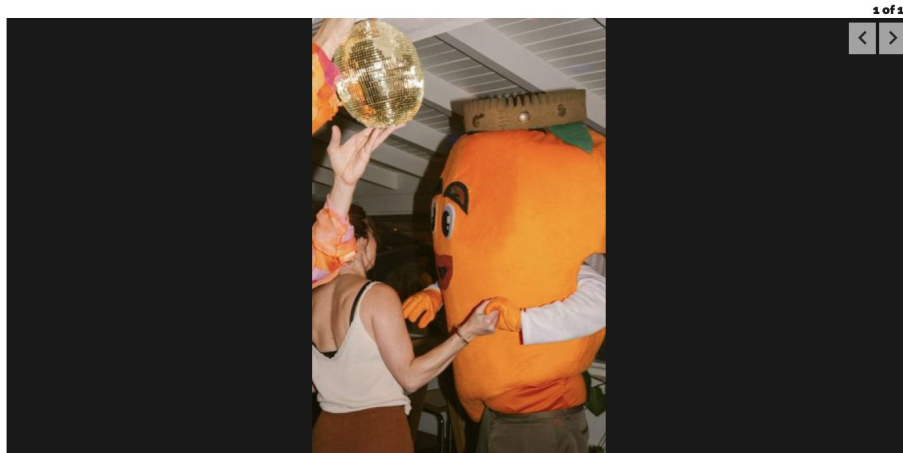


The mango is king of the Miami summer

BY PATRICIA MAZZEI THE NEW YORK TIMES Jul 8, 2023 Updated Jul 8, 2023

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King Mango at a mango-themed house party in Coral Gables, Fla., July 1, 2023. Those who sweat and suffer through June and July in South Florida are rewarded with mangos blushing from trees in yards, streets and strip malls.

JAMES JACKMAN / THE NEW YORK TIMES



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MIAMI — The air gets thick with humidity as summer arrives in South Florida. Evening thunder murmurs. The tropics begin to stir.

In the upscale Miami suburb of Coral Gables, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden has 550 varieties of mango, one of the most diverse collections in the world. Bruce Greer, the president of the board of trustees, helped start an annual mango festival. Now in its 30th year, it is expected to draw as many as 8,000 visitors this weekend.

A few months ago, Greer's sister came to town and wanted to take her daughter to see the house where she and Greer lived as children. The two mango trees their father had planted in the early 1960s — a Haden and a Kent — were still there, thriving.

"I literally remember my dad putting them in when I was 6 years old," said Greer, who has 22 trees of his own. "They went through I don't know how many owners. They went through my whole life."

That inspired Greer to envision a new "Million Mango Project" for Fairchild to promote tree plantings across Miami, with the goal of bringing people closer to the prized fruit and shade to neighborhoods with limited tree canopy.

"We're going to reintroduce these mangoes into the landscape," he said.