

Citrus connection



HIGHLANDS COUNTY CITRUS GROWERS President's Column by Bert Harris

The recent release of the Commercial Citrus Inventory just confirms what all of us already know – that acreage under active citrus production is being lost at a rapid rate. Across the State more than 57,000 acres has been lost in just the past year, with nearly 9,000 of those acres coming from Highlands County.

Highlands County, which is third in the State in citrus acreage and production, now has roughly 41,000 acres and 6.5 million trees in production according to the USDA. That is down a little more than a third from what we grew a dozen years ago.

Obviously new citrus plantings of roughly 4,750 acres across the State last year lags well behind the losses, however there are certainly reasons for those still engaged in citrus production to have some cautious optimism about the future. While production is limited, fruit prices are relatively high and tree vigor and fruit quality appears to be improving in many blocks under active management.

The **New Varieties Development and Management Corp.** is working with both UF/IFAS and USDA researchers and plant breeders to do more work on improving efficiencies associated with OTC therapies and advancing plant breeding programs with a focus on near-term results. There are some scion/rootstock combos that appear to show promise in regards to HLB tolerance, and hopefully there will be some trees available soon for growers to experiment with in real world environments.

The **CRAFT** program has opened the application period for Cycle Six of the traditional CRAFT New Tree Planting Program and Round Three of the Existing Tree Therapies Program. I encourage growers to go to their website at <https://craftfdn.org> or contact program staff to see how these two programs may be able to assist them in their fight against HLB. The application window for both programs runs through Friday, Nov. 1st, so don't procrastinate if interested.

There are both new solid set and in existing bloc reset components to the "**New Tree Program**" to consider. There are also enhanced levels of funding (\$6,000 per acre over the course of their agreement) for the "Solid Set with Program for Expedited Propagation Materials" category (*Lennon Early R20-T30-Parson Brown; Lennon Early R21-T36-Hamlin; Hamlin N14-10; Sweet Orange UF OLL-DC-3-36; and Sweet Orange UF OLL-DC-3-40*).

Participation in the "**Existing Tree Therapies Program**" allows a grower to receive cost share funding for production practices such as, but not limited to, the use of OTC, gibberellic acid, brassinosteroids, and bio stimulants treatments.

Even if you do not participate in CRAFT funded projects, you may want to check out the **CRAFT Public Dashboard** on their website to see the research results that growers are sharing. Cooperative grower innovation utilizing scientific protocols through this program is providing some very interesting information for growers to consider incorporating into their production practices.

Final thought - even if you have taken some, or all, of your citrus acres out of production, we need you to be actively involved in supporting the Association as we work to protect and enhance your property rights.

If the Association can ever be of any assistance to you in any matter, don't hesitate in calling Ray – that is what he is in place for.

Bert Harris III

AUG 2024

- Citrus Nursery Source
- Citrus Forecast - 10/11
- Acreage Down, Production Up
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- Hall of Fame Nominations
- CRAFT Program Update
- Trunk Injections - Citrus Expo
- Mind Your Melon
- Treasury Filing for Farms
- PGRs Promote Tree Health
- Operation Cleansweep
- Citrus Fun Shoot
- Fun Shoot Registration



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2024 Calendar of Events

October 11

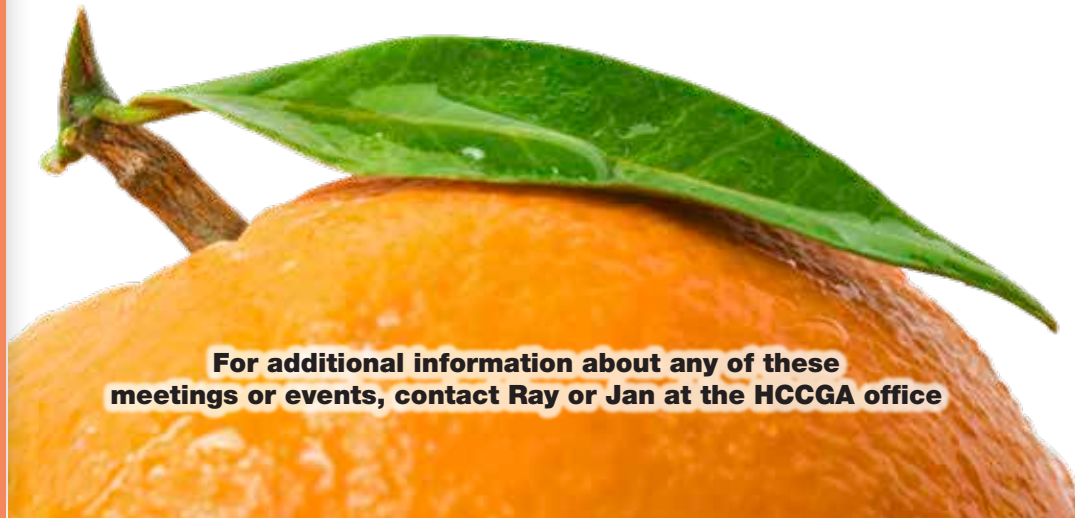
Initial 2024-2025 USDA Citrus Crop Forecast
and Florida Citrus Mutual BBQ Luncheon

November 12-14

Ag-Venture @ Highlands County Fairgrounds

December 7

HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot @ Quail Creek Sporting Ranch



For additional information about any of these meetings or events, contact Ray or Jan at the HCCGA office

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Executive Director's Report

BY RAY ROYCE

The educational seminars at the 2024 Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo were very informative and well presented. There was an interesting blend of talks about everything from overarching agricultural issues to specific citrus production tips.

