



# The Blueberry News

Official Newsletter of the Florida Blueberry Growers' Association

## Fall Issue, 2005

Fall Issue, 2005, September, 2005

Editor: Jeff Williamson

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**Fall Blueberry Short Course**  
**Polk County Ag. Center**  
**Building 1710 Stuart Center**  
**1710 Hwy 17 South, Bartow, Fla.**

**Tuesday, November 1, 2005**

**5:00 p.m. Late (on-site) registration** - (preregistration required for dinner).

**5:30 p.m. Dinner** - Compliments of Mr. Ken Patterson, Island Grove Ag. Products, and Mr. Ken Elixson, Elixson Wood Products, Inc. Both have

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web sites listed in the Products and Services Section of this newsletter.

**6:15 p.m. FBGA Business Meeting** - Mr. Joe Keel, FBGA president and grower, Plant City, Fla.

**6:30 p.m. Welcome** - Mr. Chris Oswalt, extension agent, Polk County Extension Service, University of Florida, Bartow, Fla.

**6:45 p.m. Current status and future trends of the blueberry industry: a regional and international perspective** - Mr. Ken Patterson, IGAP, Island Grove, Fla.

**7:10 p.m. Southern highbush blueberry varieties in Florida and Australia** - Dr. Paul Lyrene, blueberry breeder, Horticultural Sciences Dept., University of Florida, Gainesville.

**7:30 p.m. Blueberry leaf disease identification and control** - Dr. Phil Harmon, extension plant pathologist, Dept. of Plant Pathology, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville.

**7:50 p.m. -Dispersion behavior and injury caused by flower thrips in early season blueberries** - Dr. Oscar Liburd, extension entomologist, Dept. of Entomology and Nematology, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**8:10 p.m. - Insurance for Florida blueberries** - Mr. Lenwood Hollister and Mr. Fred Simmons, Carden and Associates, Winter Haven, Fla.,

**8:25 p.m. Blueberry research update and comments on Dormex** - Dr. Jeff Williamson, extension horticulturist, Horticultural Sciences Dept., University of Florida, Gainesville.

**8:45 - Adjourn**

### **More Information About the Meeting**

Admission to the meeting is free. However, FBGA will be accepting new memberships and collecting membership dues from those who have not paid for 2005.

Preregistration is required to receive a free dinner at the meeting. You may register at the door, but meals are not guaranteed to those who do not preregister. To receive a complimentary dinner, we must receive your preregistration form by **Monday, October 21**.

### **Directions to the Short Course -**

The program will be held at the W.H. Stuart Conference Center which is next door to the Polk County Agricultural Center. If you are traveling north on Hwy 17, the Conference Center will be on the right side of the road just

as you enter Bartow city limits. If you are traveling south on Hwy 17, it will be on your left just before you leave the city limits. Look for the Polk County Agricultural Center sign.

### **Your FBGA Membership**

You can check the status of you membership by using the date printed on your address label. If it is 2004 or less, then you will need to update your membership dues. You may do this at the Fall Short Course, or mail you membership check to the address provided at the back of this newsletter.

### **New Blueberry Book**

Dr. Norm Childers, adjunct professor in our department at the University of Florida, is editing a new book called *The Blueberry*. When completed, this book will be the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information available on blueberries. While the emphasis will be on North American production, blueberry industries in other countries will also be discussed. Dr. Childers has almost finished his editing and hopefully we will be able to take pre-orders for the book at the Fall Short Course.

### **Considerations for the Fall/Winter blueberry season**

*Jeffrey G. Williamson, Horticultural Sciences Dept., UF/IFAS*

Dormex. Growers should soon decide whether or not they will use Dormex and if so how much they will need. Information on placing Dormex orders will be provided at the Fall Short Course. A discussion of use of Dormex on Florida blueberries can be found at <http://www.hos.ufl.edu/>.

This is our departmental Web site. Click on "Extension". Then Click on "Newsletters" and "Blueberry News". Look at the Winter 2002 issue under the "Past Issues" category. Remember that Dormex is a restricted-use pesticide and growers without a certified pesticide applicators license, or without the proper application equipment, may want to make arrangements to have Dormex custom applied by a certified applicator.

