

Suncoast Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Club

Meeting Notice

- Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 9, 2013
Where: Main Room Nokomis Community Center
234 Nippino Trail East, Nokomis, FL 34275
- Agenda:** 6:15 pm Chat and Tasting Table
6:30 pm Introduction and Presentation
8:30 pm Plant Raffle
- Speaker:** Chris Rollins, Manager of the Fruit and Spice Park, Homestead, Florida
- Topic:** Pesticide Free Gardening with Rare and Unusual Fruits and Vegetables for Southwest Florida

The Fruit & Spice Park is a 37-acre subtropical botanical paradise nestled in the heart of the historic Redland community 35 miles south of Miami. It is the only public garden of its kind in the United States. More than 500 varieties of exotic fruits, herbs, spices and nuts from around the world including 80 varieties of bananas; 70 varieties of bamboo; 40 varieties of grapes; 150 varieties of mangoes; 15 varieties of jackfruit trees and numerous other exotic edibles are grown and maintained at the park.

Chris Rollins is responsible for the Fruit and Spice's garden and botanical policy, design and all aspects of maintaining the park. He is also the founder of the South Florida Tropical Fruit Growers. As the Fruit and Spice Park Manager for more than 20 years, Chris has played a key role in introducing growers and the public to new tropical plants to the United States. The park's active exchange program has brought in plants from Central America, Africa, Southeast Asia and Australia, and provides germ plasm for nurseries, farms and backyard growers.

Chris organizes and leads garden and ethno-botanical tours and fruit safaris for botanists, students, growers and restaurateurs from all over the country to collect fruit, plant specimens and enjoy cultural exchange. Past tours have included England, Honduras, Costa Rica, Belize, Guatemala, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Bali, Java and Borneo.