



March 2016 – Star Apple (aka Caimito)



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, except July and August. 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.

Tree sale: Semi-annual tree sales in spring and fall 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, the Fruit and Spice Park, 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.

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: 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 March:



Roy Beckford, PhD will speak on

**“Best Practices for Tropical Fruits
in the SWFL Environment.”**

Roy is the Lee County Extension Director and Agricultural/Natural Resources Agent for the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), a federal-state-county partnership.

In addition, he has prior experience in Jamaica and the British Virgin Islands. His presentation will include information on growing fruit in small spaces, spring chores that will increase your harvest, pruning tips, and more.

Announcements:

BSTFC Bus Trip – there is still time to sign up! See last page for details.

New Meeting Time & Format: Our regular meetings on the second Tuesday of each month will now begin with time to enjoy the tasting table, starting at 6:45 PM. The formal meeting will begin at 7:15 PM.

Please Share: We learn by seeing and tasting. You’re invited to share your harvest for the tasting table. When possible, bring your contributions table ready (washed and cut up) and labelled with fruit name and variety.

Get Lucky: Want to get extra tickets for the door prize? Now you can earn extra chances to win if you bring a first time guest or bring a contribution for the tasting table.

Tree Sale — Save the Date: Saturday, April 23. Spread the word, and plan now to volunteer.

Message from the President

Meet your new Board of Directors! They are here to serve you, so feel free to contact them with your ideas, suggestions, or questions. I think you'll enjoy getting to know this interesting group of people.

BSTFC Board of Directors:



President: Kathy Pflugrad developed a love for tropical fruits while living in Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Guam. Since moving to SWFL eight years ago, her pursuit of the perfect mango has resulted in tasting notes on over 100 varieties from around the state. She enjoys helping new Floridians select fruit cultivars appropriate for their yards and hopes to build awareness of BSTFC in the community.



Vice President: Suzy Valentine lived in Brazil 32 years and got involved in wonderful tropical fruits there. She has a passion for passion fruit, adores jaboticaba, and loves papaya, too. As international coordinator for the Square Foot Gardening Foundation, she taught classes around Latin America. Suzy wants to help today's gardeners grow fruit successfully in less space.



Secretary: Denise Houghtaling has lived in Lee County since 1973, but began growing fruit much more recently. She now has over 50 tropical fruit trees and wants to keep learning more about them. Through her family's business, MW Horticulture Recycling, she helps gardeners by providing compost and mulch. Denise's hobbies include gardening, traveling and spending as much time as possible with her large family and husband, Mark.



Co-Secretary: Adrienne Diaz is a master gardener specializing in edible plants. She shares her love of fruit trees and other edibles at her South Fort Myers nursery, Miss Potter's Place. She's involved in local community gardens, classroom gardens, and teaching public classes to educate and motivate locals to grow their own fruits and vegetables. If Adrienne eats it, she wants to grow it herself.



Treasurer: Melrose John grew up in South America among all types of tropical fruits. Since moving to SWFL five years ago, she and her husband are growing a wide variety including mangoes, custard apple, sugar apple, ackee, citrus, peach, guava, lychee, and many more. Melrose's favorite fruit is sapodilla. She has been a BSTFC member for two years.



Director Berto Silva is originally from Brazil. He maintains contact with an international circle of rare fruit collectors and enjoys the challenge of growing rare and unusual tropical and sub-tropical trees. Berto's collection includes myrciaras, eugenias, pouterias, annonas, mangiferas, and campomanesias.



Director Crafton Clift has the habit of taking a duffle bag of tropical fruit trees to Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Thailand or Egypt and moving in with a family for a few months. He has broad exposure to tropical horticulture and is always willing to share his knowledge.



Director Rickford John grew up on a citrus fruit farm in South America. After retiring as an electrician, he moved to SWFL five years ago, and has planted mangoes, starfruit, bananas, ackee, annonas, pineapple, and more. He has travelled in Europe, Africa, South America, and the Middle East.



Past President Madeline Bohannon has enjoyed her "5 acres of fruit trees" in Ft. Myers since moving here from California in 1994. She has been active in all three SWFL fruit clubs, serving as president of two of them. Madeline now has over 300 fruit trees, plants, and vines—one or more of everything! Her hobby is giving yard tours to fruit lovers.

Chores Outdoors this Month

CITRUS & AVOCADOS

It's time to fertilize citrus & avocados.

Choose your favorite – 6-4-6 or 8-2-8 or 10-2-10 - check the label to make sure the chlorine content is not more than 4% - chlorine converts to salt – too much (usually in inexpensive fertilizers) is bad for the fruit trees. Fertilize out by the dripline where the feeder roots are, but avoid overfertilizing.

Also – when you see the new growth on the citrus, its time to spray with soap & minor elements to kill the psyllids and at the same time feed through the leaves.

CITRUS PRUNING

Resist pruning citrus until after you see that the fruit has set, this way you prune selectively – pruning before the flowers have set - means, less fruit.

Grateful for the harvest – looking forward to the next!

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

3/5 Sat. – BSTFC Bus Trip to Homestead

3/8 Tue. – Regular Meeting. TASTING TABLE AT 6:45 PM / MEETING AT 7:15 PM.

