

MARCH 2010

SW FLORIDA TROPICAL FRUIT NEWS

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CLUB NEWS

COLLIER FRUIT GROWERS

WWW.COLLIERFRUIT.ORG

The next meeting is Monday, March 15th. The program will feature Charles Boning, author of *Best Fruiting Plants for SW Florida*. This a return engagement for Mr. Boning. He is both knowledgeable and entertaining. Don't miss it.

The club meets on the third Monday of the month at 7pm for socializing and enjoying the tasting table. The program starts at 7:30pm.

Meetings return to the Golden Gate Community Center, 4701 Golden Gate Parkway (corner of Sunshine Blvd.), Naples.

Membership and change of address. Family membership is \$25; renewals before February 1, \$15. Commercial membership, \$100, 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.

Fruit for the tasting table. Please share your dooryard fruit and earn a free raffle ticket.

BONITA SPRINGS TROPICAL FRUIT CLUB

The next meeting is Tuesday, March 9th. The program will feature Danny Blank, Educational Concerns for Hunger Management (ECHO) farm manager. He'll update us on ECHO's work, his travels, and the latest on fruit trees.

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 before the regular meeting. NOTE: This is a change from the past when it met before the workshop.

Bimonthly workshop. The next discussion group is March 23 at 7pm.

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

Upcoming date. November 13, fall tree sale at Riverside Park, Bonita Springs.

Newsletter produced by Linda Coyner; proofreading by Madeline Bohannon

MARCH CALENDAR

March 6. Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club tree sale. 9am-3pm. Bonita Springs Riverside Park, Old 41, Bonita Springs.

March 6. Yard Tour. Eden School for Autism, 2101 County Barn Rd., Naples. 11am tour by John Puig. 601-2919.

March 9. Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club monthly meeting. 7pm. First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs. 992-4664. The board meets at 6pm.

March 13. ECHO Farm Day. Tours, workshops, demonstrations, food, and fun as you learn how ECHO is meeting the challenge of global hunger. 9am-3pm. 17391 Durrance Rd. off Bayshore Rd., one mile east of I75, exit 143. 239-543-3246

March 15. Collier Fruit Growers monthly meeting. 7pm. Golden Gate Community Center, 4701 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples. 609-2919.

March 23. Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club workshop. 7pm. First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs. 992-4664.

JUNE FIELD TRIP TO REDLAND SUMMER FRUIT FESTIVAL TO BE SPONSORED BY BSTFC

Trips by Madeline brings us another field trip June 19 to the annual Redland Summer Fruit Festival at Fruit and Spice Park in Homestead. This is another one-stop destination, which avoids all the getting on and off the bus and keeps us on time.

This annual event showcases local agriculture and tropical fruit plants. Some 40 vendor booths typically feature local wines, fresh-fruit smoothies, fresh fruits and veggies, lots and lots of nursery plants, rare-fruit ice cream, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and of course, plenty of rare-fruit

samplings. Last year boasted more than 160 varieties of mango for tasting.

Live music is planned, as well as a petting zoo and a watermelon eating contest,

Typically there is a lychee/longan workshop Saturday afternoon that covers cultivation, propagation, and grafting techniques and a chance to pepper experts with your questions.

This trip falls on a Saturday so it gives folks who can't make it on weekdays an opportunity to go.

Stay tuned and we'll get back to you with details.



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.

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CFG'S FEBRUARY TREE SALE A BIG SUCCESS

Everything came together: All the planning and organizing, hand-writing tree labels, ordering trees, configuring the layout at a new site (Freedom Park), gathering fruit for the tasting table, copying information sheets for shoppers.

The weather cooperated, up to a point. It was threatening from the get-go, cloudy and chilly, but the sprinkles held off until afternoon. About 12:15pm it got serious and by 12:45pm the decision was made to close up. Still, we even sold trees while it was pouring rain! When we ran out of something we told shoppers about the BSTFC tree sale on March 6.

The citrus was extremely popular this year, something your intrepid newsletter editor coordinated with Jon Adams. Only a few trees remain. Treehouse Nursery sold over half its tropical trees, which made Steve Curcura a very happy man. Gordon Skrede brought blackberry plants to sell as well.