Pruning. Compared to many fruit crops, little is known about pruning blueberries. While most blueberry pruning in Florida is done after harvest during the summer, some pruning may be useful during the dormant season. Generally, the type of pruning done on blueberries during the winter is called cane renewal pruning. It is based on the idea that individual canes lose their vigor and become less productive as they age. Older canes (5 to 6 years old or older) are removed from the base of the plants. Usually no more than 2 or 3 old canes are removed from any one bush in any given year. The bush responds by producing more new canes thereby keeping the bush productive. Some crop load adjustment may also be needed during the winter if flower bud set is heavy and for cultivars that tend to produce lots of twiggy growth. This is an area where more research and experience is

needed.

Freeze protection. Virtually all early-season blueberry fields in Florida are subject to late winter or early spring freezes. As we approach the end of the hurricane season, its not too early to begin thinking about winterizing your blueberry farm. I have reproduced a useful list activities below that was taken from an article by Mike Mainland in the **North Carolina Blueberry News, Vol. 7, No. 1.**

1.

Reinstall suction lines and check primers.

2.

Test and service the pumping unit, replace filters and have spare filters available.

3.

Treat diesel tanks for water and algae.

4.

Check lines and sprinklers in the field for leaks and clogged nozzles.

5.

Check water pressure on ends of distant lines.

6.

Make sure roadways around and through the field will withstand traffic at night during irrigation.

7.

Have a high-intensity spotlight ready to plug into the truck to check sprinkler operation.

8.

Make sure drainage in and around fields is adequate.

9.

Put shielded minimum thermometers in cold, average, and warm areas of fields.

10.

Hang some ribbons on trees or poles around fields to detect slight breezes.

11.

Identify a good source of agricultural weather information and watch it closely. Consider subscribing to a weather service that issues freeze warnings.

12.

Consider purchasing a monitor that calls you when the temperature gets low.

13.

Consider purchasing a hand-held wind meter or anemometer to measure wind speed.

14.

Consider purchasing a sling psychrometer to measure wet bulb and dry bulb temperatures, relative humidity, and dew point. An

excellent discussion of these terms and their importance in cold protection can be found at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/CH054>.

15.

Have rain suits and boots available for everyone responsible for checking the irrigation system.

16.

Have wires available to unclog nozzles.

17.

Have tools and replacement parts that are necessary to exchange nozzles and/or sprinklers.

## **New blueberry cultivars from the University of Florida**

Springhigh, Springwide and Abundance are southern highbush cultivars that were recently released by the University of Florida and are suggested for trial in areas where they are thought to be best adapted. Springhigh and Abundance are expected to be best adapted in central and north Florida and in other mild-winter areas where early season blueberries are grown. Springwide is expected to be best adapted in central Florida and in other very low-chill areas where early-season blueberries are produced.

Springhigh produces an upright, vigorous, bush that set numerous flower buds in the fall and is capable of heavy flowering and fruit production. It tends to bloom a few days before Millennia, Sapphire or Emerald, making overhead irrigation important to protect flowers and young fruit from freezes. Leafing is usually adequate but may be improved, especially in central Florida, with Dormex. The berries of Springhigh are as large or larger than berries of Emerald and Jewel, and Springhigh has consistently ripened fruit before Emerald, Jewel, Millennia and Windsor in north-central Florida. Berry firmness, scar and flavor are good but not exceptional. Berries are somewhat dark but are not darker than Duke and color is acceptable for an early season berry.

Abundance was so named because, under good growing conditions, it has the potential to set and produce large crops. The main advantage of Abundance is its very high vigor and yield potential. Fruit do not ripen as early as fruit of some other cultivars. In north-central Florida, berries start ripening about 3 days after Star. Abundance berries are large, about the size of Star, Emerald and Jewel. Berry quality is good and hand harvesting is relatively easy.

