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To: Hanai 'Ai from Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers

## **ULTRA-EXOTIC FRUIT SERIES CONNECTS GROWERS WITH GROCERS, CONSUMERS**

HAWAII—Have you ever bit into a bilimbi? Or juiced jaboticaba? Known as ultra-exotic fruits, these not-so-well-known edibles are among a growing number of odd fruits under cultivation in the islands.

“Besides offering unique flavors, shapes and colors, they bring novelty to the table and can delight the senses,” says Ken Love, president of the Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers (HTFG).

Members of the statewide HTFG are growing a wide variety of ultra-exotic tropical fruits that they claim are “underutilized by the mainstream market.” They include Surinam cherry, calamonsie, jackfruit, chico, pommelo, abiu, durian, white sapote and others.

“Many of our Hawaii chefs are aware of their attributes and availability and are using them with great success,” adds Love. “You commonly see these ultra-exotics in ethnic and farmers markets, but many of them are unknown to the typical Hawaii consumer. Our goal is to change that.”

HTFG is working to build markets for these juicy rarities. Growers are partnering with chefs and grocers and offering a series of free public taste tests and culinary demonstrations at stores on four Hawaiian Islands throughout 2012. To date, there have been 11 demos, covering some of the above fruits, plus tamarillo and fig.

During ultra-exotic fruit events, attendees taste the chef’s recipes and the fresh fruit. Participating stores stock the fruit in their produce sections, accompanied by recipes and additional fruit information to take home.

“These events are well attended by shoppers,” shares Love. “People are willing to try the fruit and grocers have even sold out of it. While some people might not like the raw fruit taste, they always like it in a recipe. We show them how to use it.” He adds that the events have hooked up growers directly with grocers and attracted new members to HTFG.

Titled “New Markets for Ultra-Exotic Fruits,” the event series is funded by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture through a USDA competitive grant program to foster small farm sustainability. For more information, contact Love at [ken@mycoffee.net](mailto:ken@mycoffee.net) or 808 (969-7926). Find info on a large variety of fruits at [www.hawaiifruit.net](http://www.hawaiifruit.net).

### **Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers**

Incorporated in 1989 to promote tropical fruit grown in Hawaii, HTFG is a statewide association of tropical fruit growers, packers, distributors and hobbyists dedicated to tropical fruit research, education, marketing and promotion; <http://www.htfg.org>.