

Citrus connection



HIGHLANDS COUNTY CITRUS GROWERS **President's Column** by Aaron Nelson

The Christmas season is officially upon us! This time of year means gatherings with family and friends, lots of good food, dangling perilously from the edge of your roof to hang Christmas lights, and if you have small kids like me, being extra careful to not accidentally expose Santa's identity. It's a busy time of year, yet one we all look forward to.

As if keeping up with the numerous holiday parties and school functions wasn't enough, the groves still need our attention too. Here are a few things that I am thinking about as I am in the field this December.

Rust mites and spider mites have been at the top of my mind lately. This year has been the worst for mite control in my career, albeit a relatively short career at this point. Mite populations (both rust and spider) are still high in a lot of groves that I take care of. With the very dry weather we've had, unchecked populations of spider mites can defoliate a grove very quickly.

Another thing I'm thinking about as I ride is cold protection. Configuring valves differently for cold protection than they are for irrigating can be tricky. I want to maximize the amount of coverage I can provide a grove from a potential freeze event with the water capacity that I have to work with. Often this means getting out well ahead of time and playing with different valve combinations to see where the right balance of acreage running at once and adequate pressure at the microjet lines.

When to begin OTC is another question I'm asking as I ride. Picking in early season varieties has ramped up, so blocks that are eligible to inject are quickly becoming available. When is the optimal time to inject? Closer to bloom? Now, while the bacterial titers are elevated? What kind of weather conditions are the most optimal to inject? We are still learning how to optimize the usage of OTC trunk injections. The good news is there are many signs that point to the benefit OTC can have on an HLB infected tree.

As I said earlier, this is a very busy time of year. Let's all try to not let it be so busy that we lose sight of the reason we celebrate; Jesus, God's own Son taking on flesh in order to bear the burden of our sin just as He promised from the very beginning. That's worth celebrating. Merry Christmas to you and your families!

Aaron Nelson

NOV 2023

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- HC Grove Appraisal



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2024 Calendar of Events

January 11

HCCGA Board of Directors Meeting @ 3:00 PM

March 7

HCCGA Annual Meeting & Dinner @ Seven-Sebring Raceway Hotel @ 5:30

June 12-14

Annual Citrus Conference @ Bonita Springs

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

Our 26th Annual Citrus Sporting Clays Fun Shoot (*our largest social/fundraising event*), which was held at OK Corral Gun Club on December 9th, took place on a nice day for some outdoor recreation. We had a great group of participants join us to shoot and enjoy a good meal. I want to say thank you on behalf of our organization to all of the companies and individuals that have sponsored and supported this shoot in some manner!



Congratulations to Kevin Roberts and Arlene Tuck for being elected to serve as Chairman and Vice-Chair respectively of the Board of County Commissioners for the next year. These two members of the County Commission have a very strong appreciation for the role that agriculture plays in our community. Our Association is fortunate to have a tremendous working relationship with not only our elected leadership, but our County staff as well. So, congrats as well to Laurie Hurner for her one year anniversary serving as Highlands County Administrator. This makes working on the issues that directly, or indirectly, affect agricultural property owners so much easier.

By the time you are reading this newsletter, we will have sent 2024 membership renewal dues notices out to all of our current members. If you do not receive a renewal notice by December 16th or so, please let us know ASAP.

The collective voice of our membership is truly an amazing and positive force that demands consideration in a wide range of issue deliberations. I can assure our grower members that the work done by the Association on your behalf has saved you more money each year (*in property taxes alone for example*) than we ask you to invest in dues. Your continued support of the Association is both appreciated and needed by your fellow growers and those who work with us as allied partners. If you have any questions about your membership, don't hesitate in giving me a call.

Please save the evening of Thursday, March 7, 2024 on your calendar for the HCCGA Annual Meeting. Our 33rd Annual Meeting will begin with a 5:30 pm social hour and the dinner and evening's program will commence at 6:30 pm. We are currently in the very early phases of planning for the event, but all current Association members should receive an invitation in mid January. I hope you can join us that evening!

It will soon be the first of the year and this is the time to notify the Highlands County Property Appraiser's office about the status of things in your various grove blocs. There can be a significant difference in how your grove's appraised taxable value is set if the proper tree age categories and percentage of "skips" are on record with Raymond McIntyre's office. However, it is incumbent on you to make sure that the Property Appraiser's office has the correct information. If you want to discuss your options in this regard, don't hesitate in contacting me.

