

FRUITY TALK

MACKAY BRANCH R.F.A. inc.

P.O. Box 5106 Mackay Mail Centre. Qld. 4741

email: mackay@rarefruitaustralia.org

Check out the RFA web site at www.rarefruitaustralia.org

NEWSLETTER.
January 2013

Editor: Shirley Kerle, Ph. (07) 4954 0825

13 Tweedies Road,
Hampden Qld. 4741

Email seronday@bigpond.com

Next Meeting: Sunday 3rd February 2013 @ 1pm

Venue: Dumbleton Rural Fire Brigade Shed, 627 Sugarshed Road, Dumbleton.

Schedule: BYO picnic lunch from 11.30am. A G M at 1pm
followed by general meeting;
Fruit Tasting; Raffle and tree auction.

Please remember to bring your own chair, plate, cup etc.

If you are bringing in **fruit or prepared food for the competition**
please make sure that that you have it there by 12.30pm.

A very warm welcome to our newest member
Fay Ikin.

Outdoor meetings for 2013

7 th April	Host: Nick & Kaye Cronan, Bloomsbury
2 nd June	Host: Wayne Robertson, 426 Marian - Hampden Road
4 th August.	Host: Kevin Whitten, Sarina
6 th October.	Host: Percy & Mary Abela, Parapi

The Fruit and Prepared Food Competition.

Prize winners for December 2012 Meeting: Judge- Charlie Fox.

Most interesting rare fruit: 1 Horse Radish - Jeremy Robinson

2 Bramble Berries - Pauline Trappes

3 Black Pepper - Jeremy Robinson

Best tasting fruit: 1 Jaboticaba - Kevin Whitten

2 Purple Star Apple - Paul Saron

3 Wampi - Percy Abela

Best prepared food: 1 Frittata - Shirley Kerle

2 Pavlova- Kaye Cronan

3 Mini Quiches- Kaye Cronan

PRIZE WINNING RECIPES

t/s = teaspoon

D/S = dessertspoon

T/S = tablespoon

cm = centimetre

S R = self raising

lt = litre

ml = millilitre

oz = ounce

kg = kilogram

g = gram

pkt = packet

Frittata with Pasta

100g angel hair pasta

olive oil

wedge of pumpkin

(peeled & diced)

3 shallots, sliced

piece broccoli, chopped

2 cloves garlic crushed

1 dried chilli

nutmeg

salt & freshly ground pepper

¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

200g Nimbin cheese, diced

7 eggs, lightly beaten

50g ricotta cheese

extra grated cheese

fresh breadcrumbs

cayenne pepper

(last 3 for topping)

Method.

Cook pasta in lots of boiling water until just tender then drain and put aside. Meanwhile heat a little oil in a heavy based large fry pan and sauté pumpkin, shallots and broccoli until tender then add garlic.

Smash the dried chilli with some sea salt in a mortar with a pestle then sprinkle over vegetables with a little freshly grated nutmeg and freshly ground pepper. Add the eggs, cheese and cooked pasta to the re-heated frypan and cook over moderate heat with lid on until just set. Remove the lid and sprinkle with the mixed last 3 ingredients then brown under a hot griller. Allow to stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Note: You can use whatever vegetable you like or what ever cheese you like. I just used what I had in the refrigerator at the time.

Shirley Kerle

Pavlova

3 egg whites

1 cup caster sugar

1 t/s vanilla

3 T/S cold water

1 t/s vinegar

3 t/s cornflour

Method

Beat egg whites until stiff then add water and beat again. While still beating gradually add caster sugar then vinegar, vanilla and cornflour. Place on greased baking tray and bake at 150° for 45 minutes.

Turn off oven and leave until cold. When quite cold cover the pavlova with whipped cream or custard and decorate with fresh or tinned fruit.

Kaye Cronan

Mini Bread-case Quiches

Cases

Remove crusts from 12 slices white bread then flatten with a rolling pin. Place the slices in well greased muffin tin and push the cases down with the back of an icecream scoop or spoon.

