

**LYCHEE AND PASSION FRUIT NAMED FRUIT OF THE MONTH  
FOR MAY/JUNE 2005**

**FLORIDA'S TROPICAL FRUITS ENHANCE NUTRITION, ADD FLAVOR TO MENUS**

South Florida is known for its beaches, beautiful people, and Art Deco buildings, but two lesser known jewels of the tropics, **lychee** and **passion fruit**, are grown just south of the glitz and glamour. Known best for their delicate flavor, fragrance and beauty, these two tropical fruits provide great taste and nutrition, are low in fat and carbohydrates, with high levels of potassium and vitamin C. With seasonal availability coming to a peak for the summer months, the **Tropical Fruit Growers of South Florida (TFGSF)**, a coalition of close to 100 South Florida growers and shippers dedicated to serving the expanding national appetite for Florida's sweet, juicy, tropical fruit, are declaring **Florida lychee and passion fruit the Fruits of the Month for May and June.**

"Lychees' bright red outer wrapper gives way to a crisp, luscious pearl colored tropical fruit, with a sweet ambrosia and refreshing honey suckle aftertaste. While passion fruit has an exotic tropical flavor drenched with the heat of the sun. They are particularly versatile when used in salads, ceviches, or sorbets," according to **Chef Allen Susser**, award-winning chef/owner of Chef Allen in Aventura, Florida and the official TFGSF chef spokesperson.

**Lychee (mid-May to early July)**



A fruit gaining widespread popularity, lychees, also spelled litchis, are native to Asia, but Florida is the only state in the contiguous United States that produces lychees commercially. "Last year some 2,000,000 pounds of lychees were gathered in South Florida, but we expect a much smaller crop this year. So make sure to ask your local produce manager for Florida lychee early in the season," says **Reed Olszack**, chairman of the Tropical Fruit Advisory Board. Peak season for the Florida lychee is mid-June with availability ranging from mid-May through July.

Linked with love and romance in ancient Chinese culture, while this fruit is a relatively new trend to many Americans, the Chinese have harvested lychees for thousands of years. It grows on trees in clusters and ripens in late spring. Lychees, which are one to two inches in diameter, offer a delicious burst of tropical flavor, with a uniquely textured red skin that encases the fruit which has a consistency similar to a peeled grape. It may be enjoyed fresh as a snack or in both sweet and savory dishes. Lychees may also be added to salsas, stir-fry dishes, sauces, desserts, ceviches, cooling tropical cocktails or placed on ham, chicken or steaks during cooking. The fruit may be stored whole in plastic bags and frozen to enjoy year-round.

**Nutritional Value:** Serving Size: 100g (10 fruits), Calories: 66, Protein: .8g, Fat: .4g, Carbohydrates: 16.5g, Fiber: 1g, Potassium: 171mg, Vitamin C: 72mg

### Passion Fruit (June to December)



Passion fruit, originally found in the region from southern Brazil through Paraguay, was brought to the United States from Australia in 1880, when the first purple passion fruit seeds were planted in Hawaii. The name of this fragrant tropical fruit originated from the diaries of early Spanish missionaries who recorded accounts of seeing the flowers during the Lent and Easter church holidays, reminding them of the passion of Christ. Known for their tranquilizing effects on the body, passion fruit is said to bring sweet dreams when eaten before bedtime.

The nearly round passion fruit measures 1½ to 3 inches wide, and has a tough rind that is smooth and waxy, ranging in hue from dark purple with faint, fine white specks, to light yellow or pumpkin-color. The inside of the fruit is full of a jelly-like pulp with as many as 250 small, hard, black, pitted seeds. The unique flavor is appealing, musky, guava-like and sweet to tart. Used in juices, barbeque sauces, marinades, tropical cocktails, jelly, and desserts, the fruit is best eaten when fresh, but may also be refrigerated for 1-7 days in plastic bags.

**Nutritional Value:** Serving Size: 100g (about 5 fruits), Calories: 97, Protein: 2g, Fat: .7g, Carbohydrates: 23g, Fiber: 10g, Potassium: 348mg, Vitamin A: 700 IU, Vitamin C: 30mg

Consumers may access recipes and information about Florida tropical fruits at [www.florida-agriculture.com/tropical](http://www.florida-agriculture.com/tropical) or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 407 S. Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800.

The **Tropical Fruit Growers Association of South Florida**, headquartered at **18710 SW 288 Street in Homestead, Florida**, grows, packs and ships more than 20 varieties of healthy, luscious tropical fruit. Telephone: **305-401-1502**.

To learn more about the organization and get additional recipes, visit [www.tropicalfruitgrowers.com](http://www.tropicalfruitgrowers.com) or email [tropicalfruitgrowers@earthlink.net](mailto:tropicalfruitgrowers@earthlink.net).

**Media seeking additional chef's recipes, images, and interviews, contact:**

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