

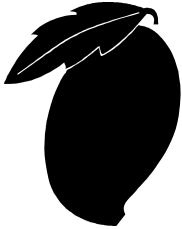


Finca la Isla's Newsletter



www.costaricacaribbean.com Garden:2750.0046 Farm:8829.4929

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Mango Madness



One of the great things about living in Costa Rica is the seasonal fresh fruits; and waiting for the season. Anticipation is a strong stimulant to one's appetite!

While bananas and papayas are available more or less year round, there are definite seasons, (unless the fruit is imported or forced), to most other fruits.

Mango season is about to begin. Almost all Costa Rican mangoes are grown in the Central and Northern Pacific, with some smaller production in the Alajuela area. While there are a lot of mangoes sold nationally, commercial mango production is driven by the export market.

There are hundreds of mango cultivars worldwide, but production is focused on less than a handful. Consumers in North America are encouraged to believe that the Tommy Atkins Mango is the best available. We can all recognize the Tommy Atkins: it's firm, weighs between 500 grams to a kilo, is a parrot green turning a golden yellow with a strawberry peach blush and it's juicy. Looks great. Trouble is it has not been selected for taste. The Tommy Atkins is the most popular commercial mango

because it has good presentation a long shelf life and can be shipped green. It's actually a perfect metaphor for what's wrong with mainstream contemporary culture: superficiality beats substance.

There are alternatives which might not look picture perfect, but taste a lot better:

The Haden mango is around a half kilo, slightly pointed and green tending to yellow. The seed is small and the fruit is very sweet and juicy, little fiber and an excellent flavor. This is the mango we use in our chutneys and dried fruit mixes.

The Irwin is small, crimson to garnet colored and is fiberless. The taste is excellent, 'melting' and aromatic, perfect for smoothies.

The Keitt is a huge mango, 1.5 to 2 kilos, ovoid in shape with a slight 'beak' at the bottom, green with a hint of red. Great flavor and also fiberless.

The Kent is small, mostly green with slight yellow to red blush, almost fiberless and very sweet.

Happy eating, and remember beauty can be more than skin deep!

March Issue:

- The good, the bad and the ugly: mango madness
- Coope news
- What's in season: almendro
- News from the farm: workshops and Easter fun.

Simple Mango Sorbet

- 2 fresh, ripe mangoes
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tblsp coconut milk
- 1 tsp lemon juice

About 1 cup whipping cream

Peel and deflesh the mangoes, chop roughly. Blend mango with sugar until pureed. Add coconut milk and lemon juice. Remove from blender. Pour whipping cream into blender and blitz until the cream forms stiff peaks. Add the mango puree and whizz for 5-10 seconds. Pour into container and freeze for 6 to 8 hours, stirring every 1/2 hour for first 3 hours to prevent uneven freezing. Enjoy with fresh fruit or a splash of coconut liqueur!

Botanical Garden

The garden is open Friday through Monday 10am to 4pm. Admission is \$5 per person, a self guided tour booklet is \$1 and available in Spanish, English, French, German and Dutch. Guided tours available(\$10/person, minimum \$30), please book in advance. Telephone: 2750-0046. There are fruits to try at our sampling table and the garden is full of the wonderful scents, sights and activities of the rainforest.

Easter fun at the Botanical Garden!

On **Thursday, April 1st, from 10 am- 12 pm**, the Botanical Garden will be celebrating this Easter with a fun-filled scavenger hunt, games, yummy snacks and a bunny hop race! Children ages 3 to 12 are invited- under 6 should be accompanied by an adult but all parents are welcome to join us. \$5 per person. Contact Ashley at the Botanical Garden for more info: 2750-0046 / 8355-9200.



Community News Update: Fueling the future!

On March 11th Coope Talamanca Sos (local alternative energy cooperative) celebrated their 3rd general assembly. With over 40 members, this cooperative is developing a community based model to produce and distribute second and third generation bio-fuels in the Talamanca region. The bio-diesel from vegetal oil project continues to run with new improvements and we are constantly seeking used vegetable oil to convert into fuel. We are also having suc-

THE MIGHTY ALMENDRO

If you've been to the Farmers' Market recently you may have had a sample of wild almond. This is the nut from the Almendro de la montana, (*Dipteryx panamensis*), a towering canopy tree known in the region mainly for its beautiful wood; reputed to be one of the heaviest in the world. But the almendro is much more: as the favored food and habitat for the Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambigua*), it is now protected by law, cutting any almendro over 120 cm or less than 70 cm in diameter is prohibited. Almendros are local trees found only on the Atlantic coast from southern Nicaragua down through Costa Rica and Panama and into

Workshops at the Farm

Last month Peter held two workshops: soil and forest floor technology, and plant propagation. Both went well and we hope to add more gardening workshops in the coming months.

This month we will look at what to do with the fruits and vegetables we harvest. The first workshop will be Fermentation. We'll work with brine pickles, kimchee, sourdough bread, vinegars, yogurt and kombucha. The workshop will be held at the farm Tuesday, March

23rd, 9am to 12:30/1pm. Cost is 8,000 colones (includes take home samples), please bring wide mouthed jars!

The second workshop: "What can I eat around here?", is a more general introduction to working with local fruits and foods. We'll look at different local edibles, and make lunch as a group based on what we find. Tuesday 6th April, 9am to noon, cost is 6,000 colones.

Advance notice is essential for both workshops, to book or for more info please call Ancel on 8910 9318.

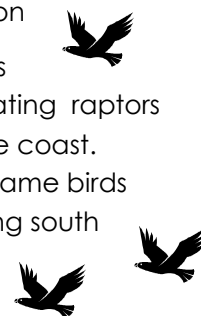
Columbia, they mostly occur below 900 meters and require an annual rainfall of 3 to 5 meters. They flower with pink-violet blooms between May and September and locally produce fruit February - March. Fruits consist of a thin fleshy covering over a hairy hard shell, the nut is found within the shell. When harvesting, choose the nuts which have lost their fleshy covering—chewed off by bats, possums, monkeys, squirrels, guatusas, pizotes, kinkajous, wild pigs, rodents or insects. Boil the shells until they open slightly, cool, and use a knife to split open. The nuts can be enjoyed fresh or dried and ground into a meal to use in baking, with yogurt, granola or whatever takes your fancy.

Coco-Palm Baskets & Hats

Come weave with us! Make baskets or hats from coconut fronds, every Tuesday and Thursday at 2pm at the Botanical Garden. Cost \$10 per class. Call 2750 0046 for more info!

Raptor Migration

Keep your eyes open for migrating raptors heading up the coast. These are the same birds we saw heading south back in November!



LA BOTANICA ORGANICA

"Su pulperia natural"

Offering Food, Health and Beauty Products with a focus on

● Sustainable ● Fair Trade ● Local ● Organic ● Natural

Natural Herbal Remedies, Organic and Natural Food, Essential Oils, Beauty and Body Care, Tinctures Supplements, Eco Friendly Cleaning products..

Upstairs at Veronicas, Puerto Viejo. Opening April!

New Vets in town Drs

Arroyo and Solano, the same vets who have offered the twice yearly Spaying and Nuetering Program, have set up a practice in Puerto Viejo.

The office is opposite Escape Caribeno, Hours are 9am to 12pm, and 1:30pm to 6pm, Monday through Saturday.

Phone number: 2756-8306.



ATEC, (Association of Talamancan Ecotourism and Conservation), is a nonprofit organization with a downtown office offering wonderful local tours, a communication center, internet, books, gifts and travel needs.