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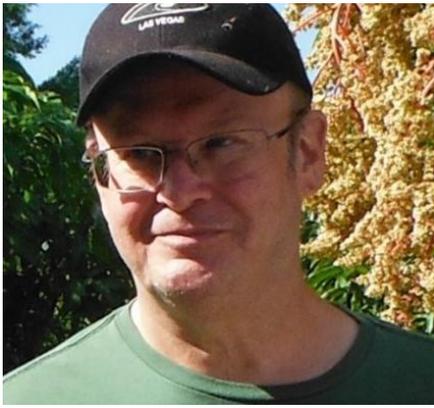
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# *Fruit Growers of SWFL*

**OCTOBER 2021**



Dr. Stephen Brady will be the CFG speaker on October 18th. He will speak on the warm climate fruits in Southwest Florida. Dr. Brady is well known as a local authority on fruit growing and nationally known as a world fruit hunter. Since planting his first mango tree as a child, Dr. Brady has had a passion for growing tropical fruits. He is a retired physician with a BA in Botany and has a collection of approximately 600 fruit trees surrounding his Naples home. He is one of several local fruit enthusiasts featured in the 2012 documentary "The Fruit Hunters," which follows the search for exotic cultivars by preservationists around the world.

**Collier Fruit Growers' NEXT Meeting: Monday, October 18, 2021, at 7:00 pm.**

**Life Center, Tree of Life Church**

**2132 Shadowlawn Dr., Naples, FL 34112**

**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 2021 or risk not receiving the monthly newsletters.**

**Please mail dues to: CFG, Inc. 1944 Piccadilly Circus, Naples, FL 34112.**



After nearly fourteen months of having to deal with COVID -19 we are all anxious for our lives to return to 'normal.' Memberships of both the Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club and the Collier Fruit Grows have significantly decreased during this time. Rebuilding interest and reevaluating the objectives of these and related organizations is 'Job One.' Interested person are needed to service as Officers and Directors for both organizations.

**Video recordings of Crafton Cliff's many fruit related stories have been deemed a high priority. Volunteers are needed to record the videos of Crafton and post them on YouTube.**

**A tech savvy person is needed to enhance and redesign the CollierFruit.org website, making it easier to navigate all the relevant information posted therein.**

The much-anticipated Grafting Class is now slated to start at 1:00 to 5:00 pm, Saturday, October 9. This class is only open to the twenty persons who are already registered. The Class will be held at the UF/IFAS Extension Service, Collier County Facility, at 14700 Immokalee Road.

**Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club Meeting will be on**

**Saturday, October 9 and October 23 at 4:30 pm.**

**Location: Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District Station**

**27701 Bonita Grande Drive, Bonita Springs, FL 34135**

**Both Events will be a Pot-Luck Dinner.**

**Please bring a Dish or Dessert to Share.**

**Please always observe the wearing of masks and social distancing.**

**Please remember to pay your 2021 renewal dues: \$15/ individual, \$25/ family.**



# Recipes

**As Daniela has taking a temporary pause from writing about new recipes in the newsletter, we have repeated a favorite recipe from the October 2019 issue of the newsletter.**

Although passionfruit is usually used in dessert recipes, it can also be used in main dishes. This recipe by Marian Blazes was found on [www.thespruceeats.com](http://www.thespruceeats.com). It pairs passionfruit with ginger and chicken to make a sweet and savory dish that is sure to become a family favorite.

## **Chicken Breasts with Ginger Passionfruit Sauce**

- 4 chicken breasts (about 1 1/2 pounds)
  - Salt to taste
  - Black pepper to taste
  - 2 tablespoons butter
  - 1 shallot (minced)
  - 1 tablespoon ginger (minced)
  - 1 to 2 cups chicken broth
  - 1 1/2 cups passion fruit pulp (divided)
  - 2/3 cup brown sugar (divided)
  - 2 tablespoons apple cider
  - 1 tablespoon vinegar
  - 1 tablespoon soy sauce
  - 2 tablespoons cornstarch
1. Sprinkle chicken breasts with salt and pepper.
  2. In a large sauté pan, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the shallot and the ginger, and cook on medium heat for a few minutes, stirring, until shallot and ginger are softened and fragrant.
  3. Add the chicken broth, 1/2 cup of the passionfruit pulp, and 1/3 cup brown sugar. Add the chicken breasts in a single layer. Add more chicken broth, if necessary, to ensure that the chicken breasts are covered with liquid.
  4. Bring the cooking liquid to a low simmer. Cover and cook the chicken breasts for 15-20 minutes, turning once, until just cooked through (slice into one of the breasts to check for doneness).
  5. Remove the chicken breasts to an ovenproof pan, cover with foil, and keep them warm in a 200 degree (F) oven while preparing the sauce.
  6. Pour off all but 1 cup of the cooking liquid from the sauté pan. Add the remaining 1 cup of passion fruit juice, the apple cider, the vinegar, the soy sauce, and 1/3 cup brown sugar. Whisk in the cornstarch.
  7. Bring the sauce to a boil, whisking constantly, and cook until it the sauce has thickened about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
  8. Pour the sauce over chicken breasts and serve. Serve with coconut rice if desired.

