

## BVI Tropical Fruit Fest

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Tuesday, July 13 &ndash; The Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour and the Department of Agriculture will host the Virgin Islands's first one-day Mango Array and Tropical Fruit Festival in the Territory on August 13, 2010 at the Noel Lloyd Positive Movement Park.

Minister for Natural Resources and Labour Honourable Omar W. Hodge said, The BVI's First Mango Array and Tropical Fruit Festival will serve as a key cultural tool, it will promote a sense of community identity and economic growth and diversification through a wide range of foods and other goods produced from mangoes and tropical fruits.

Some objectives of the festival are, to unite farmers, supermarkets, proprietors and the community and an overall greater appreciation for the tastes and varieties of local fruits in the Virgin Islands.

Chief Agricultural Officer Mr. Bevin Brathwaite stated that, "This festival will promote mango awareness in fun activities for the children, gather mango recipes for the development of a Virgin Islands mango cook book, promote the different ways mangoes can be used in the Virgin Islands, promote the cultivation, caring and maintenance of our traditional fruits in the Virgin Islands and to demonstrate and display to all residents and tourists, the large variety of tropical fruits we have to offer during their stay in the Virgin Islands".

Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer and the event coordinator Mrs. Arona Fahie- Forbes stated "We will also provide training on fruit tree production on the nutritional value, uses, production and crop husbandry and management, along with a propagation session which includes air layering, budding, and grafting".

The expected atmosphere that will take place during the one day festival is one that will be filled with activities and fun all surrounding mangoes and local fruits. There will be an official opening ceremony in The Noel Lloyd Positive Movement Park, judging of mango recipes, food competition, a display of all the locals fruits available at this time of the year, a mango eating competition for children, quizzes, games, face painting, bobbing for mangoes, and the Queen of Tropical Competition competing for the biggest and sweetest mango variety in the Virgin Islands. The festival will close with an awards ceremony for various categories and competitions. The festival is also open to vendors who can sell assorted fruit trees, ornamentals, arts and crafts, food and fresh produce.

Persons interested in participating in the various competitions and being a vendor in the festival are asked to contact Mrs. Arona Fahie-Forbes at the Department of Agriculture at 494-2110 or 468-9212.

Similar festivals have been held annually in St. Croix, U.S.V.I., Florida, India, Trinidad, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, W.I. The BVI's first Mango Array and Tropical Fruit Festival 2010 will continue in the tradition set forth by previous festivals around the Caribbean showcasing local varieties of mangoes and will feature entertainment by local artists.