Some of the agronomic info shared by UF/IFAS folks spoke to the importance of correct timing for the use of plant growth regulators, proper irrigation management, soil productivity enhancements, how gibberellic acid applications were helping with psyllid and leafminer control, and the multiple positive impacts of lowering nitrogen levels for lighter producing grove blocks. If you missed the Expo, you can view the education seminars online at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations>.



Citrus Industry magazine editor Frank Giles also moderated a very good panel discussion with Florida Senator Jay Collins and Representative Danny Alvarez about Ag policy creation at the State level, and how important the agricultural sector was to them both in regards to economic and community development. They are both strong and committed advocates for Ag.

So, congratulations to Robin Loftin, her team at AgNet Media and the many Expo vendors for executing another great Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo. The Expo will be held at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa again next year on August 20th & 21st – so save those dates on your calendar. Our friends at AgNet Media are truly committed to our industry, and provide a wide range of educational information through a multitude of communicative avenues – so thanks to the AgNet Media folks for all of your work!

All current Association members should have received their 2024 HCCGA Member Directory in the mail recently. The member directory is designed to be a great year round resource tool. So I encourage you to take a quick look at who our Associate members and advertisers are; they are supporting our industry and Association, and I hope you will give them due consideration when you are in the market for goods and services.

Save the date of **Friday, October 11th** for Florida Citrus Mutual's BBQ luncheon to hear the Initial USDA Citrus Crop Forecast for the 2024/2025 season. The industry gathering at the Putnam Ranch in Zolfo Springs is sure to draw quite a crowd of industry members and political figures.

The application period for Cycle Six of the traditional CRAFT **New Tree Planting Program** and Round Three of the **Existing Tree Therapies Program** is now open. Applications are available online at <https://craftfdn.org>. Any interested grower has until **5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 1, 2024** to submit their applications. Growers should definitely consider contacting CRAFT staff to see how you can qualify and apply for one or both of these programs. They are in place, and managed, for you to take advantage of!

Our annual Citrus Sporting Clays Fun Shoot is returning to Quail Creek Sporting Ranch this year, and will be held on **Saturday, December 7th**. Even if you don't shoot sporting clays – you may want to join us for our famous Seafood and Prime Rib Luncheon and raffle drawings. Registration is now open, so sign up early!

While we strive to keep our members as informed as possible on a wide range of local issues, please never hesitate in contacting me day or night (cell phone: 863-381-8551) for additional information if you need it; or if I can be of any assistance on any matter, large or small.

Thanks, Ray



Info Notes

2024-2025 Florida Citrus Production Guides

The 2024-2025 Florida Citrus Production Guides are available to pick up at the UF/IFAS Highlands County Extension office (*we have a few at the HCCGA office as well*) or the handbooks are available online (with printable sections) at:

https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/production-guide_

Florida Minimum Wage

Just a reminder that the fourth increase dictated by the 2020 constitutional amendment, raises the Florida's minimum wage rate to \$13 an hour on September 30, 2024. The voter-approved amendment will gradually lead to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage on September 30, 2026.

2024 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute Presentations Online

The 2024 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute was held on April 4th at the South Florida State College Avon Park campus. The educational presentations were recorded and are available online at the citrus agent's website: Here you will also find PDF versions of the slides. <https://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/archived-presentations/2024>

UF/IFAS Podcasts for Growers

UF/IFAS and Southeast AgNet have partnered to provide the latest news on citrus-related research in a monthly "All in for Citrus" podcast. The podcasts feature short interviews with scientists working to find solutions to citrus greening and other devastating citrus diseases. The podcast complements the new research update website and citrus newsletter at: <http://citrusresearch.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter-sign-up>. Podcasts may be downloaded to your mobile phone, tablet or computer to be listened to at your convenience.

Sales Tax Exemption Forms for Ag Uses

Florida Farm Bureau has a very informative page on their website that lists a number of potential agriculturally related items that may be exempt from sales tax. It also has info about the TEAM card. It can be found at: <https://www.floridafarmbureau.org/agricultural-sales-tax-exemptions-in-florida>.



2024 Citrus Expo Presentations

The educational seminars at the 2024 Citrus Expo are available online at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations>.

"Florida OJ Break" License Tags

The HCCGA office has a very good supply of the "Take A Florida Orange Juice Break" license plates to share. Please feel free to stop by the HCCGA office and get one for your vehicles. We also have a limited supply of a few other types of OJ related tags.

UF/IFAS Research Website

The updated Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC) website at <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research> is now live. The revamped site has the latest research information on HLB management, detailed information on rootstock trials, access to on-line presentations from UF/IFAS research scientists, EDIS documents sorted by topic for easy access, and more.

UF/IFAS OJ Break Programs

The central Florida UF/IFAS citrus extension agents are providing an OJ Break Grower meeting series in a twice monthly virtual program format. Upon registration you will be sent a Zoom link for each meeting. To see the upcoming meeting topics and register for the Zoom notice – go to: <https://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/oj-break>.