# The Genus *Garcinia*

***Garcinia*** is a large genus of flowering plants in the family Clusiaceae<sup>(1)</sup> native to Asia, America, Australia, tropical and southern Africa, and Polynesia. The number of species is disputed, amounting up to about 750. There are fifteen fruit trees of this genus which are common in South Florida, including the button mangosteen (*Garcinia prainiana*), Luli or seashore mangosteen (*G. hombroniana*), Imbe (*G. integrifolia*), mangosteens (*G. mangostana*), monkey fruit or lemon drop mangosteen (*G. intermedia*).

The fruit of most species of *Garcinia* are eaten locally; some species' fruits are highly esteemed in one region, but unknown just a few hundred kilometres away. The best-known species is *G. mangostana*, which is now cultivated throughout Southeast Asia and other tropical countries, having become established in the late 20th century.

The species which have been found to grow successfully in South Florida include:

***G. acuminata*** (sour bacuri) – The tree grows wild in its native dry land forests of Amazonian region and in tropical South America from Mexico to Peru. Though it is not an orchard fruit and collected from wild only, yet it is highly commercialized.



Fruits of sour bacuri

Cut fruits of sour bacuri

A glabrous, polygamodioecious tree, to 9 (20) m tall, less than 15 cm dbh; outer bark very thin; inner bark reddish; wood hard; sap yellow, in branches and trunk.

Petioles 1-2.5 cm long, somewhat swollen at base with a short appendage on the inner side above the articulation; blades elliptic, acuminate, mostly acute at base, 7.5-22 cm long, 2.5-8 cm. wide, the midrib often arched; lateral veins and submarginal collecting vein visible on both surfaces (prominulous above when dry).

Fascicles axillary, sessile, often at leafless nodes; pedicels slender, usually 2.5-3.5 cm long (rarely shorter); sepals 2, rounded at apex, ± united at base, ca 3 mm long; petals 4, nearly orbicular, to 7 mm long, creamy-white, strongly reflexed at anthesis; bisexual flowers with fewer stamens than the staminate flowers; style short; stigma discoid, as broad as or broader than ovary.

Fruits ovoid to globular, often weakly flattened, to 5 cm long and 4 cm wide, yellow, densely covered with puberulent, flattened protuberances to 3 mm long; exocarp thick, moderately hard; mesocarp thin, sweet; seeds usually 2, longer than broad.

Fruits are eaten fresh and are popular in their native range. They are occasionally cultivated & found in local markets.

***G. atroviridis*** (asam gelugur, asam gelugo, asam keeping) - It is a large rainforest tree native to Peninsular Malaysia and Thailand. This species grows wild throughout Peninsular Malaysia but is also widely cultivated, especially in the northern regions owing to its economic and medicinal value.



Fruit of the asam gelugur



Dried asam keeping fruit ready for cooking



The tree grows to a height of more than 20 meters and has a long trunk, smooth grey bark and drooping branches. The leaves are dark green, shiny, long and narrow with a pointed tip and upturned edges. The flowers are dark red. The round fruits are borne singly on twig ends about 7–10 cm in diameter. The ripe fruits are bright orange yellow.

The fruit contains citric acid, tartaric acid, malic acid and ascorbic acid, hydroxycitric acid, and flavonoids.

The fruit is sliced, dried then stewed and used as a common ingredient in Asian dishes such as curries and soups. Sun-dried slices of the fruits, locally known as "asam keeping," are commercially available and are popularly used as a vegetable salad and is considered extremely sour.

***G. cochinchinensis*** – It is a small, evergreen tree growing 10 - 15 m tall. It is frequently cultivated in the Malesian area, especially in Cambodia, and has also been introduced as a fruit tree in Brazil, where it is often grown in domestic orchards. The fruits contain 1 - 3 seeds surrounded by an acidic, succulent pulp. The yellowish fruit is an ovoid berry, 5 cm x 4 cm, with 6 – 10 seeds.



**Fruit of the *Garcinia cochinchinensis***

The fruits are eaten raw, made into juices, used as a sour relish or fermented into vinegar.

***G. gardneriana*** (false mangosteen, also known as abricó-do-mato, bacupari, pacori, bacopari, limãozinho) - It is an evergreen, dioecious species of the genus *Garcinia*. It is distributed throughout South America's Amazon Basin and produces fruit with edible arils. In Brazil there is currently research to use this fruit to combat cancer.

