

SWFREC Update

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 SOUTHWEST FLORIDA RESEARCH
& EDUCATION CENTER



Events Educate and Inform Clientele

A number of educational events at SWFREC during the past month have provided an abundance of information about ongoing research projects to growers, chemical representatives, and other clientele.

More than 60 people attended the Forage/Beef Workshop, an event organized by Dr. Ike Ezenwa, SWFREC's assistant scientist of agronomy. Among numerous topics presented were "State of Cattle Ranching in Florida," "Future Direction of Forage Evaluation," and "Valuing Agricultural Production Beyond the Commodity." Sponsors of the conference were Wolf & Wolf Seeds, Griffin Fertilizer, AGLIME Sales, Inc., Walker Spreader Service, Dow AgroSciences, and DuPont.

The Spring Vegetable Field Day attracted 75-plus participants, who received information about plant pathology, water resources and nutrient management, watermelon pollinization, entomology, and seepage BMP trials. Hendry County Cooperative Extension Director Gene McAvoy organized the outing. BioSafe Systems sponsored lunch for the event and provided a product update.

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In-field stops enable attendees to get up-close looks at current research projects.

Center Director's Corner

The UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC) at Immokalee was established in 1958 as part of the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center and became a full station in 1986. Today, the SWFREC encompasses a 320-acre site where twelve faculty members work in nine discipline areas to assist growers, producers, and homeowners throughout Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties.

The mission of the SWFREC is to supply decision-makers with specific knowledge to sustain and enhance agricultural, human, and natural resources through nationally and internationally recognized research, extension, and teaching programs. Faculty members focus on issues facing growers and decision-makers throughout Southwest Florida, including water quantity and quality issues, the implementation of sound management practices, post-NAFTA economic conditions for agricultural products, and the consolidation and globalization of the citrus industry.

We're proud to serve you as Southwest Florida's gateway to the University of Florida/IFAS.

Christine Waddill

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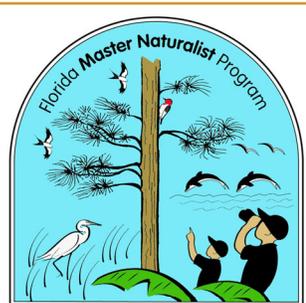
FMNP Tallies Awards

The Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) continues to garner awards and recognition among local, state, and national wildlife organizations and agencies. The most recent honors bestowed upon the program include:

- ◆ 2005 National Wetlands Award (wildlife ecologist Dr. Marty Main was recognized in the Education and Outreach category. He was one of seven wetlands educators honored at the Capitol in Washington, DC).
- ◆ 2005 Florida Wildlife Federation (Dr. Main was named the Conservation Educator of the Year).
- ◆ 2005 University of Florida Golden Gator Awards (Dr. Main, senior biological scientist Ginger Allen, and UF/IFAS video producer Al Williamson received the top award in the Video category for their FMNP Freshwater Wetlands video series).



Dr. Marty Main (center) and Ginger Allen (right) are joined by Al Williamson of the UF/IFAS video crew.



The FMNP, a statewide environmental education program that trains volunteers to teach Florida residents and visitors alike about Florida’s natural landscape, is offered in 47 counties. The program includes curriculum in three modules: Freshwater Wetlands, Coastal Systems, and Upland Habitats. For more information about the FMNP, including a list of course offerings and registration details, check out its web site at <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu>.

Events (Cont. from Page 1)

More than 80 people attended the Invasive Plants and Wildlife Habitat Programs for Landowners Field Day. It featured presentations about such invasives as Brazilian Pepper, Tropical Soda Apples, and Old World Climbing Fern, as well as information about various incentive and restoration programs for landowners. BASF and Dow Agrosiences LLC sponsored the event, which was organized by soil and water scientist Dr. Ed Hanlon and entomologist Dr. Phil Stansly of SWFREC and Tim Regan of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The 15th Annual Southwest Florida Farm Safety Day hosted nearly 140 farm workers and managers from throughout the region for a day of education and fun. Morning sessions addressed safe transporting and storage of pesticides, worker protection standards, food safety and worker hygiene, and hurricane storm preparedness. Following lunch, attendees cheered on their coworkers in a tractor safety rodeo contest. The top three finishers were: 1st Place—Jose Torres, Farm-Op. #2, 2nd Place—Curtis Hicks, Farm-Op. #7, 3rd Place—Pedro Miguel-Ruiz, Immokalee Tomato Growers.