Restricted Use Pesticide Exams

Restricted Use Pesticide exams are done using laptops at most UF/IFAS county Extension offices. Whether you are taking the test for the first time, renewing your license, or adding a new category, you can take your exam at most county Extension offices. In Highlands County, the Extension office is scheduling exams for Wednesdays and Fridays. You can schedule your exam online at <https://pesticideexam.ifas.ufl.edu/public/countyList.faces>.

FDOC Webinars

The Florida Department of Citrus hosts monthly webinars in order to provide key information on various topics important to the Florida Citrus industry. To receive notifications on webinars and other topics, please e-mail news@citrus.myflorida.com and ask to be added to FDOC's email distribution list.

CITRUS NURSERY SOURCE: What's on Tap for 2024–25

By Peter Chaires (executive director of NVDMC)

The New Varieties Development and Management Corp. (NVDMC) has awarded funding to citrus projects for the 2024–25 season. Exciting things are happening in crop transformation, but significant progress is also being made in conventional breeding. The NVDMC board continues to support conventional breeding projects, each with a focus on near-term results, while still setting a foundation for the future. Below are summaries of 2024–25 project objectives.

UF/IFAS CREC

The NVDMC board has communicated the belief that oxytetracycline (OTC) is the HLB treatment holding the greatest promise to restore fruit production and quality in the near term and has shared its desire to know how new citrus scion cultivars may perform following injection treatments. To provide such information, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC) team will begin a second season of injections using currently available technologies and materials to determine the benefits and risks in doing so.

The second season will use the same individual trees that were treated previously. These selections are currently growing in field trials at multiple locations. Some previously released mandarin hybrid and grapefruit cultivars will be selected for inclusion in the comparative injection experiments. Some varieties, such as LB8-9 Sugar Belle and Marathon, already demonstrate substantial field tolerance to HLB, but injection treatments may result in substantial improvements in yield and fruit quality. By comparing outcomes with and without injection, the team may be able to draw conclusions on the return on investment in injections, even among more tolerant varieties.

Performance data collection of advanced candidates is another research objective. Evaluations of existing field trees of advanced selections will be made for fruit appearance and juice quality (sweet oranges and similar hybrids); deep red flesh, peel color, size and external appearance (grapefruit); and appearance, flavor, peelability and seed content (mandarins). Superimposed across all categories is selection for tree health as a measure of HLB tolerance. The primary focus will be directed to sweet oranges and sweet orange-like hybrids, with the greatest potential to impact and support the juice stream.

Selections from populations currently in the field will be made. The CREC team has various families from hybridizations and other approaches to creating phenotypic diversity. They plan to continue to screen these populations in the coming season. As new selections are identified, they will present them through Fruit Display Days, to be held at least four times in the coming season.

UF/IFAS GAINESVILLE

Jose Chaparro, UF/IFAS associate professor, will evaluate mandarin and orange-like selections for HLB tolerance and juice quality as part of his UF/IFAS breeding program in Gainesville. Research plots will be established of citrus selections for evaluation of HLB tolerance and potential for processing. The experiment will consist of 28 selections, including 19 sweet orange-like selections, six mandarins and three grapefruit-like selections. Industry standards will serve as controls.

Another project in Gainesville will be accelerated introgression of HLB tolerance from Australian desert lime (*Eremocitrus glauca*) into commercial citrus germplasm, including first-generation grapefruit, mandarin and orange hybrids. These populations are now being used to create a diverse pool of

See SOURCE on page 6

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second-generation hybrids for breeding and selection. The first backcrossed generation will be planted in the field to monitor for blotchy mottle, leaf retention, canopy health and tree height. Quantitative PCR will be used to determine the CLas bacterial titer within the hybrid seedlings twice per year.

UF/IFAS POST-HARVEST

Post-harvest projects led by Mark Ritenour, UF/IFAS professor, will:

- Determine the ability of fruit from promising new fresh citrus selections, developed by the UF/IFAS and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) breeding program, to produce excellent fruit quality and maintain quality after harvest and post-harvest degreening treatments.
- Evaluate the effects of pre-harvest treatments (e.g., OTC trunk injections) of new citrus scion/rootstock selections on fruit quality and shelf life.
- Evaluate optimum decay control, storage temperature and handling/treatments during harvest, packinghouse, and simulated transportation and marketing conditions, when greater fruit numbers are available.

USDA-ARS CITRUS BREEDING

USDA-ARS researcher Matt Mattia estimates that USDA's overall efforts are directed 70% at producing sweet orange-like cultivars, 20% grapefruit-like selections and 10% specialty fruit. USDA-ARS projects for the upcoming season will:

- Screen newly fruiting breeding populations and variety collections for individuals that have HLB tolerance and commercial potential.
- Continue progress on grafting a grower demo block at the Whitmore Foundation Farm as a place to showcase new varieties to citrus growers and processors in comparison to commercial standards.
- Assess trees from irradiated buds of the most grapefruit-like hybrid selections showing some HLB tolerance. These are in field plantings, and fruit will be assessed for low seed count and lycopene pigmentation. Selections made last season will be validated this season.
- Select buds of priority selections (irradiated and conventional hybrids), pass through the Division of Plant Industry's shoot-tip grafting program and establish material at the Whitmore Farm as well as coordinating second tests in collaboration with NVDMC, Florida Citrus Processors Association and the Citrus Research and Development Foundation.
- Expedite identification of short-term HLB solutions. Cultivars will be identified in collaboration with industry for field evaluation of HLB tolerance.
- Identify potentially HLB-tolerant cultivars which may be combined to produce a satisfactory sweet orange-like juice.
- Repurpose an OTC field trial on a cross section of 12 scions with varying levels of HLB tolerance using an existing field trial for cold tolerance at the Whitmore Farm.
- Screen material for cold and stress tolerance associated with HLB and utilize the screening as an early selection tool.

