



***Fruit Growers***  
***of SWFL***

**JANUARY 2022**



The January BSTFC Meetings will be  
Saturday, January 8 & Saturday the 22, 2022 at 430 pm.  
**Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District Station**

27701 Bonita Grande Drive, Bonita Springs, FL 34135

Both events will be a "potluck" dinner. Please bring a dish or dessert to share.  
Please always observe the wearing of masks and social distancing.

Please remember to pay your 2022 Renewal Dues: \$15/individual; \$25/family



**Collier Fruit Growers' next Meeting: Monday, January 17, 2022 at 7:00 pm.**  
**The Fire and Rescue Station**

14575 Collier Blvd., Naples, FL 34119

Enter through the door on the east (Collier Blvd.) side of the admin building.  
The January Speaker will be Danny Blank, owner of 12 Seasons Farm.  
Please practice social distancing. Wearing of masks at the participants discretion.

Please remember that it is time to pay your \$15.00 renewal dues for 2022 or risk  
not receiving the monthly newsletters. Please mail dues to: CFG, Inc. 1944  
Piccadilly Circus, Naples, FL 34112.

**Please note that starting January 17th the Collier Fruit Growers will be meeting at  
a new location, the Fire and Rescue Station, on the northwest corner of Vanderbilt  
Beach Road and Collier Blvd. (Route 951), which will be more convenient for many  
of our members.**

As is now customary, Daniel Blank will address the Collier Fruit Growers at their January 19th Meeting. Daniel uses organic methods on his twenty-acre 12 Seasons Farm in Olga, south of the Caloosahatchee River. Danny is the former farm manager at ECHO in North Fort Meyers. He has a post graduate college degree in Sustainable Agriculture and has taught at Warner College and FGCU.



Danny will give us a current update of fruit trees he is growing, and the methods employed to maximize crop yields, and what measures that he has taken to protect workers from the SARS-coV-2 (COVID-19) virus. Farmers have found that the use of composts and frequent nutrient feedings help offset the effects associated with citrus greening. Danny will have a sampling of his fruits and vegetables for sale at the meeting.

Thank you to the many officers and directors of both the Bonita Tropical Fruit Club and the Collier Fruit Growers for the service during this difficult Pandemic. The organizations would not be possible without your help. As the clubs transition into 2022 there will be some new officers and directors elected. Thank you for agreeing to serve.

A new Website for the Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club [BSTFC.org](http://BSTFC.org) is being established. It is still 'under construction,' but still worth reviewing to see what new features are available.

Remember that it is time to renew your annual membership dues. Thank you to those who have already paid.



**GRAPEFRUIT & FENNEL SALAD  
WITH MINT VINAIGRETTE**  
Submitted by Roberta Taylor

**1 medium red grapefruit, peeled and segmented**

**1 fennel bulb, halved and thinly sliced**

**¼ cup thinly sliced red onion**

**Vinaigrette:**

**3 Tbsp. fresh mint leaves**

**2 Tbsp. sherry vinegar**

**1 ½ tsp. honey**

**1/8 tsp. each salt and ground black pepper**

**2 Tbsp. olive oil**

**Arrange grapefruit segments, fennel and onion slices on a serving platter. Place mint, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper in a small food processor. Cover and process until mint is finely chopped, slowly adding oil in a steady stream. Drizzle dressing over salad. Makes 4 servings.**

This recipe previously appeared in the January 2016  
Collier Fruit Growers Newsletter.”

**Rita O'Hearn**  
**By Crafton Clift**

Rita O'Hearn at various times was a member of Miami, Broward, Bonita Springs, and Collier Rare Fruit Council groups. Rita especially enjoyed trips to collect new tropical fruit seeds. I first met Rita on a Fairchild Garden sponsored trip to Leticia, Colombia on the Amazon. Since then, Rita and I have been trips with as few as three to as many as two dozen travelers to Lima, Iquitos & Pucallpa in Peru, Brazil, Honduras, and Costa Rica. In 1989 I drove a Toyota pickup from Miami to Costa Rica. When I left the U.S. none of the Central American countries required a visa from U.S., but when I got to Nicaragua, Eugene Hassenfus had been shot down, belying the U.S. involvement in their civil war and I was held up in Honduras awaiting a visa for a couple of weeks.

Because of our many trips to Wilson Popenoe Botanic Garden in Tela, Honduras, I knew a cheap hotel there where I was staying. One night I was leaving a restaurant to return to the hotel. It was dark, beginning to rain a little. A car drove up and the people getting out looked like North Americans. Since I like to talk to strangers, I let go of my door handle and walked toward the people, thinking, "I'm going to tell that man his wife sure looks like my friend RITA!"