Filling

½ cup cream cheese
3 eggs

½ cup milk
salt & pepper

½ cup chopped bacon/ ham
¼ cup finely chopped shallots/ chives

Optional extras (chop or slice where appropriate)

Dried tomatoes, asparagus, spinach, creamed corn, mushroom, fresh parsley and spices.

Topping grated cheese

Method

Beat cream cheese, eggs, milk and salt & pepper then add the bacon & shallots and any additional extras you desire. Pour into cases then sprinkle tops with grated cheese.

Bake in a hot oven 200° for 15 to 18 minutes. Cool slightly before removing. Serve hot or cold.

Kaye Cronan

Meeting report for Sunday 2nd December 2012.



This meeting was held in the Dumbleton Rural Fire Brigade shed and the last one for 2012. A large crowd attended and Nick filled in for Santa. Congratulations to Fay Ikin who won the lucky door prize, which is free RFA membership for 2013. Fay has been coming to meetings, with her dad, Ron Turner, for some time. There was a request for another bus trip so the committee will organise a trip to Nambour for the 2014 Garden Expo if there is sufficient interest.

Kevin Whitten spoke of the wonderful time he had when he travelled north with Bill Fox for the RFA Cassowary Coast Branch's Christmas break up meeting. He spoke of the results to David Chandlee's property after 2 cyclones in the past few years. He also said that David had both his legs smashed in a tractor accident.

After a long recovery period, with lots of therapy for leg muscles, David is now able to work on his property once more. Kevin & Bill recommends that members attend different RFA branch meetings as the hospitality and friendship are well worth the drive. We wish David Chandlee all the best.

Above photo by Paul Andrew: Jess looking very serene while cutting up a delicious looking slice.

Larry Murchie spoke about an organisation that he's involved with called "Computers 4 the Disadvantaged". If you have a second hand computer, laptop, printer or monitor that you no longer need please consider donating it to this organisation. Phone Larry on 042667097.

The auction was the usual marathon where you almost need a packed lunch. There was lots of lovely prepared food plus a good selection of fruit on the table and it was good chatting to other members. . All in all a good end to the year. Paul & Pat Saron won the December prize in the photo competition. See the photo with a short description of the plant below.

Report contributed by Shirley Kerle and photo by Paul Andrew.
Thanks for the photo Paul and thanks to your son, Gerry, for all his help.



Red Pineapple *Ananas bracteatus*

The Red Pineapple is from the Bromeliaceae family. Like the common pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) it's native to Brazil. It's an evergreen plant and it can grow to 2 metres in height. Fruit develop in the second year if conditions are right.

It prefers a well composted, moist, free draining soil in a sunny position. It's draught and frost tender and needs regular water and fertilizer.

The leaves have very sturdy spines so take care when working with, or around, these plants.

Propagation is by division. Apparently it produces a few different types of "suckers" or "pups". There are the ones under the plant, those on the stem under the fruit and sometimes between the leaves. It can also be grown from the crown.

The red pineapple may be seedy and if grown from the crown may not be genetically the same as the fruit it was taken from. In other words it may not be as good or it may be better.

It sounds rather interesting but a bit thorny.

The winning photo for December 2012 by Paul & Pat Saron and text by Shirley Kerle.

References: Encyclopaedia Botanica, ABC Gardening Australia FLORA and a few internet sites.

The Cold Wet Winter Of 2012

The start of 2012 was not exceptionally wet for my area compared to recent previous years. February was almost average, delivering 503mm with most of this falling in the last 5 days of the month. March was a lot wetter than normal with 825mm, then April and most of May being about average with 46mm of rain. Then the cold wet winter started delivering 88mm of rain and single digit temperatures before the end of May – very much above and below average respectively for my area. June was about average with 20mm, July being above average with 152mm and August about average with 8mm of rain. Meanwhile from the end of May to the middle of September there were temperatures from 7 to 9 degrees at times.