The tasting table overflowed—jujube, wekiwa tangelo, tangerines, canistel, black sapote, papaya, kumquats, and pummelo. Mary Fehr baked banana bread and I baked a mango cake. Preserves donated by Sue Gallagher and Jammin' Jacquie's proved very popular. A big thank you goes to Frank DeNardis for his generous donation of fruit.

Freedom Park as a location for the CFG tree sale offers great exposure to passers-by. The adjacent parking field and the parking around the building provided ample space for cars.

CFG field tested BSTFC's new signs. They directed shoppers to types (i.e., mangos, lychee, etc.) of trees quickly. Thanks to BSTFC for sharing them. They'll get another workout this March 6th at the Bonita tree sale.

WHAT'S RIPE THIS MONTH

Cold continues. The tropical trees are miserable, the subtropical ones are hanging in there, and the temperate trees (mulberry, persimmon, loquat, citrus) are having a ball. My roses are also smiling.

Frank DeNardis has canistel, black sapote, and, of course, lots of citrus.

Here's the official list:

avocado	mulberry
banana	muntingia
Barbados cherry	papaya
canistel	pineapple
carambola	sapodilla
citrus	sapote, black
coconut	soursop
custard apple	Surinam cherry
guava	
jaboticaba	
loquat	
miracle fruit	

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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, to encourage their cultivation. Where possible, the organization will produce a basis for researching and producing new cultivars and hybrids.

ASTROLOGICAL GARDENING - PLANTING BY THE MOON AND SIGNS

BY GENE MCAVOY

Planting by the moon is nothing new. Ancient tradition claims that planting times should correspond to certain phases of the Moon. This belief has been passed on for generations. There are many firm believers who will not plant anything unless a favorable moon or sign is indicated.

Just as the moon's gravitational pull influences the ocean's tide, it is theorized that it also influences the movement of fluids contained in plants. Moon gardening is based on this belief.

Planting by the signs is an astrological system of agriculture and gardening. This rural lore was once widespread. Each day of the month is said to be ruled by one of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Each sign appears at least once a month for a period of two or three days. To each of the twelve signs there corresponds a part of the human body. The signs always appear in sequence, beginning with Aries (the Head) and continuing through Pisces (the Feet). Then the cycle begins again. The signs are described as fruitful or barren, moist, watery, dry, earthy, fiery, hot, or airy.

Planting is always done in one of the fruitful signs. There are fourteen fruitful days in a month. The best signs for planting are the water or earth signs of Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, or Taurus. Planting should not be done in one of the barren signs; they are only good for trimming, killing, and destroying. No planting should be done on Sunday, as this is a barren, hot day (the Sun's day). Never transplant in the Heart or the Head; it is said that this will cause the plants to die.

The phase of the moon is also consulted in conjunction with the dominant sign. All things which yield above ground should be planted during the waxing moon, and all things which yield below ground (root crops) in the waning moon. Planting should not be done on the first day of the new moon, or on a day when the moon changes quarters.

Plant seeds or transplants of leafy plants, and plants that carry their seeds on the outside of the fruit (i.e., strawberries and corn) when the Moon is between the new and first quarter. When the Moon is between the first quarter and full, sow or transplant plants that produce seeds inside their fruit. Plant bulbs and root crops between Full Moon and last quarter. Do not plant anything between last quarter and New Moon.

For example, it is said to be best to turn sod, kill trees, and destroy weeds in the fourth quarter of the moon in the barren signs of Gemini, Leo, or Virgo.

The week before the New Moon is a good time to pull weeds.

Harvesting most crops is best done in the old of the moon; this will cause them to keep better and longer. Picking fruits during a waning moon will cause any bruises to dry up rather than rot. Fruit, grain, and vegetables should not be gathered in the watery signs or the new of the moon as they will decay and sprout. It is best to gather root crops in the last quarter of the moon when the signs are in the Knees or the Feet.

While none of this has been conclusively proven or disproved by modern science; many folks claim success using these methods. Should you wish to try planting by moon and astrological signs, most farmer's almanacs include planting calendars that display lunar phases as well as the signs on the days in which they appear in a given month.

Aries - is good for plowing, tilling, or cultivating. Though a barren sign, it can be used for planting onions or garlic.

Taurus - associated with the neck, this is a earthy sign and is especially favorable for root crops.

Gemini - a barren sign, good for cultivating and weeding, the cutting of grass and pinching buds.

