This year’s Agrifest had something for everyone, especially if you had an opportunity to visit the UVI’s exhibit area. If you wanted to purchase one-of-a-kind items, such as hand-made jewelry, bags, gift cards, and stuffed animals, they were all on sale by members of the Children, youth & families At-risk (CyFAR) and 4-H Entrepreneurship Club. The youngsters sold and made their sales pitch as they encouraged the fairgoers to purchase their items. CES’ Communications Unit also had cookbooks, tropical fruit posters, mugs, bags, greeting cards, and fruit tiles on sale. The creative display of the tropical fruits on tiles was a great hit with fairgoers, as several of the tiles were sold. This added feature highlighted CES’ promotion of “Adding value to the product.”

According to UVI’s President, David Hall, “UVI has focused on developing agricultural resources for three reasons: It’s good for the economy; it makes Virgin Islanders healthier; and it creates a connection with the land which is good for the people.” The University’s Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Station play a critical role in the development of agriculture in the Territory. This year, the UVI’s horticulture and aquaculture program was the centerpiece with the biotechnology as the anchor of UVI’s exhibits. The displays of both CES and AES highlighted the strong foundation and tremendous growth that are the keys to a successful agricultural industry.
From The Ground Up is a publication of the University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service. It is available to Virgin Islands residents upon request and is also available on the web at http://ces.uvi.edu and www.facebook.com/uvices.

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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

4-H Summer Academy July 1-August 1 (STX & STT)

Mango Melee July 7 (STX)

Basic Computer Training July 11 & 12 (STX)

Usefulness of Internet Workshop July 24 & 25 (STX)

Beginning PowerPoint Workshop August 28-30 (STX)

Beginning Excel Workshop September 2-4 (STX)

Intermediate Excel Workshop September 9-11 (STX)

World Food Day-Hunger Banquet October 16 (STX)

World Food Day October 20 (STX)

As I read the events and activities recorded in this edition of From the Ground Up, I experience a feeling of accomplishment for the Cooperative Extension Service, which generated a feeling of pride. The first report on “Entrepreneurship and Creativity” focuses on the children and youth. The seniors are included as they engage in training for raising poultry. All the other reports cater to individuals in varying age-ranges, who are learning about the superlatives of St. Croix, as we saw in the students from Rutgers University.

Discovery of the new bee species, bottling and canning fruits and vegetables, as well as making sausages, combined with adults learning the art of batik making are all essential to the success of our community. The newsletter also includes the nutritional benefits of pomegranate; it highlights the certification program of those who completed the computer classes; it records the introduction of eXtension and the institution of the Junior Achievement Program as well as grafting mango and avocado plants.

This 16-page newsletter is attractively presented, but it also educates the readers with a wide variety of information. This is documented proof that CES does fulfill its mission and its objectives as it caters to the Virgin Islands community. I hope that you, too, will read and learn about all of the programs that are conducted and help us to improve as we seek alternate ways to meet the needs in our community.

Sincerely,

Kwame Garcia, Sr.
The Internet is not an easy place to learn about St. Croix and what it means to be Crucian. Outside of Wikipedia, the results of a Google search are a directory of tourism websites and short paragraphs of adulterated history. Twenty university students from the mainland did not know what they would have found when they packed their bags and caught a 6 A.M. flight to America’s Caribbean, a phrase situated securely on the rear ends of cars across the island.

They found warmth in climate and hospitality and passion in life, love, and speech. The students came from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. What they found and where they went was different from where they came but not very much. They were impressed with St. Croix which they saw as an exemplary slice of the world; centered on the map of globalization, it is a place where the world gathers, from mainlanders to down-islanders, from the global south and north.

Being a center is not easy. The present clashes with history. Ecology clashes with economy. Culture clashes with itself. This second group of Rutgers University students to visit St. Croix toured historic Mount Washington Estate and learned about the history of the Virgin Islands through lectures presented by CES Natural Resources Specialist Olasee Davis. The students volunteered their services working with Davis on the Salt River Bay national historical park and Ecological Preserve proposed marine research and education center.

