

Suncoast Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Club

Meeting Notice

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 13, 2016
Where: Main Room Nokomis Community Center
234 Nippino Trail East, Nokomis, FL 34275
Agenda: 6:30 pm Chat and Tasting Table
7:00 pm Introduction and Presentation
8:30 pm Plant Raffle

Speaker: Laura Reiley

Topic: Farm to Fable

If you eat food, you are being lied to every day.

The food chain is vast and so complicated, from farm-to-table restaurants to farmers markets. Everywhere you look, you see claims: "sustainable," "naturally raised," "organic," "non-GMO," "fair trade," "responsibly grown." Restaurants have reached new levels of hyperbole.

How do you know what is on your plate? Only that the restaurateur said so. And how can you be sure the strawberries are free of pesticides? Only because the vendor at the farmers market said so.

Your purchases are unverifiable unless you drive to that farm or track back through a restaurant's distributors and ask for invoices.

Our speaker this month, Laura Reiley, did just that. Laura is the food critic for the Tampa Bay Times newspaper. She spent two months working on an investigative series on "farm to table" claims at area restaurants and found that some are misleading, and some are simply false. After interviewing chefs, restaurateurs, farmers, state officials and food industry experts and having foods genetically tested, it became clear that what was advertised as "local" and "farm-to-fork" was not – from mislabeled food and farms to lies of the food itself.

The series went viral when it was published and prompted much discussion and interviews across the country in newspapers, magazines, on-line and National Public Radio (NPR).

Laura Reily has been a food critic since 1991 and the Tampa Bay Times food critic since 2007. She is a former food critic for the San Francisco Chronicle and the Baltimore Sun. She has received numerous state and national awards. She is the author of four guidebooks in the Moon Handbook series. Laura has cooked professionally and is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy.