

Citrus connection



HIGHLANDS COUNTY CITRUS GROWERS President's Column by Bert Harris

I read with interest some comments by Peter Chaires, executive director of the New Varieties Development and Management Corp., recently about citrus breeding. We all certainly want to see orange varieties developed that are tolerant of the HLB, and frankly other production challenges as well, and can still function at a high level.

Of course we wish that the UF/IFAS and USDA plant breeding programs were further along in identifying and propagating the trees of the future than they are now. Obviously growers will be much more inclined to step up the pace of planting new blocks, or even resetting, when they feel those new trees have a better chance to thrive, and not simply face multiple challenges to survive.

The good news was that Chaires said HLB tolerance "is an essential element of everything that's being done in the breeding program with a stronger emphasis than anything else in orange and orange-like varieties that would contribute to the processing industry."

"They've gone through and identified the parents that they have in their parent tree program that have a propensity to pass on those tolerance traits as well as the fruit quality traits, and they're only utilizing that material now," explained Chaires. "We've seen two parents, neither one of which were HLB tolerant, but their offspring were. You can have the opposite, where the two parents were pretty good but the offspring not so much. There's a randomness to it."

Varieties that offer HLB tolerance can provide some protection for growers as they await a silver bullet variety with true HLB resistance. "It's really an economic issue," said Chaires. "If a variety helps to make a grower viable, keeps them in business and keeps that land committed, I think that there are a lot of intermediate steps that could really benefit the industry. We see a lot of potential in keeping conventional breeding programs going."

In his comments, Chaires recommended the UF 1859 sweet orange-like hybrid. It is an HLB-tolerant variety that he said is holding up well in the field, produces extraordinary flavor and is readily available. So hopefully trees such as UF 1859, and others, will soon gain the confidence of growers.

If you are willing to assume some risk and put new trees in the ground in the short term – you really should speak with the staff at **CRAFT** in the next few weeks to see if that program can be of assistance to you.

If we have some good luck for a change and weather continues to cooperate, we will hopefully see in the coming months if investments in OTC, growth regulators and other production therapies are going to pay off with more fruit loaded on the trailer and higher quality at the plant.

So as we enter the new 2024-2025 fruit season, I wish all of you good luck!

Bert Harris III

SEPT 2024

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- Citrus Production Guide



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2024 Calendar of Events

November 12-14

Ag-Venture @ Highlands County Fairgrounds

December 7

HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot @ Quail Creek Sporting Ranch

March 6

HCCGA Annual Meeting

April 24

HCCGA Golf Day



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 Federal Emergency Management Agency has designated a number of counties in Florida as Natural Disaster Areas due to Hurricane Helene. This Presidential disaster declaration (M4828) allows the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through emergency loans.

I think it is safe to assume that our area will be further included in this program once the impacts of Hurricane Milton are determined.



Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation, or to refinance certain debts. FSA will review the loans based on the extent of losses, security available, and repayment ability. The application deadline is April 10, 2025.

Primary Counties Eligible:

Charlotte, Citrus, Dixie, Franklin, Hernando, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lee, Levy, Madison, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Sarasota, Taylor, and Wakulla

Contiguous Counties Also Eligible:

Alachua, Collier, DeSoto, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, **Highlands**, Leon, Liberty, Marion, Polk, Sumter, and Suwannee

If you are considering putting new trees in the ground in the coming year you should look into the info on CRAFT's website at: www.craftfdn.org about the Cycle Six **New Trees Plantings Program**. Round Three of the **Existing Tree Therapies Program** is also accepting applications from growers, and info about that program can also be found on the CRAFT website.

Registration is actively ongoing for the **2024 HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot**, so make your plans now to join us on **Saturday, December 7th**. We look forward to the shoot returning to **Quail Creek Sporting Ranch**, located just north of Okeechobee.

To close, I want to say thank you for the opportunity to have worked on behalf of the wonderful men and women of this organization for the past two decades plus. October 17th will be my 23rd anniversary as HCCGA Executive Director, and I feel very privileged to have played a small role in our collective success. I don't know if it is a good or bad sign that I have been in this position for that period of time. My three predecessors served for a combined 11 years before I was brought on board in 2001, and those three set us on the path to fulfilling our mission statement of **"protecting and enhancing the viability and profitability of commercial citrus groves in Highlands County."** I have been honored to carry on the Association's good work since.

