



Citrus connection



HIGHLANDS COUNTY CITRUS GROWERS President's Column **by Riley McKenna**

Riding through the groves with my dad and uncle over the years has taught me some of the most important lessons in growing citrus. Those rides often lead to stories from the “good old days” — back when 800-box-per-acre Hamlins and 7-pound-solids Valencia blocks were a reality. Even though I’m old enough to remember those times I have certainly never experienced them in my professional career.

Hearing those stories fills me with two emotions: amazement at how rewarding that must have been and generally followed by a bit of jealousy of never getting to be a part of it. That doesn’t mean I don’t get to learn from it.

Lately, we’ve been talking about how Florida citrus has gone through three distinct eras:

1. **Growing citrus pre-greening**
2. **Growing citrus with greening**
3. **Growing citrus with greening and trunk injections**

It really makes you think about all we’ve tried in the past 20 years to fight a disease caused by such a simple bacterium. Over that time, we’ve had small victories when cultural practices seemed to help manage symptoms or improve tree health—but they never lasted. The disease always seemed to catch up. Even with OTC, we’re not looking at a silver bullet. But, maybe it can make those small practices we’ve developed over time more effective.

As we enter this new era, we need to reexamine what worked in the early years of greening, without being limited by the practices that didn’t work before greening hit. Florida in 2025 is a very different environment than it was just two decades ago.

We have to stay open to new practices, new research, and new thinking. The only thing worse than not finding a solution is overlooking one that’s been right in front of us the whole time.

We, as growers, need to keep pushing the envelope by thinking creatively, trying new ideas, and using the best information available. Whether its nutrition programs, rootstocks, or scions, we have more tools than ever to work with. It’s up to us to keep learning, adapting, and making the most of what we’ve got.

Remember... agriculture has always been a story of hope and a belief in tomorrow. Every tree you nurture, every grove you tend, every hard decision you make is an investment in that hope.

So, take care of the little things and let’s hope Mother Nature helps us along the way. Reach out when you need support. Let’s lean on one another, give our worries to the good Lord, and trust that through grower cooperation, solidarity, and strength that the industry can and will overcome.

Riley McKenna

MAY 2025

- Citrus EXPO
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- HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot
- Ag Literacy Day
- BMP Manual
- Citrus Soil & Leaf Sample



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2025 Calendar of Events

August 20-21

Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo @ FL. State Fairgrounds - Tampa

December 6

HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot @ Quail Creek Sporting Ranch

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



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Executive Director's Report

BY RAY ROYCE

I know we are all very pleased with the cycle of rainfall that began in late May and early June. Hopefully the weather will cooperate in the coming months, and we will experience a little bit better luck in regards to bringing a crop to harvest than the past several years.

It "appears at this time" (barring last minute political actions) that it is likely that the CRAFT program will have significant funding available to invest into their next cycle of new tree planting assistance programs later this summer.



So if you have any potential interest at all in putting new trees in the ground, either replanting a solid set bloc or resetting an existing grove, you should consider reaching out to the CRAFT team now, or check out their website, to learn more about your options and how their program and application process works.

I am grateful that I have had the opportunity over the past 5-6 weeks to visit thousands of acres of new plantings and reset groves that have taken advantage of CRAFT funding assistance. I come away from that experience very encouraged by how those trees are performing out in the field. The folks that have taken advantage of, and invested in, the CRAFT new tree program so far have some very nice young blocs coming along.

Congratulations to Florida Senator Ben Albritton for being recognized with the 2025 Citrus Achievement Award. It is hard to think of a more deserving individual for this award. Ben has dedicated a significant part of his adult life in working to protect and promote our industry. Thank you for your years of leadership Ben!

I would also like to congratulate Emma Reynolds Ezell on being selected by the Governor to sit on the Florida Citrus Commission, and Charlie Wilson for his election to the Florida Citrus Mutual Board of Directors. These two good friends, and former HCCGA Board Presidents, are extremely dedicated to, and active within, the Florida citrus industry. I know that they will represent all of us very well in their respective roles.

Production work on the 2025 HCCGA Annual Member Directory is now underway. Members need to make sure that they have provided us with their up-to-date contact information so it can be included in this year-round resource tool. If any Associate members want to enhance their presence in this year's member directory through advertising and have not already done so, just contact Ray or Jan at the HCCGA office.

Save the dates for a few things coming up: the **2025 Citrus Expo**, and it's very informative educational sessions, is coming up on **August 20th & 21st** at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa. And for some great outdoor fun and fellowship – not to mention some tremendous food & raffle prizes – the 2025 HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot will be held on Saturday, **December 6th** as the shoot again returns to **Quail Creek Sporting Ranch**.

This is your organization, so if there are issues you would like to see addressed more, or types of information that you would like to hear more about – just let me or one of our Board members know. We are also here to help facilitate interactions between our members and those that you may want or need to deal with across a wide range of personal collaborations or business related opportunities – so if you ever need assistance – just let me know.

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: 863-381-8551) for additional information if you need it; or if I can be of any assistance in any matter, large or small. And remember that if you are not getting very regular e-mail updates from us - please let us know right away.

Thanks, Ray



Info Notes

Florida Citrus Growers' Institute

The 2025 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 on the campus of South Florida State College. Presentations from the 2025 Institute are now available on the Citrus Agents website:

<https://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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>

Growing Citrus - A multipronged HLB strategy

This 17 page booklet is a brief guide to the most important things growers should keep in mind when developing HLB management plans for groves at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations/citrus-expo-2024/booklets/growing-citrus>.

