

Current Research Objectives

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Research topic: Citrus Horticultural Management

Primary Research Objective(s): Evaluation of Individual Protective Covers (IPC)

Research Goal: Delaying HLB infection in newly planted trees with IPC.

Outcomes to date: Trees grown under the IPC have tested negative for HLB. At the same time, trees are growing faster than comparable trees grown without the protective covers, and leaves have more chlorophyll. Continuous monitoring of temperature and Relative Humidity inside the IPC has shown that vapor pressure deficit is more stable and lower under the IPC, which results in enhanced photosynthesis and ultimately, more growth. Although they are young trees (12 months old) and they do not bear any fruit yet, we expect that since all growth parameters evaluated are enhanced under the IPC these trees will become productive earlier. In the current situation, any advance in accelerating tree production is important for growers, because they can have a return earlier. Although we are still evaluating first year results, from the data we are getting we expect that this device can be useful for the growers in advancing fruit production by fostering tree growth and maintaining healthier trees longer.

Funding source for this objective(s): IFAS New faculty startup funds