

January 2018 – Canistel



Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club Newsletter

Message from the President

Our Christmas Party was a wonderful success! Thanks to all of you who joined us, and brought your very own special dishes to share. The weather cooperated and we were able to use the outdoors area as well as the church hall. The new arrangement of tables and chairs worked very well, and all enjoyed the flexibility of sampling many different items, in any order, without standing in line. “Dessert First” was a popular choice! Suzy’s Fruit Punch was consumed with enthusiasm, and the club-sponsored table with hot meatballs, cold, sliced turkey and ham plus various choices of breads balanced all the delicious fruit, vegetable and grain based offerings brought by our members. As our club is blessed with so many people of different cultural backgrounds, from many countries, the dishes were truly varied and provided new experiences for all who sampled them. No one left hungry!

Mingling by members, new and long-time, was easy with the new room set up, and it was good to see the various conversations and connections taking place. I overheard many people sharing ideas and offering their help in ensuring a positive and constructive future for this club.

I hope you will attend our January General Meeting to participate in the election, as well as to learn about Florida COLD (Yes, it does happen!) from our speaker.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your President this past year, and I look forward to my upcoming ‘retirement job’ as Past President/Advisor to our new club leaders.

Remember to pay your dues for the coming year in order to be eligible to cast a ballot. You may mail a check to BSTFC at PO Box 367791, Bonita Springs, FL 34136.

Renewals are \$15/individual or \$25/ couple. New members, please add \$6/each for Name Tags.

- *Suzy Valentine*

Announcements:

ELECTION OF 2018 OFFICERS will be held at our January 9 meeting. This is your opportunity to choose leaders you believe will move our club forward. If there is more than one candidate for any office, we will have a written ballot for that/those offices. Otherwise, the slate as presented by the current Board of Directors will be presented by the Secretary as approved. **YOU MUST BE A PAID UP MEMBER IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A BALLOT.** Dues paid in 2017 are valid until February 2018.

ANNUAL TREE SALE is scheduled for Saturday, January 27 from 9 AM to 1 PM. Volunteers are needed and welcome. Please help us plan by letting us know in advance that you can be there. Help is needed in several areas: Tasting Table, Check-Out line, Coordinating drinks and lunch for volunteers, General information for the public about what to buy, lifting, loading, carrying, etc.

Contact this year's tree sale chairman, Luis Garrido, at luisitogarrido@yahoo.com or 239-218-9872.

THANK YOU Mary Allen, for overseeing the kitchen at our monthly meetings! Your kindness and faithfulness are much appreciated.

WE ARE GRATEFUL for all who share your harvests at club meetings. Your generosity enriches the experience of each attendee. None of us have room to grow everything we'd like, so it's a special treat to taste fruits from other members' trees. Please continue to bring fruit samples and other treats prepared and ready to serve.

Guest Speaker for January:

Timothy Watkins Freeze Protection and Recovery



Our speaker on January 9 is Timothy Watkins, Head of Agricultural Operations at ECHO in North Fort Myers. Originally from Duluth, Minnesota, Tim interned at ECHO in 2001 and later served as nursery manager there. In his current position he oversees the seed bank, global farm, propagation nursery and appropriate technology area. Tim has traveled widely in Africa promoting two of his primary interests-- agroforestry and tropical fruit cultivation. Nursery management and plant propagation also greatly interest him.

Tim will share a presentation on “Freeze Protection and Recovery,” a topic with which he’s well acquainted from his experience at ECHO’s farm. He will address some of the basics of cold weather conditions in SWFL and strategies for protecting tropical and subtropical plants. A range of techniques will be presented including those relevant for backyard gardeners and some that are appropriate for small farms.

Calendar of Club Events

- 1/9 Tue. –Meeting, 6:45 PM; Speaker: Tim Watkins of ECHO; “Freeze Protection & Recovery”
- 1/23 Tue. –Workshop, 7:00 PM
- 1/27 Sat. –**Tree Sale**, 9:00 AM -1:00 PM
- 2/13 Tue. –Meeting, 6:45 PM
- 2/27 Tue. –Workshop, 7:00 PM

Visit our website: <http://www.bonitaspringtropicalfruitclub.com/>

And our Facebook group page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BSTFC/about/>

Chores Outdoors: January Edition

MANGOS: Mangos are blooming--yay! yay! Now is the time to fertilize with **0-0-22** (available at Helena Chemical in Immokalee). Using a citrus fertilizer (6-4-6) sends a message to the mango tree to grow, which would mean leaves and not fruit. At the January meeting, we'll explain a hint to hang a water bottle in the mango tree to improve pollination.

