

WILLIAM LOUDEN THOMPSON
(1896-1974)



W. L. (Tommy) Thompson died in Winter Haven, Florida, 31 May 1974, and was buried at the Oak Lawn Cemetery at Winter Haven.

Dr. Thompson was born near State College, Pennsylvania, and attended Pennsylvania State College, from which he graduated in 1923 with a B. S. Degree in Horticulture. He served with the United States Army in Europe in World War I as a member of a railroad artillery battalion. For a short time, he worked as an Entomologist for a fruit packing and distributing company in Pennsylvania before moving to Florida. In 1925, he accepted a position at the Citrus Experiment Station at Lake Alfred, and worked at that location

continuously for 37 years prior to his retirement in October 1962. From 1925 to 1927, he was employed by the Florida State Plant Board, but in 1927 became Assistant Entomologist with the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station. He was in due course promoted to the position of Entomologist.

Dr. Thompson's research work concerned the life history of aphids and their control by predators, and the biological and chemical control of at least 15 other insects and mites affecting citrus. He was a pioneer in the early use of insecticides, such as sulfur, lime sulfur, bordeaux mixture, arsenic, and oil emulsion. Later, his research progressed through the use of parathion and other highly effective organic chemical pesticides. In addition to chemical and biological control, he was continuously interested in better ways of applying sprays to citrus, and his experience and advice strongly guided the development of airblast-type spraying equipment that became standard in the citrus industry. His work was published in more than 200 articles.

His extension activities were as valuable as his research activities, as he developed a strong ability to translate his research results into practical recommendations for general and specific problems. In his ability to give this kind of advice to practical citrus men, he had no peer.

He was for many years an active member of the Florida Entomological Society and served as President in 1935 and in 1936. He was extended honors by the Society through its Honors and Awards Committee in 1962. He was also a long-time member of the Florida State Horticultural Society, was the President of the Society in 1960 and elected to honorary membership in 1962.

In May 1963, the University of Florida recognized his outstanding career by conferring on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Dr. Thompson was survived by his wife, Ruby, of Lake Alfred, and his son, George William, of Stuart, Florida.

