



HABITAT



Dwarf breadfruits, anyone?

THE LINE OF MAFA'LA breadfruit trees along the ABC Highway.
(Pictures by Heather-Lynn Evanson.)



BARNEY GIBBS, one of the directors of the Future Centre Trust.

HOW MANY OF YOU have passed those trees on the stretch of the ABC Highway between the Clyde Walcott and Everton Weekes roundabouts without really seeing them?

Well, they are dwarf breadfruit trees, known as Mafa'la breadfruit trees, and they are there for the taking.

The Future Centre Trust wants people to pick them and the fruits off the trees planted around the perimeter of the Wildey Gymnasium.

So says Future Centre's director Barney Gibbs, who said that The Belle, St Michael area was specifically chosen for the planting of the Mafa'la breadfruit trees

"From the very first time we started planting palms along the highway ten years ago, we always



HEATHER-LYNN'S HABITAT

WITH HEATHER-LYNN EVANSON

wanted to plant fruit trees, but we were not permitted to do it, understandably, because the areas we wanted to plant in were too close to the road," Gibbs told Heather-Lynn's Habitat.

He explained there were concerns about fruit falling on passing vehicles and the exhaust from those vehicles contaminating the fruit.

"But fast forward ten years now and there is a real appetite for public planting of fruit.

"It speaks to import substitution. It speaks about

trying to grow what we eat. So that area in The Belle is about 100 feet off the highway so they have visibility because we want people to come and pick them," he stressed.

"We want people to see them. We want to make a statement with the trees but we didn't want them too close, and that's why we picked that particular area.

The Future Centre Trust wants people to pick these fruits.

"We wanted people to be able to run around the Gymnasium and maybe pick a mango or a cherry because we have around the Gym, Bajan cherry, Jamaican ackee, what we call ackee, lots of mangoes, limes. We are being completely open sourced," he revealed.

Gibbs added that the trust also hoped the free fruits would cut

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ONE OF THE DWARF BREADFRUITS ready to be picked.

(Picture by Heather-Lynn Evanson.)

Trust says it's okay to take fruit

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down on the rampant problem of praedial larceny faced by farmers. As a result, he does not mind if people pick the fruits to sell.

"We have so many areas that are open land. Why not plant fruit trees there? If someone wants to go pick the fruit and eat it, fine. If someone wants to pick the fruit and vend it, all the better because not everybody has space in their yard or even has a yard where they can grow their own fruit."

Unfortunately, for those heading to the **Willey Gymnasium** with reusable bags to pick the cherries or mangoes, they, unlike the Mafa'la breadfruit trees, have not yet borne fruit. But Gibbs is hopeful they will with a good rainy season.

The Mafa'la trees are part of an initiative between the Future Centre Trust and Trees That Feed Foundation.

Trees That Feed

"This is the first time breadfruits have been brought into the Caribbean since the time of Captain Bligh, and these breadfruits were brought in by a regional charity called Trees That Feed," he explained.

"They do a lot of good work in Jamaica and Haiti, particularly in post-disaster scenarios where they come in and bring in thousands of these small breadfruit trees from Samoa, because that is where they have been bred. They encourage

people to plant them where all the trees have been blown down, and basically replace the trees with these breadfruits."

The Mafa'las bear within two and a half years, compared to regular trees which might take five years or more. The breadfruits were smaller, said Gibbs, which made them perfect for single or small households.

"I don't see that as a problem because if you think about the average family size in Barbados now, sometimes a whole breadfruit may be a bit much.

"I think that the breadfruit itself is well sized to our market and, most importantly, the trees are well sized to our household size and yard size.

"You have breadfruit trees that are descended from the ones brought by Captain Bligh 250 years ago which are 80/90 feet tall. So what happens is that people cut them down, whereas the dwarf breadfruits, they only get to 15/20 feet and they will have more of a chance of living to maturity, rather than being hacked at and cut back because of their size.

"And they taste good because the Samoans are very serious about their breadfruits," he said with a laugh.

Gibbs said while the feedback had been positive, people usually queried why the trees had been planted so close to each other.

But that, too, was deliberate.

"The idea is shoulder to shoulder. The breadfruits help to prop up each other in high wind and even if they are intertwined a little bit, it seems it doesn't affect the yield too much."



Friday Lunch





Soup
Bajan Pot Soup with Pigtails

Salads
Coleslaw
Organic Tossed Salad
Pickled Breadfruit (seasonal)
Potato Salad
Pickled Souse

Entrees
Rice & Peas
Macaroni Pie
Herb Roasted Potatoes
Steamed Pudding
Bajan Cornmeal Cou Cou
Creole Salt Fish
Curried Lamb Stew


Slowly Roasted Chicken
Catch of the Day
Seasonal Vegetables

From The Grill
BBQ Spare Ribs

Desserts
Bajan Sugar Cakes
Rock Cakes
Bajan Old Fashioned Sweet Bread
Classic Apple Crumble
Ice-cream
Rum Flavored Fruit Salad

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