (813-634-8253) email: palm.man@verizon.net
Membership	Larry Rued (941-722-9550) email: presby1368z@yahoo.com
Tasting Table	Mike McCallister email: mikey2810_2000@yahoo.com (941-720-2288) and Farrell Baker
T-Shirt Sales	Sandy Engel (914-776-2195) email: KENGEL4@tampabay.rr.com
Newsletter	Dale Wallace (941-756-2276) email: dwallace@ewol.com
Seed Bank	George Anderson (727-392-8822) email: none

Propagate Now For the Tree Sale by Peter Ray

The rains have started, and now is the perfect time to start plants for sale at our club booth next May. At our last meeting, Ray Jones and I gave a talk on basic air-layering, you won't get 100% success, but this is really a pretty easy procedure. After the airlayers are put on, it typically will take two months for a good root growth to form. If they are given good care and moved up to about a two gallon pot, we can have a tree that will sell for fifteen or twenty dollars. A fifteen dollar sale by one of our vendors adds three dollars to the club's profit, while a fifteen dollar sale from our booth adds fifteen dollars. Easy to airlayer: lychee, longan, fig, mulberry, tropical apricot, guava and quite a few more. Don't try it on mangos, avocados or carambola. They are difficult or impossible. An airlayering article can be found on our website, www.mrfc.org.

You can also start seedlings of mango, avocado, and carambola to be grafted by you, or if you don't do grafting, by one of our members who does. Seedlings of guava, loquat, papaya, and some others won't need to be grafted.

Start some cuttings. Herbs such as rosemary are easy and will sell well. Figs will grow from hardwood cuttings. Passion vines grow well from greenwood cuttings. If you haven't tried them, buy the HoneyGold pineapple from Publix and grow the top. This delicious pineapple can be eaten core and all.

It's important to get started ASAP, so we will have nice large plants for sale

The Internet Adventure:

The Clubs web site: <http://www.mrfc.org/>

Echo Nursery Workshops: <http://www.echonet.org/nursery.htm#workshops>

Julia F. Morton - Fruits of Warm Climates: <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/index.html>

Ask Georgia Tasker: http://www.realcities.com/mld/miamiherald/living/home/gardening/ga_forum.htm

MANATEE COUNTY CHAPTER OF RFCI STATED OBJECT OF ORGANIZATION:

To be an active, non-profit organization dedicated to the following objectives:

To introduce, propagate, and distribute the many rare tropical and sub-tropical fruits grown throughout the world; to educate its members and the public as to the merits of these plants; to encourage and extend their cultivation.

The Manatee Rare Fruit Council meets the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m., usually at the Harlee Auditorium in the Manatee County Fairgrounds next to the Agricultural Extension Office on 17th Street, Palmetto. Most months feature a knowledgeable speaker. Visitors and guests are welcome and encouraged. Membership is \$15 annually per family.

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Perennials, Ornamentals, Grasses*

P.O. Box 951	813-716-5038
Lithia, FL 33547	E-Mail danddg@att.net

We have our '*Fruitilizer*' fertilizer back in stock. Please call Brian Clooney at 722-0188 to check on availability and arrange to pick it up.

Please return all Tree Sale signs at the August meeting. Peter Ray has volunteered to store them until next year.

First Class Mail



Manatee County Chapter
P.O. Box 1656
Bradenton, FL 34206-1656