A huge thanks goes out to the Farm Safety Day sponsors: Gold—Collier County Parks and Recreation, Everglades Farm Equipment, and Six L’s Packing Company (Farm-Op, Inc.); Silver—T & M Portable Restrooms, Inc., Bob Paul, Inc., Farm Credit of Southwest Florida, and Bayer CropScience. Additional kudos go to these Immokalee businesses, which donated prizes that were awarded throughout the day: B & L ACE Hardware, EE-TO-LEET-KE Grill at the Seminole Indian Casino, Harvest Café, Lozano’s Mexican Restaurant, Rib City Grill, Sewing by Patrice, Taps Automotive, and Winn-Dixie Supermarket.



Jose Torres of Farm-Op. #2 navigates the course on his way to a top finish in the UF/IFAS Farm Safety Day tractor rodeo contest.

Spotlight On . . . Citrus Horticulture Program

This SWFREC department serves extension and applied research needs for 180,000 acres of commercial plantings in the southwest Florida flatwoods. The department is led by Dr. Bob Rouse, an associate professor of citrus horticulture. He is assisted by biological scientist Lorrie Rigby and agricultural assistant Zoe Shobert.



Dr. Bob Rouse and Mark Terrell examine budwood trees in one of two screenhouses.

Emphasis is placed on cultural practices related to the management of bedded citrus, the integration of production practices for young trees, and early production care. The program also explores the use of perennial peanut as a cover crop for erosion control in flatwoods bedded groves. Such research has led to interest among counties and municipalities in using cover crops along roadways and medians. Commercial interest includes cover crop usage on golf courses, in botanical gardens, and in housing subdivision common areas.

In cooperation with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Department of Plant Industry (DPI), the SWFREC Budwood Foundation serves as a germplasm for the propagation of new citrus trees by nurseries across the state. Two screenhouses, which measure 144' by 88' in size each, protect the SWFREC budwood planting from insect-transmissible pathogens. Dr. Rouse oversees the project with assistance from Mark Terrell, a DPI employee who works fulltime at the SWFREC.

The SWFREC is involved with the Gulf Citrus Growers Association in the development of citrus best management practices (BMPs) for the Gulf Citrus area. Along with growers in the region, several faculty members are assisting in chapter preparation for the BMP manual, and Dr. Rouse is a member of the team writing the pesticide section.

Additional research projects conducted by Dr. Rouse and his staff include evaluating peach and plum selections from the breeding program in Gainesville that are suitable for central and south Florida. These hybrids must be tested locally to determine what types can best grow in south Florida.

"We're having success with this," Dr. Rouse says. "We released a peach variety last year that never could have been released by being evaluated in Gainesville. We evaluated it here in Immokalee, where we need the lowest of the low-chill varieties, and it has been successful. This UFSun variety is the most recent of several varieties adapted for this area that have been released over the past several years."

For more information about the SWFREC Citrus Horticulture Program, contact Dr. Rouse at 239-658-3400 or via e-mail at rer@ifas.ufl.edu.



Low-chill peach trees in bloom at SWFREC.

Upcoming Events

July 28: *Sandland Sugarcane Workshop*. SWFREC. For more information and to RSVP, contact assistant scientist of agronomy Dr. Ike Ezenwa, 239-658-3400.

August 24-25: *Citrus Expo*. 8am-4pm Wednesday, 8am-2pm Thursday, Lee Civic Center, Fort Myers, FL. Free admission to UF/IFAS-sponsored educational seminars and a citrus industry trade show. For more information, phone SWFREC, 239-658-3400.

September 7: *UF/IFAS Tomato Institute*. 9am-3pm, Ritz Carlton Hotel, Naples, FL. Free admission. For more information, contact Dr. Phyllis Gilreath, Manatee County Extension agent, 941-722-4524, ext. 229.

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We're on the Web!

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

SWFREC Staff News

Two SWFREC employees recently completed educational degree programs:

- ◆ Barbara Hyman earned her Master's Degree in agriculture from UF. A senior statistician working with agricultural economist Dr. Fritz Roka, Hyman assists with numerous projects, including a study to determine the economical benefits of harvesting citrus mechanically. She has worked at SWFREC for more than thirteen years.
- ◆ Roger McGill earned his Associates of Science Degree in golf course operations (turf science) from Edison Community College in Fort Myers. A maintenance mechanic at the center, McGill also has received an Associates in Arts Degree from Edison in general education. He has been employed at the center for nearly eleven years.



Hyman

Extension Publications Available Online

A variety of publications authored by SWFREC faculty and staff members is accessible via the EDIS web site (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>). EDIS, which stands for Electronic Data Information Source, is an online program of the UF/IFAS Extension Department. Simply enter a search keyword or faculty member's name in the search bar on the web site, and you'll have instant access to a list of publications. Documents can be viewed online and are also offered in a printer-friendly PDF format.