On that note - we are indeed fortunate to have a Property Appraiser who understands our industry and the complex set of challenges we face. Thank you Raymond!

Our goal is to keep our members as informed as possible on a wide range of issues, so 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 that if you are not getting regular e-mail updates from us, then we probably do not have a good e-mail address for you— so please let us know right away.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our members and friends Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year! We are indeed blessed to live and work in the Communities, State, and Country that we do, and I hope that we will all take a few moments during this wonderful season to recognize how important our families, friends and co-workers are to us!

Thanks, Ray



Info Notes

2023-2024 Florida Minimum Wage

Just a reminder that the third increase dictated by the 2020 constitutional amendment, raised Florida's minimum wage rate to \$12 an hour on September 30th. The voter-approved amendment will gradually lead to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage on September 30, 2026.

2023 Citrus Expo Presentations

The educational seminars at the 2023 Citrus Expo are now available online at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations/citrus-expo-2023/>.

2023-2024 Florida Citrus Production Guides

The 2023-2024 Florida Citrus Production Guides are available to pick up at the UF/IFAS Highlands County Extension office or the handbooks are available online (with printable sections) at:

<https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/production-guide/>.

2023 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute Presentations Online

The 2023 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/2023/>

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.

"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.

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 contains a recommended exemption form to be utilized. It can be found at: <https://www.floridafarmbureau.org/agricultural-sales-tax-exemptions-in-florida/>

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.



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2024 HCCGA Annual Meeting

The 33rd Annual Meeting of the Highlands County Citrus Growers Association will be held at the Seven - Sebring Raceway Hotel on the evening of **Thursday, March 7th** with a social hour (cash bar) beginning at 5:30 PM and the dinner and program commencing at 6:30 PM. ***So please save the date.***

During the dinner program, the Association will hear from guest speakers about the state of our industry, elect new Board of Directors members, thank departing directors, hear reports from Association officers, install the Board Officers for 2024 and recognize the major sponsors of our 2023 Golf Tournament and Sporting Clays Fun Shoot fundraisers.

All Association members should receive an invitation and reservation form in the mail shortly after the first of the year. The dinner will be open to all current 2024 grower and associate members who wish to attend; however advance **reservations are required**, so please return your reservation/sponsorship forms as soon as possible after receiving your invitation.

Julia C. Black Memorial Speech Contest & Scholarship

Florida Citrus Mutual is proud to announce its inaugural Julia C. Black Memorial Speech Contest and Scholarship to encourage students to learn more about Florida's agricultural industry, specifically Florida citrus, and to support high school students with scholarship funds. The application deadline for students in grades 9-12 is December 30, 2023.

The speech contest will include two phases: District and State. District competition will be based on Florida Citrus Mutual's Board of Directors districts. Seven district competitions will be held throughout the state in January 2024 (exact dates and locations are to be announced). District winners will go on to compete at the State Competition the week of March 18, 2024, in Bartow.

The winner of the State Competition must be able to present their winning speech at the Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference on June 13, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point in Bonita Springs. Accommodations will be provided for the winner and their family.

For more information, please contact Melanie Burns, FCM Director of Market Information, by phone at 863-682-1116 or by email at melanieb@flcitrusmutual.com.

Follow Thresholds for ACP Control

One of the key components of managing HLB is keeping its vector, the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP), in check. Management recommendations for the pest have evolved over time. The history of that evolution is a subject of discussion in the November episode of the **All In For Citrus** podcast.

Lukasz Stelinski, a UF/IFAS entomologist, joined the podcast to discuss current recommendations for ACP. He said good management starts with a solid scouting program. He recommends that growers get out in the grove every month to scout for the pest.

“Let’s say you have a block of trees. You can monitor 10 trees in that block with tap samples. You tap a branch with something like a clipboard beneath it. If you tap 10 trees and count the highest threshold, I’d recommend it is one psyllid per tap (on average),” Stelinski said. “If you’re counting one psyllid per tap on average, it is time to spray. That level of psyllids is eating your yield. If you really want to be aggressive, you could drop that threshold to 0.2 psyllids per tap on average.”