EVALUATION OF EARLY-SEASON SWEET ORANGES

Manjul Dutt, UF/IFAS assistant professor, will be working on three early-season orange projects at CREC.

Project 1: Several Hamlin trees have been observed to be tolerant to HLB and continue to produce fruit with high pounds solids even though they have high CLas titer. It is not known if the scion is tolerant, if there is a rootstock-scion interaction or if grower inputs coupled with improved genetics are responsible for the observations. Dutt will thoroughly evaluate all the trees in this block, select top performers and propagate additional trees to understand if this survivor trait is heritable.

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Project 2: A block of 600 irradiated Carney Orange 3 (a Parson Brown clone with better color) trees budded onto US-942 was planted at CREC in December 2023. Trees are being maintained as per standard industry procedures and will be routinely evaluated for HLB. The main goal of this study is to identify superior HLB-tolerant selections with lower peel oil and seed content.

Project 3: Dutt obtained several early-season sweet orange cultivars from the USDA at Riverside. Each of these seed-derived cultivars are being propagated for replicated planting at a CREC grove. Additional genetic evaluation will be conducted on these trees to understand if any have potential HLB tolerance.

Courtesy of AgNet Media

Initial 2024-2025 USDA Citrus Crop Forecast - October 11th

The initial USDA Citrus Crop Forecast for the 2024-2025 season will be released at 12:00 noon on Friday, October 11th. Florida Citrus Mutual will host a grower gathering and BBQ lunch that day at the Putnam Ranch near Zolfo Springs starting at 11:00 AM.

In addition to a wide array of industry related folks sharing updated industry news, there will also certainly be a number of political leadership attending - so save the date.



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Florida Citrus Acreage Down 17%, Production Up 12%

All citrus acreage down 17 percent

Results of the annual Commercial Citrus Inventory show total citrus acreage is 274,705 acres, down 17 percent from the last annual survey. The net loss of 57,551 acres is 14,505 acres more than what was lost the previous season. New plantings at 4,751 acres are down from the previous season.

Hendry County lost the most acreage, down 12,374 acres from the previous season. Polk County leads in citrus acreage with 58,516 acres, followed by Desoto County at 51,800 acres. In 2024, Highlands County was third in the State with 40,737 acres (down 8,678 acres from 2023) and a little more than 6.5 million trees.

Orange acreage is now at 248,028 acres, down 18 percent from the previous season. Valencia acreage now accounts for 63 percent of the total orange acreage, non-Valencia acreage represents 35 percent, and the remaining orange acreage is unidentified. Grapefruit acreage is now at 14,316 acres, down 10 percent from the previous season.

Specialty fruit acreage, at 12,361 acres, is down 6 percent from the previous season. Tangerines and tangelos account for 58 percent of the specialty fruit, with 7,189 acres. The remaining acreage is other citrus acreage, with a total of 5,172 acres, or 42 percent.

For the full USDA report on citrus acreage, go to: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/Citrus/Commercial_Citrus_Inventory/Commercial_Citrus_Inventory_Prelim/ccipr24.pdf.

All citrus value up 6%, production up 12%

The \$221 million preliminary on-tree value of the 2023-2024 citrus crop is 6 percent more than the \$208 million revised value for 2022-2023.

Florida's all citrus production in 2023-2024 is 20.2 million boxes, up 12 percent from the previous season's 18.1 million boxes. All orange production increased by 14 percent to 18.0 million boxes. Non-Valencia production at 6.76 million boxes is up 10 percent from the 2022-2023 season. Valencia orange production at 11.2 million boxes is up 16 percent. All grapefruit production decreased 1 percent to 1.79 million boxes. Tangerine and tangelo production in 2023-2024 is down 6 percent from the previous season.

The top 5 citrus producing counties were Polk (3.86 million boxes), DeSoto (3.14 million boxes), Highlands (2.79 million boxes), Hendry (2.37 million boxes), and Hardee (2.27 million boxes). Together they account for 71 percent of the state's total citrus production. Oranges constituted 89 percent of the citrus production, grapefruit accounted for 9 percent, and tangerines and tangelos represented 2 percent.

For the full USDA report on citrus value and production, go to: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/Citrus/Citrus_Summary/Citrus_Summary_Prelim/cit082924.pdf

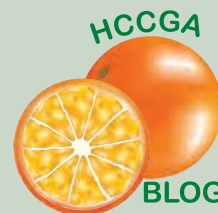
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HCCGA Annual Member Directory

All current HCCGA members should have received a copy of the 2024 Annual HCCGA Grower & Associate Member Directory recently. This year's 68 page 8.5 X 11 full color booklet includes Association information such as: Grower contact information, Associate Member Bios, Sponsorship Recognitions, Board Members, Officers, etc.

