



The Mango Collection at the Preston B. Byrd/ Mary Heinlein Fruit & Spice Park

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The Preston B. Byrd/Mary Heinlein Fruit & Spice Park is a 38-acre botanical garden in Homestead, Florida, that is operated by the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department. The Park is the only ethnobotanical park in the United States and contains more than 500 species of economically and culturally significant plants from five tropical and subtropical regions around the world. It showcases rare plants and educates the public on the connection to and reliance on the plant world. It also serves as a repository of cultivars for area growers and residents. Within the Park, there are several large collections of cultivars of species with commercial interest: annona, avocado, banana, bamboo, lychee, and mango. The Park's mango collection contains more than 170 different cultivars, some of whose introduction to the park dates to the 1950s. This valuable collection is a delight to visitors each summer, and it serves as a valuable source of germplasm for the research community.

The Fruit & Spice Park is operated by the Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department. It is situated on 38 acres in the southwest farming area of Miami-Dade County among commercial tropical fruit groves, plant nurseries, and winter vegetable fields. The Park displays over 2500 specimens of 500 species of tropical fruits, nuts, spices, and trees of economic and cultural importance. The Fruit & Spice Park is a botanical garden that strives to expand and enrich people's understanding of their reliance on the plant kingdom in the past, in the present, and future.

The Fruit & Spice Park was established on 20 acres in 1944 as a tropical fruit park, a display for the newly relocated northerners to introduce them to the tropical fruit trees that could grow in the climatic and soil conditions unique to the area. Most new residents to south Florida, were familiar with temperate crops, such as apples, peaches, and grapes, but were unfamiliar with the many options of tropical fruit trees available locally, such as mangos, avocados, jackfruits, and limes. The Park provided the opportunity to observe these fruits growing in the landscape along with activities including weekly tours of the Park and fruit displays at area events.

The 1980s was a period of significant development in the Park as well as involvement and support from the community. The Park plant collection grew, educational and outreach activities expanded, and the Park increased in size to 38 acres. On 24 Aug. 1992, Hurricane Andrew caused massive damage to the Fruit & Spice Park. Over 750 canopy trees were destroyed along with Park infrastructure. After the hurricane, bond referendums funded repairs, improvements, expansion to the Park, and a new Master Plan redesigned the layout of the collection into geographical regions and redirected the focus of the park to an ethnobotanical approach, which continues today.

The author would like to recognize the the staff of the Fruit & Spice Park for their dedication and support for the Park, and the impact made by Park managers Chris Rollins and Jim Stribling, as well as Maurice Kong for his many mango introductions, and all other plant enthusiasts who have contributed to the Park's plant collections over the years.

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The Park recently received recognition as a Level III accredited botanical garden from ArbNet, an interactive, collaborative, international community of arboreta and tree-focused professionals, and accreditation from Botanical Gardens Conservation International (BGCI,) a plant conservation charity dedicated to global plant conservation and environmental education.

The Fruit & Spice Park was created with the vision of educating south Florida residents and visitors on the varieties of trees they could grow in the soils and climate of South Florida. Since that time, the botanical collection has greatly expanded. The Park has increased the number and breadth of educational and outreach programs and made a lasting connection to the local community and visitors, working to instill in the people their connection to and dependence on the plant world.

The Collections

The Fruit & Spice Park comprises 38 acres of planted ground. The climate of the area is classified as a tropical monsoon climate with hot, humid, wet summers, and warm, dry winters. These weather conditions are favorable to support the growth of an amazing variety of tropical plants. The plant collection is divided into five tropical regions of the world each featuring ethnobotanically significant plants: Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Pacific Islands, Mediterranean zone, and Tropical America. Plants in each area are selected for the collection based on the economic, religious, and/or cultural impact they have made in people's lives. The stories of these plants are shared with the public in order to educate them and assist in their recognition and appreciation of their connection to the plant world.

Interspersed among the five geographical regions of the park, are cultivar and species collections of several commercial agricultural crops. These collections are of interest and importance to area growers as they display the growth habits of the various cultivars and provide a source of bud wood for the nursery trade and tropical fruit enthusiasts. These collections include: Annona, *Annona* spp. (77 accessions, 13 species, 14 cultivars); Avocado, *Persea americana* (76 accessions, 47 cultivars); Banana *Musa* spp. (118 accessions, 6 species, 68 cultivars); Bamboo, various genera

(135 accessions, 4 genera, 37 species) and Mango, *Mangifera* spp. [217 accessions, 7 species, 170 cultivars of *M. indica* (Table 1)].

