



Tropical Fruit Club Newsletter

August 2009

Officers: **President:** Pete von Lersner **VicePresident:** Christine Young,

Treasurer: Lincoln Lai, **Secretary:** Shirley Silvasy

Programs: Abe White, Hayri Lawrence, Pam Flesher, Clyde Stephens

Meetings: 3rd Monday 7 to 9pm Aug 17th Sept 21st Oct 19th Nov 16th Dec 21st,
Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando

TFC newsletters & photos available on our website <http://tropicalfruitclub.org>

Minutes (*good attendance*) *Pete von Lersner* called the meeting to order & welcomed guests.

Old Business: *Lincoln* gave the treasurers report which was accepted as were the July minutes. *Pete Lersner* extended a sincere thanks on behalf of all the club members to *Mae and Doyle Abbott* for hosting the recent Lychee picking fest at *Doyle's* home which generated \$280.00 towards The Club's treasury. A flyer was handed out outlining details of the MultiClub day's activity Saturday, July 25th, members were welcomed to attend a farm tour at *Topy Ritter's* on Merritt Island. Mangos are his main interest but he also has a variety of other tropical fruits. This was to be followed by a multi-club picnic hosted by the Brevard Rare Fruit Society. (*more page 2*)

New Business: *Hayri Lawrence* proposed a group "trip" to Orlando's Sleuth Mystery Dinner Show (*more page 2*)

Doyle Abbott expressed the moral obligation of all members in keeping their dues current, new members are allowed to pay a half year dues if joining after June, a couple of member dues are still outstanding.

Ms. Martha Merritt showed a practical tool that simplifies grafting, the tool is only \$6 & very efficient. Sincere appreciation to *Martha* who frequently shares and demonstrates gardening items & ideas for the benefit of members.

Doyle Abbott offered free decorative potting pots to all members interested.

Upcoming Program Monday 7p August 17th Dawn Gates an herbalist, a nurse, will be speaking about using plants for health benefits, especially focusing on using tropical fruits and plant parts.

Past Program Monday July 20th *Nick Francisco* of Blodgett Gardens & Nursery, Inc. 3821 Edgewater Dr Orlando, Florida 32804 *Nick*, a professional farmer & large commercial greenhouse operator, demonstrated the use of the BRIX system to assess and produce healthy nutritious fruit and vegetables. The intriguing slide presentation demonstrated the measurements of the percent of solids (TSS) in a given weight of plant juice by use of a refractometer with a scale capacity of 0 to 32. The result helps determine the health of the plants with the concept that the healthier the plant, the healthier the food it produces, & therefore healthier the people. By the same token, healthier plants are less susceptible to pest infestations; pests are more prone to attack less healthy stressed plants. This is a simple affordable method to taking a scientific approach in helping understand the physical state of your plants & also in taking the necessary action required to produce healthy plants in your garden.

To improve the BRIX levels in your plants, *Nick* recommends as a first step to purchase Turf & Garden Pro liquid concentrate as a composting tea along with a Turf-Pro sprayer that attaches to the garden hose, set the sprayer rate knob to #4 and spray your plants per instructions. This principle must work in conjunction with soils amended with chemicals or composting good soil to improve soil minerals along with adequate watering.

Nick can help out with lab information for sending soil samples for testing, & for plant tissue test kits, go the Pike Agri-Labs website <http://www.pikeagri.com> or contact *Nick* nickfrancisco@hotmail.com *Nick* also recommends that you read the book *Nourishment Homegrown* by *Dr. A. F. Beddoe*, DDS full of valuable information for growing healthy plants. *Nick* is scheduled for another club presentation on September 21, 2009, definitely a recommended presentation beneficial to everyone that grows plants and eats healthy.

Mon 7p Sep 21st: *Nick Francisco* of Blodgett Gardens & Nursery, Inc. more about soils & plants.

Sat 6p (or 7:30 or 9) Oct 17, 24 or 31 Sleuth Mystery Dinner Show,

\$36.50 covers show, dinner, wine, & beer. 8267 I-Drive Orlando.

Kim & Scott Tie the Knot is about a Italian wedding ~ the audience is part of the wedding party. I thought we go for Saturday night so people can sleep in the next day as they can have as much wine and beer they can drink. <http://www.sleuths.com/>

The meal starts with salad, wine & beer, then a choice of **Honey glazed Cornish Hen, Four cheese lasagna with or without meat balls** or for \$ 3.20 extra **Prime Rib**. Then desert and coffee. We solve the murder mystery and we go home.

We need at least 15 people to qualify for group discount & they don't all have to members of the Tropical Fruit Club.

