

# COLD HARDY CITRUS CONNECTION



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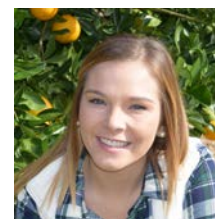
### COLD HARDY CITRUS ASSOCIATION CORNER

## See you at the Citrus Expo!

We hope you're staying dry and weathering the effects of Tropical Storm Elsa, okay! In this edition, you'll find a correction to last edition's greening update, as well as some preliminary information on a study comparing fruit quality of early and late blooms of satsumas.

We are currently in the process of interviewing candidates for the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center's Horticulture Sciences Professor position! We are excited as this position will support the cold hardy region tremendously. I hope you are making plans to attend the Citrus Expo in Fort Myers on August 18-19!

I look forward to connecting with some of you there. Please do not hesitate to contact our team if we can help you in anyway!



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# Citrus Greening and Asian Citrus Psyllid Update

By: Xavier Martini, UF/IFAS NFREC Entomologist

## CORRECTION

In the last edition of the Cold Hardy Citrus Connection (Vol 2. No. 2), it was wrongly stated that citrus greening or Huanglongbing (HLB) was not found in commercial groves west of the Suwannee River. The correct statement should have been, **“No case of HLB has been found in commercial groves west of the Aucilla River”**.

We are well aware of HLB cases in Taylor County, Florida and it was not my intend to ignore them or diminish their importance. HLB cases in Taylor County are a reminder that this disease is a real threat for the cold hardy citrus industry, and that growers all across the Panhandle and Georgia should continue monitoring their grove for the disease vector, the Asian citrus psyllid and symptoms of HLB. Growers are encouraged to work with and report HLB cases to their local Extension agents.

Growers in Georgia can submit suspected citrus greening and citrus canker samples to UGA for FREE testing. For more information, please visit: [Citrus Greening AND Citrus Canker Testing for Commercial and Residential Citrus in 2021](#) | [UGA Citrus Blog](#)

## New Variety Forum

By: Peter Chaires, New Varieties Development & Management Corp



New Varieties Development and Management Corporation (NVDMC) has long promoted the concept of an open forum where nurseries and growers can exchange information about varieties, production practices, and post questions and observations. To ensure varieties are meeting the future needs for citrus growers in Florida, we've started an NVDMC Facebook group for discussing production practices, trials, and observations on new commercial citrus varieties and experimental selections. It also will serve as a general forum for comments, questions, and concerns among stakeholders. It was created out of a need for better coordination and discussion of what's working and what's not, as well as feed back on current trials and new varieties.

To join, you must have an active Facebook account profile and be a part of the commercial citrus growing industry. This is not a tool for homeowners. Log in to your Facebook account, then go to [www.facebook.com/groups/nvdmc](http://www.facebook.com/groups/nvdmc) and click "join group." For questions about the forum, please contact Peter Chaires at [pchaires@nvdmc.org](mailto:pchaires@nvdmc.org).



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EXTENSION

By: Jake Price, UGA Extension, Lowndes County

## Comparing Owari Satsuma Fruit Quality of Early and Late Blooms

Satsumas often produce large, puffy fruit of low quality and it is not clear as to the reason why. There are many possible explanations such as, too much nitrogen, too much potassium, too much water, fertilizing too late, too much heat late in the year, too much heat early in the year, too much pruning, just to name a few. Young satsumas trees normally do not produce good quality fruit their first few years but as trees age, fruit will improve. Hopefully, that will be the case in the future but last year at the Owari Rootstock trial in Valdosta, Georgia, the fruit quality in 2020 was not as good as it was in 2019.

One thing was noticeably different in the spring of 2020. Unlike 2019, there was not a large bloom in mid-late March like we normally experience. Bloom was extended for several weeks. Several growers around the state told me they experienced the same trend to go along with a lot of vegetative growth. I'm not sure why an extended bloom occurred but I'm leaning towards environmental factors over management factors since this was not unique in our research trial. After the extended bloom I thought of a conversation I had with a local nurseryman, Mark Crawford (excuse the name drop). We were talking about the puffy fruit problem sometime in 2014-2015 and Mark called Monte Nesbitt, who had worked with satsumas in Alabama. Monte thought late blooms produced poor fruit. In the back of my mind I was wondering if that would turn out to be true when we harvested in the fall of 2020.