This species is widely distributed from the states of Amazônia to Rio Grande do Sul and it is found in the Atlantic Forest, the transition areas of Atlantic Forest-*restinga* (shore vegetation), the high plains forest, as well as in the riparian forest. It has an arboreal or shrubby habit, growing up to 10 m tall, flowers from August to January, and produces fruits from November until February.



**Fruit of the false mangosteen**

*The fruit* is consumed by humans living on the floodplain of the Alto Paraná River (Porto Rico, Paraná state, Brazil) in the form of juice or sweets.

***G. hombroniana*** (Luli, seashore mangosteen) – It is a species of mangosteen found Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam in coastal forests.

The tree is extremely soil and drought tolerant. At full size the tree generally will not exceed 6.1 m in height and is densely branched with a nice straight trunk. Smooth skinned fruits have a pleasantly sour, yellowish pulp. The roots and leaves have been utilized for hundreds of years to relieve itching.





**The fruit of the Luli or seashore mangosteen**

The aromatic fruit that is commonly used for juices and jellies.

**G. humilis** (achacharrú, or achacha) – It is a small, prolifically fruiting tree related to the mangosteen. It grows in the southern part of the Amazon basin in the central area of Bolivia, but has recently been planted on a commercial scale in Burdekin, Australia.

The achacha has an appealing color and form and is very decorative. It is egg-shaped, up to 6 cm long by 4 cm in diameter. It takes on a reddish-orange shade when mature. There is usually one significant coffee colored seed, but larger fruit may have more than one seed.



**Fruit of the achacha    Achacha seedlings**

The taste is described as both bitter and sweet and is somewhat reminiscent of lemonade. The rather tough, bitter rind can be split open with a knife or with the teeth, and the edible part of the fruit sucked off the seed.

The Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has found that the fruit keeps well for four to six weeks as long as it stays out of the refrigerator. It recommends storing the fruit at 15 to 20 C with a high relative humidity. If these conditions are not met, the fruit will shrivel.<sup>[2]</sup>

The glossy orange rinds of the achacha may be put in a blender with water. Once pureed and then strained to remove all the solids, this liquid may be diluted and sweetened to one's taste, then chilled for a refreshing summer drink.

**G. livingstonei / G. integrifolia** (African mangosteen, lowveld mangosteen, Livingstone's garcinia, imbe) – It is native to East Africa. Slow growing tree, usually only to 3 to 6 meters tall. Fruit ripens during August in its native range. Trees are cold hardy to 3 F and tolerate a wide variety of soil conditions and are salt tolerate so they can be grown near brackish or salt water. Can be grown in either full or partial shade.



**Fruit of the Garcinia livingstonei**

Fruit is either eaten fresh or made into preserves, pies, assorted desserts. The fruit has a good flavor, but its thin skin and subsequent susceptibility to damage has hindered commercial cultivation.

**G. intermedia** (monkey fruit or lemon drop mangosteen) - It is a species of tropical American tree which produces tasty fruit The lemon drop mangosteen (a name it shares with the closely related and similarly tasting *Garcinia madruno*). In Spanish it is called mameyito, though it is known as jorco in Costa Rica. In the Philippines, it is known as berba. In Portuguese it is called achachairu, a name that is also applied to *Garcinia humilis*.





**Fruit of the lemon drop mangosteen**

The fast-growing tree reaches a height of about 5 meters. It is tolerant of a wide range of soils, up to an altitude of around 4000 feet. It can be grown successfully and will fruit in a large pot. It grows best with regular water in full sun in a humid environment. It tolerates high temperatures but is probably not frost hardy. It has small, whitish flowers which are perfect and makes an attractive ornamental tree, especially when in fruit, which may be year-round. Its leaves are opposite.

The tree may fruit after as little as two years. The fruits are smooth spheres about an inch in diameter with a thin yellow, orange or red rind around a white pulp. They are edible and have an appealing sweet and sour taste.

It is usually eaten out of hand, though can be used for drinks, jams and jellies.

**G. kola** (bitter kola, a name sometimes used for *G. afzeli*) – It is a species of flowering plant found in Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Mali, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Its natural habitat is subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests.



**Fruit of the bitter kola**



**Dried seeds of the bitter kola**

The fruit, seeds ("bitter kola nuts") and bark of the plant have been used for centuries in folk medicine to treat ailments from coughs to fever. According to a report from the Center for International Forestry Research, *Garcinia kola* trade is still important to the indigenous communities and villages in Nigeria.

[*Cola acuminata*, source of the true kola nut, is not related to *Garcinia kola* belonging not to Clusiaceae but to a subfamily of the mallow family Malvaceae.]