It was Rita O'Hearn and our core plant collecting group – Bill Shannon, Russ Hubbs, Chris Howell, Joe Clemens. The last night I spent in the U.S. was at Rita's in Naples, but this trip was planned after I left.

Rita went into assisted living a couple of years ago where she enjoyed socializing at the dinner table all day until Covid messed them up.

Rita passed away November 17, 2021. A memorial is planned by Jorge Sanchez (239) 682-4657, and Madeline Bohannon (239) 851-4448. Time and place are yet to be determined.

**Melissa Parsons**

Melissa is most deserving of my gratitude and appreciation for her dedication to the Collier Fruit Growers. She was hand chosen by her predecessor Mary Fehr as Treasurer, but right from the start, eight years ago, I realized that Melissa was uniquely qualified for the position.

Melissa helped rewrite the club's Bylaws and negotiate a period when personal interests conflicted with those of the club.

During the six years prior to COVID Melissa organized and purchased the club provided food for the annual Christmas parties. She has continued to purchase the food for the volunteers at the semi-annual tree sales.

When I suggested that accepting credit cards would boost revenue at the fruit tree sales, Melissa did all the work to make it happen. Now, credit cards make up well over 50% of all sales. Lucky for the club, Melissa has agreed to continue participating with the credit card sales at future tree sales.

When the CFG Board promoted the 2019 fruit tour to Costa Rica, Melissa immediately signed up for the trip. Her participation on the trip was greatly appreciated by all.

Melissa was instrumental in filing all the paperwork necessary to obtain the 501(C)(3) tax status for nonprofit organizations, saving the club much time and cost in not having to file complete annual tax returns.

During her tenure the club's finances have been seamless, due to Melissa's diligence and hard work.

I know that I should not take Melissa's resignation personally. I wish you Melissa the best in all your endeavors.

Very sincerely,  
Rodger Taylor

**Fruits which Ripen in January:**

Avocado, banana, black sapote, canistel, carambola, citrus, coconut, guava, macadamia nut, mamey sapote, papaya, saponilla. Annual Fruits: Eggplant, winter squash (Cushaw/Seminole pumpkin), pigeon pea, bell pepper, tomato

## **Launches Loan Guarantee Program to Create More Market Opportunities, Promote Competition and Strengthen America's Food Supply Chain**

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9, 2021 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced USDA is deploying \$100 million under the new Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program to make USDA available nearly \$1 billion in loan guarantees; these loan guarantees will back private investment in processing and food supply infrastructure that will strengthen the food supply chain for the American people.

USDA is making the funding available through the American Rescue Plan Act. The program is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to address food system challenges dating back decades and further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These investments will help essential processing and supply chain infrastructure that will ultimately deliver more opportunities and fairer prices for farmers, they will give people greater access to healthier foods, and they will help eliminate bottlenecks in the food supply chain.

"The pandemic exposed vulnerabilities and created extreme disruptions in America's food supply chain. The reduction in meat processing capacity is just one example of the supply chain bottlenecks that affect small and midsize farmers," Vilsack said. "Under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris, USDA is investing in ways to improve America's food supply chain. The funding we're announcing today will leverage approximately a billion dollars in public and private-sector investments that will significantly expand meat and poultry processing capacity and finance critical food

### **Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program**

Through the Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program, USDA will partner with lenders to guarantee loans of up to \$40 million to help eligible entities expand meat and poultry processing capacity and finance other food supply chain infrastructure. Lenders may provide the loans to eligible cooperatives, corporations, for profits, nonprofits, Tribal communities, public bodies, and people in rural and urban areas.

USDA Rural Development (RD) will administer the loans. Funding may be used to:

- start-up or expand food supply chain activities such as aggregating, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distributing food.
- address supply chain bottlenecks.
- increase capacity and help create a more resilient, diverse and secure U.S. food supply chain.

USDA is accepting electronic applications from lenders through the Food Supply Chain Online Application System until funds are expended. Paper applications will not be accepted. To access the online application system, lenders must submit a request to [rdfoodsupplychainloans@usda.gov](mailto:rdfoodsupplychainloans@usda.gov). For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov/foodsupplychainloans](http://www.rd.usda.gov/foodsupplychainloans) or see the notice published in the Dec. 9 Federal Register.

USDA Rural Development encourages applications for projects that advance the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, promote equitable access to USDA programs and services, and reduce the impacts of climate change on rural communities. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points](http://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points).

### **Background**

This funding announcement follows the Biden-Harris Administration's September announcement about the steps it is taking to address concentration in the meat-processing industry. It adds a new commitment of \$100 million for guaranteed loans on top of the previously announced \$500 million investment to expand meat and poultry processing capacity.

