



## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **Virgin Islands Department of Education's Division of Sustainability & Agricultural Education Joined Forces with MANRRS for Community Showcase at Annual Mango Melee**

The Virgin Islands Department of Education's Division of Sustainability & Agricultural Education (SAE), in partnership with Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS), proudly presented an engaging and educational community showcase at the 29th Annual Mango Melee, held at the St. George Village Botanical Garden.

The interactive exhibit blended science, culture, sustainability, and the sweetness of mangoes into one powerful experience, drawing hundreds of families, students, and community members. One of the standout activities, "Mango Jeopardy," energized participants of all ages with a friendly competition testing their knowledge on topics ranging from tropical fruit biology and climate-smart agriculture to local food systems. In line with SAE's commitment to food sovereignty and security as outlined in the Territorial Agricultural Plan, the showcase featured climatized seeds and grow bags plant varieties selected or bred for resilience and specifically adapted to the unique environmental conditions of the U.S. Virgin Islands. These innovations reflect SAE's forward-thinking approach to building a stronger, more sustainable agricultural future for the Territory.

The collaboration also offered a public platform to highlight SAE's ongoing initiatives across the Virgin Islands, including school garden programs, aquaponics systems, and youth career development in sustainable agriculture. MANRRS representatives were on hand to inform students and families about pathways in agricultural sciences, underscoring the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in shaping the future of food, farming, and environmental stewardship.

As International Mango Day approaches on July 22, this celebration doubled as a heartfelt tribute to the cultural, nutritional, and economic significance of the mango. Attendees were educated on the importance of preserving mango biodiversity and supporting local agriculture to foster environmental resilience and community health.

"This year's Mango Melee offered a tremendous opportunity to blend education with tradition," said Cydney Meadows, Director of Sustainability & Agricultural Education. "Our partnership with MANRRS is helping to cultivate the next generation of agricultural leaders and empower the wider community with practical knowledge."

For more information about SAE programs, upcoming workshops, or opportunities to collaborate, please contact Sumayah Bryan at [sumayah.bryan@vide.vi](mailto:sumayah.bryan@vide.vi).

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