Stelinski recommends always spraying during the dormant period between January and February. This is when the trees are not growing and there is less flush for the psyllid to feed on. That can be a calendar spray. This really helps start the season off with a good foundation when it comes to ACP control.

“After the dormant spray, scouting should direct ACP applications. If there are no psyllids or they are below threshold, don’t spray. You can save your money,” he said. “By following this threshold, you can reduce your ACP sprays down to maybe four or five per year.”

To hear more about the evolution of ACP management, check out the latest episode of **All In For Citrus** at: <https://citrusindustry.net/allinforcitrus/>. The podcast is a joint partnership between UF/IFAS and AgNet Media.

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.



USDA Citrus Crop Forecast

December, 2023

The 2023-2024 Florida all orange forecast released on December 8, 2023 by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Board is 20.5 million boxes, unchanged from the October forecast. If realized, this will be 30 percent more than last season's final production. The forecast consists of 7.50 million boxes of non-Valencia oranges (early, mid-season, and Navel varieties) and 13.0 million boxes of Valencia oranges.

Non-Valencia Oranges 7.50 Million Boxes

The forecast of non-Valencia production is 7.50 million boxes, unchanged from the October forecast. Final fruit size is projected to be below the minimum at harvest. Current droppage is above average and projected to be above average at harvest. The Navel forecast, included in the non-Valencia forecast, is 300,000 boxes, comprising 4 percent of the non-Valencia total.

Valencia Oranges 13.0 Million Boxes

The forecast of Valencia production is 13.0 million boxes, unchanged from October. Current fruit size is below average and is projected to be below average at harvest. Current droppage is projected to be above average at harvest.

All Grapefruit 2.40 Million Boxes

The forecast of all grapefruit production is 2.40 million boxes, up 500,000 boxes from the October forecast. If realized, this will be 33 percent more than last season's final production. The red grapefruit, now at 2.10 million boxes, is increased 450,000 boxes from the October forecast. Fruit size of red grapefruit at harvest is projected to be above average, and droppage is projected to be average. The white grapefruit forecast is raised 50,000 boxes and is now 300,000 boxes. Projected fruit size of white grapefruit at harvest is slightly above average while projected droppage is below average.

Tangerines and Tangelos 550,000 Boxes

The forecast of tangerines and tangelos is 550,000 boxes, up 50,000 boxes from the October forecast. This forecast number includes all certified tangerine and tangelo varieties.



Root Nutrient and Fertilization Guidelines for HLB Affected Trees

By Davie Kadyampakeni, Lorenzo Rossi and Alan Wright

Huanglongbing (HLB) disease lowers tree performance by reducing water and nutrient uptake as a result of root loss. HLB-affected trees have a fibrous root loss of about 30% to 80%, which increases as disease symptoms develop in the canopy. Investigating optimal nutrient concentrations in citrus roots thus improves the understanding of HLB dynamics concerning root nutrition and fertilizer application methods.

UF/IFAS researchers looked at nutrient uptake via soil fertilizer applications for 5- to 6-year-old HLB-affected Valencia orange trees on Swingle rootstock at Ridge and Flatwoods sites. Macronutrients and micronutrients were applied at varying fertilization rates via fertigation according to UF/IFAS guidelines. The standard fertilizer program was compared with elevated macronutrient and micronutrient fertilization programs. Soil and leaf samples were collected for nutrient concentration analysis in spring and fall of 2019 and summer of 2020.

Research Results

No significant differences among treatments were observed for tissue and soil nutrient concentrations due to nutrient interactions. Fruit yield between 2019 and 2020 harvest seasons increased with increased nutrient availability.

At higher fertilization rates of standard fertilization + 40 pounds/acre calcium + 40 pounds/acre magnesium + 220 pounds/acre potassium + 20 pounds/acre iron + 20 pounds/acre manganese + 20 pounds/acre zinc + 4 pounds/acre boron, HLB-affected trees showed increased nutrient uptake and root growth, improving overall tree performance.

Take Home Messages

- Higher macronutrient and micronutrient fertilization rates led to higher fruit yields and faster root growth.
- Soil fertilizer application for micronutrients was more effective in increasing canopy size and root growth than foliar fertilization.

