COLLIER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2018

Brian Galligan

Crafton Clift

Jenny and David Burd

The November 20th Meeting will highlight three issues that should be of interest to all members.

Brain Galligan will provide an overview and renderings of the proposed Horticultural Campus and Orchard at the Naples Botanical Garden.

Next, Crafton Clift will provide a summary of current activities being conducted at the Collier Fruit Growers Cornerstone Nursery at 8200 Immokalee Road.

Finally, there will be a panel discussion and Q & A session with David Burd and others to address issues and problems raised by members. **Please Note**: Remember to bring all insect specimens and affected plant material in sealed clear plastic bags, as to not spread potential problems and diseases to others.

Meeting Date: TUESDAY, November 20th.
The tasting table starts at 7:00 pm.
Meeting starts at 7:30 pm
at the Tree of Life Church, Life Center,
2132 Shadowlawn Dr.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: Everyone loves bananas but when you have a whole stalk ripening at one time, you need to find a way to preserve them. Freezing them for use in baking or smoothies works well. Searching for other ways to preserve bananas led me to this recipe on www.tropicalfruitforum.com. It was shared by "Treefrog" from Jefferson County, FL. It can be used as you would a condiment or chutney. It can be spicy, but you can adjust the heat to taste depending on the peppers that you use.

recipe:

BANANA CATSUP / BANANA CHUTNEY

5 pounds peeled sliced bananas
2 large onions, peeled and quartered
1 bulb garlic separated and peeled
1 dozen assorted hot/warm peppers cored
2 heaping teaspoons ground turmeric
2 heaping teaspoons ground allspice
2 heaping teaspoons ground ginger
2 heaping teaspoons West Indian style curry powder
1 heaping teaspoon ground cloves
4 cups distilled white vinegar
3 cups sugar
1 pound raisins

Puree the onions, garlic, and peppers in a blender or food processor, and then combine all ingredients in a large pot (use one with thick walls, preferably enameled cast iron) and simmer, stirring frequently to prevent scorching on the bottom, until the bananas break down into a chutney-like consistency. Leave with a few lumps left for texture.

Spoon into wide mouth pint mason jars and steam process for a half hour or freeze. This recipe makes nine pints. Share it, too!

BURDS' NEST OF INFORMATION THIS and THAT FOR NOVEMBER

PERSIMMONS
Take time to fertilize your persimmons with a balanced fertilizer, eg. preferably an organic 6-6-6 or 10-10-10. Do so even with fruit not yet harvested.
Remember, Persimmons lose their leaves this time of the year. Keep applying the fertilizer LIGHTLY each month until the first new leaves start to push. STOP fertilizing (for this reason) once the leaves are pushing because further fertilizer will send a signal for no fruit to set or the set fruit to abort. TRIUMPH is our favorite Persimmon. It has good flavor and regular fruiting. There are many other good Persimmons, so you should test and try before you buy !

MORINGA
We are learning more and more about the health benefits of Moringa. It grows well here with the correct care. Propagation is by seed, cuttings, air layers. It can be grown successfully in a large pot or in the ground. Shape it as it grows: harvesting the top of the tree then it will bush out. In addition, the leaves, flowers, and pods will be easy to reach. The benefit of Moringa is for another month's newsletter. There are many good books about Moringa, too!

Moringa prospers in well drained, sandy soil. (Moringa will stress and die in WET soil, also. Here in SWF, a young tree will probably die at 32F. A mature tree struggles at 28F. Moringa grows at a fast rate and needs to be pruned regularly. Fertilizer it when young a little Peters 20-20-20 (follow instructions) and a light sprinkle of cotton seed meal which is the only nutrition needed when mature because Moringa thrives in acid conditions.