This booklet has become a valuable year-round resource guide for all of our members, grower and associate alike, so take a few moments to peruse through it and take note of who our members and supporters are.

Thank you to the sixty-one Associate members who through advertising investment have made the production and distribution of this directory possible. Please try to patronize the directory's advertisers whenever they can provide a good or service to your business – because we appreciate their investment in our Association.



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Citrus Hall of Fame Nominations

Nominations are being sought for potential inductees to The Florida Citrus Hall of Fame, with nominations due by November 1, 2024.

Eligible nominees are those distinguished leaders who have made significant contributions to the Florida citrus industry in any of the following fields: pioneers, harvesting, packing, processing, marketing, scientific and/or educational areas.

The induction luncheon ceremonies are tentatively scheduled to take place on Friday, March 28, 2025 in the George Jenkins Fieldhouse at Florida Southern College in Lakeland. The luncheon is co-sponsored by the Florida Department of Citrus and Florida Citrus Mutual.

Last year's inductees included both the Class of 2023, citrus pioneer A.G. Smith (deceased), of Wauchula, Fla., Gilbert Bowen (deceased), of Winter Haven, Fla. and the Class of 2024, Dr. Robert M. "Bob" Behr, of New Smyrna Beach, Fla., George H. Streetman, of Vero Beach, Fla., and Leland K. Young (deceased), of Alturas, Fla. (The classes were combined due to scheduling problems caused by the Covid pandemic.)

The mission of the Florida Citrus Hall of Fame is to recognize those distinguished leaders that have made significant contributions to the industry and to preserve and share the rich heritage of Florida citrus.

To this end we are deeply involved with and committed to an outreach program that tells the history of the Florida citrus industry and the people that have done so much to make the industry a dynamic force in Florida.

Nomination forms are available by contacting Brenda Eubanks Burnette at (561) 351-4314 or via email at: Brenda@BurnetteandAssociates.com and/or by visiting the Florida Citrus Hall of Fame web site at www.floridacitrushalloffame.com.

Please send completed nomination forms via e-mail to: Brenda@BurnetteandAssociates.com or hard copies may be sent to: Florida Citrus Hall of Fame, PO Box 1576, Bartow, FL 33831-1576.



CRAFT's mission is to move lab and research solutions into commercial groves for commercial-scale field trials, collect data on the results of those field trials and create an integrated data management system allowing growers, researchers and other interested parties to analyze the efficacy and efficiency of various strategies, treatments and therapies.

For more information, visit CRAFTfdn.org or contact Steven Hall - 863.682-1115 or Steven@CRAFTfdn.org.



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CRAFT Program Update

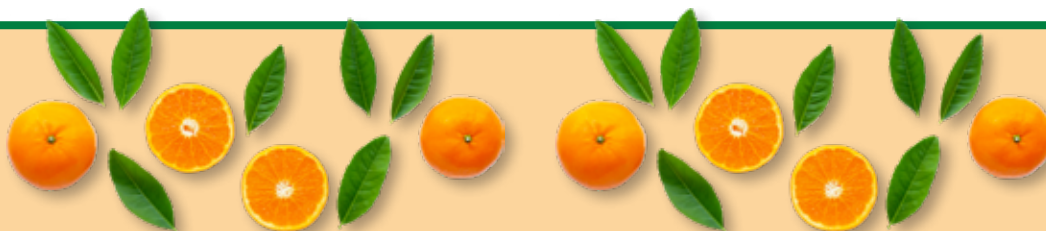
The CRAFT Board of Directors and Staff are pleased to announce that the Cycle Six of the traditional CRAFT New Tree Planting Program and Round Three of the Existing Tree Therapies Program applications are now available online at <https://craftfdn.org>. Any interested grower has **until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 1, 2024** to submit their application.



The CRAFT Board of Directors, with the help of the Technical Working Group, has established a list of Factors of Interest that includes areas of focus that are considered of higher interest for Cycle Six and Round Three. This list, as well as rules for participation in the CRAFT and ETT program, and payment schedules can also be found on the CRAFT website. Please note that this "Factors of Interest" list is not exclusive and growers are encouraged to submit all project applications that they believe may be beneficial in the fight against HLB.

Along with the regular solid-set planting and reset categories, Cycle Six will once again include a "Solid Set with PEP Materials" category. These projects will be between 20 and 50 acres and will look at plantings of at least two scions propagated as part of the Program for Expedited Propagation (Lennon Early R20-T30-Parson Brown; Lennon Early R21-T36-Hamlin; Hamlin N14-10; Sweet Orange UF OLL-DC-3-36; and Sweet Orange UF OLL-DC-3-40) compared to an equivalent early or late season standard scion which will serve as a control. Growers who apply and are approved for participation in this category will receive \$6,000 per acre over the course of their agreement. Additional details and payment schedules are available at <https://craftfdn.org>.

Growers with any questions or in need of more information about the program are encouraged to contact Executive Director and Program Manager Steven Hall at Steven@craftfdn.org, Assistant Program Manager Tina Buice at Tina@craftfdn.org, or Scientific Coordinator Carisa Keller at Carisa@craftfdn.org.



