

Environmental Horticulture Production Newsletter

SUMMER EDITION

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Moisture Click 2

Scholarship SWFWMD 2

Pre herbicide Calendar 3

State of Industry 3

USDA 4



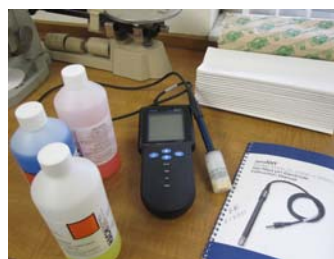
Communication Award
Winner 2011
National Finalist
Individual Newsletter

Soil pH Matters!

Every once in a while when you think you know an answer to a very straight forward question, someone challenges you to prove it. This was the case of what seemed to be a simple question of “What is my soil pH?” Posed by James Reed at 3 Pines Tree Farm. It sounded easy enough but turned into about a three month long intensive research project that involved six pH meters, three soils labs, three types of water, multiple professors, multiple institutions, and countless e-mails phone calls and soil samples. It was all worth it because it turned up some very interesting results which can have very meaningful impacts in terms of money spent managing pH. It also

means that I feel like I know the answer now when someone asks me “What is the pH of my soil?”

Here is what we learned: The water used to measure pH can have a big impact on the



result.

Never store your pH meter bulb dry, use pH storage solution and never use distilled water during storage. Seasons, temperature, sam-

pling method, protocol used, calibration method, moisture level of the soil, organic material, how your test water is stored, how you mix your sample, how long you let your sample sit, can all affect the reading of your pH.

Make sure you always repeat the exact same method when you take a pH reading. This will enable you to make judgments about pH relative to all the tests you’ve made prior. If you send your pH off to a lab, make sure you understand the method they are using and what that means to your management strategies. For more information I will be publishing a short fact sheet on everything that we learned through this process. Read my blog for more.

Industry Spotlight

[Harrell's](#) in Lakeland, Fla., has acquired a Florida peat bog containing over 9 million cubic yards of certified, nematode-free, 100% organic peat. The company will offer greenhouse, nursery and specialty crop growers premium peat moss and peat-based growing mixes. Since the company owns the bog it controls the harvesting process and the ingredients going into

its mixes. - from Nursery Management June 2011

[Scotts Miracle Gro](#) sold its professional division to [Israel Chemicals \(ICL\)](#). On Wednesday, the two companies unveiled their brand-new company name: [Everris](#). Representing the term “ever rising,” the name Everris is symbolic of the new company’s commitment to en-

hance the technologies, products and services it offers to green industry professionals. Building upon the strengths of Scotts Professional and ICL, Everris will continue to develop plant nutrition brands and products, including Osmocote and Peters.- from Greenhouse Grower May 26, 2011

Saving Irrigation Water



I recently came across a very interesting and practical water saving device from Dynamax Corporation. The device is a Moisture Click irrigation sensor. It allows the user to place a sensor in a pot or a field and measure the moisture percentage within the soil. The moisture click has a dial that can be set for a certain moisture percentage in the soil. This dial acts as an irrigation threshold. The

moisture click device then will send a signal to the irrigation controller allowing it to irrigate or not. The device will plug into either your rain sensor or the irrigation controller or your pump control and will act as a simple switch mechanism controlling the irrigation clock. The moisture click works best if you are using it in the same gallon pots or the field. I filmed a very short video on the

moisture click, what it looks like and how it works. The video is about three minutes and you can watch it by clicking here. www.tiny.cc/moistureclick If you have signed up with that BMPs for nursery industry, then this would be a great device for any cost share funding you would like to obtain. For more information you can call me or Mike McClung at 1-800-727-3570.

New Rules for Frost/Freeze

The Southwest Florida Water Management District's new regulatory rules took effect for existing and future water use permit holders in the Dover/Plant City area with crops that require frost/freeze protection. The District developed the new rules in response to the unprecedented 11-day January 2010 freeze event, which resulted in more than 750 dry wells and more than 140 sinkholes. The

new rules are one component of a District's comprehensive freeze management plan, which was developed to significantly reduce impacts from future frost/freeze events. Here is what SWFWMD is doing.