Darling Plum
by Crafton Clift

That darling plum amuses me because it's native to the Florida Keys, and because it's in the lychee family. So, as a horticulturist, I'm always taking jabs at botanists and taxonomists who have totally different reasons for naming plants and the fact that they use dead herbarium specimens to identify plants instead of using color photos or nowadays we have DNA. But it doesn't matter if you use DNA or you look at all the little panicles and get everything just right, you still have to draw the line where nature does not draw lines. But when a botanist describes a fruit in the lychee family that's native to the Keys, and they say it's edible and sweet and good tasting. I think, "Wow it must be fantastic because botanists never have a sense of taste, they're colorblind, they can't smell, and whether the plant flowers day or night, it's not important". For example, Dr. Howard, retired botanist from Harvard, at the Kampong one day said, "the only difference from the ceiba and the chorisia is that one has rough pollen and one has smooth". I thought, well, that may be the only difference you can tell from a dead herbarium specimen but if you would see a live ceiba tree, side by the side with a live chorisia tree, the chorisia has a minimum of four inch flowers that are pink, white, or red or some color in the daytime and the ceiba has one to two inch flowers that dangle in the night, pollinated by night creatures like moths. To me, as a horticulturist, I have no problem saying that it's a clorisia or a ceiba but for botanists that go by dead, colorless, tasteless, and odorless herbarium specimens, they look whether it has a smooth or rough pollen grain. That reminds me of a friend that had two horses that he couldn't tell apart until he finally measured them and found that the white one was two inches taller than the black one. They are looking at rough or smooth pollen grains instead of looking at those big beautiful pink chorisia flowers versus those night blooming white things that only the moths can smell. So, when I read that the darling plum, a relative of lychee and longan, is native to the Keys and that it has a delicious fruit, I thought what, "A botanist, a taxonomist that can taste?"

I wanted to find this native Florida fruit and make it common, so we could grow it with Rare Fruit Council International. So, I got with Florida's two of the most ardent native plant people, George Avery and MaryAnn Oden, and went out on the Keys to find the darling plum. I parked my car at the Simmons's in Homestead and got into one of their cars and spent the whole day driving down the Keys where George knew exactly where there was a darling plum that you could see without getting out of the car. It was full of tiny flowers. The plant was only about four feet tall and five feet wide, beautiful foliage, compact plant, millions of tiny flowers. So, now I know what a darling plum looks like when it's in flower. I still don't know what the fruit tastes like, but I found out the fruits are so tiny, you would have to take a thousand to get a mouthful. So, we came back to Homestead, to the Simmons's and when I went to get in my car I said, "Hey George, Mary Ann, look!". When I parked in the early morning, I had parked right in front of a darling plum tree, but I didn't know what it was in the morning and we spent all day on the Keys and when I came back, I knew the plant that I had parked in front of was a darling plum. But I'm not promoting it for hungry people.

Propagation

The propagation of fruit trees isn't as easy as just planting seeds or cuttings in nutrient rich soil with an adequate amount of sunlight and water. Most tropical fruit tree seeds are only viable for a short period of time after the fruit is harvested, and not all fruit trees grow true from seed. The one exception is papaya where the seeds have been known to lie dormant for years until sunlight cause the seeds to germinate. Seeds with a hard outer 'seed coat' generally need to be scarified. Cuttings also only last but a few days before they dry-up and die. Most cuttings do well in a moist environment [i.e., sealed clear plastic bag] until adequate new growth is observed. Peter Thompson has written an in-depth book on the subject entitled, '*Creative Propagation; A Grower's Guide*,' for both the amateur and professional.

Some fruit trees do not grow true from seed or are able to be grown from cuttings. In these cases, the art of grafting bud wood (scion) onto a suitable rootstock must be employed. Typically, three methods of grafting are used: Cleft (Vee), Side Veneer and Bud grafts. Of these the Veneer graft is utilized by most experienced grafters in the field. All grafts involve the bonding of the cambium layer of living meristematic tissue (typically one cell thick) in the scion and rootstock together, enabling the scion to continue growing. The principles may be learned in hours, but practical ability and art may take a person a life time to accomplish with any amount of success. The basic principles are covered in the IFAS Publication Circular 456 A, "*Propagation of Fruit Crops*." A more in-depth source of information is '*The Grafter's Handbook*,' revised 2013, by Robert John Garner.

Air-laying (marcotting) involves injuring or girdling a tree branch and surrounding the wound with moist material (sphagnum moss) until roots are set forth, whereby the branch is severed and planted as a new tree. This method is typically not used in Florida as only shallow surface roots develop and the new tree are prone to being up-rooted by hurricane force winds.

A simplified 'Grafting / Propagation' table is presented here, recommending methods and times-of-year to propagate the various common warm weather fruit trees grown in South Florida.