Springwide is a new low-chill southern highbush blueberry variety being released by the University of Florida. It is intended for early-season production of blueberries for the fresh market in central Florida or in other very low-chill areas where early season blueberries are produced. Springwide got its name because it ripens early in the spring and has a somewhat spreading bush habit. Springwide berries ripen early. During the

4-year period 1999 through 2002, Springwide averaged 50% ripe at Windsor about 5 days before Star, Windsor, Millennia, Emerald, and Jewel. Berry size for Springwide is large; about like Star. Berry firmness, flavor and picking scar are excellent. Berry color is medium, about like Sharpblue and Windsor. Yield of Springwide is expected to be medium.

All three cultivars root readily from softwood cuttings and grow well in nurseries. Springhigh, Springwide and Abundance are patented cultivars and require propagation licenses. For information on obtaining licenses to propagate these cultivars, contact the Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc., P.O. Box 309, Greenwood, FL 32443. Phone (850) 594-4721.

### **Blueberry Products and Services**

**A-1 plants!** The Doc's Blueberry Nursery. Since 1988, quality Southern Highbush plants at competitive prices. Winter Haven, central Florida. (863) 325-8215. Popular commercial varieties available as liners or 1 gal pots. Call Dave Weber for price and availability. Lic No 47219637.

**Bob's Blueberry Farm and Nursery.** West Pasco County. (727)863-4214 or toll free (888) 654-4214 Year around plant sales, southern highbush blueberry plants, all sizes and varieties, over 40,000 on hand. Call for prices and availability. Plan ahead, have the plants you need when you need them. Lic. no. 47227344.

**Elixson Wood Products, Inc.** Pine bark - shredded, nuggets, or fines available. Ph (904) 964-6649.

**Far Reach Ranch.** Blueberry plants for sale. 30 miles North of Orlando. Jewel, Emerald, Star liners and 1 gal. Call Jerry (352) 516-7428. Lic. No. 47226805.

**Honey Bees for Blueberry Pollination.** We use the Buckfast strain, which pollinates at temperatures 20 cooler than other strains. Bees guaranteed for strength. \$35.00 per hive. Call Robbie Bell home (863) 285-7785; mobile (863) 698-9525.

**Island Grove Ag Products.** Don't buy plants until you've talked with us. We have all varieties including new releases from U of F. We grow specifically for your needs. Lic. no. 47217870. Sheri Brothers at (352) 481-

5558 or berrygirl629@aol.com  
Website [islandgroveagproducts.com](http://islandgroveagproducts.com).

**Jacto Sprayers/Henry Mitchem Equip.** Save time and chemical costs with a Jacto Airblast Sprayer. Jacto is the number one sprayer in the blueberry and nursery industries and has proven itself in helping productivity. For more information or a demonstration, call Kenny Mitchem at (352) 787-4109, Leesburg FL.

**Miller Blueberry Nursery.** 140 Stokes Landing Rd., Palatka, FL 32177, Telephone (386) 325-7373. Let us supply your blueberry plants. All varieties. All sizes. Bare root and potted. Please call for prices. Lic. no. 04720531.

**Mixon Family Farm, Inc.** We have excellent quality blueberry plants for sale. We sell Bare Root or Rooted Cuttings and we have the newest releases from the University of Florida. Call Jerry Mixon (863) 439-8335 for price and availability. License no. 472255191.

## **ADVERTISING INFORMATION**

We welcome advertising from blueberry nurseries and suppliers. The cost is 30 cents per word per issue of the newsletter in which your message appears. Send your blueberry-related message and a check payable to **FLORIDA BLUEBERRY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION** to our address given below under membership information. Advertisements and claims therein to do not constitute an endorsement by the Florida Blueberry Growers' Association or the University of Florida.

## **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

To join or renew your membership to the Florida Blueberry Growers Association, mail a check payable to **FLORIDA BLUEBERRY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION** to our address:

Florida Blueberry Growers' Association  
P.O. Box 163  
Island Grove, FL 32654

**The Association annual dues depend on which membership category**

**you fit best.**

1. Regular Florida Member - \$10.00 per acre of blueberries, except a minimum of \$50.00 and a maximum of \$200.00.
2. Out-of -state member - \$50.00
3. Associate member - \$100.00 (Equipment and chemical companies, etc.)
4. Educational and Research - \$10.00 (University and USDA personnel who do not grow blueberries commercially)

