

Suncoast Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Club

Meeting Notice

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 13, 2013
Where: Main Room Nokomis Community Center
234 Nippino Trail East, Nokomis, FL 34275
Agenda: 6:30 pm Chat and Tasting Table
7:00 pm Introduction and Presentation
8:30 pm Plant Raffle

Topic: A Night at the Movies – THE FRUIT HUNTERS

Has anyone ever asked you what a litchi tasted like? A typical response might be "a litchi tastes exactly like a litchi." Or you might get a fairly mundane response such as "litchis are small ball-shaped fruit with a pink peel that comes off easily. You can open that and you get a juicy white flesh inside, with a pip you can pull out or spit out."

The so-called "responses" shows just how difficult it is to communicate what fruits are without the sense of taste or smell, and how their relevance draws back to personal experience. What does this fruit mean? What is its story?

These are the questions the "fruit documentary" THE FRUIT HUNTERS answers masterfully, through rich and often sensual visuals, combined with a series of plot lines that grow on one central theme – the human relationship with fruits and how they have evolved with us.

Inspired by the book of the same name this film tracks the stories of passionate and eccentric characters who dedicate their lives to studying, growing and preserving fruit varieties; some rare, others most likely in your fridge right now.

This is the story of Richard Campbell and Noris Ledesma from the Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, who travel to Bali in search of the Wani mango and to the depths of Borneo where a rare durian is under threat from logging. They first appear at a Fairchild mango auction where the film's leading actor Bill Pullman comes into play, although he is just being himself – an avid fruit lover.

Pullman relates stories of his forays into cultivating fruit as an adolescent and how that love of understanding where food comes from has stuck with him. The film follows his push to establish a plot of land as a community orchard in the Hollywood Hills. He also accompanies Hawaii-based fruit aficionado Ken Love on a natural degustation, slashing away overgrowth with machetes to taste such delights as guavas, ice cream beans and water apples.

There is the story of the Italian "fruit detective" Isabella Dalla Ragione who examines fruit like pears and figs in ancient paintings and seeks their modern day descendants in monasteries, gardens and the wild. You also have the Honduran scientist, Juan Fernando Aguilar, researching the dangers of growing bananas as a monoculture.

Hopefully, the film will spark your desire to devour and appreciate more fruits.