

# SW FLORIDA TROPICAL FRUIT NEWS

**DUES ARE DUE! PLEASE RENEW  
YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**

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## CLUB NEWS

### COLLIER FRUIT GROWERS

[WWW.COLLIERFRUIT.ORG](http://WWW.COLLIERFRUIT.ORG)

The next meeting is Monday, January 18th. The program will feature Jonathan Crane, Professor of Horticulture / Tropical Fruit Crop Specialist at the Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), University of Florida in Homestead. Dr. Crane will brief us on the threat to avocados and two new mites and a scale plus an overview of common problems with fruit trees.

The January and February meetings are held at the Tree of Life Church, 2131 Shadowlawn Dr., Naples. See page 3 for directions. Naples.

**Membership and change of address.** Family membership is \$25; renewals before February 1, \$15. Commercial membership, \$100, which includes a business-card ad in each 10 issues of the newsletter (a year's worth). Send checks and change of address information to CFG, c/o Mary Fehr, 137 Debron Dr., Naples FL 34112.

**Upcoming date.** January 22, field trip; see page 3 for more information.

### BONITA SPRINGS TROPICAL FRUIT CLUB

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 12th. The program will feature Martin Price talking about south Florida fruiting plants for your grandchildren. Dr. Price recently retired from the position of Senior Agricultural Resources Director at Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization (ECHO), located in North Ft. Myers. He joined ECHO in 1981, overseeing all areas of ECHO's ministry. Dr. Martin is interested and experienced in gardening plants for humid tropics, fruit trees, edible landscaping and rooftop gardening.

Meetings are held at the First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs (from Old 41, turn east on Crockett and left on Shriver).

The board of directors meets monthly prior to the regular meeting. NOTE: This is a change from the past when it met before the workshop.

**Bimonthly workshop.** The next discussion group is January 26 at 7pm.

**Membership.** Dues are \$15. Send checks to Tom Betts, 25071 Pennyroyal Lane, Bonita Springs, FL 34134.

**Upcoming date.** March 6th, spring tree sale.

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## JANUARY CALENDAR

**January 9-10. Redland Festival. Fruit and Spice Park.** 10am-5pm. Local arts and crafts, a large selection of tropical plants and great food.

Children's activities include a petting zoo, pony rides, an interactive puppet & magic show, and an Everglades reptile show. 24801 SW 187th Ave., Homestead. 305-247-5727.

**January 12. Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club** monthly meeting. 7pm. First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs. 992-4664. The board meets at 6pm.

**January 14. Vegetable gardening.** Master Gardener's Annual Garden Workshop series. 10 am. \$7. Unity of Naples Church, 2000 Unity Way, Naples. 353-4244.

**January 18. Collier Fruit Growers** monthly meeting. 7pm. NOTE: Different location—Tree of Life Church, 2131 Shadowlawn Dr., Naples. 609-2919. See page 3 for detailed directions.

**January 20. Annual Kumquat Festival.** 9am-5pm. Dade City. Celebration of the kumquat harvest. Live

music, farmers' market, shopping, crafts, food booths. 352-567-3769.

**January 22. Field trip to the Chocolate Festival at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden,** Coral Gables. \$20. Sponsored by Collier Fruit Growers. See page 3 for details. For more information, call Madeline at 851-4448.

**January 22-24. Fairchild's 4th Annual International Chocolate Festival.** 9:30am-4:30pm. Chocolate treats, delicious cups of coffee and tea, tree sales, cooking demonstrations. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, 10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables. 305-667-1651.

**January 26. Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club workshop.** 7pm. First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs. 992-4664.

**February 1. Naples Garden Club.** Jim White, Amateur Natural Photographer, "The Challenge of Photographing Florida Birds" 1pm. Moorings Presbyterian Church, Harbour Drive (west of Rt. 41), Naples. 262-1272.



### COLLIER FRUIT GROWERS

Collier Fruit Growers is an active nonprofit organization dedicated to introducing, propagating and distributing the

many rare tropical and subtropical fruits grown throughout the world, as well as offering education in these areas and encouragement to extend their cultivation. CFG functions without regard to race, color or national origin.

#### Officers

<b>John Puig</b> , President	601-2919
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<b>Thomas Hecker</b>	682-0674
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## CFG: NEW LOCATION FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

The Golden Gate Community Center closes for the holidays that fall on the January and February meeting dates. Those meetings will be held at Tree of Life Church, 2131 Shadowlawn Dr., Naples. Here are directions from the Golden Gate Community Center. It's about a 6-mile drive.

1. Head west on Golden Gate Pkwy.
2. Turn left at Santa Barbara Blvd.
3. Turn right at Davis Blvd. Cross over Airport Pulling Rd.
4. Turn left at Shadowlawn Dr.