Keeping Citrus Growers Informed

An informative research book containing updates on more than 70 ongoing UF/IFAS research project at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations/citrus-expo-2024/booklets/citrus-growers-informed>.

All In For Citrus 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.



UF/IFAS Research Website

The Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC) website at <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research> 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 provide 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>.

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.

Restricted Use Pesticide Exams

Restricted Use Pesticide Exams Restricted Use Pesticide exams are done using laptops at most UF/IFAS county Extension offices. In Highlands County, the Extension office is scheduling exams for two days each month through October 2025. You can schedule your exam online at <https://pesticideexam.ifas.ufl.edu/public/countyList.faces>.

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>



CITRUS & SPECIALTY CROP EXPO

PRESENTED BY: **AgNet**
MEDIA

Register Now!

The Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo will give growers a valuable experience of learning and fellowship with industry peers. The event is scheduled for Aug. 20–21 at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa.

Between educational seminars and the trade show, there's plenty for attendees to see and do over the course of the event. One highlight includes a panel discussion with leaders from key industry associations. The panel will include

Matt Joyner of Florida Citrus Mutual, Chris Butts of the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and Mike Joyner of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association. These three leaders will discuss topics like the battle against HLB, disaster relief, labor, the farm bill and much more.

"It is rare to get three people together who have such collective knowledge on topics that are so specific and important to fruit and vegetable growers," said Frank Giles, AgNet Media editor-in-chief. "This panel discussion is a must-see if you are involved in or interested in the specialty crop sector in the Southeast."

The citrus seminars will provide growers with the latest knowledge on how to optimize trunk injection of oxytetracycline (OTC). This includes new research on OTC applications and degradation and how different varieties respond to treatments. There will also be a presentation on advancements in automated trunk injection.

Outside of trunk injection, there will be talks on other practical approaches growers can take to enhance the health of HLB-infected trees. Much has been learned about how plant growth regulators can be incorporated into trunk-injection therapies to compliment tree health benefits.

Don't wait, register now at: www.citrusexpo.net/register. Registration is free for commercial growers, commercial grove owners, commercial grove managers, certified crop advisers, grower association executives, government, legislative and universities.

All preregistered growers will be automatically entered for a chance to win a John Deere gun safe, courtesy of Everglades Equipment Group.

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Citrus Achievement Award

Ben Albritton has been named the 2025 Citrus Achievement Award recipient. He will be presented the Achievement Award trophy at this year's Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference in Bonita Springs.

Ben is an extremely deserving award designee, who has invested his life in the rich agricultural heritage of Florida. The fourth-generation citrus grower, and current Florida Senate President, has been a strong lifelong advocate for our state's citrus industry across a number of industry and political leadership positions.

Albritton served on the Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association Board from 2002 to 2007. In 2005 he was appointed to the Florida Citrus Commission, where he served until 2010 including a tenure as chairman from 2007 to 2010. In 2010, Ben was elected to the Florida House of Representatives where he served for 8 years before being elected to the Florida Senate in 2018.

Senator Albritton was selected by his Senate colleagues to serve as Senate President in November 2024 for a two term in that capacity. This year, President Albritton has championed the citrus cause in the state legislature with a rallying call of "Make Citrus Great Again" and has been on the front lines reminding Florida citizens how important the Florida citrus industry is to the state.

Ben has often remarked that after his faith and family, preserving and protecting the agricultural industries and their associated communities of Florida, is a leading priority in his life. Congratulations Senator Ben Albritton on this well-deserved recognition!



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Have a Hurricane Plan in Place

By Frank Giles

Florida citrus growers are all too familiar with the fallout from hurricanes in recent history. Hurricanes Irma, Ian, Nicole and Milton have left nasty marks on prime citrus producing regions since 2017. With hurricane forecasting agencies predicting an above average season for 2025, now is the time to prepare with fingers crossed Florida citrus country is spared this year.

Be Prepared

While citrus growers certainly can't control the weather, they can take actions to prepare. UF/IFAS has worked with growers through many hurricanes and has developed some recommendations on best practices when preparing for hurricane season (June–November). Here are some of the key tips:

Personnel Assignments

A major part of the hurricane plan is ensuring that all managers know their responsibilities prior to, during and after a hurricane. Make a list of all tasks that will need to be performed so there are no last-minute, unanticipated gaps to plug. Identify and maintain an updated list of the members of a damage-inspection team, which will determine where storm damage occurred and how extensive it is. Make sure each team member knows his or her responsibilities. Specific workers should be assigned to fix ditches, prop up trees, fix roadways and perform other tasks after the storm. Make sure you know how to contact workers at their place of safety, and that they have a way to call in after the storm.

Chris Oswalt, UF/IFAS citrus Extension agent covering Polk and Hillsborough counties, says personnel assignments are particularly important in preparing for a storm. "I would suggest as a group practicing a hurricane drill to run through the mechanics of the assignments, including safety training," he says. "Hurricanes are stressful situations, and you don't want to find deficiencies in your plan while the storm is happening. Plan ahead and don't wait until the day before. You never realize how much stuff you must attend to until you have a hurricane on your doorstep."

Safety Training

Workers should be trained in the safe operation of unfamiliar equipment that they may have to use if a hurricane hits. For instance, drivers may wind up using chain saws to remove a downed tree that is blocking a road.

Liquid Tanks

Tanks containing fuel, fertilizer and other materials should be kept full, so they do not move in the wind and rain and to ensure that sufficient fuel is available for machinery used in recovery efforts after the storm.

Ditches

Ditches should be kept clean and pumped down to help maximize water-removal efforts after the storm.