This combination of events improved my supply of after winter fruits to levels that I have not seen for a long time. Everything else remained the same, i.e. nutrition levels, pruning (or lack of in big trees), nothing else changed. Was it the cold, was it the wet or was it the cold wet winter, I don't know cause I'm not an expert (a spurt is a drip under pressure and x is an unknown quantity) The fruit supply seemed to be spread out so as not to clash with each other, maybe this is mother nature's way of providing after the cold wet winter because the freeloaders left me alone. So I'm thinking they were provided for with their bush tucker as well.

Jaboticaba was the first to start fruiting, I was able to eat straight from the tree every afternoon for 3 weeks. This has to be a record for me, as I usually only get a few days before the freeloaders move in (god bless their tiny little souls). Next was Grumichama, with some fruits as big as a 50 cent coin. Then came a crop of Loquats. They are green while growing, turning yellow as maturing and finally turning orange when ripe. Now the problem for me is that the freeloaders usually eat them as soon as they turn yellow, however I was able to pick orange coloured fruit for about a week and a half. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. Somewhere in about the second half of winter the Black Shahtoot Mulberries started to ripen. These are not a problem for me as the freeloaders don't eat them, they eat all the white ones and I consider that a fair trade as the black ones taste better to me. But what was different this year was the large amount of fruit and the long period it was spread over.



Somewhere, I think around the middle of winter I had a crop of Black Sapotes maturing. I always get some fruit off this tree, but this year there was the biggest crop with some of the largest fruit that I have ever seen on the tree.

I was able to eat some, give some away, freeze some for later use and the smaller freeloaders, like the Blue Faced Honeyeater and the Fig bird etc, feasted on the

ones that hit the ground. At the end of winter I got a good crop of yellow dragon fruit. Usually I get plenty of small to medium size fruit all of good quality and the size compensated for by quantity. This year there were not many small fruit and plenty of medium to large fruit, with the largest one being 150mm long, and a large crop as well.

Above photo by Paul Andrew: a few of the many sapodilla fruit on Paul's trees.

After the winter came a large crop of Star Apples. I always get some sort of a crop of Star Apples but never as big as this year. If there is a small crop the flying foxes eat all the high ones and leave me a few at the bottom. This year there were so many that they could have had half the bottom ones too. But like I said earlier I think mother nature provided for them also cause they only dined at my place for a few nights then went away (I was so disappointed, I hope they did not go hungry !!!!!). Also starting to ripen after the winter was a better than normal crop of Sapodillas. I have seen good crops of Sapodillas before but never as big as this year. I was pretty excited about this as I am a Sapodilla junkie. If you think you don't like them, try eating them before they are real soft, the flavour is not as strong. The only downside this way is that they put a coating on your choppers, but hey, a toothbrush removes it.

Last but by no means least, there was the potential for a huge crop of mangos with the leaves almost not able to be seen for flowers. The cruel side of mother nature always delivers me fog during the winter as there is a small valley beside me that always produces fog, even light fog in the middle of November this year. However, not to be outdone by the fog they flowered numerous times and all at different stages, leaving a small crop to develop. All I have to hope for now is that my theory of mother nature providing natural food for the freeloaders works again.

The only after winter fruit failure was White Sapote, but I am not sure that can be blamed on the cold or wet as they failed last year as well. I think this is my doing, but that is another story. Like I said earlier, was it the cold or the wet or the cold wet, I still don't know. There could be two possible explanations: **1** - the cold. Some trees, if stressed before flowering will produce more in the hope that that they can propagate themselves because while they are under stress they think the end might be near, and **2** - the wet. When a tree is flowering it accesses what nutrients and moisture are available and plans what sort of a crop it can produce.



While this is not an after winter crop like the ones mentioned above, and it did flower at the end of winter, the non astringent Persimmon variety "Fu Yu" has more than normal fruit set on it.

As this tree is deciduous the cold will probably be the cause of this. I know I grumble about the cold

and living in the bottom end of the tropics, rain is a part of life, but if it means a crop of fruit like I had this spring then bring on the cold and wet again next year.

Above photo by Paul Andrew: the non astringent Fu Yu persimmon fruit.

Photos and article contributed by Paul Andrew. Thanks Paul and sorry I couldn't fit in any more photos. How do we encourage other members to write articles for this humble publication? Shirley.