**G. mangostana** (mangosteen, purple mangosteen) – It is a tropical evergreen tree with edible fruit native to tropical lands surrounding the Indian Ocean. Its origin is uncertain due to widespread prehistoric cultivation. It grows mainly in Southeast Asia, southwest India and other tropical areas such as Colombia, Puerto Rico and Florida, where the tree has been introduced. The tree grows from 6 to 25 m tall. The fruit of the mangosteen is sweet and tangy, juicy, somewhat fibrous, with fluid-filled vesicles (like the flesh of citrus fruits), with an inedible, deep reddish-purple colored rind (exocarp) when ripe. In each fruit, the fragrant edible flesh that surrounds each seed is botanically endocarp, i.e., the inner layer of the ovary. Seeds are both almond shaped and sized.



**Fruit of the Mangosteen**



Highly valued for its juicy, delicate texture and slightly sweet and sour flavor, the mangosteen has been cultivated in Malaysia, Borneo, Sumatra, Mainland Southeast Asia, and the Philippines since ancient times. The 15th-century Chinese record Yingya Shenglan described mangosteen as *mang-chi-shih* (derived from Malay *manggis*), a native plant of Southeast Asia of white flesh with delectable sweet and sour taste.

A description of mangosteen was included in the 'Species Plantarum' by Linnaeus in 1753. The mangosteen was introduced into English greenhouses in 1855. Subsequently, its culture was introduced into the Western Hemisphere, where it became established in West Indies islands, especially Jamaica. It was later established on the Americas mainland in Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Ecuador. The mangosteen tree generally does not grow well outside the tropics.

Mangosteen trees may reach fruit-bearing in as little as 6 years, but may require 12 or more years, depending on climate and cultivation methods. The yield of the mangosteen is variable, depending on climate and age of the tree. If the young tree is bearing for the first time, 200–300 fruits may be produced, whereas at maturity, 500 fruits per season are average. At age 30 to 45 years in full maturity, each tree may yield as many as 3,000 fruits, with trees as old as 100 years still producing.

A tropical tree, the mangosteen must be grown in consistently warm conditions, as exposure to temperatures below 0 C for prolonged periods will usually kill a mature plant. They are known to recover from brief cold spells rather well, often with damage only to young growth. Experienced horticulturists have grown this species outdoors and brought them to fruit in extreme south Florida.

The juvenile mangosteen fruit, which does not require fertilization to form (see agamospermy), first appears as pale green or almost white in the shade of the canopy. As the fruit enlarges over the next two to three months, the exocarp color deepens to darker green. During this period, the fruit increases in size until its exocarp is 6–8 cm in outside diameter, remaining hard until a final, abrupt ripening stage. Before ripening, the mangosteen shell is fibrous and firm, but becomes soft and easy to pry open when the fruit ripens.

To open a mangosteen, the shell can be scored with a knife, pried gently along the score with the thumbs until it cracks, and then pulled apart to reveal the fruit. Alternatively, the mangosteen can be opened without a knife by squeezing the shell from the bottom until it breaks, allowing the shell to be removed and the fruit eaten while intact with the stem. Occasionally, during peeling of ripe fruits, the purple exocarp juice may stain skin or fabric.

The fresh fruit is available seasonally in some local markets in North America. Mangosteens are available fresh, canned, and frozen in Western countries. The fruit may be served as a dessert or made into jams. In Vietnam, the ripe fruit is also used as a salad ingredient.

***G. parvifolia*** (Brunei cherry, kundong, asam aur aur, nicknames: Borneo cherry, and red mangosteen) – It is a tropical evergreen tree native to Borneo, Peninsular Malaysia, Sulawesi and Sumatra. The tree is found at elevations of 600–800 meters in humid environments and grows to a height of 33 meters.



**Fruit of the Brunei cherry**

Kundong trees grow in the humid interior of Borneo. The trees can be found at higher elevations along ridges and near riverbanks. The kundong propagates through seeds that take around six months to germinate. The tree grows quickly and once planted can produce fruit in as little as 4 years. The majority of kundong grow in the wild, but the tree can be cultivated in gardens.



Kundong can be eaten raw or cooked.<sup>[3]</sup> The small red-yellow fruit has a sour taste with a sweet white pulp. Younger fruits are used to produce a sour taste in other types of food, such as curry and rice. The fruit is about the size of a cherry and looks similar to a purple mangosteen.

***G. prainiana*** (button mangosteen, cherapu) - It has a flavor similar to, but distinct from, its cousin the purple mangosteen, with an interesting taste some have compared to a tangerine, but unlike its cousin, it has a tissue-thin skin rather than a hard rind, making it much easier to eat out-of-hand. Unlike the purple mangosteen, it can be grown in a container. The fruit is cultivated in Southeast Asia, by a few backyard growers in South Florida. It is a native of Malaysia and Thailand. The tree is small or medium-sized.

The *Garcinia prainiana* was introduced to Florida by William Whitman in 1980.<sup>1</sup>

The cherapu is a species for the dedicated enthusiast. at a minimum, the plant requires adequate cold protection, hand pollination (the presence of a male plant), shelter from strong winds, and regular watering.