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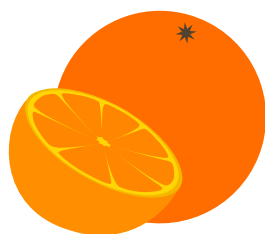
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The educational program on the first day of the Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo focused on trunk injection of oxytetracycline (OTC) being applied to citrus to treat HLB. Trees have received their second OTC treatment, and growers are hopeful trees will respond with better fruit retention and improved quality.

Ute Albrecht, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) associate

professor, spoke about her research on trunk-injection therapy, which now has spanned several years. She says her research shows promise.

“The good news is after several years across all of our field trials, we are finding OTC injections are effective,” Albrecht said. “You may not get with one injection a pre-HLB tree, but we usually get a healthier, denser canopy. We have more fruit and better quality fruit in terms of size and peel color, and much improved juice quality.” In her trials, some of the yield and juice quality improvements were significant. However, results were variable based on the state of the trees. She noted that some results were not as positive as hoped for after initial treatments in growers’ groves.

Albrecht said she has seen in her trials and heard grower reports of phytotoxicity after trees are treated. The symptoms usually include yellowing, bronzing or narrowing of leaves. Generally, the trees recover and grow out of the phytotoxicity.

There have been differences among rootstocks in how trees react to the OTC treatments. Albrecht advised growers to consider that when planting new trees.

She said after two seasons growers are learning best practices for trunk injection. One of those is that multiple injection sites on both sides of the trunk improve OTC treatments throughout the tree. This helps reduce the “sectoring” of response to the treatments where improvements in canopy show up on the side of the tree where the injection occurred.

During a Q&A session, a few growers expressed optimism that trunk injection could be a path to help rehabilitate trees. Jim Graham, UF/IFAS professor emeritus, said during a panel discussion that OTC is the first product to actually work in reducing the HLB bacteria in infected trees in the nearly two decades that the disease has plagued Florida.

Talking Trunk Injection at Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo

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We take pride in collaborating with growers to develop programs aimed at their specific needs. An example of this is our work with Clermont-based McLean Family Farms in their battle against citrus canker and HLB. The family grows organic citrus, along with peaches and vegetables. The family also produces Uncle Matt's organic orange juice.

The McLeans applied Magna-Bon CS 2005, which is Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)-listed for organic production, in combination with KeyPlex 350 OR. According to Ben McLean III, the products provide "significant benefits" in helping reduce canker symptoms and improved micro-nutrient deficiencies.


"Overall, what we saw was an increase in the health and productivity of the grove," says McLean III. "There was a significant visual improvement in the health and color of the grove."

Ben's dad, Benny McLean Jr., who heads the family farm and is also Production Manager of Uncle Matt's Organic (headed by his other son, Matt) says he noticed a difference in "the look" of the grove after only two days of the first application.

"The leaf color was the biggest thing that stood out," he adds, noting the farm has used Magna-Bon CS 2005 in other growing areas, but this was the first time it was ever used in this orange grove.

We are proud to partner with USDA and UF/IFAS by donating product to help these organizations with their can-

ker management programs.

We also support the regional tradeshow, conferences, and various associations throughout the state all year long. If you see us at a show, make sure to stop by and say hello! 



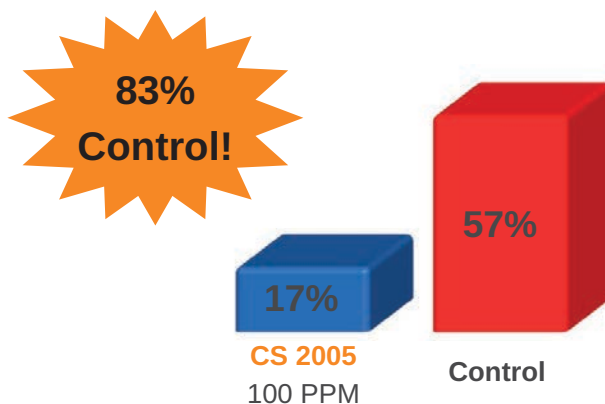
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2024–2025 Citrus Production Guide

The **2024–2025 Citrus Production Guide** is now available to growers. The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) publication includes the latest technical advice on HLB management, tree nutrition, grove management and other aspects of Florida citrus cultivation.

Topics covered in the guide include planting, irrigation, fertilization, weed control, insect management and disease management. For a grove management practice to be recommended in the guide, a minimum of two years of field-validated data is required.

Hard copies of the updated production guide are available at local UF/IFAS Extension offices in citrus-growing counties and at the UF/IFAS CREC in Lake Alfred. The guides are also available online at: https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/production-guide_

There are two other UF/IFAS publications that growers may find helpful. The first is **Keeping Citrus Growers Informed** at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations/citrus-expo-2024/booklets/citrus-growers-informed>. Which is a research book containing updates on more than 70 ongoing UF/IFAS research projects. The second publication is **Growing Citrus - A multipronged HLB strategy (August 2024)** at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations/citrus-expo-2024/booklets/growing-citrus>. This short 17-page booklet is a brief guide to the most important things growers should keep in mind when developing HLB management plans for groves.

