

# Southwest Florida Tropical Fruit News

—covering Naples and Bonita Springs, FL

## November 2009

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## Collier Fruit Growers

[www.collierfruit.org](http://www.collierfruit.org)

The next meeting is Monday, November 16th. The program will feature Dennis Riggs on the topic of beekeeping for the backyard grower. Dennis (aka Old Man Riggs) was born and raised in Alva, Florida. He has been a beekeeper and professional bee remover for the past six years with beekeeping roots that go back to childhood. Dennis is a Bee photographer, graphic designer, bee blogger, and website creator who has presented on beekeeping from Florida to Georgia. He is a moderator for online discussion forums including the Florida Beekeepers and swfbees Yahoo forums. He is the Beekeepers Association of Southwest Florida Vice President.

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

Meetings are held at 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, 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.

## Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 10th. Ruth Nowland and Paul Harris of Harris Citrus Nursery will present a program entitled "Citrus from A to Z". Paul and wife Rebecca started their Lithia nursery in 1985 after a 25-year stint in Alaska. Daughter Ruth joined the business eight years ago. Since inception, the nursery has had to roll with the punches—first canker and now greening. Major capital investment was made to keep up with the latest citrus-growing requirements and deliver the best quality tree possible.

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).

**Bimonthly workshop.** This discussion group meets November 24th at the church. The board of directors meets at 6pm followed by the workshop at 7pm.

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

**Upcoming date.** Fall fruit tree sale, Saturday, November 14.

# November calendar

**November 10. Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club** monthly meeting. 7pm. First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs. 992-4664.

**November 14.** BSTFC Fall Tree Sale. 9am-3pm. Riverside Park, Downtown Bonita Springs. 947-9429.

**November 14 & 15. Fruit and Spice Park Great Green Family Festival.** 10am to 5pm. Admission: \$6. Festival showcasing "Eco-Friendly" living including: local & organic farmer's market, alternative energy, vehicles &

fuels, medicinal herbs, oils, & teas, natural foods, and culinary plants. Homestead. 305-247-5727.

**November 16. Collier Fruit Growers** monthly meeting. 7pm. Golden Gate Community Center, 4701 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples. 643-7275.

**November 24. BSTFC** discussion group. 7pm. First United Methodist Church, Bonita Springs. 992-4664.

**November 27-29. Estates Holiday Garden Market.** Edison Ford Winter Estates, 2350 McGregor Blvd., Ft. Myers. Vendors selling orchids, bromeliads, fruit trees, roses and herbs. 239-334-7419. [www.efwefla.org](http://www.efwefla.org)

## What's ripe in November?

My Bell carambola is making its first fruit. I plan to keep it small as there are only so many star fruits you can eat.

In my yard the citrus is coming on like

gangbusters—grapefruit, kumquats, calamondins, various oranges, and soon Ponkan tangerines.

Madeline Bohannon still has a few Keitt mangos, which is amazing. Frank DeNardis brought Fuyu persimmons to the last Bonita meeting.

Anyone have jujube fruit? Mine produces lots of flowers but no fruit.

Here's what you might be picking:

avocado  
banana  
Barbados cherry  
carambola

citrus  
mamey apple  
miracle fruit  
natal plum  
papaya  
persimmon  
roselle  
sapodilla  
sapote, black  
Surinam cherry



## 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,

### Officers

<b>John Puig</b> , President	601-2919
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<b>Brian Housewert</b> , Vice President	537-1261
<a href="mailto:moonblinkstudios@gmail.com">moonblinkstudios@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Mary Fehr</b> , Treasurer	774-1047
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<b>Linda Coyner</b> , Newsletter editor/speaker coordinator	
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### At-large Directors

<b>Jon Adams</b> , past President	777-8217
<a href="mailto:jonadamsfl@gmail.com">jonadamsfl@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Thomas Hecker</b>	682-0674
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<b>Tracey Vessillo</b>	877-6608
<a href="mailto:tracey.vessillo@yahoo.com">tracey.vessillo@yahoo.com</a>	

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## November in SW Florida

The calendar says November but it feels like summer to me. Record-breaking temperatures have kept things hot for the past few weeks. Plants are growing but need adequate watering to keep from being stressed.

Pruning and fertilizing should be finished for the year. If you're crazy enough to transplant or plant something, you'll have to mulch it well and work extra hard to keep it watered.