3/16 Wed. – Pine Island Farm & Grove Tour –
contact fbeckford@leegov.com / 239-533-7512

3/19 Sat. – ECHO's Global Food & Farm Festival – see echonet.org for info and tickets

3/22 Tue. – Open Workshop Meeting, 7 PM.

4/12 Tue. – Regular Meeting. Speaker: Steve Cucura of Fruitscapes
Topic: Cultivars for SWFL

4/23 Sat. – BSTFC Spring Tree Sale at Riverside Park, Bonita Springs

Future Speaker

The Future speaker for the April General Meeting will be Steve Cucura of Fruitscapes

Board of Director Meeting SUMMARY BONITA SPRINGS TROPICAL FRUIT CLUB

Board of Directors Meeting January 19, 2016 6:00PM

Site: First Methodist Church , Bonita Springs, Florida

PRESENT: Madeline Bohannon, Rachel Stone, Denise Houghtaling, Joe Busa, Tom Betts, Berto Silva, Kathy Pflugrad, Suzy Valentine, Crafton Clift, Rickford John

ABSENT: Melrose John, Gerda Gyori

President Madeline called the BOD Meeting to order at 6:15pm. This was a joint meeting of the BOD's to facilitate the transfer of duties from the existing BOD to the new BOD effective February 1, 2016.

1. Minutes were accepted.
2. Treasurer's Report was given.
3. New officer positions were cited.
4. New officers will take over checking account.
5. Keys to storage unit, church storage cabinet and church will be transferred to new officers.
6. Take out "Rare" in bylaws first paragraph.
7. Rachel to continue to do website and newsletter.
8. Suzy to maintain membership name tags.
9. It was discussed how we pay for speakers and such.
10. Tom provided the new officers with a Tree Sale Planning guide.
11. It was suggested to appoint a Public Relations Chair.
12. Field Trips was discussed and possibility joining in other groups for them.
13. Next BOD will be Feb 23rd 6pm.
14. The club donated \$840 to the church as a courtesy for one year use of the premises.
15. Rachel to hand out membership lists in February.
16. Tom and Kathy to visit Wonder Gardens for future co-op opportunities.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16pm

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Houghtaling

Fruit of the Month – Star Apple (aka Caimito)

Scientific Name: *Chrysophyllum cainito*

Family: Sapotaceae



Star Apples are popular at tropical fruit stands in March and remain available till early summer. Fruit quality is best after a warm frost-free winter, so this is a great year to add them to your list. The globose fruits range from two to four inches in diameter, and are purple, reddish, or yellow-green at maturity, depending on variety. When cut in half, the seeds and pulp form the star-shaped pattern for which this fruit is named. Though the milky rind and seeds are inedible, the thick pulp has a pleasing texture and refreshing sweet flavor. The fruit is rich in nutrients, while the seeds and tree bark are said to have therapeutic uses.

Since its discovery by Spanish explorers in Peru in the 1500's, star apple has spread around the globe. It is especially common in the Caribbean and Latin America, but also grows well in protected areas in southern Florida. Due to the cold sensitivity of the young trees, some nurserymen recommend container growing to a height of eight feet before planting them out. These attractive trees can fruit at one or two years old, are moderately fast growing, can reach 50 feet high and yield 150 pounds of fruit per season. It's reported that slow-growing dwarf trees can be produced by grafting onto satin leaf (*C. oliviforme*).

While the trees themselves are relatively easy to grow, harvesting the fruit is labor intensive. They do not drop when ripe. When the skin is dull and slightly wrinkled and the fruit is a bit soft, it must be hand-clipped from the tree. Unless you own lots of land and a cherry picker, this is a fruit you may choose to enjoy from the fruit stand instead of from your own backyard.

Star Apple Recipes

Star apples are easy and delicious to eat out of hand either chilled or room temperature as you prefer. Simply cut in half and spoon the pulp into your mouth, spitting out the seeds. They can also be added to smoothies and ice cream recipes. In addition, they pair well with other tropical fruits, as these recipes will show.

For recipes, search “caimito recipe” or “star apple recipe” online.



Star Apple branches

BSTFC BUS TRIP – Saturday, March 5, 2016

Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club is sponsoring a bus trip to Homestead on Saturday, March 5, 2016. We will visit the Farmer's Market area of a Homestead Flea Market that has an amazing variety of tropical fruit at reasonable prices. Next is the Fruit & Spice Park for the ASIAN FESTIVAL! Food, plants and trees for sale - plus entertainment.

If you pack a lunch, they have a picnic area for us, or if you want, they have a wonderful little Mango Cafe with a good variety of foods and choices for lunch.

Next, is TREC - Tropical Research & Education Center (part of IFAS), where Jonathan Crane will board our bus and narrate a trip around the several acres of fruit groves.

Last stop - Dessert - at "Robert Is Here", a fruit and deli open-air shop.

Bus fare is \$20 per person for BSTFC members, with the club paying members' entrance fee at the Fruit & Spice Park - and \$25 per person for non-members plus \$10 entrance fee for Fruit & Spice Park.

The bus will leave at 7:15 AM from the Walmart parking lot at Colonial & Six-Mile-Cypress in Ft. Myers, and leave the Walmart parking lot at Imokalee just West of I-75 - Exit #111 - where people from Bonita Springs and Naples can depart at 8 AM. The bus will return at about 6 PM.

Free bottles of water and snacks will be served on the bus. To join our group, just call Madeline at [239-851-4448](tel:239-851-4448).