Grafting / Propagation

Fruit Tree	Time-of-Year to Graft	Propagation
Abiu	Oct - Nov	Not True from Seed
Ambarella	Not Grafted	Rooted from Cuttings
Atemoya/ Annona genus	Oct - Mar, also in Aug with Prepared Budwood.	No True from Seed
Avocado	Nov - Feb	Not True from Seed
Bael Fruit (Citrus)	Veneer graft on Robust Seedling in its Second Year.	Large Varieties are Not True from Seed.
Banana	Not Grafted	Corms
Barbados Cherry	Not Grafted	Root from Cuttings in Oct, Nov
Blackberry	Not Grafted	From Root Cuttings
Black Sapote (Chocolate Pudding Fruit)	Nov - Feb	Not True from Seed
Bucida	Not Grafted	From Seed or Cuttings, Aug, Sep
Canistel	Feb, Mar	Not True from Seed
Carambola/ Bilimbi	Dec - Feb	From Seed during Jun thru Jan
Carissa	Not Grafted	Rooted from Cuttings
Cashew Apple	Not Grafted	From Seed
Ceriman (Monstera)	n.a.	Seed or Cuttings
Cherry of the Rio Grande	Not Grafted	From Seed
Coconut Palm	Not Grafted	From Seed
Cocoplum	Not Grafted	Rooted from Cuttings

Grafting / Propagation

Fruit Tree	Time-of-Year to Graft	Propagation
Custard Apple	Mar, Apr	Not True from Seed
Darling Plum (native)	Not Grafted	From Seed (very rare)
Fig (LUS Purple)	Need to be Grafted do to Nematodes; Graft Using Ficus Sycomorus as Rootstock.	Not Recommended from Seed
Grumichama	Rarely Grafted	From Seed
Guava	Need to be Grafted, but Difficult	Difficult from Seed
Imbe	Not Grafted	Plant Three Large Seeds per Pot to get Male and Female Trees.
Jacoticaba	Not Grafted	From Seed
Jackfruit	Sep, Oct; Need to be Grafted on Very Robust Seedlings.	Not True from Seed
Jujube	Very Difficult to Graft	Air-Layered
Kei Fruit	Not Grafted	From Seed
Kumquat (Citrus)	Always Grafted as Seedling; Rootstock is Very Slow Growi*ng.*	
Longan	Chip Bud on Small Seedling	From Seed
Lychee	Chip Bud on Small Seedling	Air-Layered
Mabolo (Velvet Apple)	Very, Very Difficult to Graft	Not True from Seed
Macadamia Nut	Not Grafted	Air-Layered
Mamey Sapote	Oct or Mar; Use Suitable Budwood & Pencil Thin Rootstock. Don't Let Seedling Get Root Bound.	Not True from Seed
Mango	May, Jun & Sep, Oct	Mono-embryonic Cultivars Not True from Seed
Mulberry	Typically, Not Grafted	From Cuttings
Muscadine Grape	Not Grafted	From Leafy Cuttings Under Mist
Papaya	n.a.	From Seed
Passion Fruit	n.a.	From Seed and Cuttings
Persimmon	Jan - Mar	Not True from Seed
Pineapple	n.a.	Plant the Top or From 'Pups'
Pitaya (Dragon Fruit)	n.a.	From Cuttings, After Harvest
Pitomba	n.a.	From Seed
Star Apple	Oct - Mar	Not True from Seed
Stopper	n.a.	From Seed
Sugar Apple (sweetsop)	Oct - Mar	Not True from Seed
Sapodilla	Grafted	Not True from Seed
Tamarind	Very Difficult to Graft	Not True from Seed
White Sapote (Citrus Relative)	Feb, Mar on Strong One Year Old Seedling.	Not True from Seed

Cottonseed Meal

A by-product of cotton manufacturing, cottonseed meal, as a fertilizer for the garden, is slow release and acidic. Cottonseed meal varies in formulation slightly, but is generally made up of 7% nitrogen, 3% phosphate as P_2O_5, potassium as K_2O, and other minor nutrients. It is typically NOT considered 'Certified Organic.' Cottonseed Meal fertilizer is highly beneficial with a high organic content, which aerates tight, dense soil and aids in moisture retention in light, sandy soils. Due to its slow release properties, cottonseed meal is safe to use liberally without fear of possible foliage burn, while promoting healthy foliage and increasing crop production.

Add cottonseed meal, in a ratio of one pound to 18 cubic feet of mulch and spread 2 to 3-inches thick, to lower the pH of the soil, increase the availability of elements like Iron (Fe) and magnesium (Mg) and prevent 'nitrogen deficiency' during break-down of the mulch. [Note: Yellowing of leaves may be an indication that the pH of the soil needs to be reduced with an application of cottonseed meal.] Work one cup of cottonseed meal into the soil around smaller fruit trees and 2 to 4 cups around larger specimens. If planting a new tree, dig the hole twice as wide as needed and backfill with a combination of soil and cottonseed meal. Water thoroughly and continue to apply cottonseed meal fertilizer in the ratios above, twice per year, even after fruit trees are established.