Acknowledgment: This project was funded by the UF/IFAS Citrus Initiative funded by the Florida Legislature, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Citrus Research and Development Foundation.

Davie Kadyampakeni is an associate professor at the UF/IFAS CREC in Lake Alfred. Lorenzo Rossi is an assistant professor, and Alan Wright is a professor, both at the UF/IFAS IRREC in Fort Pierce.

Property Fraud Alert Service

Don't pay for a fraud notification service when your property records can be protected for free through the Highlands County Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller's Office.

Property Fraud Alerts is a free service that warns property owners of potential instances of property fraud by notifying subscribers when a deed, mortgage, or other document is recorded under their name in their local county's official records.

What is property fraud? It is when someone illegally uses your property for their financial gain. One common example of property fraud is when a scammer creates a fake document that will deed your home to them, records that document in the county's official records, then attempts to collect money in "rent" or "sale" of your property.

Property owners can easily recognize fraudulent activity if an alert is received regarding activity that was not initiated by themselves. Early detection can provide valuable time to stop criminal action by allowing the owner to immediately contact law enforcement and/or seek legal advice.

Sign up today by visiting the website at: <https://trishield.com/Agency?AgencyCode=12055> to take you directly to the Property Fraud Alert registration page.



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CRAFT Program Updates

The CRAFT Program continues to see a phenomenal response to its request for participation in both the New Tree Planting and Existing Tree Therapies Programs. This response remains a positive sign of the Florida citrus industry's commitment to the fight against citrus greening and the determination to remain a vibrant and viable industry.

With the November 30th closure of the New Tree Plantings Cycle Five application window, CRAFT received more than 175 additional applications for inclusion in the program. Of those applications 18 were for solid set projects featuring plant material from the Program for Expedited Propagation (PEP), 57 were traditional solid set projects and 100 were reset applications. In addition to these newly submitted applications, projects that were submitted but not approved in Cycle Four were automatically rolled over for consideration and bring the total to 210 applications. All told, more than 14,000 acres worth of new planting proposals will be considered by the CRAFT Technical Working Group (TWG) and Board of Directors for funding in Cycle Five.

CRAFT Scientific Coordinator Carisa Keller and the rest of the CRAFT staff are now working to organize the applications and begin the review process. In the coming weeks, you will meet (via Zoom) with Carisa and, if needed, a representative from the TWG to discuss your proposed project and to develop an experimental design. Once you and the CRAFT team have created a mutually agreeable design, it will be presented to the full TWG for their consideration. At that point it will either be recommended to the Board of Directors for approval or moved to the waitlist.

This process can take a bit of time, especially with more than 200 applications. In an effort to expedite the process, Carisa will reach out to you to schedule a time to review all of your applications at once. Please be on the lookout for contact from her in the coming days.



The success of the CRAFT program continues to be due, in large part, to the cooperation between the Board, TWG, staff and our grower participants. We thank each of you for your continued participation and patience as we move forward.

Speaking of patience, staff has finalized the grower participation agreements for Existing Tree Therapies Round Two and will be mailing them out to growers this week. If you applied in Round One or Round Two and have not previously received a grower participation agreement, please be on the lookout for your agreement in the mail in the next couple of weeks.

If you have any questions regarding the program in general, please don't hesitate to contact Tamara Wood at tamara@craftfdn.org or 863.698.9276.

Prolong the Health of Young Citrus Trees

By Fernando Alferez, Ute Albrecht, Ozgur Batuman, Jawwad Qureshi and Saoussen Ben Abdallah

Individual Protective Covers (IPCs), which are psyllid-exclusion mesh bags, are increasingly being adopted to efficiently protect newly planted citrus trees from huanglongbing (HLB) infection. However, IPCs typically must be removed after two to three years due to tree growth.

Early evidence indicates that brassinosteroids (Brs), a relatively new class of plant hormones, delay HLB progression. With the aim of prolonging tree health after IPC removal, UF/IFAS researchers are investigating the efficacy of Brs in protecting and/or preventing trees from Asian citrus psyllids (ACP) and *Candidatus* Liberibacter asiaticus (CLAs) infection once they are left exposed.