I can get it as family discount for \$ 36.50, which is about \$2 less than regular group discount, I think that is a very good deal as it is \$16.45 off the regular \$52.95. Come on lets have some fun as a group.

Contact Hayri gardenreb@earthlink.net 407-529-9785 to voice your interest in attending.

Tasting & Raffle Tables

Tasting *Bob Burns:* Tropical Jello; *Dolores Taylor:* Tea;

Horace & Goldie Thompson: Banana Nut Bread; *Myrtie Dumford:* Pineapple;

Cheryl and Joe Da Mota: Quacamole and chips; *Victor Orlando:* Red Berry;

Lincoln & Daphne Lai: Vanilla Wafers; *TFC:* juice, plantains, rainier cherries

Raffle *Cheryl and Jose DaMota:* Brogdon avocados fruit;

Robert Wu: Papaya; *Abe White:* Passion Vine, Papaya, Cardboard Palm, Sugae Cane;

Jim Ford: Pineapple plants; *Larry Shatzer:* Blackberries, Ginger, Spec Amorpho.;

Lincoln & Daphne Lai: Sugarcane; *Cathy Saravanja:* Aloe Vera plant; *Winston Lowe,* Banana Plants

Ben Shaddrick: Pineapple plants; *Hayri Lawrence:* Blackberry plant; *Debbie McDowell:* Fuschia 4' o'clocks;

Myrtie Dumford: Blackberry plant & Dwarf Cavendish Banana Plant; *Anonymous:* Philodendron

If you didn't sign in, thank you for your contribution!

Of Interest

On Saturday, July 25th members of Tropical Fruit Clubs from coast to coast met on Merritt Island for tours, information exchange, a BBQ lunch and general fellowship. Clubs represented were: Manatee, Sarasota, Tampa, Central FL, and our host, the Brevard Rare Fruit Council. For most, the day started with a visit to Topy Feil. Topy's property of 18 acres contains many different tropical fruit trees even though much of the property is still kept in its natural state. The tour of the farm was extensive with many mangos, longans, carambola and even Jakfruit to see and photograph. Topy claims he had an "off" year for his mangos due to the cold weather this winter. His grove is sheltered enough so that his mango flowers were damaged but not completely frozen. Other growers - even one 2 miles North of Topy, experienced a complete loss of flower panicles. This caused the tree to push out a new flush of flowers resulting in a later-than-usual, bumper crop.

After the tour of Topy's farm, we meet all the other clubs under a huge pavilion on Kiwanis Island. It was a beautiful venue for such a large group. Here a BBQ lunch was served and we had the opportunity to try many tasty and unique treats served-up by the Brevard club including spicy and tropical Sorrel and Ginger drinks. Following the BBQ (some of the distant clubs boarded their busses for the return trip home), 6 car-loads of mango fans from our Central Florida club convoyed to the home of Bill Bates - about 5 mins away from the luncheon site. Bill is 84 years of age and grows Glenn, Kent, Valencia Pride and Keitt mangos on his property (only the best!). Bill's Valencia Pride trees were easily more than 30 feet tall. Our group was greeted by three generations of the Bates men & were permitted to pick our own fruit. Because the February cold caused Bill's trees to lose all their blossoms, his mangos all re-bloomed. As a result, they were also ripening later than usual with his fragrant Glenn mangos (normally an early season variety) just reaching ideal ripeness. We enjoyed our time with Bill, his son & grandson while filling our bags with as many mangos as we could carry. Not only won't Bill pick mangos until they are ready (unless you specifically want green mangos) - he also sells them for a very reasonable price: \$0.75 each for Glenn's and \$1 each for the larger varieties. Quite a bargain! Those interested can contact Bill by calling: 321-684-0166 & make arrangements to visit him at 910 Newfound Harbor Dr., just off the Merritt Island Causeway (SR 520).

Brevard Rare Fruit Council's Website has lots of tropical fruit info <http://www.brevardrarefruitcouncil.org/>

Sat Aug 22nd, 2009 10am-4pm National Honey Bee Appreciation Day orangeblossombeekeepers.org Orange County Extension & Education Center, 6021 S. Conway Rd. Orlando. Learn about the importance of these industrious pollinators to the bounty of agricultural products, learn about the Honey Bees and the delicious & useful products from their hives, & about the medicinal value of their stings (apitherapy). Bring your family & friends for a day of fun with programs about Beekeeping & the benefits of local raw, unfiltered delicious honey & opportunities to support your local Honey Bees through education and by purchasing products from local beekeepers.

Sorry, I will not be able to continue the newsletter after November, who's next?

Share your comments & suggestions: Shirley Silvasy silvasy@aol.com 321-228-4310