Fruit Tree Sale – Saturday, November 17

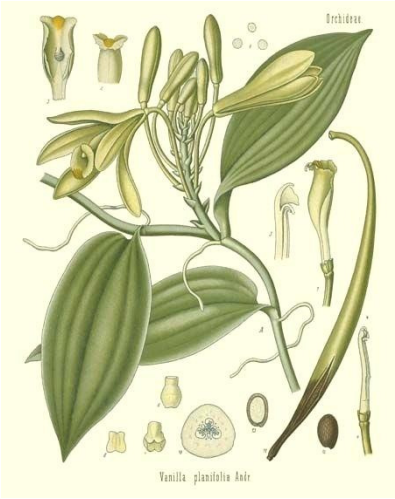
Please note the above date of the Fall Collier Fruit Growers Tree Sale. There will be selection of unusual one of a kind fruit trees, which will be offered in addition to those from Fruitscapes.

Volunteers are needed starting at 7:30 am until 2:30 pm on the day of the sale. Please give CFG two or more hours of your time to make the sale a success. Thank you.

GROWING VANILLA ORCHIDS BY NORIS LEDESMA

The vanilla orchid is a tropical plant that grows in the humid rainforests of Central and South America, Mexico, Tahiti and Madagascar, with a few native species in Florida. The Aztecs discovered the plant in Mexico and used the seed pods in various ways: to aid in digestion, as an aromatic, and to flavor beverages for Emperor Montezuma. The Totonaca people of the Gulf Coast of Mexico were probably the first people to domesticate vanilla. It was originally believed to have value only as a perfume; its value as a flavoring for food and drinks wasn't discovered until later.

The vanilla vine at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, "a big climbing orchid."



Vanilla planifolia is one of more than 60 species of vanilla orchids that have been around for almost 500 years. The vines grow up to 30 feet long, and the plant takes seven to eight years to mature. The pale yellow or green flowers, blooming from April to July, are just as unusual as the stems and the form of this orchid. They open in the early morning and usually close by midday. They are fragrant and attract bees, butterflies and birds.

Growing Vanilla orchid in South Florida

South Florida has a few native vanilla species that make usable pods: *Vanilla phaeantha, Vanilla dilloniana, and Vanilla barbellata*. Unfortunately, these unusual native orchids are listed as endangered by the state of Florida due to habitat destruction and over-collecting. This plant is an epiphytic orchid native to moist hammocks, swamps, and coastal mangrove swamps like those of southern Florida and the Florida Keys. They are very rare and collecting them is not allowed. Fortunately, we have the option of growing the legendary vanilla orchid in our backyards. Several selections of *Vanilla planifolia* that grow in South Florida are available in local nurseries. You can start a plant from cuttings, using a mixture of sand and potting soil. Set the cuttings deeply enough so that roots are covered and insert a wooden stake next to the plant, so you can tie the plant to it for support. Protect your plant by putting it in an area that gets indirect sunlight and is away from cold drafts. The new plant needs warmth and humidity.

Flowers are fragrant, and are attractive to bees, butterflies and birds.

Provide support: Vanilla orchids grow slowly until the roots develop, which can take up to two months. The plants are beautiful on their own and look great climbing up trees in a tropical landscape. Like other members of this species, the plant begins growing terrestrially, but as the base rots away, the plant becomes fully epiphytic. Carefully plant it at the base of an existing tree. Oaks are wonderful hosts, but any tree will work. Like all climbing plants, the vanilla vine needs support to grow to its full height. The advantage of growing on a tree is the shelter the tree provides from excessive exposure to the sun and strong winds. The tree must have deep roots so that nutrition in the upper soil layer, where the vanilla takes root, is not depleted.

In their natural environment, vanilla orchids will climb some yards up the tree, thanks to their climbing roots. The vine should be guided back to the ground regularly to promote the growth of new roots in the soil. This method provides an ample supply of nutrients and triggers fast vegetative growth. It takes approximately three to five years after planting for the vanilla vine to start blooming. When successful, the flowers remain on the vine and a pod will develop.

This particular vanilla needs water regularly. Cuban garden snails are the biggest threat to their development. Control them by removing them. If the problem persists, you can use salt to keep them away.

The process of growing vanilla requires intensive agricultural management. The fruits, which resemble large green beans, must remain on the vine for nine months to completely develop their signature aroma. They develop these distinctive properties during the curing and drying process.

Vanilla Bean Hangs from the Vine.