It was featured in Malaysian 30 cents stamp, printed in 21-Feb-1999.



**Fruit of the button mangosteen**

It is best eaten out of hand. The bitter rind should be discarded. The fruit can be stored for about a week at room temperature and can be stored for up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

***G. spicata*** (bitter garcinia, garlic fruit) – It is a species of native to India and Sri Lanka. Evergreen tree; to 25 m high (typically grows to 9 meters high in Florida), bark 10-12 mm thick, yellowish-brown mottled with white, smooth hoop-ringed, brittle; blaze creamy-yellow; exudation milky, white to yellowish-green, sticky; branches horizontal; branchlets opposite, 6-ribbed; very young twigs and inflorescence densely minutely pubescent. Leaves simple, opposite, decussate, stipulate; petiole 10-20 mm, stout, often pubescent initially, grooved above; lamina 7-22 x 4-8 cm, ovate-elliptic, elliptic-oblong or oblong base acute or obtuse, apex obtuse, emarginate or obtusely acute, margin entire, glabrous, coriaceous; lateral nerves 12-20 pairs, parallel, arched towards the margin forming intramarginal nerve, prominent, secondary laterals prominent, intercostae laxly reticulate, prominent. Flowers polygamodioecious, white, in the axils of leaves or fallen leaves; male flowers: in axillary fascicles or pseudo-spikes; bracts minute, pilose; pedicels slender, 6-12 mm long; sepals 4 or 5, 3 x 4 mm, pale green, suborbicular, concave, the outer two coriaceous, the inner larger, thinner, margin ciliate; petals 5, white, obovate, concave, membranous; stamens in 5 erect, long clawed spathulate fascicles, opposite to petals; anthers didymous; pistillode clavate, smooth; female flowers: solitary, axillary or paired, usually on much more longer pedicels than the male; staminoides 5, small with weak anthers; ovary superior, globose, terete, 4-celled, ovule one in each cell; style 1 mm long; stigma peltate, lobed to the centre, lobes cuneiform.



**Fruit of the bitter garcinia**

Fruit is a berry, broadly oblong, yellowish, smooth, with bad odor, pulp sweet, acidic, bitter after taste, 3-4 cm across; seeds 1-3, up to 2.5 cm long, oblong, latterly flattened, testa brown, veined, which is edible and has been described as being similar to durian in flavor.



***G. nervosa*** (Kandis gajah (shared this vernacular name with *G. griffithii*), Kandis, Kandis hutan, Mangis, Mangis hutan, Sunkup, Mountain Garcinia.) - A rare Garcinia, best known for its huge leaves which grow to well over a foot long and may be the largest of the genus. Native to Peninsular Malaysia, Peninsular Thailand, Borneo, Sumatra, Sarawak, Brunei, Sabah, south & east Kalimantan, Philippines. The tree is noteworthy for its green-yellow fruit, roughly round to a flattened pear shape. Flesh is white yellow.

Grows in lowlands to sub-montane forests up to ca 1500 m altitude. Upper-canopy tree up to 48 m tall and 60 cm dbh. Stem with yellow latex. Leaves thick and leathery up to ca 30 cm or more, opposite, simple, penni-veined, glabrous, venation very conspicuous. Flowers ca. 8 mm diameter, white, placed in bundles in the leaf axils.



**Young tree and large leaf of the mountain garcinia**

Fruits ca. 44 mm diameter, yellow-red, fleshy berry, seeds with aril. Fruits are edible. There is no information about the eating quality of the fruit.

***G. xanthochymus*** (false mangosteen, gamboge, yellow mangosteen, Himalayan Garcinia, or Sour Mangosteen) – It is originally native to Northern India but widely but also found in southern Japan through Indochina to Peninsular Malaysia at elevations of 0 - 1400 meters. Plants are found growing in humid forests of valleys or hills.

Tree growing up to 8-15 meters with gray brown bark. Leaves are oblong to lanceolate, 15.4-30.5 cm x (4-)6-12 cm. Petioles are robust 1.5-2.5 cm long. Flowers are greenish white, monoecious in a dense cluster of 4-10 with a diameter of 1.3 cm. Fruits are yellow 5 cm to 8.9 cm in diameter containing yellow flesh and around 5 seeds. Seeds are oblong or ovoid and brown.



**Fruit of the false mangosteen**

The fruit is edible, juicy, slightly acidic, yellow the size of a large plum. *G. xanthochymus* is cultivated for its fruits, which are mainly made into jams or curries. In cultivation it does well in both tropical and warm temperate climates.

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Please Note: Most of the above species of Garcinias will grow true from seed. Several species require both a male and female tree to bare fruit. Grafting of Garcinias is beyond the scope of this article.