These efforts are part of USDA's Build Back Better Initiative, a comprehensive plan to invest \$4 billion to strengthen the resiliency of America's food supply chain while promoting competition.

As co-Chair of the Biden-Harris Administration's Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force, Secretary Vilsack and USDA have brought together industry, labor and federal partners to address the short-term supply chain disruptions arising from the Administration's strong economic recovery. This is one of several key steps that USDA is taking to build a more resilient supply chain and better food system and

to increase competition in agricultural markets. These steps are pursuant to President Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy and his Executive Order on America's Supply Chains. This initiative will support key supply chain infrastructure investments to expand and scale existing capacity, as well as support long-term investments in new operations. Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety, and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov). If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates visit, our [GovDelivery](#) subscriber page.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, promoting competition and fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

## **Grant opportunity: Fruit Guys Small Scale Producers Grant**

### **Fruit Guys Community Fund**

We are excited to announce we will be accepting applications for a 2022 Grant Cycle.

The application portal will be activated January 3, 2022, at 12:00 am PST.

**The deadline to apply is Friday, January 31 at 11:59 pm PST.** In the meantime, review our [grant eligibility requirements](#) and please spread the word with small-scale farmers and agricultural non-profits you know.

**Focus on Small Farms:** We are one of the only organizations that provide agricultural micro-grants for small farms in the U.S. Investing in farms as economic and social change agents.

Each year we award grants ranging from \$2,000-\$5,000 for projects that align with one or more of the core ideals detailed in our [Sustainable Farming Manifesto](#).

### **Eligibility**

1. Applicant is an owner/operator of the farm or has long-term, legal access to the land. If farming on leased land, a letter of support from the landowner specifying length of the lease agreement must be provided with the grant application.
2. The applicant farm must be an established working farm that is looking to improve operations.
3. Applicant has not been previously awarded a Fruit Guys Community Fund grant. We are not currently funding past grantees.
4. We welcome farms to re-apply for the same project or a different one if you have not been funded.
5. Farm is small to medium-sized as determined by acreage in agricultural production. Farms with more than 300 acres in agricultural production are ineligible to apply.
6. Community outreach. Farmers will engage in community outreach, education, or policy advocacy surrounding sustainable agriculture. Engagement must be described in the grant proposal. Up to 10% of the total grant amount awarded may be used to support efforts for community outreach, education, and/or advocacy.

<https://fruitguyscommunityfund.org/get-involved/apply/>

### **For possibly more information contact:**

Jessica Mendes Ryals, Agriculture / Sustainable Food Systems Agent

UF/IFAS Extension, Collier County

Office: 239-252-4811

[Jessicaryals@ufl.edu](mailto:Jessicaryals@ufl.edu)

## Grafting Avocado Trees

Commercial avocado growers get the best results from grafted avocado trees, obtaining a large crop of top-quality fruit. Avocado tree grafting is not technically necessary to get fruit to grow. However, grafting can speed up the process of fruit bearing. If one grows an avocado tree from seed, they will have to wait with the seedling for six or more years before seeing any fruit. Even after the seedling begin to produce, there is no certainty that the tree will look like the parents or produce fruit of the same quality. That is why avocados are usually not seed grown. Trees are propagated by grafting known cultivar scions onto the various rootstocks.

Grafting avocado trees is a common practice of commercial producers, but maybe rather difficult for the average gardener. Grafting is a process of joining parts of two trees biologically. One can graft scions (budwood) or the individual buds of one tree onto the rootstock of another, allowing the two to grow together into one tree. Virtually all avocado trees commercially sold today have been grafted. However, that does not mean anyone can simply graft the tips (scions) of one tree onto another. Avocado tree grafting involves carefully bonding the cambium layers of the scion to that of the rootstock. As the two grow together, a new tree is created. The closer the scion and the rootstock are to each other biologically, the better chance you have of successfully grafting them.

If you are wondering how to graft an avocado, it is a matter of precision. First, you must position the scion on the rootstock. The green cambium layer of wood, just beneath the bark, is the key. Grafting avocado trees is only possible if the cambium on the scion and the cambium on the rootstock contact each other. If not, the graft will fail.

Of the three most common methods of grafting, i.e., cleft (Vee or top work), side veneer, and bud, the most common is the cleft graft, an ancient method for field grafting. Firstly, select the desired budwood (scions) with two or three buds which are starting to 'push' new growth. In south Florida, December and January are deemed by many to be the best months to graft avocado trees. Scions are usually collected in the late afternoon from known avocado cultivar that is to be replicated, and can be stored in a dark, cool sealed plastic bag or wrapped tightly in 'Parafilm' for several days. Grafting is typical conducted during the morning hours.

