

Gulf Coast Fruit Study Newsletter

Volume 19, Issue 4

Edited By: Ethan Natelson

December 13, 2005 Meeting

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Current Meeting

Our program will begin on **December 13, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Extension offices at the Bear Creek Facility. Our program will be devoted primarily to citrus. John Panzarella will give a presentation and we will have a tasting of a number of varieties. There will be a citrus grafting demonstration and some plants for sale and as door prizes. We will also show some slides from the recent NAFEX and SFF meetings held in Santa Cruz, CA and Blairsville, GA and discuss the next meeting in Lexington, KY. Please bring any of your own citrus or pecans to share. We will have a demonstration table and some citrus juices available.

Annual Plant Sale

On January 28, 2006, beginning at 9:00 a.m., and adjacent to the extension center, we will have our annual plant sale of many fruit varieties suitable for the Gulf Coast area. We will also have a formal presentation, in two parts, discussing and showing slides of many of these varieties from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the conference area. We will break from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for the plant sale and then resume the formal presentation from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

What You Missed

In September, we had the annual meetings of the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX) and the Southern Fruit Fellowship (SFF). The NAFEX meeting was a joint affair with California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG) and held in Santa Cruz, CA, with tours in many neighboring areas. We had a fruit tasting of a host of new peaches and peach/apricot and plum/apricot crosses sponsored by Dave Wilson Nurseries. The word "outstanding" hardly does justice to the flavor and size of some of this material. We also visited plantings in the many diverse microclimates of the area, from high in the mountains to fruit grown in the warmer areas — everything from citrus orchards, apples and persimmons to sub-tropical fruits. We had a fascinating lecture by Jules Janick, Professor of Horticulture at Purdue University, and author of more than 80 books. He spoke on the development and movement of fruits between continents, over the ages, as shown in high-detail photographs of sections of ornate ancient paintings. For example, he showed us when corn (maize) first appeared

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What You Missed (continued)

in Italian art following the return to Europe of Columbus and the rise and fall of highly colored pears in Europe. We also visited a huge, hydroponic greenhouse planting of tomatoes, herbs and other plants, which included a project to grow sweet cherries indoors, in pots without soil, and enabling three crops per year with manipulation of temperature, irrigation and certain auxins. We visited the large Filoli mansion south of San Francisco, and saw the attempts to re-do the large demonstration orchard there, similar to the now-successful attempts to reduplicate Thomas Jefferson's fruit planting at his home in Charlottesville, VA, which we visited on a prior NAFEX tour. Naturally, we had the opportunity to do some much needed pruning of some of the interesting cultivars we saw and I brought back and grafted several, as well as rooting some cuttings from a very large and tasty numbered Italian fig with a beautiful red interior.

At Blairsville, GA, which is located in a picturesque mountainous area about 120 miles north of Atlanta, we sampled some spectacular apples, which are a major industry there. One location showed what could be done with a 300 acre high-density apple planting on dwarfing rootstock consisting of about 10 cultivars, and very few personnel, primarily family members. They have a company store which sells these apples directly to the public and their parking lot is always full. Tour buses regularly stop there to allow apple purchases and for the bus riders to eat at their restaurant on-site. Local school children have hay wagon educational tours throughout the facility and orchard. They also have a major cider operation on the premises, selling both locally and throughout Georgia and they also make apple pies which are sold on-site and to various fast food chains in the area. Nevertheless, their very successful operation is threatened because land they bought for \$50/acre is now selling for \$30,000/acre for resort second homes only 30 years later. We saw this same situation in California, where beautiful acreage is giving way to population growth.

Our 2006 NAFEX meeting will be a joint affair with SFF and hosted by the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY. We will be located at the Holiday Inn North where we have a block of rooms. This area is the location of the paw-paw repository and we will see this planting with a bus tour to Frankfort, KY, as well as orchard plantings of many other fruits. There will be a number of world-class speakers on diverse topics including classical pear breeding and genetic engineering of pears by Dr. Richard Bell of the Kearneysville, WV station, raspberry hybridization, persimmon culture, and a featured lecture by Dr. John Clark, the world's most prominent blackberry breeder, from the University of Arkansas. We will also have a wine-tasting tour. The program begins at noon on August 30, 2006—September 1, 2006. If you have never attended one of these meetings, give it a try, you will be hooked.

Can You Identify?

An unusual citrus we encountered in Santa Cruz, in a collectors orchard, was the Ginger Lime. The leaves emitted a very refreshing and pleasing aroma, and the fruit was large and lemon-like (see photo). Does anyone know other names for this variety?



PERSIMMON-PECAN PICNIC CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE ICING

(source: *Houston Chronicle*)

1 cup persimmon pulp
1 1/2 tsp lemon juice
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp freshly ground nutmeg
3 large eggs
scant 2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup canola oil
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup sour cream
1 cup coarsely chopped pecans, toasted

Grease and flour a 9-by-13-inch baking pan. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Combine the persimmon pulp and the lemon juice in a small bowl. Set aside. Whisk together the flour, salt, baking soda, cinnamon and nutmeg. Set aside. In a large bowl, beat the eggs with a wooden spoon. Add the sugar, oil, vanilla, sour cream, reserved dry ingredients and the persimmon pulp, blending briefly after each addition. Stir in the pecans. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for about an hour or until the cake springs back lightly when touched in the center. When cool, frost with Lemon Cream Cheese Frosting (recipe follows).

LEMON CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

(source: *Houston Chronicle*)

3 oz cream cheese
4 T unsalted butter
2 T lemon juice
grated zest of 1 lemon
2 1/4 cups confectioners' sugar, or more for spreading consistency, sifted
chopped pecans or pecan halves, for garnish

Beat the cream cheese and butter for a long time until all the lumps are gone. Add the lemon juice and zest. Beat in the confectioners' sugar until smooth. Spread on the cooled cake. Garnish with chopped pecans or pecan halves.

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Upcoming Meeting Details

Date: December 13, 2005

Time: 7:00 p.m.

The meeting will be devoted primarily to citrus, with a presentation by John Panzarella, a citrus grafting demonstration some plants for sale and door prizes. John invites all to come to his annual citrus tasting at 404 Forest Drive in Lake Jackson from 2:00-4:00 p.m. on Dec. 10th. Call 979-297-2120 or email jpanza@swbell.net for directions.



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