

February 2015 - Carambola



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 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.

Meetings:

Regular membership meetings that include an educational program are held the second Tuesday of each month, except July and August. Meetings begin promptly at 7 PM, at the First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Avenue, Bonita Springs. The meetings are held in the "Freedom Hall" meeting room.

Workshops:

Workshops (monthly discussions) are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 PM at the Methodist Church, when practical. This open format encourages discussion and sharing of fruits and information. Bring in your fruits, plants, seeds, leaves, insects, photos, recipes, ect.. This is a great chance to get answers to specific questions, and there always seems to be a local expert on hand!

Tree sale:

Semi-annual tree sales in February and November at Riverside Park in downtown Bonita Springs 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 \$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. Madeline Bohannon is our membership person. For information, call her at 239-851-4448.

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.

Newsletter:

This newsletter is available to anyone via email, and to paid members via Post office mail upon request. You may join our email communications group by emailing Berto Silva at BNS58@aol.com.

Officers and Board of Directors:

Madeline Bohannon - President

Rachel Stone - Vice President

Trudy Moynihan - Secretary

Gerda Gyori - Treasurer

Tom Betts - Director

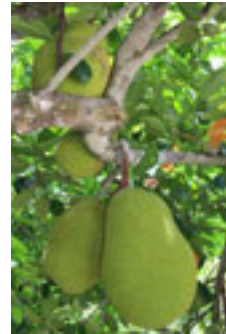
Joe Busa - Director

Berto Silva - Director

Guest Speaker for January:



Our guest speaker for February will be Chris Rollins. He will be doing his farewell program, covering the many years he was at the Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead. Chris Rollins became Manager of the Fruit & Spice Park in 1981.



Message from the President

Most of us have been SO lucky ... not getting frost or freeze watches ... so far. Me? I think we're pretty safe now. I even have a 6 inch-long jakfruit in one of my trees. Baby fruit and blossoms everywhere ... I just wish there were more bees to go around.

With Chris Rollins this month, and Larry Schokman coming next month, we have the cream of the crop on knowledge and enthusiasm of growing fruit. Larry speaks fervently of the days when David Fairchild created and lived at the Kampong. As David Fairchild was probably the first and MOST avid collector of rare fruits around the world and really started what Florida stands for, it prompts my asking EVERYONE in this club to read - if you haven't already done so - the book by Mr. Fairchild called, "The World Was My Garden"... surprisingly quick and easy to read, considering the amount of knowledge you acquire in doing so.

-Madeline

This & That

The citrus trees are pushing new growth, the Asian citrus phyllid calls this PARTY TIME, let's be party poopers and take care of them by spraying with a mixture of :- Farm Soap 1oz per gallon together with Minor Elements (vitamins for the tree). Follow directions on the bottle. **Spray early in the morning or late afternoon.** Ten days – 2 weeks later, spray again, except ½ oz per gallon of the Farm Soap and same amount of the Minor Elements.

Why is this done ?? To repel the phyllids and feed the tree through the leaves.

Resist planting young trees until after mid February, even then, check long range forecasts, because in the past there have been frosts even at the end of February.

Everyone make sure to give a big thanks to David and Jenny Burd for providing us our *This and That tips* for each month. Thanks guys.

Future Speaker

The Future speaker for the March meeting will be Larry Schokman - past Director of the Kampong in Miami. Check our next newsletter for more info about Larry Schokman's visit.

Fruit of the Month - Carambola

Genus: *Averrhoa carambola*

Family: *Oxalidaceae*



The carambola is a medium sized semi-deciduous tree that commonly grows to 20 feet and can occasionally reach heights of 35 feet. It has a dense canopy and a short trunk covered with grayish-brown bark. The carambola flowers are born on short, branching panicles which usually form in the axils of leaves, but also emerge from mature wood. Selected cultivars usually bear fruit within a year after they are set out. Carambolas have only a limited tolerance to drought and its leaves will fold up at night when showing signs of drought-related stress. Carambolas are also intolerant of constantly windy conditions. With that said, the tree shows surprising tolerance to winter cold surviving temperature drops as low as 25 F in Florida

The fruit of the carambola is an elliptical berry, measuring from 3 to 8 inches in length. It has 5 or 6 prominent longitudinal ribs. These form angles with one another, giving the fruit its characteristic star shape when sliced. The skin is smooth and slightly waxy. The flesh is translucent and is of the same color as the skin. It is very juicy with the taste ranging from tart and flavorful to sweet and somewhat bland. The fruit should not be judged based on the sour prematurely picked fruit sold by the super-markets. When harvested from a good cultivar at peak ripeness, the fruit is delicious, crisp, refreshing, and laden with sweet juice.

In Florida, the tree bears fruit sporadically between July and February producing up to 3 crops and peak production occurs from September through January.