Actually I have been involved with the Association since its inception in 1990 when our family's citrus operation joined the new group. I was invited to join the HCCGA Board of Directors in the early spring of 1993 and became the Association's fifth Board President in 1994 serving two terms in that capacity. So you can see that this organization is very special to me, and I thank you all for your faith in my leadership!

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. ***And remember, if you are not getting regular e-mail updates from us (usually several a week plus this newsletter every month), then we do not have a good e-mail address for you – so please let us know.***

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>.

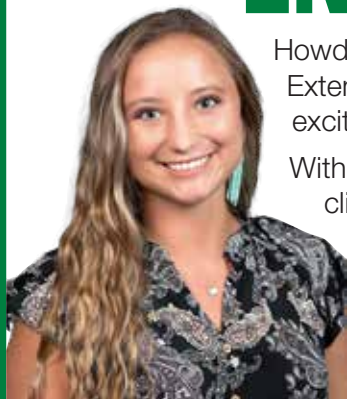
Restricted Use Pesticide Exams

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.

New Highlands County Livestock Agent



Howdy Highlands County, I'm thrilled to introduce myself as the new Livestock Extension Agent for Highlands County. My name is Ally (Bennett) Bastien, and I am so excited to become part of this community.

With a diverse background in livestock health and management, from veterinary clinics to cattle ranches, I have developed a deep passion for agriculture. My time at the University of Florida as an undergraduate further fueled this passion, especially within the cattle industry, leading me to pursue a Masters degree in Beef Cattle Reproduction and Physiology. During my studies, I was actively involved in Extension programs throughout Florida, helping to prepare me to support and collaborate with producers.

As a new agent, I am working on building relationships within the county and I would love to hear from you about potential programming you would be interested in. Initially, I would like to have programs including herd health management for all livestock, cattle reproductive management, pasture management, and conservation.

You can reach me by phone at 863-274-2540 (cell) or at 863-402-6540 (office), and by email at alexandrabennett@ufl.edu.

Please don't hesitate to reach out, I look forward to meeting each of you and working together towards achieving the goals of Highlands County producers. Here's to new opportunities and successful partnerships!

Ally B.

Steven Callaham Named FFVA Chairman

The Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association (FFVA) has named Steven Callaham, chief executive officer of Dundee Citrus Growers Association, as its chair for 2024–26.

"Steven Callaham has long been a driving force in Florida's citrus industry. His leadership, vision and dedication have strengthened the resilience and future success of the agricultural community," said FFVA President Mike Joyner. "With his commitment to innovation and collaboration, Steven is well positioned to lead our organization forward."

Callaham has been a champion for citrus under protective screen (CUPS) production. Under his leadership, Dundee Citrus Growers Association members have steadily increased their CUPS acreage and profitability. He has also helped diversify the association to include peach and blueberry production.



Farm TEAM Card

Just a reminder to consider taking advantage of utilizing the **Florida Farm Tax Exempt Agricultural Materials (TEAM) Card** if you are not already doing so.

The plastic wallet-sized Florida Farm TEAM Card is a physical alternative to the paper exemption certificates and aims to streamline the purchasing process for sales-tax-exempt agricultural materials, making it more convenient to purchase these materials tax-exempt. The card is free, and those interested in applying or learning more (*including what is exempt*) can visit: www.fdacs.gov/FarmTEAM.

How Does The Florida Farm TEAM Card Work?

- The TEAM card does not expand or create agricultural exemptions beyond those provided in s. 212.08, F.S. A farmer whose real property is classified as agricultural pursuant to s. 193.461, F.S. – OR – A farmer who has implemented agricultural best management practices on property it owns or leases.
- ***How long does the exemption approval last?***
Unless an exemption is revoked by the DOR, each approved Card is good for five years before renewal is required.
- ***How will stores/vendors verify Farm TEAM Cards?***
Each card will have a URL or QR Code that will allow stores/vendors to verify Farm TEAM Cards quickly and easily.
- ***Can stores/vendors make a copy of my card to keep on file for quick reference?***
Yes, with cardholder permission. The card will not display sensitive data such as social security numbers or tax IDs. Cards will display the individual or corporate name and address. The tax exemption number is provided by DOR.
- ***How many cards may I request under a single entity?***
FDACS will provide up to 10 cards. Each card will contain the individual business or corporate name and address. Cards will not name individual cardholders.
- ***Will online vendors accept the TEAM Card Exemption?***
User will have to follow the online vendor's procedures and any requirements, which may include submission of the Tax Exemption Certificate issued by DOR.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

FarmTEAMCard@FDACS.gov.