Mind Your Melon Survey

Work and Life within the agricultural sector can be very stressful. The Highlands County Citrus Growers Association is committed to the health and safety of our members and friends.

To help further that mission, we have partnered with agricultural associations across the state to endorse and support the **Mind Your Melon Farmer Wellbeing Survey** - the statewide initiative led by Florida Farm Bureau Federation, UF/IFAS Center for Leadership, and Mind Your Melon to address mental health in agriculture. Please click the link provided below to participate now.

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and your response will be anonymous. If you have any questions about this survey, feel free to contact Carrie Baker at baker.carrie@ufl.edu, Dr. Sarah Bush at sab5271@ufl.edu or (352) 273-2613, or reach out to Jaime Jerrels at jaime.jerrels@ffbf.org.

Take the survey at bit.ly/MindYourMelonSurvey or scan the QR code below. The deadline for participation is November 10, 2024.



SCAN ME

Farms and Ranches Required to File Ownership Information with U.S. Treasury

Many farms and ranches will be required to file "beneficial ownership" information with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), a division of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. In 2021, Congress passed a law called the Corporate Transparency Act that requires businesses to report the identity of their owners with the goal of reducing financial crime. Unfortunately, many small businesses like farms and ranches are required to comply with this requirement.

Who must file: Any producer whose farm or ranch employs 20 employees or less, is a corporation, limited liability company (LLC), partnership, or was formed as another type of entity by filing a document with the secretary of state or similar state office is required to file a Beneficial Ownership Report with FinCEN.

When to file: Companies that were registered before January 1, 2024, have until January 1, 2025, to file their report. Any companies created between January 1, 2024, and January 1, 2025, have 90 days from their creation or registration with the state to submit this report to FinCEN. Additionally, any updates or corrections to beneficial ownership information must be submitted within 30 days.

Where to file: To comply with the Corporate Transparency Act, you must fill out a form online at <https://www.fincen.gov/boi>. The form will require your name, date of birth, residential or business address, and a unique identifying number like your driver's license or passport number. Producers are encouraged to consult with their attorneys to determine if the CTA applies. Penalties for non-compliance can include a \$500 per late day fine, up to \$10,000 in fines, or even prison sentences for refusing to comply with the law.

Resources: For more information, visit <https://www.fincen.gov/boi> or review FinCEN's Small Entity Compliance Guide at <https://www.fincen.gov/boi/small-entity-compliance-guide>. This information is not professional advice, and you should always consult with a tax professional and/or attorney for advice as to whether the Corporate Transparency Act applies to you.



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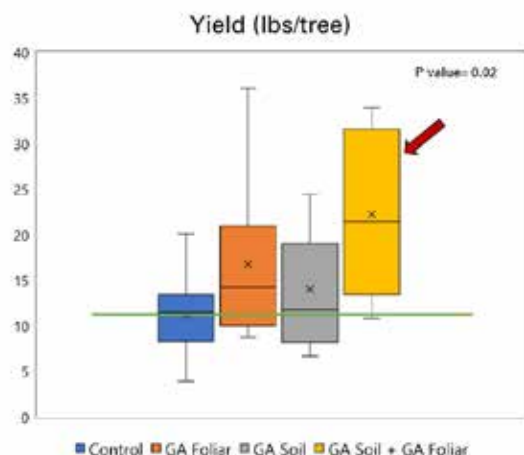
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PGRs Promote Tree Health

The use of plant growth regulators (PGRs) has been a popular method to treat HLB-infected citrus trees. The materials have continued to be applied in conjunction with trunk injection of oxytetracycline (OTC) to improve tree health. Tripti Vashisth, an associate professor of horticultural sciences with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), has been studying PGRs for six years and has shared that knowledge with growers.

INJECTING GIBBERELLIC ACID NOT ADVISED

Growers are eager for new alternatives to inject into citrus trees now that they've gotten a better handle on the application process. Vashisth says this has led to questions about whether gibberellic acid (GA) can be applied via trunk injection. GA has been the more popular compound among the PGRs to improve citrus tree canopies and fruit retention.



When combined, foliar and chemigation treatments of gibberellic acid (GA) significantly improved yields.

"We know whatever is injected into the tree is being delivered directly to the xylem, so the plant is taking up virtually everything that is being applied," she says. "This is different from foliar or soil drench applications of GA, where some of that material is leaching away and not making it into the tree."

The type of application will affect the rate at which the product should be applied for these very reasons. She cautioned that trunk injection of GA runs a significant risk of a high rate of phytotoxicity.

"When growers ask me what rate of GA they should inject into the tree, I tell them I have no clue because we've not studied that yet. My answer to them is we know that foliar and soil applications of GA usually work well, so there is no reason to inject it or risk phytotoxicity. And foliar and soil applications are going to be more economical options anyway."

CHEMIGATING GIBBERELLIC ACID

Another question Vashisth has been fielding from growers has been whether GA can be applied through irrigation systems. This led her to do some research work on the question.