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They were moved by the people and their hospitality at Arawak Bay. The inn run by Jennifer Jackson, and her husband, Lionel; Don Bailey’s tilapia from the University’s aquaponic farm; Mrs. Harvey’s delicious conch and grouper in Christiansted; the taste of emancipation at UCA’s Kitchen in Frederiksted; the best vegan burger on-island at Polly’s at the Pier, and the words of extraordinary bushman, Olasee Davis. The Crucians they met were as prepared as any for the challenges and difficulties that must be overcome at the center of the world. Their experience is a positive testimony to our culture and generosity we look forward to their next visit.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- **Corned beef** is NOT horse meat. Corning is the name of the pickling process used to prepare the meat.
- **Mountain chicken** has nothing to do with poultry. It is frog meat.
- **Rocky Mountain** oysters have nothing to do with seafood. Mountain oysters is the name commonly given to bull testicles. Sheep testicles are called “lamb fries.”
- **Kidney Beans** are poisonous if not cooked.
- A pineapple is a berry.
- The proper name for goat meat is CHEVON.
- **Beef** from grass fed cattle contains less saturated fat than commercially raised feedlot cattle.
- **Rabbit meat** is lower in fat, cholesterol, and calories; is higher in protein and more easily digested than any other meat.
- With proper management, a female rabbit can produce up to 10 times its weight in edible meat per year.

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Rutgers University’s Students Rooted in St. Croix

Olasee Davis, CES’ Natural Resources Specialist, posing with Rutgers University students at Arawak Bay on St. Croix.
Dr. Joey Williamson, CES’ Extension Specialist-Pest Management, has been sampling for native pollinators with Sara Prado from North Carolina State University (NCSU). She is a research assistant for Jaime Collazo, a professor with the Department of Biology at NCSU. They want to determine what are the native bees that help the non-native honeybees with pollinating crops in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The native pollinators often help make the honeybees more efficient by competing for the same resource. Pollination is important to maximize yields, even with common vegetables such as melons and tomatoes. Some crops, such as watermelon and passion fruit, benefit more from certain pollinators such as Xylocopa mordax, than the honeybee, due to their vibrating within flowers, which helps shake the pollen off of the anthers.

On her first trip here, Sara and Dr. Williamson discovered 3 new species. Although known among locals, the bumblebee, *Xylocopa mordax*, was not recorded in the scientific literature or known outside of our islands. They also discovered a Lasioglossum species, and *Megachile lanata*, a leafcutter bee. “Not bad for one trip,” said Dr. Williamson. “Our sampling has been limited to farms in central St. Croix and the southeast. Sampling in the rainforest and other islands would likely yield more specimens and greater knowledge of native pollinators’ role in natural and developed environments.”

According to Dr. Williamson, Sara will possibly be returning soon to do some more sampling, and that will be the end of the funding for the project. He hopes that another funding source can be found to continue this project.

Have you ever wanted to produce your own fruit trees or create your own fruit orchard using your own creative design of varieties of fruit trees? Well, you can. Grafting is one way you can do just that. Grafting is an acquired skill learned through demonstrations and constant practicing.

Once learned, you can produce many different varieties of tropical fruit trees and thus create an orchard in your backyard. Horticulturists such as Dr. Dilip Nandwani, Research Assistant Professor at UVI Agricultural Experiment Station, define grafting as the joining of a part of one plant, called the scion to part of another, called the rootstock. When the two parts are joined, they will continue to grow as one. This method is commonly used when some plants have difficulty in rooting naturally to propagate. The scion is sustained by joining it to the stock, which will provide support and supply the necessary nourishment.

Mango and avocado are important fruits in the U.S. Virgin Islands. These seasonal fruits are produced over a 4-6 month period. Early and late-bearing varieties exist in many areas of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and successful grafting of varieties of these trees will help provide a more consistent supply of fruits.

Recently, grafting workshops were held on all three islands (St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John). This fruit grafting project is a collaboration of the V.I. Department of Agriculture, UVI Agricultural Experiment Station, and UVI Cooperative Extension Service and is funded under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Specialty Crops Block Grant. Grafting fruit trees helps to produce trees that combine favorable characteristics such as high yields, flavor, and/or disease resistance varieties.
American Academy of Chefs (AAC) inductee and Associate Professor at the University of Florida, David Bearl, educated and enlightened VI farmers, chefs, and other interested residents in blanching, freezing, bottling, canning, meat preservation and sausage making. Bearl is a Visiting Associate in Regional Food Systems with the Program for Resource Efficient Communities. Approximately 260 individuals attended the workshops on St. Thomas and St. Croix held April 8-9 and 10-11 respectively.