Footnote:

- (1) The **Clusiaceae** or **Guttiferae** Juss. (1789) is a family of plants including 13 genera and ca. 750 species. They are mostly trees and shrubs with milky sap and fruits or capsules for seeds. The family is primarily tropical. More than in many plant families, it shows large variation in plant morphology (for example, three to 10, fused or unfused petals, and many other traits). This family belongs to the order Malpighiales.

One feature which is sometimes found in this family, and rarely in others (e.g., Malpighiaceae), is providing pollinators with rewards other than pollen or nectar; specifically, some species offer resin which bees use in hive construction.

In the April 2019 (Pgs. 3-4) issue of FGSWF newsletter there is an article entitled 'Fordlandia, Henry Ford's Utopia.' The rubber industry in South America at the turn of the twentieth century was controlled by British rubber barons. "The Song of the Butterfly" which aired Sunday evening, September 5, 2021 on the Public Broadcasting System 'Point of View' program started me thinking of what happened about the claims of slavery and genocide of the indigenous people of the upper Peruvian Amazon River area during the 'Rubber Boom' of the first decade of the past century. An interesting fact considering Britain's "Slave Trade Act of 1807," and "Slavery Abolition Act of 1833." After much investigation I came across the following article that summarizes the work and personal testimonials which extract the facts from myths of the period. Rodger Taylor

## Rubber Barons' Abuses Live on in Memory and Myth

*Indigenous South Americans who lived during the rubber era weave fact and myth to pass down their collective memories as both witnesses and survivors.*

By Leonardo Tello Imaina and Barbara Fraser 1 JUL 2016



LEONARDO TELLO IMAINA is the director of Radio Ucamara in Nauta, Peru.



BARBARA FRASER is a freelance journalist who has lived in Peru for more than 25 years.

After he had put them into a deep sleep, the *tigre negro* entered the camp and killed them all, slashing their throats. It sucked the blood out of them. Only one saved himself by hiding in the forest. From there he heard his companions screaming. That's how the *tigre negro* killed the rubber tappers."

I heard that story from my father when I was a boy, sitting on the palm wood floor of our house on the island of Sarapanga in the Marañón River in northeastern Peru. With smoke from my father's pipe wafting around us and the river flowing by just meters away, the tale of the *tigre negro* (literally black tiger, a reference to the black jaguar) capped his late-afternoon storytelling, after which he'd send us off to bed.

Years later, I heard it again as I visited villages with my colleagues from Radio Ucamara, a small station in the port town of Nauta. The members of the radio station staff (including myself, one of the authors, Leonardo Tello) are of the Kukama people, the Native group that predominates in villages along the lower Marañón. The station primarily serves Kukama communities.

When I first listened to it as an adult, the story struck me as odd. The reclusive jaguar is a selective predator, taking only the prey it needs. But gradually, the tale of the animal that slaughtered humans and drank their blood revealed a terrible truth. The *tigre negro* was not a feline of the forest but something more sinister—a metaphor for a rubber baron. The story captured the living memories of an era when rubber, the once-precious natural latex that drove the Amazonian economy, led to the death or forced displacement of thousands of Indigenous peoples. That reality is as vivid now as it was a century ago when the rubber boom was at its peak.

"Indigenous mythic histories are often non-linear. They're not necessarily chronological. They may not be concerned so much with telling exactly what happened but with trying to socialize the events of the past so they can be placed into collective memory in ways that make sense within the Indigenous world view," says anthropologist Jonathan D. Hill of Southern Illinois University, who has collected stories about the rubber boom era in Venezuela. "I think that's a healing process."

Myth, says Hill, offers a way for Indigenous peoples to interpret their own histories and maintain their cultural identity within Latin America's predominantly non-Indigenous societies.

For Indigenous peoples in the Amazon region, the rubber era was a particularly traumatic part of their collective history.





*Much of the profit from rubber was gained through the exploitation and abuse of indigenous peoples in the Amazon. A 1912 book, *The Putumayo*, in which this image was included, was an early and important work that documented the atrocities committed by rubber baron Julio César Arana's Peruvian Amazon Company. Wikimedia Commons*

The rise of commercial manufacturing in Europe and the United States in the 19th century triggered an economic boom in South America by creating an enormous appetite for rubber to make tubes, tires, belts, gaskets, and other products. The Brazilian cities of Manaus and Belém, as well as Peru's Amazon port city of Iquitos, still bear traces of the fortunes made in the late 1800s before British travelers spirited thousands of rubber tree seeds to London. Once they were germinated, the seedlings were sent to Asia, where plantations were sown.

But the rubber barons' wealth came at the expense of forced labor—some of which was outright slavery. Thousands of indigenous men, women, and children died while subjected to this work or were murdered by overseers when they failed to deliver their quota of latex—or when they rebelled.