All eyes should be on the Bonita club's tree sale on November 14th. It's at Riverside Park on Old 41 in downtown Bonita Springs and runs from 9am to 3pm. Your help is needed for this important fundraiser and community service. There are a variety of jobs available: passing out fruit samples, answering questions, talking about the club, keeping the workers hydrated, etc. ,etc. The bottom line is that it's lots of fun and an easy way to learn more about fruit trees.

Pat Johnson's herb workshop went off as planned on October 17th. Two days later she surprised us all—including herself—by having quintuple bypass heart surgery. All went well and she's now at home recuperating.

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## November in the veggie patch

The weather has proved very frustrating for those of us growing veggies. The brief cold snap was followed by very hot and dry weeks.

Sue Gallagher is the only member I know of picking lettuce and collards. The rest of us keep having to replant crops that like

cool weather—lettuce, greens, etc.—and watching warm weather crops like tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers struggle.

I am also dealing with a black lab that loves to dig in the beds, which hasn't helped. (Anyone want a dog?—just kidding.)

If you need manure, there are plenty of local horse farms that give it away. Some put it in trash bags;

Madeline Bohannon organized a group of us to plant Pat's herb garden on Sunday, which we did gladly.

In the meantime, the discussion about faux-Earthboxes continues. John Puig showed a shallow version he created out of recycled materials.

My prototype is finished. Using a tub and small plastic basket from Walmart, pvc from Home Depot, and black tubing I had on hand, my faux box came together. I've planted an African okra and two tomatoes in it. The key to these planters' success is the water reservoir in the bottom.

The Collier board's decision to allow licensed vendors at their spring tree sale is described on page 4. Members with nursery licenses who are interested should submit their application before the December meeting. Select outside vendors will also be invited. It should make for a very interesting sale.

Bring your questions to the meetings. Another source of information is the University of Florida's Collier Extension at 353-2872 or Lee at 533-7504.—*Linda Coyner, horticulturist and freelance writer*

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### Officers

**Tim Deaton**, President 992-4664  
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**Trevor Parks**, Vice President 947-9429  
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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.

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## Collier club invites vendors to the February 27th tree sale

Collier fruit tree sale 2010 will be open for all nursery licensed members of CFG to consign trees and plants. Select outside vendors are also being invited. Here are the rates:

\* Tropical fruit trees will be consigned at a 50/50 rate with the licensed supplier.

\* Citrus will be consigned at a 80/20 rate with the 20% going to CFG.

Vendors may decide their own pricing, but please consider club suggestions for standard-sized stock.

All vendors must submit their interest in tree sale involvement with a copy of the current state Nursery ID by the December meeting (December 21). Include what trees (edibles only please) will be sold, and a minimum and maximum interest you will have to bring to the sale.

the CFG Board will award vendors a certain volume of trees to sell in January 2010. The awards will be based on vendor interest, available space, diverse tree selections and, in the interest of equality among

all involved parties.

Blank labeling tags will be provided to each vendor for their awarded part in the sale. Each vendor will be responsible for tagging, labeling, delivering, and removal of unsold product after the sale.

The board of directors will work with vendors to assure the CFG annual trees sale contains high quality products selling at a low retail rate. Vendors will be paid only for what trees are sold following the sale.

Thank you in advance for supporting this sale, where our community can get the best fruit trees at great prices! Our reputation will assure our continued success!

The CFG board will do its best to run a great and fair sale for everybody involved. If you have any ideas or suggestions, roll up your shirt sleeves, get involved and work with us!

The 2010 tree sale is scheduled for February 27th from 9am to 2pm at the new Freedom Park on 1515 Golden Gate Parkway near the corner of Goodlette-Frank Road.

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## New exotic fruit variety 'developed'

Scientists have developed a variety of super healthy Chinese fruit, the Red Bayberry, that can grow in subtropical regions worldwide. The dark red attractive fruit of the Red Bayberry (*Myrica rubra*) has been produced in China for centuries, long and enthusiastically sought after for perceived health benefits as well as their refreshing and delicious flavor.

Now, an international team, led by Queensland

University, has developed new Red Bayberry varieties that are thriving in the subtropics. Lead scientist Prof Daryl Joyce said the small number of mature fruiting trees currently growing in South East of Queensland started producing commercial yields of fruit just three years after transplanting. "We were pleasantly surprised the trees grew so quickly and started fruiting after such a short juvenile period after transplanting. Many fruit trees don't start producing reasonable volumes of fruit until maybe five or six years after transplanting.

"However, it appears that Red Bayberry responds well to the sub-tropical growing conditions," he said.