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## JANUARY 22 FIELD TRIP

You're all invited to join us on a bus trip to the 4th Annual Chocolate Festival at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens in Coral Gables. The Festival features lots of chocolate tasting, of course, cooking demonstrations, lectures about *Theobroma cacao*, the source of chocolate, and tours of its rainforest habitat. In addition, member Crafton Clift, who used to work at Fairchild as a horticulturist, will be leading a tour of the fruit trees at Fairchild.

Feel free to enjoy lunch at the cafe or buy food from vendors or pack a lunch for a picnic.

Cost is \$20 for CFG members; \$35 for guests. That includes, the price of admission, the bus, and refreshments on the bus.

The bus leaves from the Super Wal-Mart on Immokolee Rd. in Naples, just southwest of I75 (Exit 111) at 7am sharp. We return about 6pm. Pay Linda Coyner at CFG or Madeline Bohannon at BSTFC. For more information, call Madeline at 851-4448.

## WHAT'S RIPE THIS MONTH

I can testify that kumquats, calamondins, and tangerines dropped, as the ground around my trees is orange. Others report the same, possibly due to drought or an unusually extended summer.

Better pick and eat your citrus before it dries out. The only way to tell if the fruit is ripe is to try one.

The jujube is coloring up so I'm excited to try this fruit that's new to me. There are lots of flowers on my grafted black Surinam cherries.

Be forewarned: The usual cold snap is predicted for the end of December and early January. Protective measures include Christmas lights (old-fashioned big lights), frost cloth (no plastic!), soap spray, and well irrigated roots.

avocado	miracle fruit
banana	papaya
canistel	sapodilla
carambola	sapote, black
citrus	Surinam cherry
coconut	soursop
macadamia nut	

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### Officers

**Tim Deaton**, President 992-4664  
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## BONITA SPRINGS TROPICAL FRUIT CLUB

The purpose is to introduce and distribute the many rare and tropical and subtropical fruits grown throughout the world; to inform, educate and advise members and the public in the selection of these valuable tree crops, so as to encourage their cultivation. Where possible, the organization will produce a basis for researching and producing new cultivars and hybrids.



## MEMBER BULLETIN BOARD



Jacqueline Hoare-Ward needs carambola and calamondins for preserving. If you have any to share, please contact her at 514-0087.

Frank Denardis has finger limes (see page 5) and beautiful citrus trees with fruit on them. Call him at 597-8359.

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## JANUARY IN THE VEGGIE PATCH

Despite the endless summer, my patch and others that I see regularly are doing nicely. If you want to see a productive vegetable garden, you must see Sue Gallagher's. She started her seeds in August.

I have lovely string beans, lettuce, arugula, collards, and various herbs, although not basil. The cucumbers are in a life and death struggle with caterpillars and need to be sprayed with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), which goes by the brand name of Thuricide. The bacterium is naturally occurring in the soil and can be used up to the day before harvest.

The eggplants, peppers, and tomatoes have flowers; in fact the tomatoes have small fruit. I haven't given up on swiss chard, so I've resown it a third time.—*Linda Coyner, editor*

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## UPCOMING SPEAKERS AND EVENTS

### Bonita Club

January 12 Fruiting plants for grandchildren by  
Martin Price, ECHO

March 6 Spring tree sale

### Collier Club

January 22 Field trip to Fairchild's Chocolate Festival

February 15 Landscaping with fruit trees by

Richard Campbell

February 27 Tree sale, Freedom Park, Naples

March 15 Underused fruit trees by Charles Boning

April 19 Citrus greening update by Tim Gast,  
Southern Gardens

## NEW SUGARCANE CULTIVARS FOR SOUTH FLORIDA

by Stephanie Yao

Two new sugarcane cultivars specifically developed for Florida's sand soils have been released by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists and cooperators.

The new cultivars, CP 00-1446 and CP 00-2180, were developed at the ARS Sugarcane Field Station in Canal Point, Fla., as part of an effort to provide growers with more cultivars that yield well on sand soils. The new cultivars are the result of cooperative research with the University of Florida and the Florida Sugar Cane League, Inc.

During testing, potential sugarcane cultivars are evaluated on their yields of cane and sugar. Both CP 00-1446 and CP 00-2180 produced high quantities of cane, and their sugar yields were 32 percent and 15 percent higher, respectively, than the sugar yield of a commercial variety used for comparison.

Growers in Florida usually get three annual harvests from one planting of sugarcane. Both new varieties produce very high cane yields for the first harvest and moderate yields for the other two harvests, commonly referred to as ratoons.

CP 00-2180 is unusual because it is the offspring of a single sugarcane variety, HoCP 91-552. It is rare to have commercially viable offspring from a self-cross of one cultivar.

Florida produces more sugar than any state in the United States. The majority of the sugarcane is produced in organic soils along the southern and southeastern shore of Lake Okeechobee in southern Florida. Twenty percent of Florida's sugarcane acreage is grown on sand soil.

Researchers at Canal Point develop sugarcane cultivars that meet Florida sugarcane growers' needs. The station's goal is to produce disease-resistant varieties that contain good amounts of cane tonnage and sugar content. Research conducted at the station is responsible for substantial yield increases in Florida during the past 40 years.