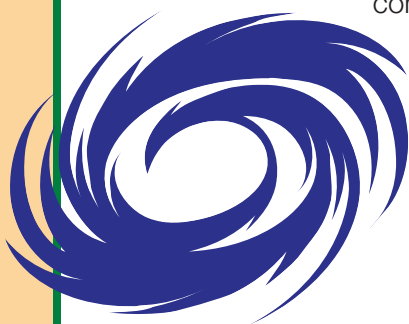
Cultural Practices

Trees should be pruned regularly to reduce broken limbs and minimize toppled or uprooted trees. Windbreaks can also reduce tree damage and the spread of citrus canker.

Emergency Equipment

Make sure that all emergency equipment — including generators, chain saws, torches and air compressors — is on hand and in good repair. Emergency generators should be available for use in headquarters and equipment maintenance shops. Large diesel-powered generators with 25-to-60-kilowatt capacity can be rented or leased by the month during the hurricane season.

See **PLAN** on page 8



PLAN, Con't from page 7

Communications Equipment

Ensure that radios are in good working order. Have handheld portable radios with extra charged battery packs available for workers who will need them in the field after the storm. Direct truck-to-truck radio communication is most reliable when phone lines are down. However, cellular phones with radio capabilities and standard cellular phones can help workers save valuable time during the recovery process, as opposed to communication systems that require messages to be relayed through a base unit.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials should be secured prior to a storm, and gasoline pumps should be shut down. Emergency contacts: Have a list of phone numbers you might need in an emergency, including those for the phone and electric companies, sheriff and medical facilities.

Post –Storm Checklist

After the storm, job No. 1 is making sure everyone is accounted for and safe, Oswald says. Then damage assessments and cleanup can begin. “Going back to the personnel assignments before the storm, here is where you should have addressed your order of priorities and damage surveys,” Oswald says. “First and foremost, my list would start with people’s safety, then consider those that would be most immediate hazards, mitigation of secondary hazards and then on to cleanup and recovery.”

Here are a few more recommendations from UF/IFAS:

Activity Checklist

An activity checklist will help ensure that all essential damage assessment and recovery operations are carried out. Additionally, a plan that prioritizes the importance of individual blocks makes grove recovery efficient. With a priority plan, managers can quickly determine where to begin recovery operations.

Employee Call-In

Maintain a current list of employee locations and phone numbers. As soon as it is safe to do so, call in those who will be needed for damage inspection and grove recovery work.

Damage Inspection

If roads are passable, inspection of tree and equipment damage may be conducted from trucks. Since flooding, downed trees and electrical poles may have blocked roads, large growers should consider making prior arrangements for a helicopter or flying service to transport the grove manager to survey grove damage. Aerial surveillance can also determine routes of passage through the grove.

Clear Road Access

Have crews clear all roads leading to parts of the grove where trees must be reset, or other recovery activities must be conducted. Having a clear path for workers will speed up the recovery effort.

Water Removal

Remove excess water from tree root zones as soon as possible. It is essential to accomplish this task within 72 hours to avoid feeder root damage due to insufficient oxygen.

Tree Rehabilitation

Resetting of trees to an upright position should be accomplished as soon as possible after the storm. Ensure that employees know how to properly upright toppled trees and that appropriate equipment is available. Such equipment might include pruning saws, chain saws, front-end loaders, backhoes and shovels. Toppled trees should be pruned back to sound wood. Painting exposed trunks and branches with white latex paint helps prevent sunburn.

Injection Month Affects Fruit Size, Juice Quality & OTC Residues

By Ute Albrecht, Gabriel Pugina, Caroline Tardivo, Jasmine de Freitas and Deived de Carvalho

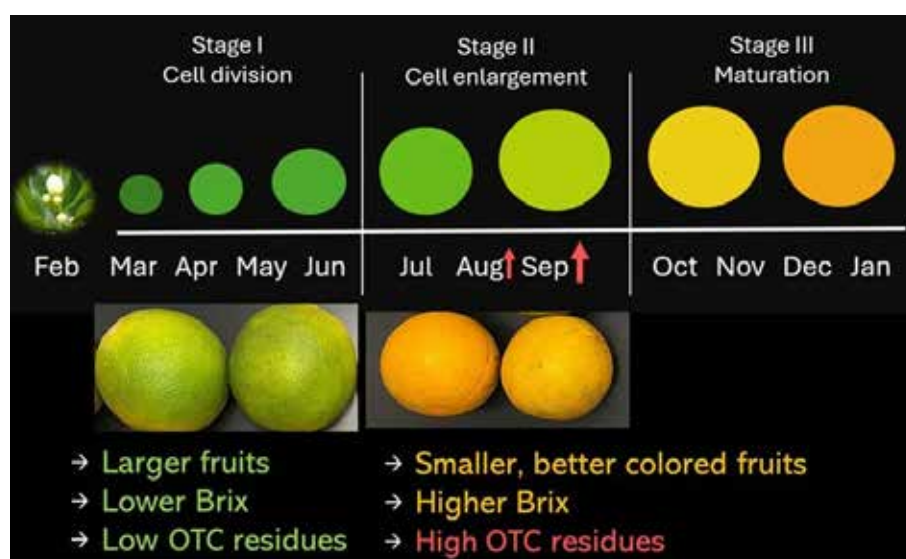
The month during which oxytetracycline (OTC) injections are performed can have a considerable impact on fruit size, juice quality and OTC fruit residues.

Citrus fruit development can be divided into three overlapping stages:

Stage I (cell division), from anthesis to the end of physiological fruitlet abscission (June drop), during which cell division predominates and growth is moderate

Stage II (cell enlargement), from the end of June drop to shortly before fruit color change, during which cells enlarge rapidly, and fruits reach their final size

Stage III (maturation), during which no more growth occurs, and fruits begin a non-climacteric ripening process.



If injections are performed during Stage I, they promote cell division, which increases fruit size. The earlier the injections are performed, the larger the fruits will become. These larger fruits may need a longer maturation time and, if harvested too early, may still be green and contain fewer total soluble solids (have a lower Brix). However, OTC residues will be low as any OTC that has accumulated in the fruitlets will be diluted during cell growth and expansion.

Moreover, earlier injection allows a longer OTC degradation period before harvest, further contributing to residue reduction.

In contrast, if injections are performed during Stage II, they have a lesser impact on fruit size but promote soluble solids accumulation, resulting in a higher Brix. These fruits usually also have a better peel color. The later the injections, the more pronounced this effect will be.

However, injections at the end of Stage II will result in high OTC fruit residues as no more growth occurs, preventing OTC dilution. Specifically, September injections increase OTC residues to above the allowed maximum level (10 parts per billion), even when using a lower OTC rate, and even when maintaining a pre-harvest interval of 180 days. August injections may also result in OTC residues exceeding the allowed level, especially when using a higher OTC rate.

It is therefore recommended to complete all injections by July to maximize Brix while reducing OTC fruit residues. In contrast to fruit and juice quality, the month of injection does not appear to influence yield.

Ute Albrecht is an associate professor, Gabriel Pugina is a Ph.D. candidate, Caroline Tardivo and Deived de Carvalho are postdoctoral research associates, and Jasmine de Freitas is a biological scientist at the UF/IFAS SWFREC

All in For Citrus Podcast Info



During the recent May 2025 **All in For Citrus** podcast, several UF/IFAS researchers shared information that should be of interest to citrus growers.

Tara Wade, a UF/IFAS natural resources economist, shared that she had surveyed growers about their perceptions of the effectiveness of trunk injection of oxytetracycline (OTC) to treat HLB after several seasons of treatments.

Wade said that 80 citrus growers participated in the survey, covering about 28,000 acres (65 growers answered the acreage question). Of the 80 growers surveyed, 79% had applied an OTC treatment.

Eighty-four percent of the growers reported an increase in yields after the treatment, and 87% saw a decrease in fruit drop. Wade said the survey showed other positive results in areas like quality, Brix ratio and pounds solids.

Lauren Diepenbrock, UF/IFAS entomologist, also joined the podcast to talk about her research on a snail (*Bulimulus bonariensis*) that continues to spread across citrus-growing regions. A new study is looking at how far the snails can move in groves. Small tracking devices are attached to the pests. Diepenbrock said she was surprised that the snails could travel further than anticipated.

Her research is evaluating existing snail baits and other treatments to help manage the pest. She is also studying longer-term biological controls that could be applied in groves.

With the recent seasonal rains getting underway, Diepenbrock cautioned growers to be aware of the emergence of diaprepes root weevil. She advised growers to be prepared to take control measures, especially in groves where diaprepes is historically a problem.

The **All In For Citrus** podcast series (*a podcast is produced monthly*) is a partnership between UF/IFAS and AgNet Media. So if you want to hear more from both Wade and Diepenbrock or to check out previous podcasts, you can access the podcasts at: www.citrusindustry.net/allinforcitrus.



New HLB Research Projects

The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) announced May 28 it has invested nearly \$23 million in 14 HLB projects in 2025. The projects seek to find solutions to combat and prevent HLB in citrus. The projects are part of the **Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program**. You can learn more about that program at: www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/emergency-citrus-disease-research-extension-program.

The University of Florida is the only organization to receive multiple awards; it received eight. The awards, by recipient organization, project title and award amount (rounded to the nearest \$100,000), are:

- **Soil Culture Solutions, LLC:** Multiplexing CRISPR-mediated breeding of HLB-resistant citrus varieties targeting *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* effector interactomes using protoplast transfection, \$1.1 million
- **Texas A&M AgriLife Research:** Evaluation of novel aerial root and inarch graft systems for enhancing the delivery of HLB therapies into citrus tree vasculature, \$1.1 million
- **University of California, Davis:** Systems approaches to integrate biology and information technology in improved ACP/HLB dynamics models and regional management tools, \$1 million
- **University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc.:** Evaluation of the risk of HLB in cold-hardy citrus production systems, \$1.1 million
- **University of Florida:** Speed up the release of non-GMO HLB-resistant/tolerant citrus varieties via a multi-tiered decision-making approach, \$6.2 million
- **University of Florida:** Make transgenic citrus lines with robust HLB tolerance available to the citrus industry; \$1.5 million
- **University of Florida:** Guided therapeutic delivery: Improving HLB-affected tree health through physiology-directed volume, timing and location of injection, \$1.5 million
- **University of Florida:** Developing effective strategies to enhance HLB tolerance in susceptible scions by leveraging resilient rootstock genetic resources, \$1.5 million
- **University of Florida:** Development of novel antifeedant insecticides to prevent horizontal transmission of *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* by the Asian citrus psyllid, *Diaphorina citri*, \$1.4 million
- **University of Florida:** Individual protective cover + oxytetracycline = recipe for success?, \$1.2 million
- **University of Florida:** Understand and identify HLB tolerance in citrus and its relatives, \$1.1 million
- **University of Florida:** Rapid selection of HLB resistance genes to fast track citrus variety development, \$1.1 million
- **University of Wisconsin System:** Bringing RejuAgro to market: Development of a groundbreaking trunk injection biopesticide for HLB, \$1.5 million
- **USDA Agricultural Research Service:** Control citrus HLB by using the citrus isolate of Nectarine marafivirus M and its expression system, \$1.5 million

Source: USDA NIFA

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2025 HCCGA Member Directory

We have started preliminary production work on our 2025 Annual Grower & Associate Member Directory. This Directory (*an 8.5 X 11 - 64 page booklet*) serves as a valuable year-round resource guide for our members, Grower and Associate alike.