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## Upcoming speakers & events

### Bonita Club

November 10: A to Z of Citrus by Ruth Nowland & Paul Harris of Harris Citrus Nursery

November 14 Tree sale, Riverside Park, Bonita

November 24 Discussion group

December 8 Holiday potluck and elections

January 12 Preserving fruit by Jenny & David Burd (tentative)

### Collier Club

November 16 Backyard beekeeping by Dennis Riggs

December 21 Holiday potluck and elections

January 18 Disease and insect problems with fruit trees by Jonathan Crane

February 15 Citrus greening update by Tim Gast

February 27 Tree sale, Freedom Park, Naples

March 15 Underused fruit trees by Charles Boning

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## A sweet passion for fruit

by Lillie Viola, Natural Awakenings, July 1, 2009

Frank DeNardis is in love. At the golden age of 87, the Connecticut native still emanates a contagious enthusiasm for life from every pore of his five-foot, nine-inch frame. Ask this man with a broad smile, animated gestures and an effervescent voice that smacks of inner joy what he's simply nuts about, and you'll get a lightening quick response—his wife Mary, 85, and his hobby of 20 years: growing and selling tropical fruit trees.

A visual testimonial to the personal rewards of DeNardis' hobby are the more than 80 hearty and healthy organically grown tropical fruit trees on his 1.25-acre lot along the Palm River, in North Naples. "I'm in love with everything about fruit trees, especially the eating part," grins DeNardis, who admittedly becomes a kid in a candy shop every time he visits a wholesale nursery to buy a tree for himself or his clients. "My hobby is my work, so I have a wholesale license," he explains. "Typically, when I shop for 10 trees I come back with as many as 25.

His trees are always bearing fruit, which is why a trip to DeNardis' Garden of Eden is guaranteed to result in a slow golf cart ride through the all-natural nursery. Pruned to give visitors ample room to enjoy a more intimate encounter, DeNardis' grove includes many trees familiar to Southwest Floridians. The treasure trove encompasses 40 varieties of mango trees, 12 varieties of avocado and 4 varieties of star fruit, as well as varieties of papaya, lychee, banana and orange trees.

Other, lesser known produce growing onsite includes jak fruit, a sweet, yellow, fleshy fruit that tastes like

pineapple; mamey sapote, a foot-long fruit with orange-tasting flesh, somewhat like a flavorful pumpkin; canistel, a glowing yellow, waxy-skinned fruit with a pulp the consistency of a hard-boiled egg yolk; jaboticaba, a purple fruit with the flavor of a sweet grape; black sapote, whose rich, custard-like flesh has a mild chocolate flavor; and the longan, a fleshy fruit that looks like an eyeball and taste similar to the lychee.

Three cats and a dog help to keep squirrels from raiding the grove. What DeNardis and his wife don't eat, they give to their friends or send to the Old Naples farmers' market off Third Street. They also offer the fruits of their labor of love to visitors. "No one walks away from here without fruit," says DeNardis, whose passion doesn't end at his property line.

That's why he regularly attends meetings of three different tropical fruit tree groups in the area and enjoys day trips, like a recent sojourn to the Homestead Mango Tasting Festival.

DeNardis would love to see more Naples' residents growing fruit trees in their yards. "There aren't many places in the world that you can raise tropical fruit trees," he remarks. "Homegrown, though it may not be as pretty as store bought, is the best not just because it is free of chemicals, but also because it tastes better."

While Frank is busy pruning, mulching and fertilizing his part of the Garden of Eden, Mary is occupied with her vegetable and flower gardens in the backyard. "I am not allowed in her garden, because I have big feet," jokes DeNardis. Both these nurturing stewards of the land enjoy good health and take no medication. "We're going to live to be 100," they claim, "because we're active and eat a lot of great fruit."

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### Carambola bread

from Trinigourmet.com

Serving Size: 12

1 cup pureed carambola,  
about 3 to 4 small fruits  
1 cup sugar  
3/4 cup milk  
1 egg or egg replacer  
1 cup wholewheat flour

1 cup white flour  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon ginger  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/4 cup raisins  
  
\* Preheat the oven to 350 F and oil or spray one large (9X5X3-inch)

loaf pan.

\* Combine the puree, sugar, milk, and egg.  
\* In another bowl, combine the remaining ingredients and mix well. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet, stirring until all the flour is moistened.  
\* Pour into the prepared loaf pan and bake about 35-40 minutes.

## **Got Questions about Growing Tropical Fruit? We're 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). 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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