

2018–2019 Florida Citrus Production Guide: Introduction¹

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Over the past decade, Florida citrus production practices have changed dramatically due to the challenges presented by Huanglongbing (HLB). As we have learned more about this disease, how it is spread by the Asian citrus psyllid, and the overall effects on citrus tree health, it is increasingly evident that management of this disease requires changes to ALL aspects of citrus production. For this reason, the Florida Citrus Pest Management Guide has been expanded to include topics beyond pest management. Under the new title of *Florida Citrus Production Guide*, additional coverage is provided on horticultural practices that are important to consider for maintaining productivity in the era of HLB. Topics covered include selection of rootstock and scion varieties, irrigation and nutrient management, and maintaining overall health of trees through proper root and canopy management strategies. These and other factors must all be considered together when developing a site-specific management plan for citrus production in the presence of HLB. The Florida Citrus Production Guide will continue to be updated annually (mid-summer) with the latest information to help growers refine their production practices using the latest research-based findings that have been proven to be effective for Florida citrus production.

In addition to changes in production practices needed to manage emerging pest problems in Florida, the regulatory environment is also constantly changing. For example, in 2015 new rules for Worker Protection Standards (WPS)

were passed and must be fully implemented by January 2, 2018. These new rules include important changes to worker training, reporting and posting of pesticide applications. Likewise, new rules regarding food safety training, reporting and monitoring are also being implemented. Because these new rules will directly affect Florida citrus growers, and all of agriculture, significant changes

have been made to the chapter on WPS and a new chapter on food safety has been included with which growers should be familiar. As changes in these rules are likely to occur, the guide will be updated to reflect the latest information growers need to know to ensure compliance.

Overall, the goal of the Florida Citrus Production Guide is to serve as a reference for information needed to guide decision-making in Florida citrus growing operations. **It is not intended to replace agricultural product labels that contain important usage information and should be immediately accessible for reference. Violations of directions for use printed on the label are against State and Federal laws. Always read and follow label instructions!** Likewise, State and Federal Regulations on topics such as WPS are constantly changing

and not all the information needed to ensure compliance can be covered in this guide. The chapter in this guide covers some of the important highlights of these rules. **It**

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is imperative that growers obtain copies of and follow the detailed rules out-lined in the regulatory documents referenced in this guide. The Florida Citrus Production Guide provides general guidance and is NOT the final regulatory document that should be followed!

For specific information on pest identification, biology, damage or non-chemical management techniques, refer to Extension Digital Information System (EDIS) and other UF/IFAS, USDA, and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) publications. In addition to the authors listed throughout the Florida Citrus Production Guide, the citrus faculty and Extension agents listed below can provide assistance with citrus production practices.

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