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February 09, 2021

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

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Spotlight on . . . SWFREC Faculty Tackle HLB via New Grants

Four SWFREC faculty members are among UF/IFAS researchers who are set to embark on new projects targeting Huanglongbing (HLB), or citrus greening disease, with grant funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

In its award announcement, NIFA stated that its Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension program “brings the nation’s top scientists together to tackle this problem. This research is critical to help farmers find scientifically sound solutions to citrus greening so they can continue to grow citrus crops in a financially sustainable way. We hope this latest round of grant support moves us closer to a viable solution.”

To read the article, click [here](#).



IFAS Leader Column Touts Economists' Research

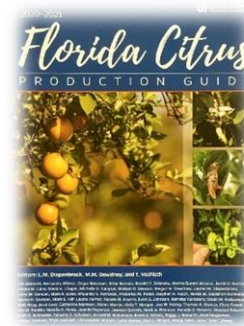
In an article special to the Fort Myers News-Press in late December, new UF/IFAS Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources Dr. Scott Angle highlighted research being conducted by several UF/IFAS economists, including SWFREC ag economist Dr. Kimberly Morgan and natural resource economist Dr. Tara Wade.

In the article, “Guest Opinion: The Science of Why You Buy in Southwest Florida,” Angle writes that Dr. Morgan “researches what we put into our (grocery) carts and why. She probes whether you even want to know whether (produce) is gluten-free, non-GMO, organic, local, or low-cal. Morgan discovers what people want.” About Dr. Wade, he writes “she works on issues such as the costs and benefits for farmers who invest in equipment and techniques that reduce the impact of their operations on the environment.”

To read the full column, click here: [2020-12-30-KiMorgan-News-Press.pdf](#)

New Handbooks Available

The 2020–2021 Vegetable Production Handbook of Florida and the 2020-2021 Florida Citrus Production Guide are now available! To pick up a copy, visit SWFREC (please knock on the front doors) and the UF/IFAS Hendry County Extension office, 1085 Pratt Blvd., LaBelle, FL 33935, Office: (863) 674-4092. The books will also be available at any future in-person meetings and workshops.



In addition to the hard copies, the handbooks are available online (with printable sections): vegetable <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cv292> and citrus <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cg101>.

Faculty Present In-service Training

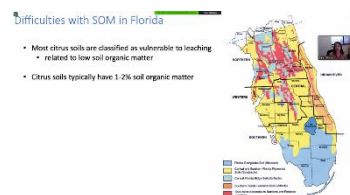
Three SWFREC faculty made presentations during a recent virtual UF/IFAS Extension in-service training titled Beneath the Citrus Canopy: Weeds, Roots, and Microbes:

- Soil microbiologist Dr. Sarah Strauss presented **“Building Healthy Soils for Citrus,”** which highlighted the benefits of a healthy soil environment for crop production.

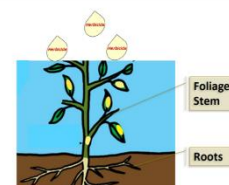


- Plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht presented **“The Importance of Rootstocks for Florida Citrus Production,”** which focused on the history of Florida citrus rootstocks and methods of propagation.

- Weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery presented **“Weed Identification and Herbicide Phytotoxicity Diagnosis in Citrus”** and **“Understanding Effective and Tree-safe Weed Management in Citrus,”** which targeted weed identification and effective weed management.



Herbicide phytotoxicity diagnosis – basic clues



McAvoy Makes Invited Talks



Associate director for stakeholder relations Gene McAvoy made two presentations in January. **“Overview of Florida Agriculture and the Future of Florida Agriculture”** was presented at South Florida Community College in Avon Park. The talk was part of the school’s Lifetime Learners Institute, which provides non-credit, educational, short-term sessions that foster the exchange of ideas and experiences in a collegiate setting. And **“The Florida Gardener: Tips and Tricks from Agricultural Specialist Gene McAvoy”** was presented virtually as part of a Rutgers University alumni educational program. McAvoy earned both his bachelor and master’s degrees in horticulture from Rutgers.

To see the presentation, click here: <https://youtu.be/ekJhXrh7RGk>.

Faculty Wins Alumni Award

SWFREC ag and biological Engineer Dr. Sanjay Shukla won the Distinguished Alumnus Award from his alma mater, Virginia Tech University. The award is presented to an alumni for domestic and global contributions in the area of agriculture and life sciences as well as leadership and service to Virginia Tech. The virtual ceremony took place in November 2020.



Graduate Students Gain Honors



Ph.D. student Miurel Brewer won second place in the best poster contest during the Southern Weed Society annual virtual meeting at the end of January. The title of her poster was **“Exploring the Use of Cover Crops for Suppressing Weeds in Florida’s Citrus (*Citrus sinensis*) Orchards.”** Miurel’s committee chair is weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery.



