



May 2016 – Grumichama



Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club Newsletter

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 May:

Steve Brady is a retired internist who planted his first lemon seeds at age six. He's been growing and collecting tropical fruits ever since. He lives on 2 acres in Naples along with 600 fruit trees/plants and two dogs. He specializes in the truly rare fruits which are unlikely to grow in south Florida. He is active on the Collections Committee of Naples Botanical Garden.

At our May 10 meeting, Steve will speak on Moraceae (often called the mulberry or fig family).

Announcements:

Thank You—The tree sale was successful because of each of you who volunteered your time and efforts; your help was much appreciated! A special thank you to Tom Betts for coordinating this event. (See photos at end of newsletter.)

Refreshments—A big thank you to Mary Allen for her leadership in the kitchen. Let's do our part to chip in with contributions for the tasting table (fresh fruit or other refreshments). *Please* bring your items ready to serve—that means cut into individual portions and in a serving bowl or basket. If you enjoy the refreshments, please take a turn helping in the kitchen. Let Mary know which month(s) you are available to volunteer.

Meetup.com—Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club now has a meetup listing. We hope this will increase awareness of our club and help us grow. Check it out and join at Meetup.com > Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club.

Fruit Club Library—A reference library is being created for our club. If you have books on tropical fruit you are willing to donate or to loan for this purpose, please hand them to Suzy Valentine at an upcoming meeting.

Librarian Needed—If you are willing to volunteer to oversee or help with the new reference library, please contact Suzy Valentine (suzy.valentine@att.net).

Correction—Several of the jaboticaba photos in last month's newsletter were provided by Berto Silva. The photo credits were inadvertently omitted. Thank you, Berto.

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

Name Tags & Notebooks: If you're a new member with dues paid for 2016, and have not yet received a club notebook and/or permanent name tag, please email kspflugrad@gmail.com.

Best Practices for Tropical Fruits in the SWFL Environment: Our March presenter, Roy Beckford, has provided us his PowerPoint slides. For your convenience, they have been posted on our website: <http://www.bonitaspringstropicalfruitclub.com/best-practices-for-tropical-fruits-in-the-swfl-environment-by-roy-beckford/>

Message from the President

Over the years, I've learned so much from being involved in our fruit club. Each speaker seems to share something I didn't know before. But it's not just the formal presentations that are educational. YOU as members are the greatest source of knowledge BSTFC has. Thank you for sharing tips, plant knowledge, fresh fruit and even yard tours with me. I hope you all realize how valuable you and your knowledge are to the other club members. We've recently gained several members who are new to Florida—so keep on sharing!

Chores Outdoors: May Edition

Mangos

Watering in the dry season should be kept to once a week; this will result in larger fruit. Too much water will dilute the flavor of your mangoes!

Now that the mango season is commencing, late mangos should be selectively pruned (yes, there will be fruit on the tree) so as to have fruit again next year. Selective is the key word, so as not to lose all the fruit.

Pruning late mangos after the fruit is harvested (i.e. late September or October) increases the risk of having no harvest the next year. This applies to late varieties such as Keitt, Neelum, Palmer, Beverly, Wise, Cryder & Zillate as well as Valencia Pride, a mid season mango that is very sensitive to late pruning.

Regarding early mangos—Rosigold, Lemon Saigon, Glen, Manilita and Florigon, to name just a few—fertilize with 0-0-18 when the fruit has been harvested. The minor elements in this formula will be absorbed by the roots over the following weeks. Note that this task is likely to fall in June rather than May this year due to our late flowering of mangoes this season.

Also, watch for the flush of new growth, and spray foliage with micro nutrients just before the new growth has hardened off. This gives the tree “vitamins” it absorbs and uses right away.

Please—if you have a bountiful crop, share at your local food bank. 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.

Learning Opportunity: Cornerstone Nursery

A local educational nursery on the Cornerstone Methodist Church property at 8200 Immokalee Road was established in 2013. The nursery contains both a shade structure for propagation and an orchard of sub-tropical fruit trees, plus a seasonal community vegetable garden. There are also examples of more cold sensitive/tropical trees, like bread fruit and green sapote. Necessary work at the nursery and hands-on propagation for new trees is scheduled every Thursday from 9:00am to 2:00pm throughout the year. In 2016, there are plans to significantly expand the shade structure, the orchard to accommodate a greater variety of unique tree specimens, and irrigation system. All are welcome to come visit, help out, and share their fruit related stories and experiences. For more information, contact Rodger Taylor at rtaylorrm@gmail.com.



Calendar of Events

5/10 Tue. – Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM. Speaker: Steve Brady; Topic: Moraceae Species

5/24 Tue. – Workshop Meeting, 7 PM

6/14 Tue. – Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM. Speaker: Arlo Simmonds; Topic: Fruit Trees
& Permaculture

6/28 Tue. – Workshop Meeting, 7 PM

Future Speaker

The Future Speaker for the June General Meeting will be Arlo Simmonds, Garden Coordinator and Permaculture Designer at Pine Manor Community Gardens, speaking on fruit trees and permaculture.

Fruit of the Month – Grumichama

Scientific Name: *Eugenia brasiliensis*

Family: Myrtaceae



Photo courtesy of Berto Silva.

The grumichama tree is not only fruitful, but beautiful at all seasons. The glossy green foliage is attractive, but when coupled with brilliant new growth, an abundance of showy white blossoms, or a crop of cherry-like fruits of deep purple, grumichama is truly spectacular. The compact tree will reach 15 to 25 feet in height, or can be pruned as a six foot shrub, or used as a hedge. Grumichama can be grown in shade or sun, tolerates a wide range of well drained soils, and is known to survive temperature drops to the mid-twenties. Ripe fruit are ready to harvest approximately a month after the blossoms appear.

Grumichama fruit appears, and even tastes, similar to the northern sweet cherry, although the two are not related. The fruit is most plentiful during April and May, when a mature tree may yield 50 pounds of fruit over a two week period. There may be sporadic smaller yields in the off season, also.

The fruit should be picked as soon as it reaches full color. If the stem is left in place and the fruit is refrigerated immediately after harvest, grumichama will keep for over a week. The fruit is most commonly eaten out of hand. It makes excellent jams and jellies, too. The pitted fruits may be pureed and frozen for later use in sauces, ice creams, drinks, and desserts.



1st three photos courtesy of Berto Silva

SPRING TREE SALE 2016 Pictures of Tree Isles, Check Out Table, Tasting Table, Herb,Honey, and Biowash Table.

Our Spring Tree Sale was a success, in spite of the traffic disruptions on Old 41 ... in both directions. Steve Cucura was pleased with the sales and people were making purchases right up until 3 PM. Many club members were helping - some even from an early start to a late finish. Thanks to ALL of you! Madeline



