

Southwest Florida Tropical Fruit News

—covering Naples and Bonita Springs, FL

October 2009

Club news	1
Fruit calendar	2
What's ripe in October	2
CFG directors	2
October in SWFL	3
Veggie patch	3
BSTFC directors	3
Farming and 'fooding'	5
Upcoming calendar	5

CLUB NEWS

Collier Fruit Growers

www.collierfruit.org

The next meeting is Monday, October 19th. This month's program will feature Ian Orlikoff, president of Eco Logic Plant Care, a division of Signature Tree Care. Ian will talk about alternatives to the use of chemicals and fertilizers for safe, sustainable and environmentally sound plant and soil care.

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.

Fruit for the tasting table. Please cut up fruit to make it easier to sample.

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, October 13th. Brian Housewert, urban homesteader extraordinaire and Collier Fruit Growers VP, will talk about his organic vegetable garden. He and his family are working toward sustainability by creating their own paradise on the 1/3-acre parcel in the middle of Golden Gate City. They are two years into the journey on the Golden Gate City plot, and have spent almost 6 years experimenting with urban farming, raising livestock, growing medicinal herbs and food.

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 October 27th at the church. The board of directors meets at 6pm.

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

Upcoming date. Fall fruit tree sale, November 14.

October fruit calendar

October 13. Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club monthly meeting. 7pm. First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs. 992-4664.

October 17. Florida Herb Arts Farm. Establishing and caring for an herb garden. Instructor Pat Johnson. 10:30am-12:45pm. \$20; includes lunch. La Belle. 239-910-1538.

October 19. Collier Fruit Growers monthly meeting. 7pm. Golden Gate Community Center, 4701 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples. 643-7275.

October 27. BSTFC discussion group. 7pm. First United Methodist Church, Bonita Springs. 992-4664.

October 30, 31. Southwest Florida Home and Garden Show. 9am-4pm (Sunday, 10am-3pm). Admission: \$3. University of Florida Collier

Extension Service. 14700 Immokolee Rd., Naples. 353-4244.

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

November 14^t & 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 21. Florida Herb Arts Farm. Creating soap from scratch. Instructor Pat Johnson. 10:30am-12:45pm. \$20. La Belle. 239-910-1538.

December 8-10. ECHO Agricultural Conference 2009. 17391 Durrance Rd., N. Fort Myers. 543-3246 or conference@echonet.org.

What's ripe in October?

avocado
banana
Barbados cherry

carambola
coconut
mamey apple
miracle fruit
natal plum
papaya

roselle
sapodilla
sapote, black
persimmon
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, color or national origin.

Officers

John Puig , President	601-2919
captjohn@naplesbiofuel.com	
Brian Housewert , Vice President	537-1261
moonblinkstudios@gmail.com	
Mary Fehr , Treasurer	774-1047
Fehrmay@earthlink.net	
Linda Coyner , Newsletter editor/speaker coordinator	
fruitnflowers@gmail.com	530-2383

At-large Directors

Jon Adams , past President	777-8217
jonadamsfl@gmail.com	
Thomas Hecker	682-0674
tshecker@gmail.com	
Tracey Vessillo	877-6608
tracey.vessillo@yahoo.com	

October in SW Florida

The September yard tour was a wash out, literally. That morning we got some wonderful rain, which unfortunately wasn't conducive to walking around a muscadine vineyard. It was just as well as the muscadine harvest was early this year and by September 12 the grapes were history. I'm thrilled to report that my two muscadine vines (both Southern Homes variety) produced a few grapes their first year. They are planted along a chain-link fence. Nothing fancy. I've ordered several varieties from Ison's Nursery, a couple of which have thin skins that are easy to eat. In the meantime, if you want information about growing muscadines, Gordon Skrede will be glad to share his knowledge. Call him at 353-4543.

The rains have been generous the last few weeks. Better late than never, right? With the nice warm temperatures, plants have grown like gangbusters. It's a good time to weed, as the recent rains have made them easier to pull.

My summer vegetable garden turned out a big crop of wild grasses with morning glory vines covering tomato cages and bean trellises. Did I mention that summer vegetable gardens require a lot of attention? Other

October in the veggie patch

Backyard gardeners are gearing up for our best growing season for vegetables—winter.

According to Andres Mejides' garden almanac for Zone 10, it's okay to start seeds for heat-lovers such as tomatoes and peppers in afternoon shade; start seeds for greens, brussel sprouts, broccoli,

cabbage, cauliflower.

You can also plant beans, peas, carrot, and okra seeds directly in the garden. With afternoon shade, you can even start lettuce.

Mejides advises to wait to plant cucumbers, squash, and corn, at least until after the rains have stopped.