Seed cane of the releases is available from the Florida Sugar Cane League, Inc., for commercial planting. Small quantities of seed cane for research purposes can be obtained from the ARS Sugarcane Field Station by calling 561-924-5227.

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# FINGER LIMES

## MICROCITRUS AUSTRALASICA

BY ERICA BIRMINGHAM

A long narrow fruit with thin skin that ranges in color from green, yellow, purple and red. The fruit contains an acid juice similar to that of a lemon. A delicate rainforest tree that offers a distinctive citrus flavor to sweet or savory dishes. The juicy cells, similar in appearance to caviar, are delightful in salad dressings.

Australian finger lime (*Microcitrus australasica*) can be classed as either a tall shrub or a small tree. Its spiny foliage makes it an attractive Australian ornamental. This tiny citrus variety has many lime characteristics, and its fruit is long and cylindrical in shape. Oil seeps from the rind into the pulp, giving the fruit a very acidic flavor and lingering turpentine-like aftertaste.

The Australian finger lime is unique in the citrus family. The fruit are finger-sized and shaped and naturally have an exciting range of skin and pulp colors. Compressed within the skin are tiny pulp cells, which resemble colored pearls. These juice bubbles ooze out when the fruit is sliced open and look just like lime caviar. When you bite into the finger lime pearls, they burst in your mouth, releasing a tangy lime flavor.

The finger lime (*Citrus australasica*) is a True Citrus fruit tree. It is found in the Australian rainforest as a small under story tree and grows to a height of four to six meters. It bears small, white, fragrant flowers in spring and summer. The trees bear fruit in summer and autumn, as for the Tahitian lime.

The finger lime has a wide natural genetic diversity, which means that the fruit vary significantly in size, shape and color. The skin colors of the finger lime fruit, when ripe, range from red, purple, black, yellow to green, with many color variations in between. Pulp colors are different too, and can be green, yellow, white or pink.

The finger lime pulp has a pleasantly sour citrus flavor, tasting almost like a Tahitian lime, or grapefruit. Then again, each fruit varies as

much in flavor as it does in color. The pink-pulped fruit have a more aromatic flavor than other limes. Some fruit are sweeter than others and can be eaten fresh in a fruit salad, or used to garnish lush, tropical fruits such as paw-paw, or avocado.

The finger lime fruit is extremely versatile. It can be used as a creative new ingredient in any recipe requiring a citrus flavor, whether sweet or savory. Instead of squeezing the juice, as for other citrus, the finger lime pearls are scooped out and used either as a fresh garnish, or mixed through fresh salsas, dips, soups, desserts. Colored slices of finger lime make a great garnish for cakes, or cheesecakes, looking like tiny cartwheels. Finger limes also make a luscious wild lime marmalade.

Chefs love finger limes and are using them to create exciting new dishes in the most exclusive restaurants. Finger limes are finding their way into the best bars, too. Try infusing some finger lime pearls in a vodka martini, add new zest to a tropical fruit daiquiri, or simply decorate a gin and tonic with a slice of pink finger lime.

Finger limes are an exciting new addition to seafood dishes. Use as a fresh, colorful garnish for oysters, or sashimi. Create delicious sushi with an Australian flavor, or spice up gourmet vegetarian cuisine. Finger limes also blend beautifully with other Australian native foods, such as lemon myrtle, Dorrigo pepper, or strawberry gum.

Joanna Savill, co-producer of SBS Food Lovers' Guide to Australia, featured the finger limes on her program on Friday, June 2nd, 2000. She describes the finger lime as "an amazing indigenous fruit...designer quality and our newest discovery."

Graham Latham, Director of International Education and Development with Le Cordon Bleu Group in Paris, says: "oysters with finger lime are exceptional and stand out in a class of their own. The lime "caviar" is unique and adds a beautiful dimension to the taste of oysters."

*Note: These trees are hard to find. Frank Denardis them for sale. Call 597-8359.*

**GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT GROWING TROPICAL  
FRUIT? WE'VE GOT ANSWERS.**

Check out our website [www.collierfruit.org](http://www.collierfruit.org)

Our clubs have many experienced backyard and professional growers. Bring your fruity questions to the next meeting or have them posted in the newsletter ([fruitnflowers@gmail.com](mailto:fruitnflowers@gmail.com)). You can also call the Collier Extension Service plant clinic at 353-2872, M/W/F 9am-noon and 1-4pm. The Lee County Extension horticulture desk can be reached during those hours at 239-533-7504.

Don't overlook online resources about tropical fruits. For instance, you can access the full text of Julia Morton's [Fruit of Warm Climates](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/index.html) at [www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/index.html](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/index.html).

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# **JANUARY 2010 FRUIT NEWS**

Collier Fruit Growers [www.collierfruit.org](http://www.collierfruit.org)  
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