1. Declaring a 256-square-mile water use caution area in the Dover/Plant City area.
2. Establishing a minimum aquifer level and Minimum Aquifer Level Protection

Zone

3. Developing a recovery strategy to help meet the minimum aquifer level
4. Requiring Automatic Meter Reading Devices
5. Creating a new process for allocating dry well complaints

For more information on the new regulatory rules or the District's freeze management plan, visit www.WaterMatters.org/frost-freeze/.



FNGLA Scholarship Awarded

The FNGLA Carl F. Cowgill Youth Scholarship was awarded to Ashley Leonard this year. She will receive \$1000 from the Tampa Chapter FNGLA. If you know somebody who is a college student from Hillsborough County that is pur-

suing a degree that will lead to employment within the environmental horticulture industry, this scholarship would apply to them. The FNGLA awards up to 5 scholarships each year based upon the merit and needs of the students. The

FNGLA holds a plant auction at the Hillsborough County Fair and has a golf tournament to raise money for the scholarships. For an application to be considered for 2012 please send me an email.

OHP Introduces Biathlon Pre-emergent

OHP Inc. has introduced **Biathlon herbicide** to growers in the production ornamental market.

The pre-emergent granular herbicide, a combination of oxy-fluorfen and prodiamine, is produced on an easy-to-use, low-dust and odorless granule.

Biathlon controls grass and broadleaf weeds in field and container ornamentals, ground maintenance and other non-crop areas. Biathlon may also be

used on evergreens and conifer trees including Christmas tree and conifer farms.

Biathlon is made with the Verge granule technology, which is a breakthrough manufacturing process that produces a low dust and uniform-sized granule for greater accuracy.

Biathlon provides long-term control at labeled rates. The rate is 100 lbs. per acre with a maximum of two applications per acre per year. Re-applications

may be made at three-month intervals

UF/IFAS Hillsborough County Extension and their affiliates do not endorse or support any particular products. This article was for informational purposes only and not a recommendation. Growers should trial products on their own.

Extension Calendar

September 14, 2011– FNGLA Tampa Chapter Board Meeting, Extension Office, Seffner

October 10, 2011– Pomegranets and USDA funding class, Polk Co. Extension

October 27, 2011–WPS Safety Train the Trainer Class, Extension Office, Seffner

September 29-Oct-1 2011- FNGLA Landscape Show, Orlando Convention Center

October 15, 2011– FNGLA Plant Auction, Hillsborough County Fair

February 8, 2011- Integrated Pest Management Update, UF Balm

“There are so many men who can figure costs, and so few who can *measure* values.”

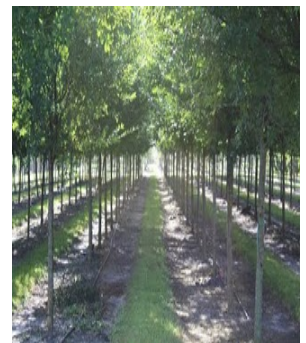
~ Author Unknown

State of The Industry in Hillsborough County

“FLAT!” That is the best way to describe the local ornamental economy. Every year as soon as the labor statistics are released from the Florida Labor Department I embark on the task of figuring out the size and health of what the wholesale industry did in the year past. In 2010 the number came in at \$144.4 million.

This was fractionally lower than 2009 at \$144.5 million. It really doesn’t take an economist to figure out that we are not doing very well, especially when our high water mark was \$220 million in 2005. Once again it seems that those engaged with dealings to the big box stores suffered less damage or even

slight increases than wholesale tree or woody landscape producers. This year, again, those selling edible plants saw some bright spots. I heard a hospitality professional mention in a radio interview that “flat” is the new growth. Let’s hope that next year “growth” is the new growth.