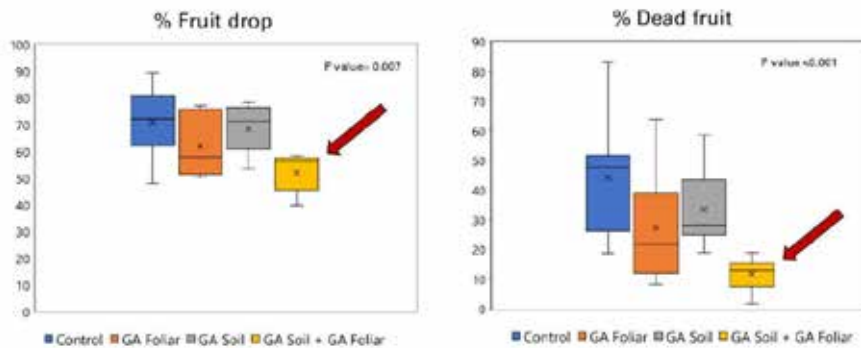
"Growers are interested in this because chemigation can be cheaper than foliar applications through savings on fuel for tractors and sprayers," she says. "So, we created a trial looking at foliar alone, chemigation alone, foliar plus chemigation and a non-treated control."

The treatments were applied to 14-year-old Valencia trees on Swingle rootstock. The foliar applications were made during their normal September through December timeframe at 10 ounces per acre. The GA chemigation rate was 30 ounces per acre in 10 gallons of water. The applications were made mostly from September to December.

"The trial revealed that the foliar plus chemigation application of GA provided the best results," Vashisth says. "There was better canopy, reduced fruit drop and better yield. And there was also less dead fruit stuck on the tree, which we think was coming from the drought."

See PGRS on page 19

PGRS, Con't from page 18



The combined soil and foliar gibberellic acid (GA) treatment reduced fruit drop and the number of dead fruit

“We are not exactly sure why the foliar/chemigation is performing best but believe there is a

synergistic benefit. And seeing less dead fruit on the tree, we think the chemigation is helping the roots with better water uptake.”

OTHER PGR TAKEAWAYS

Vashisth says other trends have become apparent over the years studying PGRs. One is where fruit drop is not a big problem, applications of 2,4-D don't appear to provide any benefit.

“Every PGR works on different processes. We want to align PGRs based on tree phenology, so we are applying the right PGR at the right time,” she says. “For example, 2,4-D can reduce pre-harvest fruit drop, so if we apply it in the summer, it is not going to be very helpful.

“Growers need to think about their goals — boosting growth, reducing drop or reducing flowering — then apply the PRGs accordingly. But if a grower can only use one, then GA in the summer is by far the best option, because it does a little bit of everything — boosting growth and reducing drop.”

Courtesy of AgNet Media

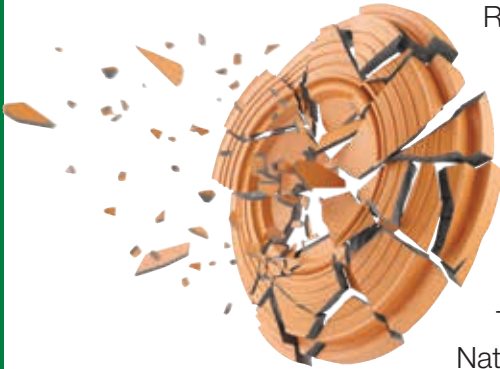
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2024 Citrus Fun Shoot at Quail Creek - December 7th



Registration is now open for the **2024 HCCGA Citrus Sporting Clays Fun Shoot**. We are very pleased that the Citrus Fun Shoot is returning to **Quail Creek Sporting Ranch** for 2024.

While our Fun Shoot has evolved over the past 27 plus years, the key concepts remain the same – providing a great opportunity for fellowship with others within the citrus industry and greater agricultural community, fun clay target shooting, great and plentiful food and some fabulous green bird station and raffle prizes.

The day will start with grilled sausage & white bread and all the Natalie's juice you can drink - so make plans to join us on **Saturday, December 7th** for our 27th Annual Citrus Fun Shoot and Prime Rib &

Seafood luncheon extravaganza.

We want to thank our shoot's Title Sponsors: **Tropicana Brands Group, Duke Energy, TradeMark Nitrogen, Alan Jay Fleet Sales, PGIM Real Estate, Hood Citrus Caretaking, Peace River Citrus Products, Magna-Bon II, AgNet Media, Cowpokes Watering Hole Restaurant, CRAFT, Glade & Grove Supply, Syngenta, Cutrale Citrus Juices USA, Wedgworth Fertilizer, Everglades Equipment Group, Natalie's Orchid Island Juice Company, and Florida Power & Light.**

Our Seafood & Prime Rib Luncheon sponsor is **Farm Credit of Florida.**

Senator Ben Albritton is sponsoring our live scoring updates, and **Highlands County Board Attorney Sherry Sutphen** is sponsoring the "shooters only" gun drawing again this year.

Our four Green Bird Station Sponsors so far are: **Tree Defender, Marden Industries - SuperTrak, Quality Roofing & Sheet Metal** and **Highlands County Sheriff Paul Blackman.**

At this time we do have one last Green Bird Station sponsorship slot (\$750.00) left if your firm would like to garner some great PR – just give us a call for details.

A registration/sponsorship flier is included in this newsletter, so we hope you will join us at **Quail Creek Sporting Ranch** on **Saturday, December 7th**!

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- **BRANDT Smart K B** - high efficiency foliar potassium/boron
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