Update on Efforts to Lower Required OJ Brix Level

Florida Citrus Mutual (FCM) and federal lawmakers from Florida are pushing legislation that would direct the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to lower the required Brix level of not-from-concentrate pasteurized orange juice (OJ) from 10.5% to 10%. The change has been requested because many Florida oranges no longer produce juice that meets the 10.5% Brix requirement.

FCM Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President Matt Joyner provided an update on the effort to reduce the required Brix level for OJ. He noted that he had recently “tuned into the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee hearing on Capitol Hill, awaiting answers on our delayed Brix petition.”

“Like you, I hoped we would get immediate answers on the next steps,” said Joyner. “Turns out, the timeline is being pushed further down the road and clear answers remain just out of reach, again.”

“There is good news here, though. We are fortunate to have strong Florida leaders championing H.R. 1750, the Defending Domestic Orange Juice Production Act of 2023. Bill supporters like sponsor U.S. Rep. Scott Franklin and co-sponsors U.S. Reps. Gus Bilirakis, Kat Cammack, Kathy Castor and Darren Soto continue to push federal regulators to revise the Brix standard.

“During last week’s hearing, Reps. Gus Bilirakis and Kat Cammack asked Jim Jones, deputy commissioner for human foods at the FDA, for answers on the next steps in publishing the proposed rule to revise the standard identity of orange juice and ease the pressure on growers and processors.

“Rep. Cammack pointed out the Brix petition was not on the FDA’s regulatory agenda. ‘At this point, don’t you think it would just be easier to pass H.R. 1750?’ Cammack asked Jones. Later, Cammack added, ‘I would absolutely request that you get back to us with a timeline and some better answers when you appear before this committee.’

“We did receive an update from Rep. Cammack’s office that the FDA is continuing to move forward on the proposed rule to amend the standard of identity of orange juice, but there is no concrete timeline.

“The FDA stated that the next key step in moving the petition forward is adding the proposed rule to the Fall 2024 Unified Agenda. The Fall 2024 Unified Agenda includes the actions —including proposed and final rules — agencies intend to publish within 12 months of posting the agenda.

“While this is not the clear picture we hoped for with regard to next steps, the proposed rule on Brix could be on this fall’s Unified Agenda, which is expected to be published between October and December. We should know more of what to expect then.”

Learn more about the Brix issue and proposed legislation at: <https://citrusindustry.net/2022/06/22/brix-addressed-in-proposed-u-s-legislation/>.

Source: Florida Citrus Mutual



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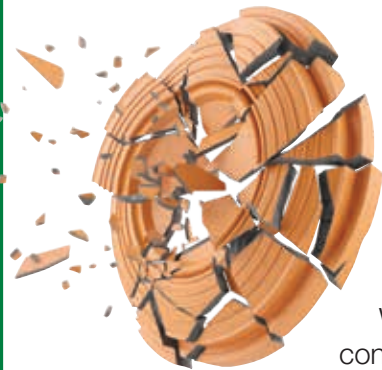
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2024 Citrus Fun Shoot December 7th

Registration is now open and very active 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 and wrap up with a great Prime Rib & Seafood lunch - so make plans to join us and 300+ other shooters on **Saturday, December 7th** for our 27th Annual Citrus Fun Shoot.

