

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Hundreds Turn Out For Yet Another Successful Mango Melee

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ST. CROIX -- Never an event to disappoint, this year's Mango Melee affair, held annually at the Botanical Garden in St. George, brought hundreds -- if not well over 1000 people -- to the annual all-day experience, where an abundance of local tastes are to be had, with nonstop entertainment spread about the vast grounds.

As for the main event, the mango eating competition, eight-time winner Hector Gordon, who skipped last year's contest, won again this year in about 4 minutes.

For Mr. Gordon, who said a mindset to win was the main secret behind his ability to outperform his competitors, advocated for a larger reward for the winner; the grand prize

now stands at \$100. Mr. Gordon also called on organizers to include a second-place prize, and to limit the mangoes to three instead of four for the children's competition.

"We need St. Croix to make this event much more inviting. Let's step up the children to \$100 and the adults to \$200," he said. Mr. Gordon also advocated for better gear to protect participants' clothing from mango stain while they're competing.

Mr. Gordon's point of expanding the competition should not be ignored. The Consortium's video of last year's contest has become the second most viewed video on our Facebook Platform, [with a reach of over 680,000, and video views of over 340,000](#). This year's competition, posted only 11 hours ago, has been viewed by over 35,000, another sign that interest in the unique competition remains solid, and an indication that there may be room for growth in its execution and, perhaps, marketability.

This year's affair was the 21st annual, according to organizers. A vendor who has attended for 18 years spoke with The Consortium about some of the changes that have taken place during that time. "More vendors for sure. When we started there were only 10 vendors, now I heard it's 143 this year, so it has grown," said the co-owner of Sweet Delights, a vendor who's become synonymous with cotton candy, but whose offerings also include a surfeit of local eats, including the usual suspects chicken and Johnny Cake, Caribbean Pates, local drinks and more.

The event, which has become a mainstay on St. Croix, is the Botanical Garden's biggest fundraiser.

Feature Image: Kids compete in this year's Mango Melee competition. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)