

November 2016 – Papaya



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.

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 November:



Our presenter on November 8th, 2016 will be a little different than usual. A panel of members will present **what to do with these wonderful tropical fruits.** Consume fresh “out of hand,” preserve as jam or jelly, bake into breads, stew into a savory dish, dry for the future, freeze for smoothies, etc. We will have different people speaking about their specialties, and samples will be offered when possible. As the holiday season approaches, we are reminding you that the best gifts are homemade, homegrown, and healthy! This will be a fun, practical and inspiring program, and help all of us understand more about the vast range of fruits available to us here in SW Florida—and how to enjoy them through the year. If you would like to participate and share a special recipe or technique, please contact Suzy Valentine. suzy.valentine@att.net

Message from the President

“Ask not what your fruit club can do for you, but what you can do for your fruit club.”
(Apologies to JFK.) This is the month to give that some thought.

Our club bylaws state that at November’s general meeting, a call will be made for volunteers for club office. This is the first step in choosing new officers for 2017. Available positions are: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer (all one-year terms) and one director position (a two-year term).

Have questions? Call me, Kathy Pflugrad, at 239-822-7151. Ready to have your name considered? Come to the November 8 meeting and raise your hand. Our nominating committee will thank you!

“If not now—when? If not me—whom?” (Rabbi Hillel)

Calendar of Events

11/8 Tue. – Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM. Program: **“What to do with these wonderful tropical fruits?”**

11/22 Tue. – Workshop Meeting, 7 PM

12/13 Tue. – Christmas Dinner Party, time to be announced

12/27 Tue. – Workshop Meeting CANCELLED

Progress and Expenditures:

Update on Everglades Wonder Gardens Project

The historic Wonder Gardens has given an area to our BSTFC to create a venue for educating visitors about tropical fruits which are easily grown in this area. It is a wonderful location, just to the right as visitors enter into the gardens from the entrance/museum building. Suzy Valentine, David Southall, Kathy Pflugrad and Rick Johns have cleared the area of 'undesirables' and planted Miracle Fruits, Papaya, Pineapple, Jaboticaba, and Vanilla Orchid vines so far. Plans include Passion Fruit vines and Monstera Deliciosa to be added soon. Mulch was donated by Forestry Resources on Old 41, and it was delivered free of charge by a local landscaper friend. Actual physical labor of spreading mulch provided by Suzy, Kathy and Rick-- we make a great wheelbarrow/pitchfork team! Signage is coming soon, with correct names of our plants and a bigger sign recognizing our BSTFC. Go see what we are doing!

Chores Outdoors: November Edition By David & Jenny Burd

PERSIMMONS

Take time to fertilize your persimmons with a balanced fertilizer, preferably an organic 6-6-6 or 10-10-10 even with fruit not yet harvested. Remember, persimmons lose their leaves this time of the year; keep applying the fertilizer *lightly* each month until the first new leaves start to push. Then **stop** fertilizing because once the leaves are pushing, fertilizer will send a signal for no fruit to set or the set fruit to abort. 'Triumph' is our favorite persimmon—good flavor and regular fruiting. There are many other good persimmons; test and try before you buy!

MORINGA

We are learning more and more about the health benefits of moringa. It grows well here and is drought tolerant once established. Propagation is by seed or cuttings or air layers. It can be grown successfully in a large pot or in the ground. Shape it as it grows, harvesting the top of the tree—then it will bush out and the leaves, flowers and pods will be easy to reach. Moringa trimmings are excellent green fertilizer under fruit trees. There are many good library books and online information about the benefits of moringa.

Moringa prospers in well drained, sandy soil, and will stress and die in wet soil. A young tree will probably die at 32° F, a mature tree struggles at 28° F. Moringa grows at a fast rate, so needs to be topped or pruned regularly. When young fertilize with a little Peters 20-20-20 (follow instructions) and a light sprinkle of cotton seed meal, which is the only nutrition needed when mature because Moringa thrives in acid conditions.

STRAWBERRIES

This is the time to plant strawberries. See full instructions in the September newsletter.