Cancer - is a watery sign. It is said to be the most fruitful sign. It is excellent for all planting and transplanting. Seeds sown under Cancer will germinate quickly, grow well and yield abundantly.

Leo - tied to the Heart. This sign does not favor planting or transplanting. It is good for weeding.

Virgo - a barren sign, good for cultivating and weeding.

Libra - is a strong, fruitful sign. Flowers should be planted in Libra. Also thought to be favorable for planting crops that bear above ground.

Scorpio - ranks next to Cancer in fruitfulness. Favorable for planting crops that bear above the ground, root crops, and fruit trees.

Sagittarius - a barren, fiery sign, although said to be good for planting onions.

Capricorn - a moist, productive sign. Tied to the knees it is favorable for planting root crops.

Aquarius - an airy, barren sign, useful for cultivating and weeding.

Pisces - a watery, fruitful sign, good for planting all crops, especially fruits and bulbs.—*Gene McAvoy is the horticulture agent with the Hendry County Extension Service.*

NEW CITRUS VARIETIES COMING DOWN THE PIPELINE

Picking out a promising variety used to take 15 years. The New Varieties Development & Management Corp. (NVDMC) working with the University of Florida and the USDA can fast track varieties, reducing the time to two years.

SUGAR BELLE (LB8-9)

The Sugar Belle, developed by IFAS, is a complex mandarin hybrid that closely resembles the Honey Belle, but matures four to six weeks earlier and has better color and flavor. The Sugar Belle is not seedless, but can be low-seeded or occasionally seedless when grown in solid and/or isolated blocks. It has been reported that specific growing practices can also help reduce seed counts. The Sugar Belle has been preferred by consumers over most other easy-peel selections in the December market window. [Note: Harris Citrus Nursery has this but not for distribution yet.]

EARLY PRIDE

The USDA Early Pride Tangerine is a low-seeded Mutation of the Fallglo Tangerine (Bower x Temple). The Early Pride will provide our growers an early season entry that is easy peel and almost seedless. This tangerine will typically be harvested mid-October into November. Although many of the Early Pride Tangerines are seedless, they can have up to four seeds. The Early Pride is available to Florida growers for early evaluation through NVDMC.

SEEDLESS SURPRISE

The USDA "Seedless Surprise" is a very early (September) maturing grapefruit-like fruit. The fruit is seedless, white-fleshed, low-acid, and non-bitter. It has a very smooth and gentle flavor that has proven quite popular in consumer taste panels. The fruit physically resembles a grapefruit, but seems to be liked by grapefruit lovers and people who do not typically care for grapefruit. This fruit is available for early evaluation plantings through the NVDMC.

NEW UF EXPERIMENTAL LINE

This "yet-to-be-named" variety is a December mandarin hybrid developed by the IFAS Plant

Improvement Team in Lake Alfred. This fruit was just discovered this winter, and if it produces identical fruit next year, it will be rushed to the front of the line for grower early evaluation. This hybrid is the size of a Clementine with a deep-orange exterior and brilliant-orange interior. It peels easily, is seedless, and has wonderful flavor.

SEEDLESS PINEAPPLE ORANGE

"Seedless Pineapple Orange" is very low-seeded, averaging two or fewer seeds per fruit, with many being seedless. This fruit is a mid-season orange that could be packed fresh or processed.

BLACK SAPOTE PUDDING

This yummy combination from the Friendly Burds was one of the stars at February's CFG's tasting table.

Equal parts:

black sapote pulp
whipped cream
chocolate rum

MARCH IN THE VEGGIE PATCH

It's just about wide open now as to what you can plant. You need to pick varieties, however, that mature before the heat sets in, which at this point is anyone's guess. I've heard predictions for a wet, cool spring.

Tomatoes are really struggling with the cold temps we've had recently. This is my second planting. The cucumbers gave up. So did the eggplant. Forget about basil, except for African blue basil.

If you like greens, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, lettuce, and the like, you're in luck. Bon appetit!

Beans	Okra
Collards	Onions
Corn	Parsley
Cucumber	Parsnips
Dill	Peas, English & snap
Eggplant	Radish
Endive	Rutabaga
Kale	Spinach
Kohlrabi	Squash
Lettuce	Tomatoes
Mustard	Turnips

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

Check out our website 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). 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.

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PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

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