



March 23, 2020

Welcome to SWFREC Update E-news! This newsletter is distributed biweekly and contains news about the center and its faculty and staff, program research updates, and upcoming events.

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### **Coronavirus Prompts Cancellations**

Per UF/IFAS administration request, in view of the precautions required to contain Coronavirus (COVID-19), the center has canceled all extension programs through the end of April and is operating with limited staff personnel. If you need to speak to a member of our faculty or staff, please call 239-658-3400, and we will do our best to put you in touch with that person or send them a message asking that they call you back. You can also email our faculty and staff from our web site: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

We strive to be prudent and provide the best service possible and keep you and our staff safe during this uncertain time, but our grower clientele remain our top priority.

**One seminar that will be presented solely via videoconference is tomorrow's (March 24, 10am-12pm) Vegetable Grower Meeting: Focus on Soil Fertility.** The link to access this workshop online is: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/109265507>. If you plan to participate, please e-mail Gene McAvoy ([gmcavoy@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:gmcavoy@ifas.ufl.edu)), associate director of stakeholder relations, to ensure proper CEU and CCA credit will be applied. There is a possibility that future seminars may be presented via videoconference. We will keep you posted on this effort.

#### **Among SWFREC postponements and cancellations:**

- Presentations by the remaining two candidates for the UF/IFAS Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources position. Dr. Paul Patterson, Dean, College of Agriculture, and Director, Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, Auburn University, and Dr. Scott Angle, Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, will present on dates that have yet to be announced. To see CVs of the candidates, click here and scroll down to "Candidate Details": <https://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/talent-search/vice-president-for-ifas/>.
- Certified Crop Advisor Workshop--April 8, 2020, SWFREC
- Florida Citrus Growers' Institute--April 14, 2020, Avon Park
- SWFREC Citrus Advisory Committee Meeting—April 17, SWFREC
- SWFREC Vegetable Advisory Committee Meeting—April 21, SWFREC
- Beyond Basic Produce Safety: A Hands-on Analysis--April 23, Naples
- Build Your Own Farm Food Safety Plan--April 24, Naples
- Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training--April 28, Naples
- SWFREC Foundation Board Meeting—April 28, SWFREC
- 30th Annual Farm Safety Day--May 1 & 2, SWFREC

#### **Graduate Student Residence Progress**

Since ground broke on the construction project to build a new residence at SWFREC for master's and Ph.D. graduate students, progress is coming along. Concrete was poured this past Friday. The new facility, which will house eight students, is expected to be completed in a few months and will be named the Philip A. Stansly Graduate Student Residence after the former SWFREC entomologist.





### **Graduate Student Becomes Chair**

Ph.D. student Clayton Nevins has been named chair of the overall graduate student committee for the combined American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America. His committee chair is soil microbiologist Dr. Sarah Strauss.

### **Pest of the Month Column**

SWFREC associate director of stakeholder relations Gene McAvoy writes a regular column in Florida Grower magazine called “Pest of the Month.” The March issue includes his article “**Cuban Pepper Weevil**” and includes information about identification, spread, and management of this pest. To see the full story, click here:

<https://www.growingproduce.com/vegetables/beware-of-cuban-pepper-weevil-in-your-crops/>.

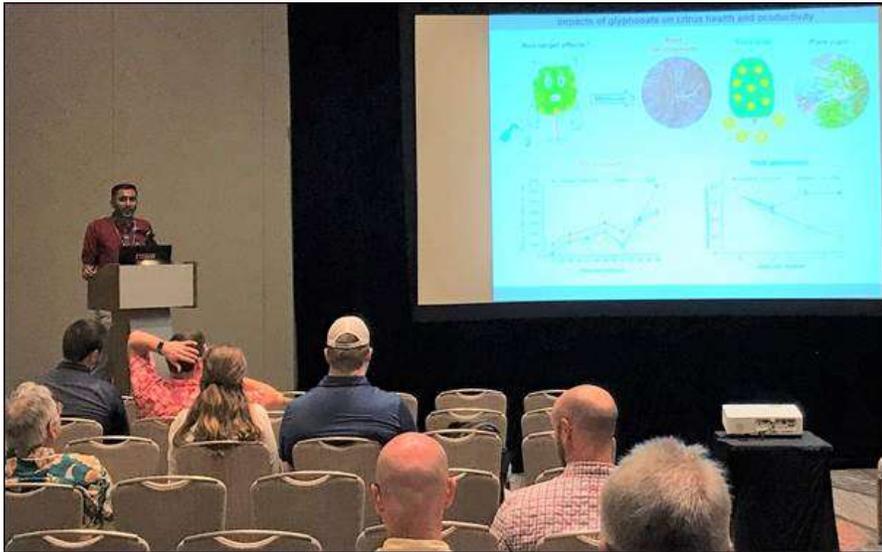
### **Spotlight on: Greening Battle**

UF/IFAS researchers, led by SWFREC plant pathologist Dr. Ozgur Batuman, are investigating the possibility that viruses that live inside the digestive system of the Asian citrus psyllid, the insect that transmits citrus greening disease, might actually weaken or kill the insects. And media outlets are promoting the story:

- An article was published on the web site Americafruit, which provides news and insight for North America’s fresh produce buyers. To read Carl Collen’s article, “Citrus Greening Fight Goes on...Scientists in Florida are working towards a New Method to Help Control the Asian citrus psyllid,” click here:  
<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/181088/citrus-greening-fight-goes-on-1>.
- “University of Florida Researchers Study Ways to combat Citrus Greening” appears on the WINK-TV news web site. Reporter Stephanie Byrne interviewed Dr. Batuman and Jim Snively with Southern Gardens Citrus for the report. To watch and read her story, click here: <https://www.winknews.com/2020/03/13/university-of-florida-researchers-study-ways-to-combat-citrus-greening/>.

## Program Represented at Conference

Weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery and his master's student Biwek Gairhe made presentations at the Weed Science Society of America 2020 Annual Conference earlier this month in Maui, Hawaii. Gairhe (photo below) presented **"Impacts of Glyphosate on Citrus Health and**



**Productivity"** and Kanissery presented **"Novel Weed Management Tools for Horticulture Production in Florida."** Gairhe was also recognized as the only graduate student from the University of Florida who received a travel grant from the society to attend the conference.

## Faculty Give Extension Talks

- Entomologist Dr. Jawwad Qureshi gave a talk recently to the Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit Club. His talk was **"Managing Asian Citrus Psyllid in Urban Environment and Commercial Groves."**
- Soil microbiologist Dr. Sarah Strauss gave a talk this month to UF/IFAS Broward County Master Gardeners as part of a train the trainer workshop series. The title of her talk was **"Soil Microbiology and Soil Health."**

## Peer-reviewed Publications

SWFREC faculty and staff members have had refereed journal articles published recently:

- Ag and biological engineer Dr. Sanjay Shukla is second author of the article **"Valorization of Farm Pond Biomass as Fertilizer for Reducing Basin-scale Phosphorus Losses."** The article appears in the June 2020 issue (volume 720) of the journal Science of the Total Environment. To read the article, click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/water-resources/2020-720-Shukla-Science-total-Environment.pdf>.
- Precision ag engineer Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis and postdoctoral research associate Dr. Jaafar Abdulridha are second and third authors, respectively, of the article **"The Basis for Development of a Foundational Biomarker Reflectance Signature Database System for Plant Cell Identification, Disease Detection, and Classification Purposes."** The article was included in the proceedings of the 2020 10th Annual computing and Communication Workshop and Conference in January in Las Vegas, Nevada. To read the article, click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/precision-ag-eng/2020-Ampatzidis-IEEE.pdf>.

- Dr. Ampatzidis is also third author on a paper written with visiting research scholars Lucas Costa and Leon Nunes titled “**A New Visible Band Index (vNDVI) for Estimating NDVI Values on RGB Images Utilizing Genetic Algorithms.**” It appears in the May 2020 issue (volume 172) of the journal Computers and Electronics in Agriculture. To read the article, click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/precision-ag-eng/2020-172-Ampatzidis-Computers-Electronics-Agriculture.pdf>.

### **Notice: Possible Graft Incompatibility**

Recently, some apparent graft compatibility issues affecting the new citrus rootstock US-1283 and particular scions were noticed. To read a brief statement about this, click here:

[https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/plant-physiology/2020-02-14-Albrecht Notice-possible-graft-incompatibility.pdf](https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/plant-physiology/2020-02-14-Albrecht%20Notice-possible-graft-incompatibility.pdf). For further information, contact SWFREC plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht ([ualbrecht@ufl.edu](mailto:ualbrecht@ufl.edu)) or Dr. Kim Bowman ([Kim.bowman@usda.gov](mailto:Kim.bowman@usda.gov)), research geneticist with USDA ARS in Fort Pierce.

### **Operation Clean Sweep**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services announces the 2019-2020 Operation Clean Sweep program, a mobile pesticide collection effort that provides a safe way to dispose of cancelled, suspended, and unusable pesticides. The free service is available to farms/groves, greenhouses, nurseries, golf courses, and pest control entities. For more information, including how to sign up, click here: <https://floridadep.gov/waste/permitting-compliance-assistance/content/operation-cleansweep-pesticides>.

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