



August 2016 – Longan



Who we are and 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 tropical and subtropical fruiting 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.

Website: BonitaSpringsTropicalFruitClub.com informs the public about our club, tropical fruit culture, and relevant events. Club newsletters are archived on the site.

Meetings: Regular membership meetings that include an educational program are held the **second** Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin with a tasting table at 6:45 PM followed by a program at 7:15 PM, at the First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Avenue, Bonita Springs. The meetings are held in the "Fellowship Hall" meeting room.

Workshops: Workshops (monthly discussions) are held on the **fourth** Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the above location. The open format encourages discussion and sharing of fruits and information. Bring your questions, seeds, cuttings, photos, recipes, etc. This is an opportunity to get answers and peruse the club's reference books.

Directions:

From the intersection of Old 41 Road and Bonita Beach Road SE, proceed north to Dean Street. Turn right on Dean St. and go two blocks to Shriver, then turn left on Shriver and go two blocks to the Methodist Church. Free parking on both sides of the street.

Tree sales: Tree sales raise revenue for educational programs and other related purposes of the club.

Trips: The club occasionally organizes trips and tours at the Fruit and Spice Park, nurseries, agricultural research facilities, etc.

Membership:

Dues are \$20 per person for new members, and \$15 per person for renewals. Send checks to: PO Box 367791, Bonita Springs, FL 34136, or bring to any regularly scheduled meeting.

Newsletter: This newsletter is available to members by email, and to the public at BonitaSpringsTropicalFruitClub.com

Officers and Board of Directors:

President: Kathy Pflugrad

Vice President: Suzy Valentine

Secretary: Denise Houghtaling & Adrienne Diaz

Treasurer: Melrose John

Director: Berto Silva

Director: Crafton Clift

Director: Rickford John

Past President: Madeline Bohannon

Email us at Info@BonitaSpringsTropicalFruitClub.com.

Guest Speaker for August:



Our speaker on August 9th, 2016 will be Har Mahdeem.

Har has worked as an orchard supervisor in the Brazilian Amazon region, spent 20 years as a plant propagator and *Annona* breeder for the Zill nursery, gone on fifteen collecting trips to central and south America, completed innovative projects merging agriculture and industry, done consulting and tree service, and written and presented on the theme of tropical agriculture. Har is a past president of the Palm Beach Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council.

Har's topic will be "Fruits of the Central Amazon," a topic with which he is intimately acquainted. Come expand your knowledge of the fascinating fruits from this exotic region.

Message from the President

Summer is a great time in Florida! This is the only state in the 48 where you can sample dozens of mango varieties, locally grown and at peak ripeness. Instead of a "life list" of bird species I've seen, I keep an annotated list of mango varieties I've tasted. Pine Island is a wonderful place to expand your list. The Fruit and Spice Park is another delightful destination. Visitors are allowed to taste fallen fruit, so take along a pocket knife and enjoy sampling as you walk among 160 varieties of mango trees. Save room for the other tasty summer bearing tropical fruits, too.

Several excellent online resources detail various mango varieties, with photos, descriptions, and notes regarding disease resistance, etc.: FruitScapesLLC.com, TropicalFruitNursery.com, TopTropicals.com, and the USDA site <http://www.ars-grin.gov/npgs/images/mia/mangifera/mango01.htm>. While these are helpful, there's no substitute for actually tasting a variety before you plant. I've found online flavor ratings don't match my personal preferences.

Remember, if you have an abundant harvest please bring fruit to club meetings in table ready condition. Label it with the cultivar name (if known); this is helpful for new members who are deciding what types of fruit to plant in their own yards. Thanks for your help in treating the taste buds and furthering our education by sharing.

Announcements:

Refreshments—We appreciate your generosity in bringing “table ready” snacks for the tasting table. Tropical fruits are especially enjoyable, so remember to share your harvest at our tasting table. *If you can help in the kitchen for our August or September meeting, please let Mary Allen know* at 239-649-9000.

Strawberries—We are looking for someone who’s grown strawberries in their home garden successfully here in SWFL. If you (or someone you know) have done that, please take a minute to call or email Kathy Pflugrad: kspflugrad@gmail.com or 239-822-7151. Thank you!

Facebook Page - Our club's Facebook page is working again. Login to Facebook and type "Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club" to check it out. Thank you, Eric Miller, for making this happen!

Chores Outdoors: August Edition

There are some “must do” chores for your fruit trees in August.

MANGO TREES: Fertilize with either 0-0-18 or 0-0-22. Also spray with minor elements; Keyplex is a good choice, though even citrus minors will work.

CITRUS: Spray the trees with a mix of Keyplex and BioWash or use minor elements (aka micronutrients) together with the BioWash. Fertilizing with 0-0-22 around your citrus trees in the summer months through the end of September will help produce juicier, thin skinned flavorful fruit.

Everyone make sure to give a big thanks to David and Jenny Burd for providing us our *Chores Outdoors this Month tips* for each month. Thanks guys.

Calendar of Events

- 8/9 Tue. – Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM. Speaker: Har Mahdeem; Topic: Fruits of the Central Amazon
- 8/23 Tue. –Workshop Meeting, 7 PM
- 9/13 Tue. – Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM. Speaker: Jonathan Crane of TREC; Topic: Avocados
- 9/27 Tue. –Workshop Meeting, 7 PM
- 10/11 Tue.–Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM. Speaker: Danny Blank;
- 10/25 Tue.–Workshop Meeting, 7 PM

Future Speaker

The Future speaker for the September General Meeting will be Jonathan Crane of TREC

Fruit of the Month – Longan

Scientific Name: *Dimocarpus longan*

Family: Sapindaceae



The longan probably originated in Burma or southern China, but grows well in subtropical Florida. It's drought tolerant, hardy to about 25°, and productive—generally more rewarding to grow than it's fussy but famous relative, the lychee. The fruit is approximately one inch in diameter, enclosed in a somewhat brittle tan husk, and contains one dark seed. Its translucent white flesh is sweet and juicy with an excellent flavor.

Longan harvest peaks in July and August. Locally, they are grown commercially on Pine Island where they're readily available at roadside fruit stands. Cultivars include Kohala, an early bearer known for its quality fruit and consistent bearing; Biew Kiew, a mid-season variety steadily bearing fruit with a superior flavor; Edo, a prolific bearer of good fruit in mid to late season; and Diamond River, with a long bearing season and juicy fruit hinting of spice.

Longan trees prefer well-drained soil, and don't tolerate flooding or salt. Mulch and periodic fertilizer are recommended. While trees can reach 30 to 45 feet in height, wise pruning can be used to maintain a manageable size. Hand thinning of immature fruit will improve fruit size and quality, and reduce the risk of biennial bearing. Lychee webworm and scale may require pesticide treatments. Squirrels and birds are known to compete with growers at harvest time; netting young trees can help to save this delicious crop from such predators.



Left: Longan Fruit Clusters

Next page: Longan Fruit Tree

Some photos compliments of Fruitscapes, LLC.