One of the most brutal rubber barons was the Peruvian Julio César Arana, who operated in a large swath of land along the Putumayo River during the first decade of the 1900s, taking advantage of lawlessness in an area where the border between Peru and Colombia was undefined. Accounts of the rape, torture, and murder of indigenous laborers eventually reached England, where Arana's Peruvian Amazon Company was registered. Press coverage and pressure from a human rights organization there led to an investigation by British diplomat Roger Casement.

Casement's damning report, filed with the British Foreign Secretary in 1911, triggered another investigation in England, since three of the company's directors were British. But it had little impact in Peru, where those responsible for the abuses went largely unpunished.



*Although the bulk of the rubber tapping industry shifted to Asian plantations for cost efficiency, the rubber industry persisted in South America through the 1960s. Ji-Elle/Wikimedia Commons*

Instead, the end of the rubber boom in this region of the world was a matter of economics. As Asian plantations began producing more latex at a lower cost, rubber tappers—who worked from scattered trees in the forest—could no longer compete, and the Amazonian boom went bust.

Nevertheless, rubber production—and the abuse of indigenous laborers—continued in Amazonian Peru on a smaller scale, finally dwindling away in the mid-20th century.



Some Kukama villagers along the lower Marañón River tapped rubber as recently as the 1950s and 1960s. The villagers were not slaves but rather laborers indebted to *patrones* (landholders and bosses) in what is now the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, a huge, protected area encompassing a seasonally flooded expanse of forests and wetlands in Peru's Loreto region.

Although the last of the rubber tappers do not remember the peak of the era, when Arana ruled, the collective memory of that time remains alive in stories they heard from their parents and grandparents, and in myths such as that of the *tigre negro*.

Even now, when the descendants of that era's victims tell tales of torture, rape, and murder suffered at the hands of rubber barons, their eyes fill with tears, says Stefano Pau, a scholar in Latin American literature and cultural studies based at the University of Cagliari in Italy. Pau has collected stories and myths about this time period in Nauta and in communities along the Ampiyacu River, a tributary of the Amazon in Peru.

I also experienced the emotional pain that lives on from that era. When I sat down, audio recorder in hand, to ask my father to tell me about his life during those years, he looked me in the eye and began by telling me that everything was good back then. Then his voice broke, his hands trembled, he bowed his head, and he began to cry. As I listened, my heart ached. I became angry. I wanted revenge. That afternoon changed my life.

Since then, my colleagues at Radio Ucamara and I have collected more than 70 personal accounts of the rubber era. Others are engaged in similar efforts, including artists such as Huitoto painters Rember Yahuarcani and Brus Rubio. Peruvian anthropologist Alberto Chirif of Iquitos recently edited two accounts of the era told by Ramiro Rojas Paredes—a Huitoto Murui man born in 1923 in the heart of rubber country—to his grandson, Alex Acuña, before Paredes died in 2008.

Besides the story of the *tigre negro*, which reflects the cruelty of the rubber barons, the stories we have collected contain other figures from that era who have become interwoven with the Kukama spirit world. Such tales echo the past and connect it with current events along the Marañón.



For Kukama people, the river is central to everyday life—it is the place where they wash, bathe, do laundry, get cooking and drinking water, fish, swim, and relax. Leonardo Tello

Stories of ghost ships—brightly lit boats with lavish parties on board that Kukama fishermen see on the river at night but that disappear without a trace—are a reminder of the boom times, when the *patrones* traveled in luxury made possible by the exploitation of Indigenous workers.

The places where fishermen tell of seeing these boats are often sites where latex was loaded onto ships or where some other rubber-related activity occurred. And the myths surrounding these ships of old have re-emerged with the arrival of oil barges and high-end tourist cruise ships that now ply the river.

Other common lore features a pink river dolphin that takes the form of a light-skinned man wearing boots and a broad-brimmed hat who appears in communities, courting the women and impregnating them.

Although pink dolphin myths predate the rubber era, this version of the story harks back to when male laborers would spend long periods of time in the forest while their wives and children, left behind in the village, were at the mercy of the *patrones*. "I saw how they arrived at the community's port, where my aunt and my cousins were washing in the river," recalls 64-year-old Víctor Canayo Pacaya, who grew up in a village along the Marañón but now lives in Nauta. "They grabbed my cousins and their mother and raped them. I saw them from my hiding place in a guayaba tree." If a man returned home to find his wife carrying an unborn child that was not his, the pregnancy would be blamed on the pink dolphin.



Many of the women and girls who experienced such violence are grandmothers and mothers now, but their stories have never been heard. Nothing has been done to reconcile the past or heal those wounds, and their daughters and granddaughters often suffer similar sexual aggression when they travel from their communities to cities to work as maids, sometimes in the homes of the rubber barons' descendants.

