



May 2017 – Custard Apple



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 \$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: Suzy Valentine

Vice President: Kathy Pflugrad

Secretary: Don McBride

Treasurer: Victoria Strickland

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Email us at Info@BonitaSpringsTropicalFruitClub.com.

Guest Speaker for May:



Our speaker on May 9 will be Will Wright. He is chairman of the Tropical Fruit Society of Sarasota. His love affair with tropical fruit began with a nispero (sapodilla) smoothie in Caracas, Venezuela in 1992. That led to growing cold-hardy citrus in Houston. After moving to Sarasota in 2000, Will joined a local fruit club and broadened his horizons. He claims that his favorite fruit is the one in his hand, but he's especially fond of lychees, mangoes and sapodillas.

Will says, "Perhaps the one thing I like most about tropical fruit horticulture is this: it is a life-long apprenticeship. There are so many kinds of fruit all over the world, no person could ever become an expert in the classical sense. It is a hobby that keeps one humble. The other aspect of this hobby that is so nice is the people— gardeners are great people."

Will's presentation, "Lychees, Longans and Spanish Limes" will focus on three closely related fruits. They have fascinating differences and an enigmatic evolutionary path. He will discuss their "underappreciated" differences, as well as growing requirements.

Announcements:

COSTA RICA FRUIT TOUR is being planned for this fall, Sept 4-15, 2017. For full itinerary and pricing, contact Rodger Taylor at rtaylorrm@comcast.net or 239-384-9630.

REMEMBER TO SHARE your bounty so other members can enjoy lots of tropical fruits. Bring samples for the tasting table washed, cut up, and ready to serve. Thank you!

Calendar of Events

5/9 Tue. –Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM; Speaker: Will Wright; Topic: "Lychees & Longans"

5/23 Tue. –Workshop Meeting, 7:00 PM

6/13 Tue. –Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM

6/27 Tue. –Workshop Meeting, 7:00 PM

7/11 Tue. –Regular Meeting, 6:45 PM

7/25 Tue. –Workshop Meeting, 7:00 PM

Chores Outdoors: May Edition

AVOCADO & CITRUS PRUNING: Now is the best time for trimming avocados and citrus. Remember, if you trim branches larger than one and half inches the wound should be sealed. Why? If not treated, cracks will eventually occur which bugs can occupy as their home. Later, the wound will rot back into the trunk, which will die in time.

There is an art to trimming. With avocados, in heavy productive years the remaining crop will be much larger after trimming. The new growth helps feed that remaining fruit. Too much fruit weakens the tree so that the next year the tree may not fruit at all.

Always remember to clean your tools after pruning each tree. Alcohol or hydrogen peroxide are best. Never use bleach.

Sadly we are seeing more and more avocado trees in our area dying because of laurel wilt. University of Florida researchers now are saying that other beetles besides the ambrosia beetle can carry the disease threatening avocado trees.

ANNONAS: As the fruit starts to set, mealy bugs will show up. Soap products are very effective--usually one ounce per gallon; less is better than more. If using BioWash, half an ounce per gallon is OK. Dawn dish washing soap is not good for trees. Always check that the dish soap has **no** antibacterial or perfume added.

Particularly on the Custard Apple (also called Bullock's Heart; Cubans call it cherimoya) the chalcid fly will attack. If small exit holes are seen, pick the fruit and bag it, then put it in the trash; otherwise the problem will show up year after year. Ideally, the fruit remaining on the tree should be bagged to prevent further infestation. That is why we try to keep our fruit trees at a reachable height.

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 – Custard Apple (aka Bullock’s Heart)

Scientific Name: *Annona reticulata*

Family: Annonaceae

The fast growing Custard Apple bears its distinctive fruits in late winter and spring—months earlier than other *Annonas* such as atemoya and sugar apples. Unlike many of its relatives, it produces a good harvest (up to 100 pounds per tree) without hand pollination.

The tree is typical of *Annonas*—an open growth habit forming a somewhat irregular crown and reaching a height of 15 to 30 feet. Mature trees are hardy to about 27°, though the leaves will drop in winter. Custard Apple needs full sun and adequate drainage, but is known to thrive in a variety of soil types and in humid conditions. Some irrigation is needed during dry periods. If attacked by the chalcid wasp, fruit will mummify before maturity. Fruit can be bagged to prevent this problem.

The name “Custard Apple” is applied to other *Annona* species in some regions; this results in confusion. The true *Annona reticulata* has fairly smooth skin that is yellow, brown, red or purple—rather than green—when ripe. Fruits are four to seven inches long, and quality and flavor vary widely. Some authors consider the yellow skinned types to be superior, but a tree at ECHO in North Fort Myers bears a superb red skinned fruit. True to their name, superior Custard Apples have a thick layer of custard-like flesh; inferior varieties may be overly granular or fibery. In general the fruit is sweet and pleasant. Recommended cultivars include ‘Tikal,’ ‘Benque,’ ‘Sartenaya,’ and ‘San Pablo.’

Using Custard Apples

Custard Apples are delicious cut in half, and spooned directly into the mouth, discarding the seeds. The flesh can be added to milkshakes, sauces, ice cream, baked goods, or fruit sauces.

NOTE: Check out these websites for more pictures of various stages of cultivation and types of the *Annona reticulata*:

http://www.fruitipedia.com/bullock%27s_heart_annona_reticulata.htm

<http://www.growables.org/information/TropicalFruit/annonareticulata-new.htm>

<http://bie.ala.org.au/species/http://id.biodiversity.org.au/node/apni/2914650>

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