

SWFREC News

August 29, 2025

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

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Spotlight on . . .

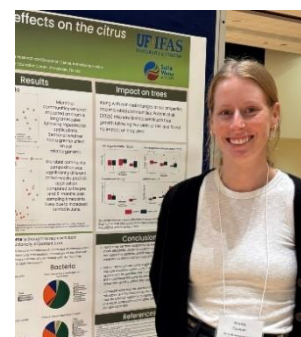
International Engineering Conference Features SWFREC Research

Several SWFREC faculty, graduate students, and staff participated in the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers Annual International Meeting in late July in Toronto, Ontario! This conference allowed current SWFREC research projects to be presented to an international audience. ([more](#))



Congratulations, Dr. Dawson!

Emma Dawson successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation last month! Her research seminar was titled “Soil Microbiome Dynamics in Response to Modified Cultural Practices and Chemical Inputs within Citrus Agroecosystems.” Her committee chair was SWFREC soil microbiologist Dr. Sarah Strauss. Other center faculty members included plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht and weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery. Congratulations, Dr. Dawson!!!



SWFREC Shines at Citrus and Specialty Crop Expo

Seven SWFREC faculty members presented research talks at the Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa last week:

- ✚ “Optimizing Young Citrus Tree Protection against HLB”—citrus horticulturist Dr. Fernando Alferez.
- ✚ “Best Practices for Applying Oxytetracycline (OTC) by Trunk Injection”—plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht.
- ✚ “Insights on OTC Adoption and Profitability from a Florida Citrus Survey”—ag and natural resources economist Dr. Tara Wade.
- ✚ “Advancements in Automated Trunk Injection of Citrus Trees”—precision ag engineer Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis.
- ✚ “Integrated HLB Management for Florida Citrus”—citrus pathologist Dr. Ozgur Batuman.
- ✚ “Distribution of Asian Citrus Psyllids in Groves: Natural Suppression and Management Implications”—entomologist Dr. Jawwad Qureshi.
- ✚ “Methods to Measure Soil Health in Florida Citrus”—soil microbiologist Dr. Sarah Strauss.



The Expo was organized by AgNet Media and included both citrus and specialty crop education and a trade show. Several SWFREC programs extended their research through educational booths at the event:

- ✚ Citrus Pathology booth: lab assistant Denise Garcia and master's student Lauren Fessler Mathews.
- ✚ Citrus Horticulture booth: biological scientist Osbaldo Vasquez.
- ✚ Weed Science booth: Biological scientist Robert Riefer, postdoctoral associate Dr. Isabela Figueiredo de Oliveira, and associate professor Dr. Ramdas Kanissery.
- ✚ Entomology booth.
- ✚ Plant Physiology booth: Ph.D. student Larissa Nunes da Silva and postdoctoral associate Dr. Carol Tardivo.



Postdoc, Student Place at Symposium

Two SWFREC personnel took oral presentation awards at the 8th Annual South Florida Student and Postdoctoral Research Symposium last month at the UF/IFAS Everglades Research and Education Center in Belle Glade!

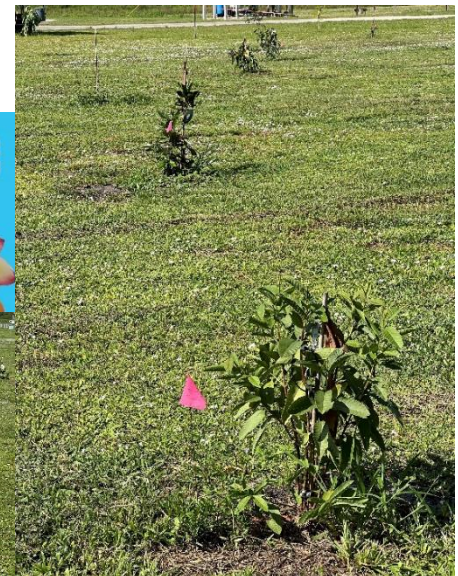
- Weed science postdoctoral associate Dr. Isabela Figueiredo de Oliveira (left) took first place and \$250 in the postdoctoral competition with her presentation titled “Persistence of Pre-emergence Herbicides in Plastic-mulched Vegetable Beds.”
- Plant pathology Ph.D. student Amanda McVay (right) earned honors and \$250 in the postdoc competition with her presentation, “Monitoring Fungicide Sensitivity to Improve Disease Management for Cucurbit Growers.”



Fruit Tree Donations Spruce up Center

A huge thank you to Top Tropicals Garden Center in Fort Myers for its generous donation of fruit trees to help beautify the SWFREC grounds!

Tatiana Anderson, owner of Top Tropicals (<https://toptropicals.com/>), donated 25 trees valued at more than \$1,300. Included in the mix: pineapple guava, mulberry, Barbados cherry, loquat, and Jacaranda. These trees join previously planted mango, peach, avocado, jackfruit, and others.



Open House: Save the Date!



You and your colleagues are cordially invited to the annual open house at the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC).

Enjoy casual tours of our laboratories, guided trolley tours of our farm facilities, and educational science demonstrations.

Learn about research, Extension, and other outreach activities that touch every community in southwest Florida.

Upcoming Events

2025 UF/IFAS Florida Tomato Conference

September 4, 2025

John Boy Auditorium, Clewiston

Four SWFREC faculty will present at the event: “Perceptions of the ‘Fresh from Florida’ Program: Findings from Conversations with Florida, New York, and Canadian Consumers” by ag economist Dr. Kim Morgan; “Advancing Tomato Phosphorus Recommendations: Evidence, Site-specific Insights, Lessons Learned, and the Road Ahead” by water resources engineer Dr. Sanjay Shukla; “Tomato-infecting Viruses in Florida Fields” by citrus pathologist Dr. Ozgur Batuman; and “Pre-harvest Assessments/Wildlife and Domesticated Animals” by food safety specialist Dr. Stephanie Brown. For full program and to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2025-florida-tomato-conference-tickets-1559361073949>. For sponsorship opportunities, please contact organizers Craig Frey (craigfrey@ufl.edu) or Meghan Foos (meghanfoos@ufl.edu).

Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association 81st Annual Convention

September 8-10, 2025

The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grand Lakes

For information and to register: <https://www.ffva.com/>.

UF/IFAS September Citrus Zoom Seminar

September 11, 2025, 11am-12pm

“Harnessing Host Tolerance for Long-term Management of Huanglongbing in Citrus” by Dr. Nabil Killiny, CREC, Lake Alfred. 1 CEU each for pesticide license renewal and certified crop advisors. Click here to register, then you will receive a link to the Zoom connection: <https://ufl.zoom.us/meeting/register/mfWivtrVQh6OBQ6ztWJlQ>.

UF/IFAS October Citrus Zoom Seminar

October 16, 2025, 11am-12pm

“Individual Protective Covers (IPCs) and Brassinosteroids” by SWFREC citrus horticulturist Dr. Fernando Alferez. 1 CEU each for pesticide license renewal and certified crop advisors. A seminar registration email will be sent out soon.

SWFREC Open House

November 19, 2025, 9am-1pm

SWFREC, Immokalee

Registration info coming soon!

Contact us...



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