MANGO COLLECTION. The Fruit & Park houses the only mango, *Mangifera indica*, collection that is open to the public in the continental United States. Of all the fruits in the park, the mango collection is the most popular and well known to the visitors.

In 1981 there were six mango trees of five varieties in the Park: ‘Kent’, ‘Anderson’, ‘Haden’, ‘Zill’, and ‘Brooks Late’. Today the mango collection houses 217 accessions of 170 cultivars, donations of plants and/or budwood from the Parks horticultural support club, Tropical Fruit & Vegetable Society of the Redland (TFVSR) private collectors, local nurseries, collecting trips, and the mango collections at the USDA Agricultural Research Service –Subtropical Horticultural Research Station (Chapman Field), in Miami, FL, and the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences’s Tropical Research and Education Center (UF/IFAS TREC), in Homestead, FL. The Park’s mango collection serves an educational exhibit for the visitors and also as a germplasm bank for local nurseries, enthusiasts, researchers, and growers for the further development of the industry.

The Park features its mango collection at two events: The Summer Fruit Festival and Mango Mania, both in June. The Summer Fruit Festival highlights the variety of tropical fruits that are grown in south Florida in the summer months, and features a mango display of around 200 mango cultivars. Volunteers harvest mangos from the collections at the Park, Chapman Field, TREC, and private collectors, and are displayed and labeled for the event. Lectures, plant sales, and mango tasting are offered to the festival attendees.

The following weekend a similar event called Mango Mania is sponsored by the Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Society of the Redland. Tickets are sold to attend this much-loved fund-raising, educational event. The volunteers return to the same collection sites to harvest additional mangos. The fruits are labeled and displayed on plates on tables under a tent at the Park. The event begins with a two-hour lecture from an area expert discussing mango cultivation, propagation, harvesting, the history of the mango industry in Florida, prominent mango cultivars, etc. and then moves to the display table where attendees move around the display table and sample ripe mangos. It is a memorable experience and a wonderful opportunity for visitors to try new mangos, compare different cultivars, and share the discovery of new delicious mango flavors.

Additional Activities

The Fruit & Spice Park offers visitors many ways to learn about and enjoy the Park: guided tours, fruit sampling, horticultural classes, volunteers, internships, and festivals. Visitors can taste fallen fruit in season providing an enjoyable opportunity for education.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES. The Tropical Fruit & Vegetable Society of the Redland (TFVSR) and the South Dade Garden Club (SDGC) have supported the Park for many years. SDGC has met at the Park since the 1944 and helps sponsor the Parks’ summer camp programs and memorial tree planting program. TFVSR formed in 1981 to increase public interest in the cultivation and use of tropical fruit and vegetables and to support the Park. It has supplied the Park with tree labels, a greenhouse, nursery, irrigation systems, farm equipment, numerous trees, etc., and has hosted 13 international tropical fruit conferences with speakers and participants from around the world.

Table 1. List of *Mangifera indica* cultivars L. currently growing at the Preston B. Byrd and Mary Heinlein Fruit & Spice Park, Homestead, FL.

Cultivar	Origin
Ah Ping	Hawaii
Alampur Baneshan	India
Alphonso	India
Anderson	Florida
Angie	Florida
Aroemanis	Indonesia
Ataulfo	Mexico
Bailey’s Marvel	Florida
Beverly	Florida
Bombay	Jamaica
Brahm Kai Meu	Hawaii
Brooks Late	Hawaii
Bullock’s Heart	Hawaii
Burd	Florida
Butter Cream	Florida
Cambodiana	Vietnam
Carrie	Florida
Cecil	Florida
Chok Anon	Thailand
Cobiella	Florida
Coconut Crème	Florida
Cogshall	Florida
Cotton Candy	Florida
Cushman	Florida
Daung	Thailand
Davis-Haden	Florida
Diab	Egypt
Diamond	Florida
Dolce de Leita	Cuba
Donkey Killer	Philippines
Dot	Florida
Du Dus	Trinidad
Duncan	Florida
Dupuis	Florida
DuPuis Saigon	Florida
Dwarf Hawaiian	Hawaii
Early Gold	Florida
East Indian	Jamaica
Edward	Florida
Eulogio	Tropical Asia
Ewais	Egypt
Excalibur	Hawaii
Extrema	Brazil
Fairchild	Panama
Fascell	Florida
Fernando	Florida
Fiji Long	Pakistan
Florigon	Florida
Ford	Florida
Fruit Punch	Florida
Galaxy	Florida
Gary	Florida
Gaylour	Egypt
Glenn	Florida
Golden Nugget	Florida
Goldens Lippens	Florida
Golek	Indonesia
Gopher	Florida

Table 1. (continued).