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 — Papaya

Scientific Name: *Carica papaya*
Family: Caricaceae

Papaya originated in Central America, but can be considered a native plant in Southwest Florida because it was here before western explorers arrived. Archeologists at Randell Research Center discovered that Calusa Indians on Pine Island were eating papaya 1800 years ago.

Not a true tree, the papaya nevertheless grows to a height of about fifteen feet, and bears in abundance over much of the year. While male plants bear only flowers, female plants bear somewhat spherical fruit; these may be seedless if unpollinated. Hemaphroditic plants bear elongated fruits. Papayas, weighing up to ten pounds, are melon-like and usually filled with seeds. The flesh—yellow, orange, or red—is sweet and juicy. The best cultivars have a very pleasant tropical flavor with floral undertones. While still green, papayas can be used as a vegetable in a variety of recipes.

Papaya plants are not difficult to grow. They like to be well watered, appreciate rich and fertile—but well drained—soil, and lots of sunshine. They are cold sensitive, but may thrive against a sheltered south wall in a cooler microclimate. Because they reach peak production at two or three years old, it's wise to plant new ones every year or two, and cut down older plants that have begun to decline. Solo cultivars tend toward smaller "trees" and yield fruits under two pounds; 'Sunrise Solo' is one of the best. The popular 'Red Lady' yields delicious fruits that can weigh above seven pounds; this cultivar also has thicker skin which reduces papaya fruit fly damage. 'Known-You' is a tasty yellow variety. Papayas can be easily grown from seed, though they may not always be true to type.

Papaya pests include the papaya fruit fly, which lays eggs under the skin of the fruit; nematodes, especially in sandy soil; and papaya ring spot virus in susceptible cultivars. Despite these risks, the papaya is a valuable addition to backyard collections. Few other fruits bear such an abundant harvest in such a small space.

Papaya Recipes

Uses for Ripe Papaya

- Squeeze fresh lime juice over chilled papaya wedges and serve with a spoon.
- Combine chunks of fresh papaya with diced fresh pineapple. Allow flavors to blend before serving.
- Peel papaya, and cut thick crosswise slices. Remove seeds, and place on individual salad plates. Fill cavity with fruit salad, cottage cheese, or chicken salad.
- Pour almond milk over an individual serving bowl of chilled papaya chunks, top with cinnamon.

Uses for Green Papaya

- Peel, shred, and use in traditional Green Papaya Salad. Many variations of the recipe are online.
- Use to replace summer squash in your favorite vegetable or casserole recipes.
- Chop finely or shred, steam lightly, and serve with warm marinara sauce.



Papaya Tree



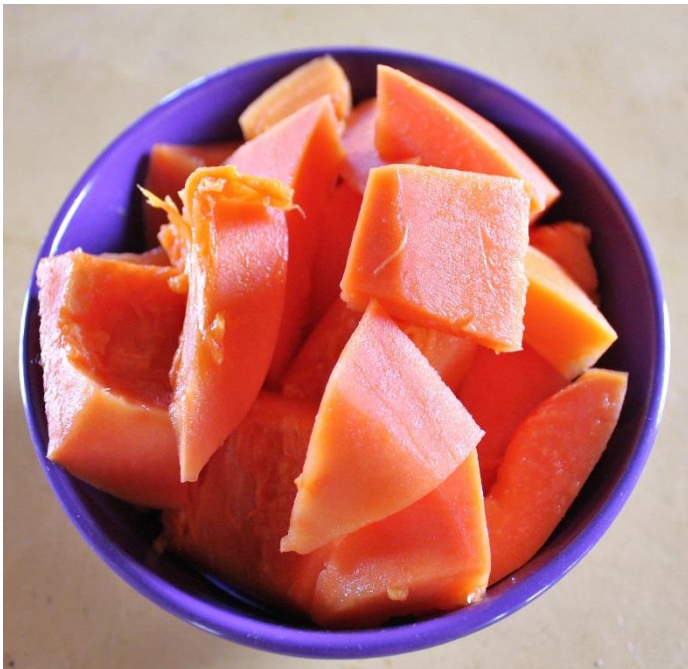
Papaya Fruit on tree close up



Female Flower



Male Flower



Bowl of papaya chunks



Papaya Seeds



Dried Papaya