Start by adequately sterilizing the tools with alcohol and letting them air dry. Position oneself or the rootstock and scion in a conformable position. If potted rootstock, place it either in the lap or on a low table directly in front of the Grafter. Now time and precision are vital. As soon as the cambium layers are exposed, they will start to 'heal,' so the target to complete the graft is one minute. (Do not get upset, this is only the target for experienced grafters.) Cut completely through the branch and trunk of rootstock using opposed blade hand clippers. Make a vertical split, about an inch longer than the proposed 1 to 2-inches-long cuts on the scion, through the center of the rootstock. Cut opposing tapers on the scions using a single bevel grafting knife. Insert the complete taper of the scion down into the rootstock and position the scion to making sure that cambium layers on both sides (or one side if the scion is a smaller diameter than the rootstock) are in contact with full each other. (Never touch the exposed cambium layer.) Using elastic bands, or green gardener tape wrap the rootstock at the splice tightly. Wrap the graft tightly with Parafilm tape, twisting the top securely closed or cover with plastic to prevent the graft from getting wet. If the rootstock is potted, keep it under cover in partial shade. It will take 3 to 4 months to tell if the graft was successful.

Refer to: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/fruits/avocado/avocado-tree-grafting.htm>

### **Crop Insurance for Specialty, Diversified and Organic Farmers**

This publication reviews federally subsidized crop insurance, with special attention to options available to specialty, diversified, and organic farmers.

Generally, the greater the diversity or specialization of the crops and livestock farmers grow, the more difficult it can be for them to obtain insurance that fully covers the value and risks of their production. This publication gives several examples of using alternative crop-insurance policies that can offer some degree of protection from significant market-price changes and the multiple perils of farming that can impact yield.

It gives special attention to understanding whole-farm revenue insurance options, which may be of particular interest to growers of diverse specialty and organic crops and livestock.

Crop Insurance Options for Specialty, Diversified, and Organic Farmers | ATTRA | Sustainable Agriculture Project (ncat.org)



# Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club



## Who We Are & What We Do

The Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club, Inc., is an educational not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to inform, educate and advise members and the public in the selection of plants and trees, to encourage their cultivation, and to provide a social forum where members can freely exchange plant material and information. The club cooperates with many organizations, and provides a basis for producing new cultivars. We function in any legal manner to further the above stated aims.

### General Meeting:

The General Meetings will be held on the second Saturday of each month starting at 4:30 pm. The Meetings will be pot luck dinners at the Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District Station at 27701 Bonita Grande Drive, Bonita Springs, FL Please bring a dish to share.

### Workshops:

Workshops will be held on the fourth Saturday of each month starting at 4:30 pm. at the Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District Station at 27701 Bonita Grande Drive, Bonita Springs, FL and will be pot luck dinners.. Please bring a dish to share. This open format encourages discussion and sharing of fruits, plants, seeds, leaves, insects, photos, recipes, etc. This is a great change to receive answers to specific questions.

### Tree Sales:

Semi-annual tree sales in JUNE and June, in the Bonita Springs area, raise revenue for educational programs for club members and other related purposes of the club.

### Trips:

The club occasionally organizes trips and tours of other organizations that share our interests. The IFAS Experimental Station and the Fairchild Nursery Farm are examples of our recent excursions.

### Membership:

Dues are \$15 per person for new members, and \$25 per household. Name tags are \$6 each. Send checks to: PO Box 367791, Bonita Springs, FL 34136, or bring to any regularly scheduled meeting.





# Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club



Feel free to join BSTFC on our **Facebook group**, where you can post pictures of your plants, ask advice, and find out about upcoming events!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BSTFC/>

Link to the **next meeting**: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BSTFC/events/Meetup> Link (events/meetings sync with the calendar on your phone!):

<https://www.meetup.com/Bonita-Springs-Tropical-Fruit-Club/>

Our **Website** (and newsletters with tons of info):

<https://www.BonitaSpringsTropicalFruitClub.com/>

#### Officers and Board of Directors:

Jorge Sanchez, President  
Luis Garrido, Vice President  
Dwain Kiddo, Treasurer  
Talitha DeLuco, Secretary  
Crafton Clift, Director  
Lisa Mesmer, Director  
George Kaladiny, Director



**Like Us on Facebook!** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BSTFC/>

## 2022 CFG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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!

#### CFG Officers

President, Crafton Clift  
Vice President, Bonnie Hawkins  
Secretary, Lisa Hare  
Treasurer, Rodger Taylor

#### CFG Board Members

Jorge Sanchez  
Micah Bishop  
Lisa White



VISIT US AT:  
[www.collierfruit.org](http://www.collierfruit.org)



**Like Us on Facebook!** <https://www.facebook.com/CollierFruitGrowers/>

HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR

