

2018 FSHS Honorary Member



STEVEN A. SARGENT

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611

Steven A. Sargent received his B.S. (1976) and M.S. (1979) in Horticulture, and his PhD (1984) in Agricultural Engineering Technology from Michigan State University, East Lansing. He began his career at the University of Florida, Horticultural Sciences Department (UF) in 1987, rising through the ranks of Assistant (1987-92), Associate (1992-98), and Full Professor (1998–present). Within the department, he served as Graduate Coordinator (2005-11), Assistant Chair (2007–11; 2012–present), and Interim Chair (2011–12). He went on Sabbatical leave in 1993-94 with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, National Center for Food Technology (EMBRAPA/CTAA), Guaratiba, Brazil.

Sargent has developed a multidisciplinary research/extension program that addresses the effects of harvest, handling, cooling, packaging, and transit operations on the quality and safety of high-value, fresh fruits and vegetables. He has significant experience with the effects of 1-MCP on avocado and other fruits and vegetables. His recent projects include: 1) improving cooling efficacy for strawberry, blueberry, peach, sweetcorn, 2) identifying the ideal harvest time of “new” potato, 3) evaluating quality aspects of mandarin selections from the UF breeding program, 4) improving postharvest handling of red-fleshed pitaya (dragon fruit), and 5) reducing postharvest losses in mandarin oranges (Tanzania), mangos and broccoli (Haiti). In addition to graduate student training, he teaches “Postharvest Technologies for Horticultural Crops”, a graduate-level course offered each spring that centers on a five-day field trip visiting horticultural operations from harvest through packing, shipping and receiving operations.

Sargent also serves as Extension Co-Team Leader of the Fruit and Vegetable Crops Focus Group (2006– present) and conducts statewide extension programming. He regularly speaks internationally at conferences and seminars, notably in Brazil.

His most notable non-FSHS honors include current secretary (2018) and upcoming Chair (2019) of the ASHS Postharvest Working Group, 2010 Researcher of the Year (Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association), 2010 International Educator of the Year (IFAS, Sr. Faculty Category, UF International Center), 2002 Jim App Award for Outstanding Design Team (UF), and 1999 Most Outstanding Research Paper in Vegetable Crops (ASHS).

His service to FSHS include as past President (2015) and Chair of the Board (2016), Program Coordinator (2002–07), and he has been a consistent force since 2005 in developing the in-service training programs associated with FSHS’s annual meetings that have been so important in strengthening the horticultural Extension community’s partnership with FSHS. He has also served on numerous committees such as for Best Paper, and the Florida Tomato Research Award. He has received numerous FSHS awards including The Presidential Gold Medal Award (2002, 2009), the best Handling and Processing Section paper (1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008), the best Vegetable Section paper (1999), and the FSHS Council Memorial Tomato Award (1993). He is a habitual publisher in the FSHS Proceedings.

It is with honor and privilege that Steven A Sargent named the 2018 Honorary Member of the Florida State Horticultural Society.