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.**

Florida State Sen. Ben Albritton is sponsoring our Live/Online Scoring, and again this year through our association with **Score Chaser** (www.scorechaser.com.) you will be able to access scores online during and after the shoot. Our HC County Attorney **Sherry Sutphen** is sponsoring our "Shooters Only" gun raffle 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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2024



CITRUS FUN SHOOT

100 Target Fun Shoot • Dec. 7, 2024 • 8:30 am



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PARTICIPATION LEVELS

All levels include one raffle ticket per registered shooter

- **Gold Sponsorship \$1000**
Includes up to 6 shooters, lunch, use of one shooting cart, signage and recognition during awards ceremony
- **Team Sponsorship \$675**
Includes 4 shooters, lunch and station sponsorship sign
- **Individual Shooter \$175**
Includes 100 target shooting round and lunch
- **Station Sponsorship \$150**
Includes lunch for one and a station sign
- **Lunch Only \$60**

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Please check a Participation Level: ☐ Gold ☐ Team ☐ Station ☐ Individual ☐ Lunch Only

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ OR ☐ Bill me \$ _____

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Contact Name _____

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Phone _____ Email _____

Please attach shooting participants' names and contact info (address, phone & e-mail) to the back of this form.

For additional information, contact Jan or Ray at the HCCGA office at 863-385-8091 or admin@hccga.com.

Mail or E-mail form to: HCCGA, 6419 U.S. Hwy. 27 S., Sebring, FL 33876; E-Mail: admin@hccga.com.

For information about Quail Creek Sporting Ranch, go to: QuailCreekSportingRanch.com.

Association E-mails

We want to make sure that all of our members and friends that are expecting to hear from us on a regular basis via e-mail are indeed doing so. You should usually receive several e-mails a week from us in addition to the HCCGA newsletter once a month.

We have occasionally had a few problems with folks not getting some e-mails, and you are strongly encouraged to let us know if you are expecting, and/or wanting, to receive regular e-mail updates from us and are not receiving them.

There could be several reasons if you are not regularly receiving e-mail from us:

One could be that we either do not have an e-mail address for you, or what we have is an incorrect or outdated one. So if you change your e-mail address, please let us know immediately so we can make the changes in our data base.

Another reason could be that your e-mail system may be “bouncing” or “blocking”, the messages that come from us due to the e-mail management system we need to utilize. Occasionally it seems that some e-mails are “rejected” or “blacklisted” by “spamcop” or other computer protection services, **especially if you have a centurylink or embarqmail address**. Often this is just a temporary or one day event, but you never can tell. If you normally utilize a **“centurylink or embarqmail”** address but have another e-mail address that you can share with us to use – please do so.

Finally, if you normally receive e-mails from us and something changes, please check your spam folders or filters and see if that helps. Also, never hesitate in letting us know if e-mail communication stops coming so we can collectively work through it.

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Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program

On September 27th, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson announced that Florida farmers, ranchers, and growers impacted by Hurricane Helene can now apply for interest-free loans through the Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program.

Loans can be used by eligible agriculture and aquaculture producers to restore, repair, or replace essential physical property – including fences, equipment, greenhouses, and other buildings – or to remove vegetative debris.

Impacted producers are encouraged to take photos of any property damage sustained from Hurricane Helene and to save all receipts for recovery efforts and supplies. Specific details on the application process are available on the program's website at: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Agriculture-and-Aquaculture-Producers-Natural-Disaster-Recovery-Loan-Program>.

Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program

- Interest-free loans up to \$500,000 for eligible agriculture and aquaculture producers that have experienced damage or destruction from Hurricane Helene.
- Loans may be used to restore, repair, or replace essential physical property, including fences, equipment, greenhouses, and other buildings, or to remove vegetative debris.
- Interested producers can learn more or apply on the website.

Producers that were previously awarded funds for damages sustained from Hurricane Debby may be eligible to apply for damage sustained from this disaster. An applicant may not receive more than one loan per storm, more than two loans per year, or more than five loans in any three-year period.

During a special legislative session in November of 2023, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1-C, which provided \$75 million to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for a revolving loan fund to support impacted agriculture and aquaculture producers recover from natural disasters.

H U R R I C A N E



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U.S. Patent Nos. 11,122,752; 11,496,063; 11,407,470; & 11,533,777



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Programs Available to Ag Producers in Florida's Heartland

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) has implemented a new BMP Cost Share Program.

With this new program, producers have an opportunity to receive up to 90% reimbursement if they are willing to provide data of water quality improvements, water quantity savings, and/or improvement of nutrients along with their project implementation.