Fig 1. First bloom fruit tagged April 15



Fig. 2. Late blooms tagged April 15



## Comparing Early and Late Blooms (Continued)

At harvest last year there were significantly larger fruit on some trees compared to the previous year and in turn more cull fruit. Cull fruit is in the eye of the beholder but our trial standard is mostly based on fruit size which is fruit over 3" in diameter about a 200 gram or larger fruit. Any malformed or extremely damaged fruit from rust mites or insects was also culled. In 2019, 81% of the fruit was marketable compared to 57% in 2020. Trees with fewer fruit resulted in larger fruit size which is normally the case with satsumas so these culls may have been due to alternate bearing.

This spring there was a very large mid-late March bloom at the Owari satsuma trial which hopefully will result in better quality fruit than last year. I wanted to test the hypothesis that late blooms produce lower quality fruit than early blooms from the primary flush. To do this we had to somehow tag early blooms and late blooms and follow the fruit to maturity and then evaluate them. This year the bloom time frame was more compact with the vast majority of blooms occurring in March. However, there were some blooms that I estimate to be 2-4 weeks later than the initial bloom.

We tagged 150 of these late blooms per tree (Fig. 2) on April 15 with a pink ribbon and tagged set fruit (Fig. 1) that survived the first shed (still dark green) on the same day with an orange ribbon to represent early blooms. We only tagged 50 of these fruits assuming they were more likely to remain on the tree. We repeated this on 6 Owari trees with US-812 rootstock.



**Fig. 3. Shed fruit**



**Fig. 4 Early bloom fruit (orange) and late bloom fruit (pink) 6/3/21**

## Comparing Early and Late Blooms (Continued)

Each week I check the trees and remove ribbons where the tagged fruit had shed (Fig. 3) to prevent any future confusion as to which ribbon corresponds with the fruit. A lot of the later bloom fruit has dropped which is the reason we tagged 150 of those per tree trying to have enough fruit in the end for testing. At this time, we are cautiously optimistic that we will have a good amount of fruit to evaluate as most of the fruit drop has already occurred and fruit are getting larger (Fig. 4).

Two to four weeks may not be enough time between blooms to make a difference in fruit quality but we will see. If early blooms produce better quality fruit, we may adjust management practices to promote earlier blooms on satsumas. Stay tuned!