We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.

—F.D.R.

Youth Plant Auction

We had a very successful Florida Strawberry Festival Youth Plant Show and Sale. There are approximately 300 attendees at the event. The ambitious youth raised over \$25,000 for their plant projects. We had 97 youth entrants that participated in the auction and they entered 165 different plant lots. A very special thanks goes out to all the volunteers who make this event possible. I also would like to thank the FNGLA for their commitment to the youth projects in our community. Here is

a list of the winners.

Grand Champion-Chloe Wineinger.

Reserve Champion-Kelsey Fry.

Champion Woody Ornaments-Taylor Harrell.

Champion Foliage Plant-Jared Upthegrove.

Champion Hanging Planters-Bailey Day

Champion Liners-Paige Gran.

Champion Miscellaneous-Hannah Wilson.

Awards of Distinction—Andrew Wade, Mattie Montague, Clare Gill, Meredith DelCastillo, Emily Fry.

If you have a youth who would like to enter plants please contact me at the extension office, a 4-H leader or your schools FFA teacher to participate next year. Remember plants should be started when school begins in the fall if you don't have them growing already.

Ornamental Veggies and Sales Tax

I receive a question about taxing vegetables sold as ornamentals from a wholesale nursery. Here is what I found. Section 212.08(5), Florida Statutes, provides an exemption for "field and garden seeds, including flower seeds; nursery stock, seedlings, cuttings, or other propagative material purchased for growing stock; seeds, seedlings, cuttings, and plants used to produce

food for human consumption . . ." also Rule 12A--1.048, Florida Administrative Code, Sale of Agricultural Products, which states "(1)(d) The sale of agricultural products by any person, other than the producer, as a marketable or finished product to the ultimate consumer, except in the form of food or food products, is subject to tax "(2)(a) The sale of orna-

mental nursery stock by any person, including producers of agricultural products, is subject to tax., but does not include plants used to produce food for human consumption."

Therefore, sales of plants used to produce food for human consumption such as peppers, tomato, strawberry, etc is exempt from Sales Tax.

Smart Phone App ID's Trees



[Leafsnap](#) is the first in a series of electronic field guides being developed by researchers from Columbia University, the University of

Maryland, and the Smithsonian Institution. This free mobile app uses visual rec-

ognition software to help identify tree species from photographs of their leaves.

Leafsnap contains beautiful high-resolution images of leaves, flowers, fruit, petiole, seeds, and bark.

Leafsnap currently includes the trees of New York City

and Washington, D.C., and will soon grow to include the trees of the entire continental United States.

The makers say apps for the iPad and Android are coming soon—From Nursery Management May 2011



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Solutions for Your Life.

USDA Compensation for Discrimination

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. You may be eligible if:

- You are Hispanic or female;
- If you are Hispanic or female, you farmed, or attempted to farm, between January 1, 1981, and December 31, 1996, or between October 13, 1998, and October 13, 2000;
- You were the owner-operator or a tenant-operator of farm property, or attempted to own or lease farm land, during the same time periods listed above;
- You applied for a farm loan or for farm-loan servicing at a USDA office during the same time periods listed above; or for those seeking a Tier 1 payment only, you made a bona fide effort to apply for a farm loan or for farm-loan servicing, and USDA actively discouraged the application during the same time periods;
- Your application for a farm loan from USDA was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, or restricted, or USDA failed to provide you an appropriate loan service;
- At the time you applied for the loan or loan servicing, you met all applicable USDA regulatory requirements for the loan or loan servicing. You believe USDA discriminated against you because you are Hispanic or female;
- USDA's treatment of your loan or loan application led to economic damage to you;
- You filed a discrimination complaint with USDA, either individually or through a representative, alleging that USDA discriminated against you based on your being Hispanic or female, in connection with a loan application or loan;

If you want to register your name to receive a claims package, you can call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or access the following website: <http://www.farmerclaims.gov/>