Bearl, who has an outstanding record in the field, has been working for over thirty years in training chefs for certification, among other things. His very affable demeanor combined with his culinary skills, engaged his participants each minute of each three-hour session. Be it preparing ingredients, mixing, cooking, frying or freezing, Bearl worked octopus-like moving easily between each process. He also explained and entertained questions while he managed each task.

The University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service took advantage of Bearl’s expertise upon a recommendation of a colleague. Funded by a grant through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, these workshops were geared primarily to farmers. Bearl believes that these processes are relevant to the Virgin Islands because they add value to farmers’ products, which can be stored and made available in various forms and would also eliminate spoilage and waste of fruits and vegetables. He explained that farmers should select their “freshest products,” and even though we have the ability to grow vegetables year round, we can supplement our diets with value-added products in various forms. If the large number of people who attended the workshops is any indication, we should be seeing locally bottled and preserved fruits and vegetables, and locally made sausages in our markets very soon.
Learning a new art form can be challenging and daunting sometimes; however, this was not the case with fourteen women who decided to learn a new skill: batik. The class was taught by CES’ energetic Dr. Caryl Johnson. Dr. Johnson decided to deviate from the traditional sewing classes and introduced the art of batik. The participants took to it like “duck to water.” They made their own designs and learned how to transpose their designs onto the fabric.

During a recently held closing program, participants modeled their garments and exhibited some of their lovely batik creations.

Batik is a form of art that relies on the resistance of wax on fabric to help illustrate a picture. The artist uses wax to prevent dye from penetrating the cloth, leaving “blank” areas in the dyed fabric. The process can be repeated over and over to create the design of the artist. Batik is especially unique due to the way certain wax blends will “crackle” during handling. Batik can be done with many types of dyes and waxes on 100% cotton, silk, or other natural fabrics.

Batiks originated centuries ago with the villagers and tribesmen of remote, tropical regions in what are now the countries of Malaysia and Indonesia. The promotion of the village arts is a way of keeping alive an important part of a vibrant and beautiful culture.

The batik classes provided the participants as well as interior designers and seamstresses with an opportunity to combine an ancient art form with their own cultural/Caribbean design, thus enhancing their ability to supplement their incomes and an opportunity to make items for their families.

Members of the Advisory Council for CES’ Children, Youth and Families At-Risk Program (CYFAR) listened attentively to Michael Dow, Executive Director of the Junior Achievement of the Virgin Islands, as he gave an overview of the Junior Achievement program and its work in the school system in the Virgin Islands. According to Dow, the Junior Achievement is the world’s largest organization dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential or hands-on programs. The program helps prepare young people for the real world by showing them how to generate wealth and effectively manage it, how to create jobs, which make their communities more robust, and how to apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. Students put these lessons into action and learn the value of contributing to their communities.

The presentation, which was held during the Council’s quarterly meeting, provided opportunities for members to question Dow on the “More Than Money” curriculum offered by the Junior Achievement Program, as well as the possibility of collaborating with the CYFAR Program.

According to Lois V. Sanders, Assistant Director for 4-H/Family & Consumer Sciences, CES’ CYFAR offers several subjects to include financial literacy to the families at Croixville Apartments, St. Croix; and Knolls at Contant, St. Thomas. She said, “The Junior Achievement’s ‘More Than Money’ curriculum will add another dimension to what is already offered by CYFAR.”

The CYFAR Program is an after-school program designed to provide low-income families with information and skills needed to enhance their quality of life. Youth and adults receive educational sessions on nutrition and healthy lifestyles, money management, computer technology, workforce preparation, cultural literacy and agriculture. School-aged youth also receive tutoring in mathematics, science, English and reading, along with homework assistance from Monday through Friday. This program is under the auspices of the National 4-H Program and has been in the Virgin Islands since 1998 at the University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service. For more information, contact Ms. Sanders at 340-692-4096 or 340-692-4087.
Brief History

The pomegranate tree is native from Iran to the Himalayas in northern India and has been cultivated since ancient times throughout the Mediterranean region of Asia, Africa and Europe. The fruit was used in many ways as it is today and was featured in Egyptian mythology and art, praised in the Old Testament of the Bible and was carried by desert caravans for the sake of its thirst-quenching juice. Pomegranate is among the most popular, nutritionally rich fruit with unique flavor, taste, and health-promoting characteristics. Pomegranates contain seeds surrounded by juice sacs, called arils, which are the part of the fruit that can be eaten. Pomegranates are full of antioxidants and may have a number of health benefits.

