



# COLLIER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2016

A Citrus grower, Danny Blank of Ft. Myers, will be our speaker on January 11<sup>th</sup> (second Monday). Danny uses organic methods on his 20 acre farm in Olga, south of the Caloosahatchee River. Presently, the farm is mostly home to 15 different varieties of citrus. Below is a list of fruit species intended for planting. It will be years before 12 Seasons Farm fulfills the identity of being a year-round producing farm. But it is on its way! For now, Danny enjoys delivering fresh citrus to markets. Those fruits are most always picked within 24 hours of selling.



**Danny Blank's 12 Seasons Farm To be home of seasonal fruits:**

**January: Starfruit**  
**February: Avocado**  
**March: Black Sapote**  
**April: Mulberry**  
**May: Lychee**  
**June: Mango**

**July: Longan**  
**August: Jackfruit**  
**September: Sugar Apple**  
**October: Atemoya**  
**November: Persimmon**  
**December: Pummelo**

Danny will give us a review of citrus varieties and history as well as an update of how the battle to save citrus is going. Statewide the annual crop totals continue to drop due to diseases such as citrus greening. State and Federal governments are spending money to find a cure but no silver bullet has been found. Farmers have found the effects of the disease show up early in the root system and have turned to soil development using composts and nutrient feedings. This has kept some still in the business going but is no cure. Big Ag research seems to be pushing a GMO variety which splices spinach genes into the citrus. This development is headed for production but may take years. Citrus growing has been a traditional favorite of the last century but the psyllid introduction has the future of citrus in question.

### **PRUNING - IT'S TIME!**

Grapes, Peaches, and Nectarines! Each has a very particular way to be pruned. Check reliable information on how it should be done.

### **BURDS' NEST OF INFORMATION THIS and THAT FOR JANUARY**



**MANGOS** are just beginning to bloom! The fall heat and crop abundance last year has delayed this year's crop. So now is the time to fertilize with 0-0-18 and a good package of minors including iron which mangos need. 0-0-22 is OK as well. Both are available at Helena in Immokalee. Also hang a water bottle with small amount of old fish/meat in the mango tree (example will be shown at the January meeting) to attract the blow flies that fertilize the flowers.

**COLD PROTECTION** – Be prepared! if you don't need it, yea yea, **BUT** if a really cold night is coming, water at the highest temp of the day, 20 minutes is enough, will help. Covering the trees if you can, especially those that suffer at 40F but plastic should NEVER be used. Have the seam on the south east side because cold wind will come from the north. If it's a really strong "noreaster" then check for salt on the leaves, especially on Lychees and Jaboticabas and Jackfruit.

## **RECIPE OF THE MONTH**

This refreshing salad fits the bill for a low calorie post-holiday recipe. It is also a way to use red grapefruit, which are so abundant this time of year. The recipe was originally published in the Dec. 2015 issue of *Taste of Home* magazine.

recipe:

### **GRAPEFRUIT & FENNEL SALAD WITH MINT VINAIGRETTE**

Submitted by Roberta Taylor



1 medium red grapefruit, peeled and segmented  
1 fennel bulb, halved and thinly sliced  
¼ cup thinly sliced red onion

Vinaigrette:

3 Tbsp. fresh mint leaves  
2 Tbsp. sherry vinegar  
1 ½ tsp. honey  
1/8 tsp. each salt and ground black pepper  
2 Tbsp. olive oil

Arrange grapefruit segments, fennel and onion slices on a serving platter. Place mint, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper in a small food processor. Cover and process until mint is finely chopped, slowly adding oil in a steady stream. Drizzle dressing over salad.

Makes 4 servings.

## CLUB NOTES



Clift Notes by Clifton Clift

### **OVERHEAD IRRIGATION FOR FREEZE PROTECTION**

A couple of years ago Danny Blank and Tim Watkins gave the best program on freeze protection I have ever heard. I remember going home thinking this was the first time I've understood how dew point is measured and why I should know it. Then a few weeks later E.C.H.O. (North Ft Myers) was hit with a severe freeze and I wondered why? In the talk I found out why.

Someone in the audience asked at what temperature you turn off irrigation after a freeze? The answer "32 degrees". If plants are covered in ice from continued irrigation, the plant underneath the ice could still be unfrozen because when irrigation water turns to ice it gives up its heat changing from liquid to solid and this little bit of heat constantly touching the plant keeps it slightly above freezing.

When plants are covered with ice and this source of heat (constantly freezing water) is turned off, it doesn't matter if the ambient temperature is 32 degrees or 72 degrees, the plants under the ice will freeze. You can't turn irrigation off until all the ice is on the ground. That is often noon.

When the sun comes up with plants covered with ice and temperatures well above freezing, the ice is melting fast. Ice becoming liquid picks up heat hopefully from irrigation water and not from the plants. Ice that melts rapidly with hot sunshine (even with irrigation) is more dangerous than the same ice coverage and irrigation thawing slowly in shade.

I wondered why it froze inside an ECHO greenhouse until I saw dry crushed corncobs on the floor. Using 70 degrees F ground water to protect plants from cold, works fine until water begins to freeze. After overhead irrigation begins to freeze, it is very important to keep the water running, freezing, and giving off heat to the plant beneath until all ice has melted and fallen to the ground. Turning off overhead irrigation while ice is still on the plants has the reverse effect. The melting ice will take up heat from the plant and freeze it (like the ice cream freezer).

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Collier Fruit Growers Inc.  
c/o Jan-Marie Etzel  
8768 Ibis Cove Circle  
Naples, FL 34119

## **JANUARY 2016**

## **FRUIT NEWS**

The Collier Fruit Growers Inc. (CFG) is an active organization dedicated to inform, educate and advise its members as well as the public, as to the propagation of the many varieties of fruits that can be grown in Collier County. The CFG is also actively engaged in the distribution of the many commonly grown fruits, as well as the rare tropical and subtropical fruits grown throughout the world. CFG encourages its members to extend their cultivation by providing a basis for researching and producing new cultivars and hybrids, whenever possible. CFG functions without regard to race, color or national origin.

**REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**

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