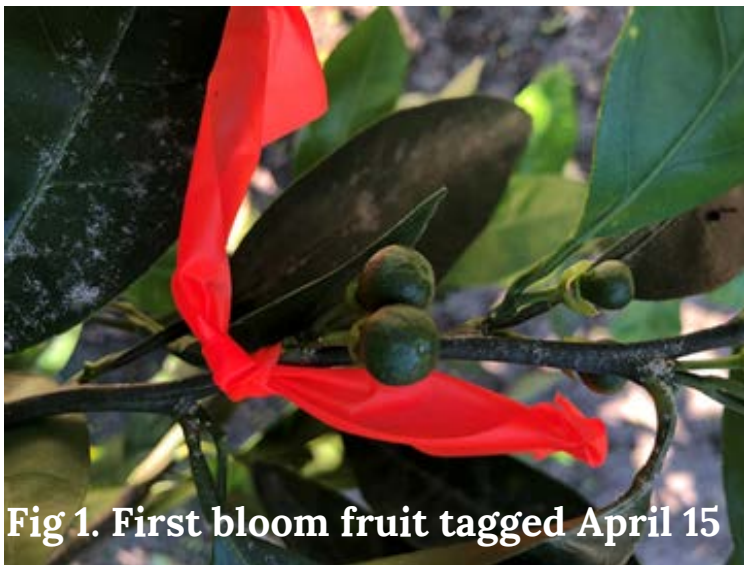


Fig 1. First bloom fruit tagged April 15



Fig. 2. Late blooms tagged April 15



Fig. 3. Shed fruit

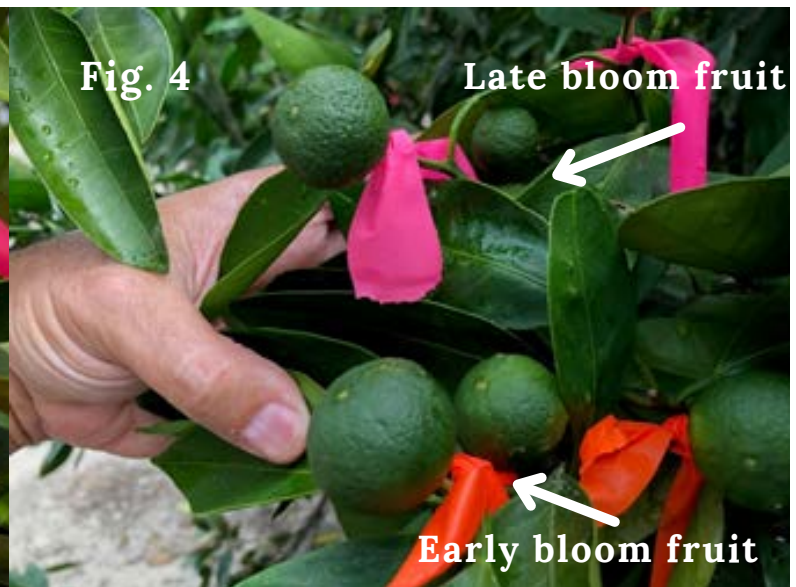


Fig. 4

Late bloom fruit

Early bloom fruit

# Upcoming Grower Meetings

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## **Virtual Citrus Seminar: 10-11AM EST, July 14**

Speaker: Dr. Fred Gmitter; Topic: Fresh Fruit Options for Growers in the 20s

Speaker: Dr. Jude Grosser; Topic: Processing Sweet Orange Options for Florida Growers in the 20s

**[Click Here to Register](#)**

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## **Citrus Expo: August 18-19**

Lee Civic Center, North Fort Myers, FL

**[Click Here to Register](#)**

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## **Citrus Packinghouse Day: 8:30 EST, August 26, 2021**

UF/IFAS Citrus Research & Education Center, Lake Alfred, FL

**[Click Here to Register](#)**

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## **Citrus Production Meeting: September 30**

UF/IFAS Taylor County Extension Office, Perry, FL

More information to come!

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## **Sunbelt Ag Expo: October 19-21**

Moultrie, GA

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# COLD HARDY CITRUS ASSOCIATION CORNER

As I write this, tropical storm Elsa is soon to be making landfall. We've already had 8 inches of rain in the past week and there is a possibility of more as the storm comes across north Florida and south Georgia.

In this situation we have to ask ourselves "Do my trees have enough nutrition with current levels and scheduled applications to finish the crop that is set?". More than likely our recent applications have been diminished so, it may be time to step up and reapply some nutrients. Pull some petiole samples and test to see where you are today and adjust your applications accordingly.



Kim Jones, CHCA President

Some of the Cold Hardy Citrus Association (CHCA) members have been participating in evaluating the horticulture candidates for the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center in Quincy. This is to replace Dr Pete Anderson's position and one we feel that is extremely important to the cold hardy region. There were more than 50 candidates that applied and it is down to the final four. Our industry and the Association has lobbied hard for this position to be filled and look forward to working with the new person very soon.

The CHCA has also been hard at work addressing several other issues. One of those is managing the USDA marketing grant. Please note that members will be receiving a poll in a few days to vote for their top picks on the name of the cold hardy region and the fruit from there. Be sure and share your thoughts about the names proposed and get the poll back before the deadline.

Our goal is to help market every box of fruit produced in the cold hardy region. That means we have to find additional ways to market and new areas to market. We would like to include your fruit in this marketing plan. Join us as we grow the citrus industry in the cold hardy region. -Kim Jones