Percentages:

75% = no data collection

80% = 2 years data collection

90% = 4 years data collection

*Data collection will be done every 2 years during IVs (Implementation Visits)

For a list of eligible project types and to apply online, visit: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Water/Agricultural-Best-Management-Practices/BMP-Cost-Share-Program>. For additional information, contact Lauren Ahrens at (850) 631-1017 or lauren.ahrens@fdacs.gov. *Applications accepted year-round.*

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service accepting applications

Programs provide technical and financial assistance for agricultural producers and ranchers who voluntarily install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land to protect soil, water, air quality, and or wildlife habitat. For more information, contact Carlos Torres at (863) 451-3419 or carlos.torres2@usda.gov. *While NRCS accepts applications year-round, Florida producers and landowners should apply no later than November 1, 2024, to be considered for funding in the FY2025 current cycle.*

Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) & Mini- FARMS Programs.

FARMS is an agricultural cost-share reimbursement program that reduces groundwater withdrawals from the Upper Floridan aquifer through conservation and alternative water supply best management practices (BMPs). For a list of qualifications and examples of project types, visit: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/business/agriculture/facilitating-agricultural-resource-management-systems-farms>. For additional information, contact Carole Estes at (941) 404-1452 or Carole.Estes@WaterMatters.org. *Applications accepted year-round.*

Highlands County Extension has partnered with the Highlands County Soil & Water Conservation District to provide 5 free soil/water tests and 2 free tissue tests to Highlands County producers through the AgriTest Initiative.

For more information, contact the Highlands County Extension Office at (863) 402-6540. *Applications accepted year-round.*

FWC's Florida Panther Payment for Ecosystem Services Pilot Program

The program rewards private landowners for maintaining and improving Florida panther habitat on their property. For eligibility criteria and to apply online, visit: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/664f4f347bd14a188f0e1c73f864c861>. For additional information, email PES@MyFWC.com. *The enrollment period for this round of applicants is from September 19, 2024 to October 19, 2024.*

For help navigating agricultural cost assistance, please stop by the Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District Office or call Kayla Nickerson at (863) 451-3420.

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.

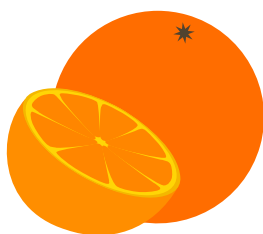
Take the survey at bit.ly/MindYourMelonSurvey or scan the QR code below. The deadline for participation is November 10, 2024.



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Alissa Hevesh

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Grove First Project Update

*By Randall Niedz, Ph.D, Research Geneticist Agricultural Research Service
USDA U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory*

Grove-First is based on the idea that treatments for HLB are only identified by improving the horticultural health of trees in the field - improved canopy health, reduced fruit drop, larger fruit, more fruit, and better-tasting fruit. There are two sequential screening trials in Grove-First - Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Phase 1 involves the treatment of three trees selected at random within a block, looking for molecules that produce visual effects that are equal to or greater than OTC. Phase 2 trials are conducted on molecules from Phase 1 that show large effects.

Phase 2 is a grower validation trial designed to determine whether the effects observed in Phase 1 are noticeable to growers on a larger scale. Phase 2 treats three 20-tree rows within a block. Phase 2 testing is funded by the Citrus Research and Development Foundation.

88 molecules were entered into a Phase 1 trial at the USDA Picos Road farm site in 2023 using Valencia/US812. About 20 molecules showed positive effects and were moved forward to Phase 2 trials.

There are seven Phase 2 trials currently underway. The 88 molecules injected in 2023 have been reinjected in 2024. 201 additional molecules entered a Phase 1 trial this year at a commercial Indian River grower's grove using Valencia/US-942.

Additionally, in collaboration with a commercial grower, researchers have implemented a statistical framework, known as design-of-experiments, to test multicomponent mixture combinations of the best chemistries in the field for positive, synergistic effects on tree health. Strategy discussions with CRDF and FCM about how to advance the top combination treatments through regulatory approval are in progress.

Grove-First was responsible for the new OTC label that removed the third-year restriction. The USDA-ARS Grove-First team submitted 12 molecules to the CRDF and Florida Citrus Mutual (FCM) for FDACS review of state registration requirements. Multiple meetings and many discussions eventually led to a meeting with EPA regulators.

At this meeting, the EPA described the third-year rule as a resistance management strategy and was based on the availability of OTC alternatives. When the restrictions were implemented, EPA regulators said they had not realized that OTC alternatives did not exist. FDACS removed the third-year restriction a few weeks later.