In late May, we sent a letter via the US Mail to all of our members requesting that they update their contact and biographical information to ensure that it is correct in the 2025 Directory. All members (*especially Associates*) should make sure that they complete and return the contact/bio informational form that was enclosed in that mailing – especially if there have been any changes.

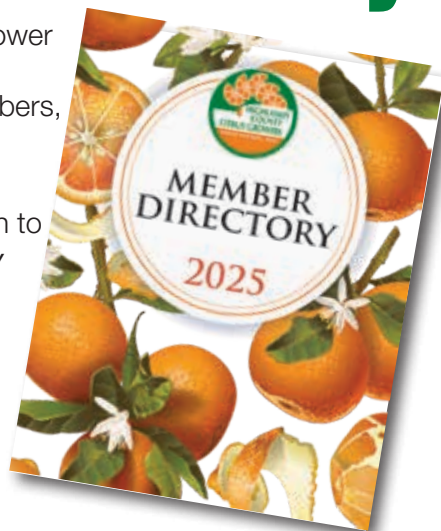
If you did not receive a letter about the Member Directory, please let us know and we will send you a membership update form. Having your up-to-date contact information included in this Directory is a must!

We currently plan to have the 2025 Directory distributed to Association members in late July. This year's Directory will include Association information such as: Grower contact information, Associate Member Bios, Sponsorship Recognitions, Key Industry Contact Info, Board Members & Officers, etc.

Now is also the time for our Associate members to think about taking advantage of the advertising opportunities (*at the same low pricing levels as the past several years*) that this Directory provides. An advertising rate sheet was included in the mailing that all members should have received.

There are several different advertising options available: quarter (\$200.00), half (\$300.00) and full page (\$450.00) black and white ads, and half page (\$400.00) and full page (\$600.00) full color ads.

Contact Ray or Jan at the HCCGA office at (863) 385-8091 or admin@hccga.com if you would like additional information about acquiring an enhanced presence in the 2025 HCCGA Annual Member Directory.



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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FDOC Marketing Plan

The Florida Department of Citrus marketing team on May 21 presented its 2025–26 global marketing plan to the Florida Citrus Commission.

The team stated that it plans to expand on the **True Original Campaign** to reinforce the value of Florida orange juice (OJ) for modern juice consumers and health professionals.

To reach and engage health professionals, the team plans to leverage credentialed health and wellness experts to create awareness as well as drive credibility while amplifying evidence-backed health and nutrition information on 100% OJ. One example was to create a partnership with the American Heart Association to certify a collection of heart-healthy recipes that feature Florida OJ as a key ingredient. To measure these efforts and ensure they're working, a benchmark survey is being implemented, which will help in understanding how the messaging is being received and guide the next steps with this key audience.

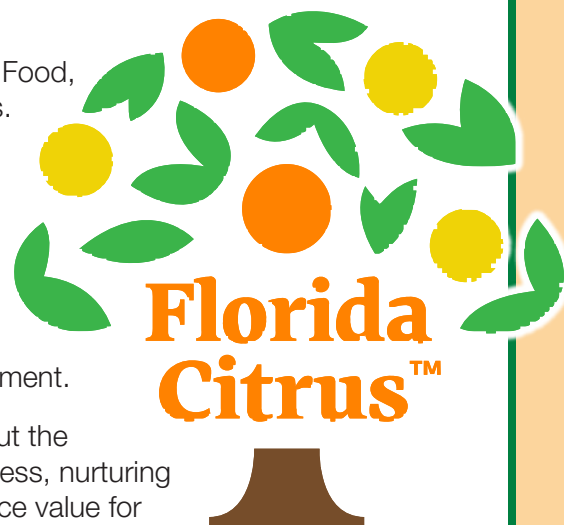
For modern juice consumers, one of the activations proposed for Florida OJ was a partnership with the Tampa Bay Lightning and Amalie Arena. With an estimated 9.2 million Lightning fans nationwide and 1.5 million annual visitors to Amalie arena, the partnership would efficiently drive Florida OJ demand and value. This partnership would include not only hockey games, but also 150-plus ticketed events at Amalie Arena, including concerts.

Another proposed activation was for Florida grapefruit with the Grapefruit League, Major League Baseball's (MLB) spring training games. The Grapefruit League draws more than 37 million MLB fans from around the country during February and March to 230-plus games in 13 Florida stadiums. Similar to the Tampa Bay Lightning/Amalie Arena partnership, the Grapefruit League partnership would include out-of-market team broadcasts to deliver Florida grapefruit key messaging nationwide, not just in Florida.

Other activations recommended include PBS with Ellie's Real Good Food, Homemade (chef-led cooking events) and hosting key media events. These recommendations are a complement to the e-commerce initiatives already in place, which are set to continue into the next fiscal year. Everything within the program is aimed at driving sales and building value or willingness to pay for Florida OJ.

In addition to e-commerce, other always-on programming includes digital advertising, earned and owned media, social media and influencer promotions, search engine marketing and issues management.

The goal is to reach and engage modern juice consumers throughout the entire path to purchase to drive sales. This includes building awareness, nurturing consideration, securing the initial purchase and continuing to reinforce value for repeat purchases.