Brs have been approved for commercial use in Florida citrus. Although the project is in its first months, researchers have already found that treatment with Brs prevented CLAs infection four months after IPC removal. In contrast, 60% of the trees grown in IPCs without subsequent Brs treatments were HLB-affected at this time. After Brs treatment, trees are flushing more profusely and setting more fruit. In addition, less psyllids per flush were found. Long-term efficacy of treatments still must be assessed.

Take-home messages of the research are as follows:

- Brassinosteroids delay HLB progression after IPC removal.
- Citrus trees flush more profusely after Brs treatment once IPCs are removed.
- Psyllid population is affected by Brs treatment.

This project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Fernando Alferez is an assistant professor; Ute Albrecht, Ozgur Batuman and Jawwad Qureshi are associate professors; and Saoussen Ben Abdallah is a post-doctoral associate — all at the UF/IFAS SWFREC in Immokalee.



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HCCGA Membership Dues

HCCGA members should receive their 2024 membership dues renewal statements in the mail in mid-December. If you did not receive your renewal invoice by December 16th or so, or have questions about your membership; please contact the HCCGA office (863) 385-8091 at your earliest convenience.

Both Grower and Associate dues for 2024 remained the same as previous years (as a *matter of fact, they are the same as they were when HCCGA was founded in 1990*). Grower dues are \$2.00 per acre with a minimum of \$100.00 and a maximum of \$2,000.00 and Associate dues are only \$100.00 per year. Prudent budgeting by your HCCGA Board of Directors, nearly 100% membership renewal from year to year and additional support of several Association social and fundraising events through the year have allowed your Association to keep the dues at this low level for the past 30 plus years.



Thank you again for your membership and support in the past, and we look forward to working on your behalf in 2024.



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2023 HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot

The 26th Annual Fun Shoot and Prime Rib & Seafood Luncheon took place on Saturday, December 9th at OK Corral Gun Club for the first time. The nearly 300 shooters, and others that joined us for lunch, enjoyed great outdoor recreation and fellowship. We will share some more details and pictures next month, but thank you to all of our great sponsors!

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UF/IFAS Flower Bud Induction Advisories

The 2023-2024 Flower Bud Advisories provided by Dr. Tripti Vashisth (UF/IFAS CREC) have begun. These advisories will be published biweekly until March 30, 2024. Growers can utilize this information to better understand and predict the timing of flowering for the upcoming season. The advisories can be found at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/research/citrus-production/flower-bud-induction/>.

The information is based on the Citrus Flowering Monitor, which is a model that uses area FAWN stations, cultivar type, tree age, soil type and the current date to give predictions of when flowering is expected to occur and how many bloom events to expect. The model shows the flower bud induction levels from October through April.

Trees begin to accumulate induction hours as cooler weather at temperatures below 68 degrees occur. During the late fall and early winter bud differentiation occurs, which means the citrus buds will sprout as either flowers or vegetative growth. Warm spells that occur intermittently during times in which we typically encounter cold weather can induce bud initiation resulting in multiple bloom events. Therefore, it is important for growers throughout the fall and winter to track how many induction hours the trees have accumulated and monitor weather forecasts for potential warm periods.

Growers can enter parameters specific to their grove to get a prediction. Knowing the bloom date is important for managing bloom and other related events. The Citrus Flowering Monitor also gives specific recommendations on how to manage bloom. You can also run the Flowering Monitor utilizing your own site specific information. The model is available at: <http://disc.ifas.ufl.edu/bloom/model.jsp>.

Growers should pay attention to flower bud advisories because they discuss the predicted bloom and best practices to follow at that time of year for optimum flowering. Keep track of induction hours in your area and watch for projected warm periods from the weather services.

Growers are encouraged to critically assess their problems in regard to flowering before applying any strategies. For example, the goal may be to reduce flowering in a variety that flowers excessively and the fruit remains small, or it may be to suppress flowering where tree canopy is sparse and excessive fruit drop occurs. In such cases, a gibberellic acid (GA) application during a low to moderate flower bud induction period is recommended.

Normal, healthy trees could have their induction boosted by applying some drought stress. Unfortunately, with vulnerable root systems associated with HLB, growers shouldn't risk heavier preharvest fruit drop of the current crop by using water stress to prevent unwanted early vegetative growth and enhance induction of flowers. Starting this year, each advisory will carry additional recommendations regarding use of GA to manipulate flowering.