In 2012, a century after Casement wrote his scathing report, the Colombian government—in a ceremony at La Chorrera, which was at the heart of the Arana empire, and which is located in what is now Colombia—officially apologized for the atrocities Indigenous peoples suffered during the rubber era. But the apology did not reach the ears of many of the people whose lives are still marked by the upheaval, and discrimination and humiliating treatment continue. Human trafficking and child sex tourism, oil spills, and loss of territory are modern reminders that the era of pain and exploitation has not ended. The densely forested border between Peru and Brazil has the largest concentration of isolated Indigenous peoples—tribes that generally shun contact with outsiders—in the world. Many are descendants of people who fled into the forest to escape the violence unleashed by the rubber barons.

Although there has been some acknowledgment of the tragedy by government officials and even in literature—Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa's novel, *The Dream of the Celt*, is based on Casement's story—recognition of the moral dimension of the rubber boom and its aftermath has been slow to come.

My colleagues at Radio Ucamara and I would like to see the rubber era included in the Place of Memory, Tolerance and Social Inclusion (*Lugar de la Memoria, la Tolerancia y la Inclusión Social*), a new museum in Lima that is mainly dedicated to the historical memory of the political violence of the 1980s and 1990s.

Some Indigenous rights activists are also calling for compensation for the violence, an idea that is still in the early stages, according to Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

During an official visit to Brazil in March, Tauli-Corpuz recommended that a national inquiry be made into the living situation of Indigenous peoples. Such an inquiry could allow for deeper exploration into the current situation of Indigenous peoples as well as examine the structural and historical roots of the problems they face, Tauli-Corpuz says.



*The last generation of Kukama people who lived during the latter part of the rubber era are aging and passing on. The myths they carry can help young Indigenous people in the Amazon better understand their history as well as the current challenges they face. Leonardo Tello*

The generation that holds memories of the rubber era is leaving us—my father is now 98, and several people who told us their stories a few years ago have since died. When young people read about those decades in history books, they learn names and dates, but they do not learn how deeply the horror affected—and still affects—their grandparents, their parents, and themselves.

It is important to listen to the accounts of older men and women, but we must also ensure that both the true and the mythical stories reach our youth. Many of them do not understand why Indigenous peoples in the Amazon still suffer insults and discrimination.

“The mythologization of history is as much concerned with the moral dimension of the past as it is with factual reiteration of what happened,” Hill says. With these stories, he adds, “People no longer understand themselves as simply descendants of mythic ancestors. They’re people who are descended from the survivors of a traumatic historical past.”

*Editors’ note: This story was produced through a collaboration between Leonardo Tello Imaina, the Kukama director of Radio Ucamara, who grew up along the Marañón River and whose parents experienced the end of the rubber era, and Barbara Fraser, a freelance journalist based in Lima, Peru.*



# DID YOU KNOW?

## Did You Know?

- Oranges are not naturally occurring fruits. In fact, oranges are a hybrid of tangerines and pomelos.
- By replacing your potato chips with grapefruit as a snack you can lose up to 50% of what little joy you still have left in your life.
- Water bottle expiration dates are for the bottle, not the water. After a while, the plastic will start leaching chemicals into the liquid.

## What are nightshade fruits?

Nightshade fruits and edible plants are members of the Solanaceae family of flowering plants. The nightshade family contains over 2000 species and varieties of plants, but very few of them are actually eaten as food. Some, such as belladonna, are even poisonous. Nightshades contain alkaloids, which is toxic in concentrations. The most commonly consumed nightshade fruits and other plants are eggplants, peppers, tomatillos, tomatoes, potatoes, and tobacco. Solanine is also a chemical which some people believe may aggravate arthritis pain or inflammation. The Arthritis Foundation says that this is not true. If a person wishes to eliminate nightshades from their diet, they can place them with other non-nightshade plants, such as: sweet potatoes, yams, cauliflower, mushrooms. For more information see:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321745#anti-inflammatory-foods->

## Fruit That Ripens in October

Atemoya, banana, Barbados cherry, carambola, carissa, coconut, fig, guava, jackfruit, kwai muk, macadamia nut, miracle fruit, monstera, Otaheite gooseberry, papaya, passion fruit, peanut butter fruit, pomegranate, Spanish lime, guanabana (soursop), strawberry tree, sugar apple

Annual fruits: beans, eggplant, hot peppers, okra, cherry tomatoes, winter squash (Cushaw/ Seminole pumpkin), watermelon

**Collier Fruit Growers, Inc.**

# **FRUIT TREE SALE**

**Saturday, November 20, 2021**

**9:00am - 2:00pm**

**MANY VARIETIES, SIZES, AND  
PRICING TO MEET YOUR NEED  
AND BUDGET.**

**COME EARLY FOR THE BEST  
CHOICE BEFORE THE  
INVENTORY IS SOLD.**



**AT FREEDOM PARK  
1515 GOLDEN GATE PKWY.  
NAPLES, FL**



# 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 chance 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/>

## 2021 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!

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