Nutrition Facts

A medium pomegranate contains 110 calories, 1 g of protein and 1 g of fiber. It contains 15 percent of the daily value for vitamin C, 8 percent of the daily value for vitamin B-6, 4 percent of the daily value for thiamine, riboflavin and iron and 2 percent of the daily value for folate and niacin. Pomegranate juice contains 140 calories per 8 oz. glass.

Possible Health Benefits

A 2004 study by Michael Aviram published in Clinical Nutrition found that drinking pomegranate juice helps lower blood pressure and reduces atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. The study involved patients with carotid artery stenosis who drank pomegranate juice for up to three years and had systolic blood pressure reductions of up to 12 percent after one year. Consuming pomegranates or pomegranate juice may also help reduce the risk of high cholesterol, prostate cancer, heart disease, obesity, diarrhea, fungal mouth disease, sore throat and hemorrhoids, according to Medline Plus, but more research is needed to determine whether or not this is effective.

Considerations

Much of the research done on pomegranates and their health benefits has been done in the laboratory, rather than with people, so more research is needed, according to Johns Hopkins. Most studies used a dosage of 16 oz. of pomegranate juice per day, which adds up to a lot of calories and can be quite expensive.

Warning

Pomegranate juice may interact with some medications, including high blood pressure medication. Because of the possible effect on blood pressure, Medline Plus recommends not consuming pomegranate within two weeks of having surgery.

Expert Insight

Even though there isn’t enough research to prove the health benefits of pomegranates, they are a good source of both vitamin C and potassium, so pomegranates and pomegranate juice can be included as part of the recommended 2 to 4 servings of fruit per day, according to Johns Hopkins.

Information from www.livestrong.com/article/289012-pomegranate-fruit-nutrition/#ixzz2RUB3wOdm
Fifty-eight adults received certificates at the closing program for the University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service’s (CES) Introduction to Computer training on Wednesday, April 17, 2013, in the Great Hall on the Albert A. Sheen Campus of UVI. This program—replete with remarks from UVI’s President, the State Director, the Assistant Director-SCSEP, and the Employment Counselor from the Department of Labor, as well as poetry and instrumental music—was the culmination of a seven-week course that introduced the participants to the computer. The participants were divided into three sessions to facilitate the growing need for this program. From March 4 to April 18, the participants wended their way to the campus where they were exposed to the technology and its growing demands. As they became more acquainted with the training, they lost their fear of the device, thus improving their confidence.

Class Speakers, Mrs. Sadie McLaren-Peterson, Mr. Gordon M. Haynes, and Ms. Earlene R. Wagner, expressed the growing demand for technical skills, and the benefits they anticipate from this training. McLaren-Peterson was impressed by the “diverse group” of participants, most of whom knew “absolutely nothing about the computer and a few with self-taught skills.” She was also impressed by the number of men who participated. While forging friendships and helping each other by sharing their skills, the participants were very vocal in expressing their sentiments, as McLaren-Peterson stated. To some, the experience was “awesome.” Some expressed their victory over their weaknesses and fears, while others appreciated the “hands-on experience.”

All participants expressed great admiration and appreciation for the training course instructors, Mr. Marthious Clavier and his assistants. They applauded Mr. Clavier’s “passion and enthusiasm for his work,” while he “energized, motivated, and encouraged” them to be actively involved in the class. His assistants, Mr. Kevin John and Mr. Gerald Felix, were also praised for their “tireless” efforts and knowledge. The participants have embraced the CES’ objective and are well prepared to enter the technical world. They overcame their fears, and are determined to continue to expand their knowledge. To them, we say “Congratulations!”

Mr. Denis Augustine was one of 15 seniors who participated in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Workforce Training at the Cooperative Extension Service on St. Croix. Augustine said he was very happy to take the training. He learned a lot about poultry raising, the difference between broilers and layers, how to brood the chicks, and what to feed them. Augustine stated that he is looking forward to building an additional chicken coop for raising more chickens. He was particularly thankful for receiving the basic equipment to begin raising his young birds.

Participants in the program also entered the kitchen and learned several preparation techniques for eggs and chicken meat. They had a great time tasting the difference between fresh, locally produced items and the standard supermarket varieties.

The SCSEP program is a collaboration between the University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service and the V.I. Department of Human Services. Extension provides workforce training to seniors through a grant from Human Services. Workshops were also held in areas such as landscaping, gardening, clothing construction, and financial management.