COLD PROTECTION: Be prepared. If you don't need it, wonderful--**but** if a really cold night is forecast, it will help to water at the warmest time of the day; 20 minutes is enough. Cover the trees if you can, especially those true tropicals that suffer at 40 F. **Never use plastic to protect from cold.** If there is a strong "nor'easter" check for salt on the leaves, especially on lychees, jaboticabas & jackfruit. A short time with the garden hose will remove that salt residue.

PRUNING: It's time to prune *grapes, peaches and nectarines*. Each has a very particular way to be pruned. Check reliable information on how it should be done.

POST- IRMA DAMAGE: Fruit trees battered by Irma may not flower this year. Fertilize at the appropriate times anyway. Also keep an eye on the new growth on citrus (brand new leaves starting to push), looking for the psyllid insect that causes *greening*. Spray with a good organic soap (e.g. Safer Soap) and minor elements; remember less is better than more!

Wishing us all a peaceful, healthy, and fruitful 2018!

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.

Fruit of the Month — Canistel

Scientific Name: *Pouteria campechiana*

Family: Sapotaceae

The canistel's nickname, "eggfruit," highlights this fruit's similarity to boiled egg yolk. The fruit varies in size (6-26 oz) and shape (egg shaped or spherical, with a pointed end), but both the thin waxy skin and the interior pulp are consistently bright yellow or orange-yellow. The texture, too, is reminiscent of boiled egg yolk, though superior cultivars are sometimes described as rich and creamy. The flavor ranges from simply egg-like to a sweet richness like egg custard, sometimes with a hint of pumpkin flavor.

Canistel trees have many benefits for home growers. The attractive fruit is usually born during the winter season when few other fruits are ripe; they may even fruit twice in a season. The tree stays manageable—seldom exceeding 30 feet high, and is attractive with glossy, dense, evergreen foliage. It can be cultivated in soil too poor to support most other fruit trees, and tolerates short-term flooding or drought, and a fair amount of neglect; it withstands hurricane winds if properly pruned. Pests and diseases are not a serious threat to canistels in Florida. Note, though, that canistels are native to southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and El Salvador, so they don't tolerate cold. Even mature trees may be killed if temperatures dip into the 20's.

Several canistel cultivars are available, though not common, in Florida. The most common is 'Bruce,' known for its large fruit size, though it ranks only fair in eating quality. Other varieties with good quality fruit are 'Oro' and 'Trompo,' both heavy producers; 'Fitzpatrick' with a long bearing season, unusual greenish color skin, and small fruit; 'Fairchild #1' bearing medium fruit in the fall; and 'Fairchild #2' considered by some to be the best quality for eating, bearing small quantities of small fruits year round.

If you are looking for a low maintenance conversation piece for your yard, consider planting a canistel tree. The nutritious cholesterol-free "eggs" will give you something to crow about.

Using Canistel

Canistel fruit can be eaten fresh by cutting them in half and scooping the pulp out with a spoon. Try them plain or sprinkled with salt and pepper or lemon and lime juice. They are at their best, though, as an ingredient in prepared foods.

A variety of sweet recipes can feature canistel—jam, marmalade, pancakes, sweet breads, pies, and more. Pureed canistel pulp is delicious added to rice pudding, custard or ice cream recipes. Use it in milkshakes, or make canistel eggnog by blending canistel, milk, sugar, vanilla and nutmeg.

Some savory options include mashing canistel with mayonnaise and seasonings for an "egg salad" sandwich spread; lightly baking it and serving with salsa or another favorite sauce; crumbling it into a white sauce to serve over toast; or adding the puree to potato or sweet potato dishes.



Canistel fruit on tree



Canistel tree

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.

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. This open format encourages discussion and sharing of fruits and information. Bring in your fruits, plants, seeds, leaves, insects, photos, recipes, etc. This is a great chance to get answers to specific questions, and there always seems to be a local expert on hand! The workshops begin at 7pm and are also held at the First United Methodist Church, 27690 Shriver Avenue, Bonita Springs, in the "Fellowship Hall" meeting room.

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. Shriver is parallel to Old 41, two blocks East.

Tree sale: An annual spring tree sale at Riverside Park in downtown Bonita Springs raises 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, the Fruit and Spice Park, and the Fairchild Nursery Farm are examples of our recent excursions.

Membership:

Dues are \$15 per individual, \$25 per household per year. Nametags, if needed, are \$6 each. Send checks to: PO Box 367791, Bonita Springs, FL 34136, or bring to any regularly scheduled meeting.

Newsletter: This newsletter is available to anyone via website and email, and to paid members via post office mail upon request.

Officers and Board of Directors:

President: Suzy Valentine

Vice President: Kathy Pflugrad

Secretary: Anna Bailey

Treasurer: Victoria Strickland

Asst. Treasurer: Melrose John

Director: Berto Silva

Director: Crafton Clift

Director: Rickford John

Email us at Info@BonitaSpringsTropicalFruitClub.com