The information provided by these two modeling resources can also be used by growers in their decision making processes about spray timing before flowering flushes and management of Post-Bloom Fruit Drop to reduce inoculum, especially during prolonged bloom periods and wet weather.

2023–2024 Citrus Production Guide

The 2023–2024 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. The guide is a comprehensive reference meant to assist growers in development and management of citrus groves in Florida, said Tripti Vashisth, a UF/IFAS horticulture associate professor and a member of the guide’s editorial team.

Additions this year include new fertilizer recommendations for some nutrients that have been recently changed and information on the plant growth regulator gibberellic acid. Information on pesticides registered for use in Florida citrus is also updated in every new edition.

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. About 50 UF/IFAS personnel contributed to the latest edition.

“Each year, we update the guide with new information as it becomes available,” Vashisth said. “This is a fundamental component of the UF/IFAS faculty mission to continue to meet the needs of our growers as we learn about and/or develop new tools and strategies for citrus production.”

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/>.

We also have some copies at this time at the HCCGA office.



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For additional information, contact Tamara Wood - 863.698.9276 or tamara@craftfdn.org

Farm TEAM Card

What is the Florida Farm TEAM Card?

- The TEAM card is a sales tax exemption card for use by qualified farmers to claim the applicable sales tax exemptions on items for agricultural use.
- Farmers may present the TEAM card to the selling dealer instead of paper exemption certificates.
- 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.

A farmer is a person, such as an individual, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, etc.) directly engaged in the business of producing crops, livestock, or other agricultural commodities. The term includes but is not limited to, horse breeders, nurserymen, dairy farmers, poultry farmers, cattle ranchers, apiarists, and persons raising fish. (See ss. 212.08(2), 212.02(9), 212.02(28), F.S.)

How will I apply for a Team Card?

Complete and submit the Application for a Florida Farm Tax Exempt Agricultural Materials (TEAM) Card (Form DR- 1 TEAM) and any required documentation to the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR). The DOR will notify you if additional information or documentation is needed to determine your eligibility. If your application is approved, the Department of Revenue will notify the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) who will be responsible for providing TEAM Cards.

When will the Farm Team Card application window open?

January 1, 2024.

What items are exempt from taxation with this card?

There are 26 categories of Sales Tax Exemptions, which can be found by accessing <https://floridafarmbureau.org/agricultural-sales-tax-exemptions-in-florida/>.

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 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.

Winter Weather Watch

The 2023-24 edition of the Polk County Extension Winter Weather Watch program began on November 15, 2023. The program provides growers with winter weather forecast information specifically geared toward agricultural interests in West Central and Southwest Florida. The program provides subscribers with an unlisted phone number for (24 hour/7 days a week) access to daily weather forecasts.

The zone forecasts are from the National Weather Service (NWS) and are listed on the automated phone menu, so you can select the products you are interested in. Forecasts include the zone forecasts, 6-10 and 8-14 day outlook forecasts. In addition to the forecasts there are special weather narratives provided as needed in the event of freezing temperatures and a weekly outlook provided by meteorologist David Fayash.

When freezing temperatures are predicted in our area additional updates will include the afternoon zone forecast and the modified sunset brunt minimum temperature equation. In addition, the program also provides the weekly citrus leaf freezing temperatures.

Subscriptions for the Winter Weather Watch program are only \$100.00 for the entire 4 month period (Nov 15 to Mar 15). You can subscribe to the Winter Weather Watch by contacting Joy Spencer at 863-519-1041 or j.spencer@ufl.edu or by sending in the subscription info below:

2023 - 2024 Winter Weather Watch Program

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2024 HCCGA Promotional and Sponsorship Packages

A number of our HCCGA Associate members have indicated to us that they want the ability to plan their promotional/sponsorship investments for an entire year for budgeting purposes, to lock in the lowest possible rates, and/or to not have to deal with solicitations on an individual basis.

If your firm would like to take advantage of “**guaranteed pricing based on 2023 rates**” for next year - you can now take advantage of the opportunity to make arrangements for a 2024 promotional package with a total value of **\$2,500.00 or more** in order to ensure that the 2023 “a la carte pricing” shown below will be locked in and utilized. A firm that utilizes this package deal can certainly still decide at a later date to engage in additional promotional opportunities if they so desire.