Growing vanilla is a big industry. Today, the orchids are grown in Mexico, the Bourbon Islands, Tahiti, Indonesia, India, Uganda, and Papua New Guinea. They are pollinated, harvested and cured by hand by farmers in a process that takes anywhere from 13 to 14 weeks. After the seed pods spend about nine months on the vine, the curing and aging process takes a further three months before the beans are ready to be sold.

If you're one of those people who are up for a "green" challenge, then consider growing and producing your own vanilla. It's a rewarding experience that will help you learn and appreciate the work involved in its production. Start from your own cuttings, which are easy to propagate, or you can find plants in local nurseries.

Noris Ledesma is curator of tropical fruit at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden.

[*It is for note that vanilla prices in recent years have sky-rocked as major brands attempt to go all natural. Currently, vanilla is the world's second most costly spice after saffron. As most of the industry rely on one species of vanilla orchid, Vanilla planiforlia, the bulk of the world's supply is susceptible to an opportunistic disease or pest, like the banana industry that is faced with Panama disease which is obliterating the world's most popularly grown Cavendish banana.*]

Specialty Fruit Trees and Herbs at the November Tree Sale

Name	Price
Peanut Butter Fruit (*Bunchosia glandulifera*)	$ 30
Tropical Almond, Sea Almond (*Terminalia catappa*)	$ 40
Christmas (Goji) berry, Wolfberry, Carolina desert-thorn [native plant] (*Lycium carolinianum*)	$ 10

Herbs

African Blue Basil, (*Ocimum kilimandscharicum* × *basilicum*) - Small $10 , Large $15

Banana Plants - A Variety Will Be Offered

NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday 5 **Southwest Florida Small Farmers Network Meeting**, 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM at Oakes Demonstration Farm, Deer Run Lane, off Rock Road in North Naples, 34120. Pot Luck Lunch, so please bring something to share. **Membership is open and at no cost.** Sign up at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/swfl-small-farmers-network-meeting-oakes-demo-farm-2018-tickets-50169224501

Tuesday 6 Monthly Meeting: **Caloosa Rare Fruit Exchange**, 7:00 pm, Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council Bldg., 2166 Virginia Ave., Fort Myers.

Weekly Workshops: Every Thursday (**year around, Crafton said he will even be there on Thanksgiving Day**), 9:00 AM until at least 1:00 PM, **Cornerstone Nursery**, 8200 Immokalee Road, North Naples – Learn about fruit trees, volunteer in the nursery, or just come and listen to Crafton's stories.

Tuesday 13 Monthly Meeting: **Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club**, 6:45 PM Tasting Table, 7:15 PM Program: First United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs.

Saturday 17 **Collier Fruit Growers' Fall FRUIT TREE SALE**, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, at Freedom Park, 1515 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples. -- Come early for the best selection of trees. – This is the Organization's only semi-annual fund raiser.

Tuesday 20 Monthly Meeting: **Collier Fruit Growers**, 7:00 PM Social, 7:30 PM Program: Tree of Life Church, Life Center, 2132 Shadowlawn Drive, Naples. The speaker will be Brain Galligan from the Naples Botanical Garden.

Tuesday 27 Monthly Workshop: **Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club,** 6:45 PM: First United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs.

Fruits which Ripen in November:

Atemoya, avocado, banana, black sapote, canistel, carambola, carissa(1), coconut, fig, guava, jackfruit, miracle fruit, orange, macadamia, miracle fruit, Otaheite gooseberry, papaya, passionfruit, peanut butter fruit, pomegranate, strawberry tree, and sugar apple(2).

Footnotes:

Warning: All unripened green carissa fruits are poisonous. There are three species;
Carissa spinarum [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carissa_spinarum],
Carissa bispinosa [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carissa_bispinosa],
and Carissa macrocarpa [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carissa_macrocarpa]

Sugar apple (*Annona squamosa*) fruit is also known as sweetsop.

There's a **NEW** Collier Fruit Growers Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/CollierFruitGrowers/?ref=br_rs
CFG Members are encouraged to submit fruit related articles on the page. Your comments are also encouraged. Please LIKE and share our page with your friends. Be sure to LIKE our new page!

Upcoming Meeting Date: TUESDAY, December 18th

The Collier Fruit Growers Inc. (CFG) is an active organization dedicated to inform, educate and advise its members as well as the public, as to the propagation of the many varieties of fruits that can be grown in Collier County. The CFG is also actively engaged in the distribution of the many commonly grown fruits, as well as the rare tropical and subtropical fruits grown throughout the world. CFG encourages its members to extend their cultivation by providing a basis for researching and producing new cultivars and hybrids, whenever possible. CFG functions without regard to race, color or national origin.

REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

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