Cultivar	Origin
Graham	Trinidad
Haden	Florida
Harvest Moon	Florida
Hatcher	Florida
Hindi Besanara	Egypt
Hodson	Florida
Hong Sa	Thailand
Ice Cream	Trinidad
Imani Pasand	Trinidad
Irwin	Florida
Ivory	Thailand
Jakarta	Florida
Jaqueline	Florida
JB2	Florida
Jehangir	India
Julie	Caribbean
Juliette	Florida
Justin	Florida
Kaeow Savoy	Thailand
Karti Clombra	Tropical Asia
Keitt	Florida
Kensington	Australia
Kent	Florida
Kesar	India
Lancetilla	Honduras
Lemon Zest	Florida
Lippens	Florida
M4	Florida
Mabruka	Egypt
Madame Francis	Haiti
Mahachanook	Thailand
Mallika	India
Mandalay Yin Guay	Myanmar
Manga Blanca	Cuba
Mangga Pari	Tropical Asia
Martin	Florida
Maya	Israel
Mendoza	Tropical Asia
Mesk	Egypt
Montong	Thailand
Mulgoba	India
Mun Kun Si	Thailand
N-5	Florida
N-6	Florida
Naomi	Israel
Neelum	India
Nelson	Jamaica
Number 11	Jamaica
Okrong	Thailand
Okrong Tong	Thailand
Orange Sherbet	Florida
Osteen	Florida
Page	Florida
Pettigrew	Florida
Philippine	Philippine

Table 1. (continued).

Cultivar	Origin
Phimsen Mun	Thailand
Pickering	Florida
Po Pyu Kalay	Myanmar
Pohn Sawadee	Indonesia
Prieto	Cuba
Rapoza	Hawaii
Rataul	Pakistan
Ritah	Jamaica
Rosa	Brazil
Rosigold	Florida
Royal Special	Florida
Ruby	Florida
Ryan	Florida
Saint Maui	Hawaii
Sammy	Florida
San Felipe	Cuba
Sandersha	India
Sein Ta Lone	Myanmar
Sensation	Florida
Sheila	India
Shew Ya Za Ma	Myanmar
Sia Siam	Thailand
Sia Tong	Thailand
Sindhri	Pakistan
Smathers	Florida
Southern Blush	Florida
Spirit of '76	Florida
Springfels	Florida
Starch	Trinidad
Step	Hawaii
Sucari	Tropical Asia
Sugar Loaf	Florida
Sunset	Florida
Super Julie	Florida
Sweet Tart	Florida
Tahar	Israel
Tommy Atkins	Florida
Tong Dom	Florida
Tong Pi Kahn	Thailand
Torbert	Florida
Triple Sec	Florida
TT	Florida
Turpentine	Cuba
Tyler Premier	Kenya
Ugly Betty	Florida
Val x Carrie	Florida
Valencia Pride	Florida
Vallenato	Colombia
Van Dyke	Florida
White Alphonse	India
White Pirie	Hawaii
Wise	Florida
Yai Grom	Thailand
Zeylanica	Sri Lanka
Zill	Florida
Zillate	Florida

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS. The Park operates an educational program for schools and summer camps with classes on pollinators in the food system, proper nutrition, and good eating habits. An extensive volunteer program has grown over the years that attracts area gardeners, students, fruit enthusiasts, area youth groups, and students participating in community service programs.

FESTIVALS. Highlights of the year are the seven themed festivals held at the park: Redland Heritage Festival, Asian Culture Festival, Blues and BBQ, Orchid Festival, Summer Fruit Festival, Grow Fest!, and Mango Mania. These festivals are presented by the Park or in partnership with community groups, and each focuses on a specific horticultural or cultural theme associated with the Park. They have become much-anticipated events in the community. At every event, the Park presents a tropical fruit display of the fruits, nuts, and spices that are harvested from the Park at that time of year. It is created and staffed by knowledgeable park volunteers.

Research/Collaboration

The Fruit & Spice Park works closely with and strongly supports the nearby research institutions at Chapman Field and the UF IFAS TREC. The Park has shared plant material with these organizations, sought out their expertise on various topics over the years, and provided them with a separate location and different growing conditions in which to conduct research. It has been a valuable partnership and we look forward to continuing for years to come.

The Florida Division of Plant Industry maintains early detection traps for pests in the Park. The Fruit & Spice Park is also used as a place of study and living laboratory for classes offered in the curricula at the University of Miami, and Florida International University, and homeschools and summer camp programs.