Source: FDOC



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U.S. Patent Nos. 11,122,752; 11,496,063; 11,497,470; & 11,593,777



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Citrus Research and Field Trials Foundation Update

Supplemental PEP Application

The CRAFT Supplemental PEP (Program for Expedited Propagation) application period recently closed. The CRAFT Board approved 8 additional PEP applications that will add 150 acres in Desoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Polk counties to the PEP new tree planting program. These growers will receive a participation payment of \$6,000 per acre for planting and submitting data on the newly available varieties included in PEP. This data will be available for all growers to evaluate.

ETT Program

The CRAFT Foundation Board of Directors approved amendments to all Existing Tree Therapy (ETT) Round 1, 2, and 3 contracts that revise the contract payment schedule. The amendment allows Participants to be eligible for Payment 3 upon the submission of the data for the harvest year following the second year's approved treatment, which is a year earlier than the current payment schedule. The Board authorized this change to provide participating growers with the final contractual participation payment to assist with their treatment costs.

This change means many Participants will be eligible for their third and final payment this year. For example, a Participant that applied their first treatment in 2023 and that has received their second Payment, may be eligible for the third and final payment following submission of the 2024-2025 harvest year data to CRAFT.

All data submission surveys are available on the CRAFT website Data Entry Page at <https://craftfdn.org/craft-existing-tree-therapies-data-entry>.

There are separate data surveys for each ETT Round. For example, Round 1 contracts will have a 1,000 series number (i.e. ETT-1076) and must submit their data using the Round 1 surveys.



See CRAFT on page 16



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CRAFT, Con't from page 15

The ETT amendments have been mailed and emailed to all participants and were due to be returned by April 30, 2025. If you have not executed and returned your amendments, please do so immediately. The submittal of the third year's treatment and harvest data remains a contractual requirement for all ETT participants. The survey to submit this information will be made available to all participants later this year.

Upcoming CRAFT Programs

CRAFT is closely monitoring this year's legislative session in Tallahassee. Once we have a clearer understanding of available funding, CRAFT will announce program timelines and program rules for the next program year. If you would like the latest CRAFT information, please email Steven Hall at Steven@craftfdn.org to be added to our mailing list.

Growers with any questions or seeking additional information about the CRAFT program are encouraged to contact Executive Director Steven Hall at Steven@craftfdn.org or (863) 333-2931, Assistant Program Manager Tina Buice at Tina@craftfdn.org, or Scientific Coordinator Carisa Keller at Carisa@craftfdn.org.

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Highlands County Ag Deputies

Highlands County Sheriff Paul Blackman has put together a very robust agricultural deputy program that focuses on Ag related issues and crimes. Remember to **always** report any crime, large or small, that impacts your Ag operation as it may be part of a pattern of similar offenses. In addition to utilizing the 911 system, you can also contact any of the deputies or Ag unit leadership below.

Major Darin Hood

863-381-2082

dhod@highlandssheriff.org

Captain John Barcinas

863-443-2142

jbarcinas@highlandssheriff.org

Lieutenant Scott Williams

863-443-3179

swilliams@highlandssheriff.org

Deputy Charley Peck

863-381-3273

cpeck@highlandssheriff.org

Deputy Coleman O'Gara

813-365-0133

cogara@highlandssheriff.org

Deputy Jeff Turner

863-214-6227

jturner@highlandssheriff.org

Deputy Tyler Bumby

863-399-2509

tbumby@highlandssheriff.org

Deputy Rob Gunthorp

863-214-5413

rgunthorp@highlandssheriff.org



Citrus Fun Shoot at Quail Creek

December 6th

Preliminary planning the **2025 HCCGA Citrus Sporting Clays Fun Shoot** will get under way in the coming months. While our Fun Shoot has continued to evolve over the past 28 plus years, some things remain the same for us – providing a great opportunity for fellowship with others within our industry and greater agricultural community, fun shooting, great food and some fabulous green bird station and raffle prizes.

So save the date, **Saturday December 6th**, on your calendar for our 28th Annual Citrus Fun Shoot and Prime Rib & Seafood luncheon extravaganza. The Citrus Fun Shoot will once again take place at **Quail Creek Sporting Ranch**, a full service world class shooting destination located just north of Okeechobee, this year. If you want more information about Quail Creek, check out their website at: <https://quailcreeksportingranch.com>.

We will soon start the process of getting our event's Title Sponsors into place in order to finalize our shoot flier and get it out to our members and the public by late summer for shoot registration commencement. While we expect that most of last year's major sponsors will re-up for this year – just about every year once the flier comes out, some associate member inevitably says *"boy I wish I could have been a major sponsor of the shoot"*.

If you are potentially interested in being one of our Title Sponsors (a \$1,500.00 investment includes placement for 8 shooters, use of one shooting cart and a lot of great PR), get with Ray or Jan at the HCCGA office ASAP for more details.

Look forward to seeing many of you at **Quail Creek Sporting Ranch** on **Saturday, December 6th**!



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stacey.howell@bayercropscience.com
Web: <http://www.bayercropscience.com>

Farm TEAM Card

Just a reminder to take 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 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.



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Citrus BMP Manual

Earlier this year a new Citrus BMP Manual replaced the 2012 Citrus Manual reflecting advancements in agricultural science, water quality research and on-the-ground practices. The practices were developed by the FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, UF/IFAS and industry experts.

The good news is that producers do not need to take any action in regards to the change in BMP manuals at this time. You will only be asked to “re-enroll” in the BMP program at the time of a site audit visit, or if you participate in a cost share program.