Prepare your beds with plenty of manure; mulch with straw.

folks report success with Earthboxes, containers with a water reservoir. On the internet, there are DIY instructions for making your own since the real thing is pricey. If I succeed with my homemade containers, maybe we can start a production line.

Don't miss the upcoming herb workshops that Pat Johnson is offering. The first one is "creating your herb garden from scratch" on October 17th. See the calendar on page 2. The schedule of topics ranges from herb gardening basics, making soap, making all-purpose skin cream, to cooking with herbs, and preserving herbs. You can contact her for the dates at floridaherbarts@aol.com or 239-910-1538. Workshops are \$20; which includes an herb-enhanced lunch.

Bring your questions to club meetings or check out the Forum at the Collierfruit.org website. 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*

Officers

Tim Deaton , President timdeaton@yahoo.com	992-4664
Trevor Parks , Vice President tparks9208@aol.com	947-9429
Tom Betts , Treasurer tibetts@comcast.net	498-0003
Kathy Walters , Secretary kathy@virtualdba.com	800-210-0217
Linda Coyner , Newsletter editor fruitnflowers@gmail.com	530-2383

At-large Directors

Madeline Bohannon , past President madelinemay99@gmail.com	851-4448
Joe Busa jojobusa@yahoo.com	948-0987
Bob Van Scoy BobVanScoy@gct21.net	992-1751

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.

Farming and 'fooding' nurtures lives and livelihoods

by Roger Williams, Florida Weekly, June 4, 2009

In the contemporary business of urban farming and "fooding" — making a living by selling local food to local people — there seem to be several demanding prerequisites.

First, you have to come from a long ways away or have traveled widely. Second, you have to be something of a minimalist. Third, you have to qualify as a workaholic. And finally, you have to come equipped with a temperament that can distinguish between joy and opulence, and assign each of them different values.

At least those are the shared qualifications of several Neapolitan urban farmers, or "fooders," who know they won't get rich fast, if at all, but who say they reap an abundance of pleasure from doing hard work that they love dearly. "I love people, and I love food," says Jacquie Hoare-Ward, the founder, owner, chief cook and bottle washer at Jacquie's Jamming, a tiny retail operation and commercial kitchen in a North Naples industrial park where she turns out jams, jellies, marmalades, salsas and chutneys. "I do it because I love it and because I can make a living off of it," says Nick Batty, who grows and sells a score or more of vegetables as fresh as the morning dew for local consumers on his small-acre farm east of Naples.

"We're doing this because we love what we do," says Jenny Burd, who with her husband David Burd operates Friendly Burd Tree Service and Tropical Fruit, a tropical fruit concern that manages and cultivates fruit trees for others and that also sells large quantities of fresh or dried mangoes in many varieties, along with many other fruits and preserves and honey. The couple also teaches others how to grow and preserve their own food.

Here are their abridged biographies — the stories of people for whom a productive life means literally a life of produce, of sharing the cultivated gifts of local fields and groves.

Jacquie Hoare-Ward Jacquie's Jamming

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Lebanon-born Jacquie Hoare-Ward studied English and worked in

hotels and restaurants around London. It was a life far removed from her present-day role as a subtropical urban food producer who works tirelessly in a colorful little kitchen, making and jarring handcrafted, tropical fruit jams and jellies.

For Mrs. Hoare-Ward, the business of jams and jellies all comes down to this: Create something compelling that few or no others can match, and keep the price low and the overhead down while you're doing it. She collects fruit from groves or from private individuals and cuts it all by hand. "We use no machines," she says about the mangoes she turns into jams, the calamondins (a powerfully flavorful, walnut-size orange citrus) she combines with cranberries, and the black sapote (known as the chocolate fruit) that goes into her "very unusual chocolate sauce with Kahlua and vanilla." She makes her chutneys Caribbean-style, with papaya. Just last week, she started selling lunch as take-out from her storefront on Yahl Street.

She also sets up a booth at the Third Street South Farmers Market every Saturday morning, and her goodies are available at Fifth Avenue South Coffee Company, Oakes Farm Market, Mikkelson's Pastry Shop and or Wynn's Market, all in Naples. Jacquie's Jammings are also sold at the Fairchild Botanical Market in Miami and even at Mazzola Bakery in Brooklyn, N.Y. And you can also place an order online, at www.jacquiesjamming.com.

Mrs. Hoare-Ward's London days ended when her husband, a former Royal Navy sailor, was transferred to New York City. She worked in real estate, selling lofts and condominiums in Manhattan, until the couple bought a sugar plantation in St. Croix and opened a bed-and-breakfast," she says. "A B&B's a wonderful thing, but when you do it 24/7 for 12 years, that's enough."