If a package is not secured during this time period; individual prices for 2024 advertising and sponsorship opportunities are subject to potential increases. For more detailed information about any of the events or advertising opportunities, or to discuss and/or create your individual promotional plan, contact Ray or Jan at the HCCGA office.

Discover pricing and services on page 21

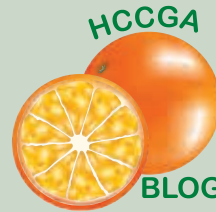
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2024 Promotional & Sponsorship Menu



HCCGA Associate Membership

Annual HCCGA Associate membership

\$100.00

HCCGA Annual Meeting (March 7, 2024)

Gold Table Sponsorship (reserved table for 8)

\$500.00

Silver Seat Sponsorship (4 reserved seats)

\$250.00

Bronze Seat Sponsorship (2 reserved seats)

\$100.00

HCCGA "Citrus Connection" Newsletter Ad Rates

Full Page - Full Color, per month (min. 3 months)

\$ 300.00

Full Page - B/W, per month (min. 3 months)

\$ 225.00

½ Page - Full Color, per month (min. 6 months)

\$ 200.00

½ Page - B/W, per month (min. 6 months)

\$ 150.00

⅓ Page - Full Color (12 months)

\$ 1500.00

⅓ Page - Full Color (6 months)

\$ 900.00

Business Card - Full Color, one year - 12 issues

\$ 500.00

Business Card - Full Color, six months - 6 issues

\$ 350.00

Business Card - B/W, one year - 12 issues

\$ 400.00

Business Card - B/W, six months - 6 issues

\$ 250.00

**** All Business card size ads must be placed for a minimum of six consecutive months.**

2024 HCCGA Golf Day (April)

Team Foursome Sponsorship

\$400.00

4 Tournament participants with lunch

Annual HCCGA Member Directory Ad Rates

¼ Page Ad (B/W)

\$ 200.00

½ Page Ad (B/W)

\$ 300.00

½ Page Ad (full color)

\$ 400.00

Full Page (B/W)

\$ 450.00

Full Page Ad (full color)

\$ 600.00

HCCGA Sporting Clays Fun Shoot (December 14, 2024)

Title Sponsorship

\$1,500.00

(8 shooters and custom recognition package)

Gold Sponsorship

\$1000.00

(6 shooters & 1 shooting cart)

Green Bird Station Sponsorship

\$750.00

(special recognition at 1 station on each course & awards ceremony)

Team Sponsorship

\$675.00

(4 shooters)

Station Sponsorship

\$150.00

(sponsorship sign at 1 shooting station)

This menu represents the promotional advertising and sponsorship rates for 2023

2023 Highlands County Grove Property Appraisal

As we approach a new tax assessment year come January, it is time for growers to make sure that the Highlands County Property Appraiser's office has the most up-to-date information on your grove properties just as soon as possible after the first of the year. Their office **will not** contact you, so it is incumbent upon each grower to make sure that the Appraiser's Office has the most up-to-date and accurate information about their grove properties as possible.

It would be extremely prudent for all growers to take the time to **annually update** your groves info with the Appraiser's office. Unplanted grove acreage and non-reset skip areas, due to concerns about HLB disease presence, are still entitled to the **de-minimis \$50.00 per acre assessed valuation**, so make sure they have that information from you.

Mr. McIntyre's office has always worked closely with our Association to fine tune assessment models in order to accurately reflect property values, and is happy to modify how property income calculations are utilized if the proper information is provided. Mr. McIntyre is encouraging growers to contact his Ag property staff in the Property Appraiser's office in order to discuss your updated information in order to have the most accurate long term grove appraisal models possible.

In order for growers to benefit from this process on an ongoing basis, it is critical that the Appraiser's office has complete and accurate information in areas such as net grove acreage, tree age category percentages, replacement tree and spacing numbers, significant pruning or topping, and/or tree removal (both numbers and age categories). Sharing your individualized production and harvesting records will allow the Appraiser's office to utilize those numbers in your assessment calculation instead of the default methodology involving statewide statistics.

If a grower wants to discuss in more detail how this type of information sharing may potentially benefit their operation prior to contacting Mr. McIntyre's office, contact Ray at the Association office.

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