The citrus manual will help producers improve water quality while maintaining productivity and economic viability. Categories contained in the BMP include: Nutrient Management, Irrigation Management and Water Resource Protection. The Citrus BMP Manual can be accessed at: <https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/25410/file/Florida-Citrus-Operations-2024-Edition-Water-Quality-and-Water-Quantity-Best-Management-Practices.pdf>

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Citrus Soil and Leaf Sampling

We will soon be approaching the optimum time of the year (*July-September*) to collect citrus soil and leaf samples for analysis. Soil and leaf sampling is a key component to the evaluation of a citrus nutrition program **AND** the Citrus BMP record keeping and documentation that is required today. Annual sampling, and its subsequent analysis, will provide you a good idea of the nutritional trends that have been occurring within specific grove blocs from year to year. ***Remember to retain records for all soil and leaf analysis results.***

Select representative trees from each grove bloc that you intend to manage nutritionally the same. Typically 15 to 20 trees are selected within a grove bloc for sampling and collect your leaf and soil samples from these trees. You can reduce the year to year variability in interpreting your analysis results by some degree by utilizing samples from the same trees from one year to the next. With the availability of affordable GPS technology nowadays, from a portable unit in your truck to most smart phones, the opportunity to utilize it in order to sample the same areas (trees) year after year should be taken advantage of.

Soil analysis can provide very specific information that you can use in your nutritional program decision-making. This information includes soil pH, phosphorous, calcium, magnesium and copper (*if you specifically request the copper analysis*).

From these 15 to 20 trees, take a single soil core of an 8 inch depth from within the irrigation pattern of each tree. Place the sampling cores in a clean nonmetal bucket for collection. When you have collected all the necessary cores from a production bloc -thoroughly mix the sample cores together. Take approximately one pint of the soil from the mixed sample for analysis.

Also, don't forget that not all soil testing laboratories use the same extraction procedures to determine soil nutrient levels. UF/IFAS recommends utilizing the Mehlich 3 extraction method. You may even want to consider sending samples from the same "bucket" to differing labs to compare results. Make sure if you change soil testing labs from one year to the next, or utilize different extraction methodologies, that you understand how to properly interpret the results and appropriate tables.

Leaf analysis can be utilized for all essential elements including those determined in the soil analysis. As mentioned above, leaf samples can, and should be, collected from the same trees as the soil samples. One hundred healthy, and representative, leaves from the 15 to 20 trees should be collected. These leaves should be 4 to 6 months old from non-fruiting twigs. This time frame will generally be between the months of July to September. In handling the leaf samples, keep the collected leaves out of the heat. If they cannot be sent out immediately, place in a refrigerator for overnight storage.

For macronutrient analysis, the leaves need not be washed. If micronutrient analysis is desired, then the leaves will need to be washed well to remove surface contamination. Washing of leaves can be done by soaking the leaves in a mild detergent solution and rubbing them between your thumb and forefinger. The washing of leaves should be done as soon as possible after collection. Some micronutrients are exceedingly difficult to remove (copper, manganese and zinc) through surface washing. This should serve as a reminder that it may be exceedingly difficult to make judgments utilizing leaf analysis if you are applying frequent nutritional sprays



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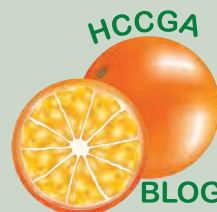
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New IPC Options

Following a trip to Brazil, Riley McKenna and Trevor Murphy decided to explore IPC options for Florida growers. The result is a larger bag, which will provide protection for resets for up to 3 years at an economical price. They are looking for fellow growers who are resetting with IPCs to coordinate on orders for bulk savings. Please contact Riley at 863-214-7918 or Trevor at 863-443-1847 for more information.



The tree on the right was in an IPC 6 months longer than the tree on the left.



New IPCs are 40inx40inx6ft



Traditional IPC vs larger IPC

This message is a paid advertisement, and should not be interpreted as an endorsement by the Highlands County Citrus Growers Association (HCCGA). The information, opinions and/or views presented by HCCGA for the advertiser is for informational purposes only and should not be taken as an Association recommendation, approval, or endorsement of any product, service, or idea.

Informational Websites



FDOC Grower Website

The Florida Department of Citrus website at: www.FDOCGrower.com. is in place to provide growers with relevant information about the citrus industry. FDOC Grower features timely information about economic and market research, scientific updates, marketing activities and Florida Citrus Commission meetings in an easy-to-navigate format.

2022-2023 Florida Citrus Production Guides

The 2022-2023 Florida Citrus Production Guides are available online (with printable sections) at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cg101>.

HLB Nutrient Management Web Site

Some HLB nutrient management information to accompany the HLB Guidance document has been put on the CREC website at: <http://www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/greening/index.shtml>.

CREC Citrus Industry Update

The UF/IFAS Citrus Industry Update can be found on the CREC website: www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu. These informational newsletters can be located in the publications area. Growers that would like to be added to the e-mail distribution list can do so by contacting the CREC staff at: cankergreeningupdates@crec.ifas.ufl.edu.

Black Spot Info

Information about citrus black spot is available on the Lake Alfred CREC website at: www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/black_spot/citrus_black_spot.htm

Citrus Research & Education Center Lake Alfred

www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu.

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>

South Florida Water Management District

www.sfwmd.gov.