Ph.D. student Clayton Nevins is the 2021 recipient of the Wilbur Ellis Graduate Scholarship from the Foundation of Environmental Agriculture Education. The honor, which includes a \$2,000 award, is presented annually to one graduate student nationwide who is pursuing a degree in a major or discipline closely aligned to crop production. Clayton studies under the leadership of SWFREC soil microbiologist Dr. Sarah Strauss.

Job Update for Former SWFREC Employee

Former SWFREC post-doctoral research associate Dr. Rajendra Sishodia, who worked with ag and biological engineer Dr. Sanjay Shukla, is now the water resources assessment program manager for the Broward County Environmental Protection and Growth Management Department. His specific responsibilities include oversight of the county’s hydrologic modeling efforts related to integrated management of surface and ground water resources under various stressors, such as climate change and sea level rise. Congratulations, Dr. Sishodia!

Refereed Journal Articles

- The article **“Horticultural Attributes and Root Architectures of Field-grown ‘Valencia’ Trees Grafted on Different Rootstocks Propagated by Seed, Cuttings, and Tissue Culture”** has been published on the HortScience journal web site (Volume 56, #2, pp. 163-172). Master’s student Sameer Pokhrel, biological scientist Bo Meyering, and plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht are first, second, and fourth authors, respectively. To read the article, click here: <https://journals.ashs.org/hortsci/view/journals/hortsci/56/2/article-p163.xml>.
- The article **“Interplay between Abscisic Acid and Gibberellins, as Related to Ethylene and Sugars, in Regulating Maturation of Non-climacteric Fruit”** has been published on the International Journal of Molecular Sciences web site (Volume 22, #3, p. 669). Citrus horticulturist Dr. Fernando Alferez and Ph.D. student Daniel Boakye are first and third authors, respectively. To read the article, click here: [IJMS | Free Full-Text | Interplay between Abscisic Acid and Gibberellins, as Related to Ethylene and Sugars, in Regulating Maturation of Non-Climacteric Fruit \(mdpi.com\)](#).

Trade Journal Articles

- Entomologist Dr. Jawwad Qureshi authored **“Dormant Sprays for Asian Citrus Psyllid Management”** in the January issue of Citrus Industry magazine. To read the article, which was part of a special issue called “Keeping Pests under Control,” click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/entomology/2021-01-Qureshi-Citrus-Industry.pdf>.
- Weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery authored **“Compost Use and Weed Management”** on the Citrus Industry News web site. To read the article, click here: [Compost Use and Weed Management - Citrus Industry Magazine](#).
- In the January issue of Vegetable and Specialty Crop News, SWFREC faculty authored two articles: **“Enterprise Planning Budgets for Growers”** by ag economist Dr. Kimberly Morgan and ag resource economist Dr. Tara Wade (see article here: [Enterprise Planning Budgets for Growers - VSC NEWS](#)) and **“Imperfect Competition Yields Profitable Market Opportunities”** by Dr. Kimberly Morgan and Jessica Ryals, sustainable ag and food systems agent with the UF/IFAS Collier County Extension Service (see article here: [Imperfect Competition Yields Profitable Market Opportunities - VSC NEWS](#)).

SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh

SWFL Direct to Market Producers can now list their business profile on the SWFL Fresh web site. "SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh" is a brand created by UF/IFAS Extension and the SWFL Regional Planning Council to connect consumers with local producers. If you are a producer selling any direct to market or local sold products, create your profile by clicking the website and scrolling down to "Producers Register Now!": www.swflfresh.com. For more information or to be involved in future development of this brand, contact Jessica Ryals, food systems agent, UF/IFAS Collier County Extension, Naples, at jessicaryals@ufl.edu.



Extension Publications Provide Virus Info

To read articles written by UF/IFAS faculty and staff about the Coronavirus, you can visit the Electronic Data Information Source here: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_covid19.

Upcoming Events

February 16, 10am-12:30pm

Citrus Squeezer Seminar—Zoom only

Please note: This event will include a seminar portion followed by a grower panel discussion

Dr. Fernando Alferez, UF/IFAS SWFREC

Unraveling mechanisms of HLB-associated fruit drop. Dr. Alferez show how understanding physiology associated with fruit drop on HLB-affected trees is allowing to assay new tools to control it and improve yield.

Dr. Tripti Vashisth, UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred

What do we know about HLB-associated preharvest fruit drop? Dr. Vashisth will focus on understanding the cause of preharvest fruit drop, new information on what causes preharvest fruit drop, and possible strategies to mitigate fruit drop.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEkcuqrT4tHtXGwmz0pg3VBBCsxALgu271>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

February 25, time TBD

Vegetable Growers Meeting—Zoom only

Sweet corn and snap bean management

Registration info to come

March 23, 10-11am

Citrus Squeezer Seminar—Zoom only

Working program: BMP use and the future of water resources

Scheduled speakers: Dr. Tara Wade, ag resource economist, UF/IFAS SWFREC, and Dr. Tatiana Borisova, water and policy economist, UF/IFAS Food and Resource Economics Department, Gainesville

Registration info coming soon.

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