It was as part of that St. Croix enterprise that Mrs. Hoare-Ward started making and selling her tropical fruit jams. When the couple decided to leave the island, they sought a place where she could continue making her jams. They picked Naples, she says, in part because of the abundance of mangoes here. She started Jacquie's Jamming in 2002 and has made many good friends since, including the folks at the Goodlette Farmers Market and Ritchey's Produce. "Ronnie Ritchey has come through for me when there's no other fruit to be had — he's even sold me his last box of mangoes or papayas," she says, explaining how people in this business tend to take care of each other.

David and Jenny Burd Friendly Burd Tree Service and Tropical Fruit

David and Jenny Burd are master gardeners and subtropical fruit experts known for their extraordinary mangoes, sold fresh or dried, and sometimes sold by the hundredweight in their dry form at the Third Street Farmers Market.

Some people spend whole summers waiting for the next supply of the dried extravagance, which is why the Burds often run out, even though they can produce 200 pounds for a single winter season. That's a huge amount of individual mangoes, when you consider how much moisture is lost in the drying process.

The Burds grow and in some cases preserve and prepare many other fruits, of course — but David has been called the "Mango Master." "And I'm known as the 'Drag-on' lady," adds Mrs. Burd. "He prunes or cuts (a client's trees) and I 'dragon' them away."

Mrs. Burd grew up in a world where few had ever heard of a mango: Belfast, Northern Ireland. Her mother practiced lifelong frugality, and her father made his "plot" in the city — ground rented to gardeners — produce tremendous amounts of food. Mr. Burd grew up in the woods of Bucks County, Pa., where his father was a ranger and manager of a Boy Scout camp. He was bicycling through Northern Ireland when he met Jenny at a bed-and-breakfast owned by one of her friends. They fell in love and came back to the U.S. together.

Mr. Burd began to study mangoes and other tropical and subtropical fruits after coming to Naples and starting a yard service. After encountering numerous unkempt fruit trees in clients' backyards, he decided to learn everything he could about caring for subtropical fruits. Although he is a certified master gardener, he plays that down, saying, "There's so much more than that to learn."

The Burds live "more simply than you can imagine," says Mrs. Burd. At their home on Rordon Avenue, they grow small, self-contained mango trees that are high volume producers, sometimes with four or five varieties on each tree.

This time of year, Mr. Burd is beginning the process of injuring his right shoulder, yet again. The significant aggravation is caused by using a knife in his right hand, day after day, to cut mangoes precisely — exactly the way he likes them cut, and at the perfect moment of ripeness — so they can be dried and then sold. He handles scores of different varieties of mangoes, but he says among his favorites — and the favorites of Friendly Burd produce customers — are Valencia Pride, Nam Doc Mai and Pram Kai Mea.

Nate Batty **Organic grower**

Nate Batty was born in the tiny African nation of Swaziland and raised mostly in Naples (his father is English, his mother South African). When he was about 25, he decided to get a degree in horticulture from the University of Florida so he could become a produce grower. He speaks of those university days with characteristic modesty. "I wasn't the greatest student, but they teach you how to think, and that's valuable," he says.

Although he seems to be able to think — and organize — better than most people, his modesty precludes him from saying so. "It's not rocket science, growing organic vegetables," he says. He does allow that it's a lot of work, however. But one thing is true, he says: "The more you do it, the easier it becomes."

This year, Mr. Batty is expanding from a three-acre operation to six or eight acres near the corner of Immokalee and Rock roads. He grows a variety of squash and greens, cucumbers, some tomatoes, lots of lettuce, arugula, Chinese vegetables, herbs, green cabbage, onions, broccoli, kohlrabi and more, all organic. He delivers his bounty as it's picked. When new clients seek his food, he adds them to his e-mail list and then figures out how best to get them the vegetables. He doesn't wholesale, but he might provide free produce to someone willing to serve as a supply depot for a certain area of town. "I try to keep as few drops as possible," he explains.

That way, he can spend more time in the field, growing food so fresh and healthy it might almost seem to come from a different world. Fortunately for food-loving Neapolitans, that world is Mr. Batty's.

Upcoming speakers & events

Bonita Club

October 13: Brian Housewert on organic gardening

November 10: Jenny Burd and Pat Johnson

November 14 Fall tree sale

December 8 Holiday potluck and elections

Collier Club

October 19 Ian Orlikoff on sustainable fruit and vegetable growing

November 16 Backyard beekeeping by Dennis Riggs

December 21 Holiday potluck and elections

Got Questions about Growing Tropical Fruit? We're 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.

October 2009 Fruit News

Collier Fruit Growers www.collierfruit.org
Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club
c/o Linda Coyner
3705 17th Ave. SW
Naples FL 34117