***Grove-First was developed and led by
USDA-ARS researchers Drs. Michelle Heck and Randall Niedz***



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CRAFT Program Update



All interested growers are encouraged to apply for Cycle Six of the traditional CRAFT New Tree Planting Program and Round Three of the Existing Tree Therapies (ETT) Program **until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 1, 2024.** Program information and applications are available at <https://craftfdn.org/>.

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. The "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 equal plantings of at least one scion 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.



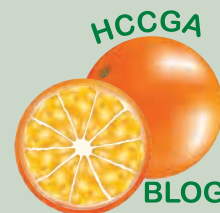
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The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and Southeast AgNet have partnered to provide the latest news on citrus-related research in monthly podcasts at: <http://citrusindustry.net/allinforcitrus/>

The podcast, “All in for Citrus,” features short interviews with scientists working to find solutions to citrus greening and other devastating citrus diseases. The podcast complements the UF/IFAS Citrus Research website at: citrusresearch.ifas.ufl.edu, and their monthly newsletter.



How to Access the “All In For Citrus” Podcast

There are multiple ways to listen to the current and past episodes. A new episode is normally released and published online the third week of the month. It appears on AgNet Media’s **Citrus industry** website at: <https://citrusindustry.net/allinforcitrus/>, along with an archive of all the episodes. It is also available on the UF/IFAS CREC Facebook page.

The podcast can also be easily accessed on your mobile phone. Go to the play store or podcast icon on your phone. Type in Podbean and download that app to your phone. (All In For Citrus is published on the Podbean platform). Once the Podbean app is loaded, open the app and search for All In For Citrus podcast. It should pop right up. You can even follow the podcast.

You can also download the podcast to listen to it at any time or share it with others from the Podbean app. Another option is to find the podcast using Google search by typing in All In For Citrus podcast. To get a specific episode, be sure to add the month and year in which you are interested.

The link below will take you to information about how to access podcasts on any device: <https://www.thepodcasthost.com/listening/how-to-listen-to-a-podcast/>.

So, to recap, listen to the All In For Citrus podcast on the web, through social media or on your phone. If you have topic ideas you would like to hear addressed in the podcast, please email Ruth Borger at: rborger@ufl.edu to share your thoughts



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.



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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2024-2025 Operation Cleansweep

Operation Cleansweep is a mobile pesticide collection program that provides farmers, nursery operators, golf course operators, and pest control services a one-time safe and economical way to dispose of up to 1,000 lbs. of their canceled, suspended, and unusable pesticides for free.

For information about participating, call 877-851-5285, email cleansweep@fdacs.gov or visit https://floridadep.gov/waste/permitting-compliance-assistance/content/operation-cleansweep-pesticides?fbclid=IwY2xjawEjPOJleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHaHvkS2S7fC6xfPPUwTq0qlJ7fQVatJ97aAZ8a6NvSgtE9LirOOMLm8TeQ_aem_4ZvKjmp9IBga7pPNKjyl_Q



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.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before recovery or rehabilitation actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) and Farm Loan Programs. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act (the federal law that provides for most federal disaster response activities) and emergencies, it's important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.

Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans. Contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

What to Do if a Disaster Occurs

- Producer or USDA Documents damage with dated photographs, videos and third-party verification.
- Producer reports to a local Service Center as soon as possible to request assistance (immediate restoration applies only to emergency situations such as putting up fencing to confine livestock).
- The county FSA office will provide guidance on the approval process and next steps.




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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.

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- **BRANDT Manni-Plex for Citrus** - high efficiency foliar nutrient combo for citrus
- **BRANDT Smart B-Mo** - high efficiency foliar boron/molybdenum
- **Celite® 610** - mechanical insecticide that contains 100% diatomaceous earth, OMRI Listed

Complexed Nutrients:

Feed with Dry Lignosulfates

- **Agra Sol** - dry soluble powder chelated micronutrients

Summer Oil Sprays:

Foliar Feed and Protect

- **BRANDT Smart K B** - high efficiency foliar potassium/boron
- **Nordox® 75 WG or 30/30** - copper fungicide, OMRI Listed
- **TresOil®** - emulsified fungicide/insecticide spray oil, OMRI Listed

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