Safe Fruits & Veggies Website

The Alliance for Food and Farming (AFF) was formed in 1989 to represent farmers of fruit and vegetables. The information on their website linked below was developed in conjunction with experts in the fields of toxicology, risk analysis, nutrition, health and farming to demonstrate how safe the food supply raised by Americans farmers is for the consuming public. You should consider utilizing facts and videos from this website in social media posts to help promote agricultural products to the general public. <https://www.safefruitsandveggies.com>

CRDF Website

The Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) has a renovated website designed to make it easier for users to find information on research projects. For the latest in cutting edge citrus disease research information: www.citrusrdf.org.

Research Updates Website

There is a website that provides a venue where you can check on all ongoing citrus related research. Each research project has a brief synopsis of what is happening so far, who is funding it, who the researchers are, etc. The site also provides a wide range of other updated information from UF/IFAS. So check out <http://citrusresearch.ifas.ufl.edu>.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com>

University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

www.ifas.ufl.edu.

Indian River Research and Education Center, Ft. Pierce

<http://irrec.ifas.ufl.edu>.

United States Horticultural Research Laboratory, Ft. Pierce

http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=66-18-00-00

Florida Citrus Extension Agents Web Site

This web site: <http://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu> has been developed to help growers' access information from around the citrus industry. You are able to read their citrus newsletters, learn about scheduled meetings, and disseminate information across the citrus industry.

Highlands County Extension Web Site

This web site: <http://highlands.ifas.ufl.edu> was developed and is managed right here in Highlands County. It contains a wealth of information, and links to even more information. You will find local extension citrus meeting announcements, registration information, etc.

IFAS EDIS/IFAS Solutions for Life sites

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> and <http://solutionsforyourlife.com>, for a plethora of information on citrus and other types of agriculture.

Soil and Leaf Tissue Testing

Information about techniques associated with soil and leaf tissue testing at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss531>.

Citrus Nutrition

For information on citrus nutrition, you can consult "Nutrition of Florida Citrus Trees" by Drs. Obreza and Morgan. The entire publication can be viewed at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss478>.

FDOC Greening Research Updates

The latest greening research information can be viewed online at: <http://www.floridacitrus.org/oj/?s=greening>

FASS Reports

Florida Agricultural Statistics Service (FASS) Reports. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/.

USDA Citrus Crop Update Website

The USDA adjusts the citrus crop estimate on a monthly basis. Get the latest citrus crop estimate updates at: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/Citrus/index

Southeast AgNet

Daily Ag news posts, audio clips and updates, including citrus news, from the state's only farm broadcast service. They Tweet and provide RSS feeds too. www.southeastagnet.com

Citrus Industry Magazine has been a grower and industry favorite for 90 years. CEU Credit articles are now available on-line here with several scheduled to appear throughout the year. www.citrusindustry.net.

Low Volume Spray Application Techniques

Information from the Low Volume Spray Program series can be found online at: http://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/events/PDF/LowVolumeApplication/LVA_program.htm The information includes currently labeled products for low volume application (2-5 gallons per acre), worker safety, application considerations and factors affecting application success.

SWFWMD Permit Info

You can search for SWFWMD pending permits (by application number, project name, or by county) or sign up for electronic notification of application requests at <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us>. Click on the E-Permitting link on the Features List. Click the following link for access: <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/permits/>

OSHA's Agricultural Website

This link is to OSHA's agricultural web page. <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/agriculturaloperations/index.html>

Florida Citrus Mutual

<http://flcitrusmutual.com>.

Florida Farm Bureau

www.floridafarmbureau.org.

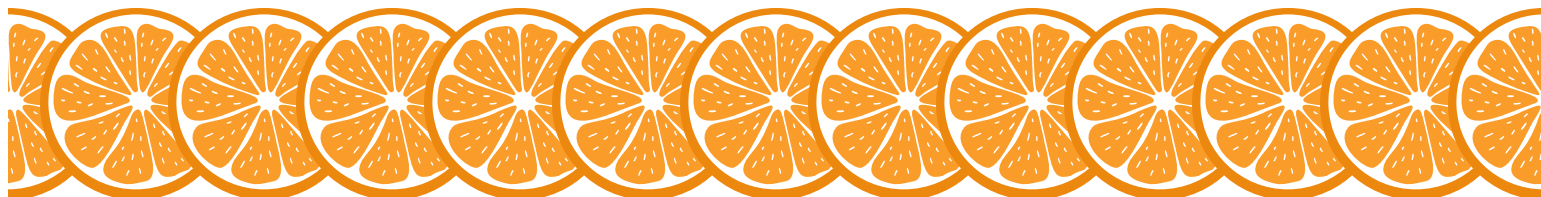
FAWN

The Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN) can be accessed on the web at: <http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu>

Weather Underground

www.wunderground.com

Citrus Industry Magazine



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Southridge Citrus Nursery, Inc.
Stallings Crop Insurance Corporation
SunRidge Harvesting Company
SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzler Real Estate
Syngenta
Taylor Oil Company, Inc.
Tessenderlo Kerley, Inc.
The Avanti Company
The Story Companies
Tim Hurner
Trademark Nitrogen
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Tree Defender
Triangle Chemical Co.
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Tropicana Products, Inc.
Valent
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Cutting Edge Nutrition & Crop Protection for Trees Impacted by Citrus HLB

BRANDT, a leading provider of specialty inputs, offers a wide range of proprietary nutrition and crop protection products. The following products are recommended to help treat trees that have been impacted by Citrus HLB.

Spring Pre-Bloom through Post-Bloom Sprays:

Foliar Feed with Boron, Calcium and Magnesium

- **BRANDT® Manni-Plex® Cal-Mag** - high efficiency foliar calcium/magnesium
- **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

*For more information, contact J.R. Gough at
Jr.Gough@brandt.co or 863 781 0363*

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