

## Current Research Objectives

Dr. Tripti Vashisth, Assistant Professor, Horticultural Sciences, CREC  
([tvashisth@ufl.edu](mailto:tvashisth@ufl.edu))

**Research topic:** Pruning of HLB-affected trees

**Primary Research Objective(s):** Evaluate pruning and controlled release fertilizer (CRF) as a strategy to rehabilitate HLB-affected trees.

**Research Goal:** HLB-affected trees often go through a heavy root loss. Therefore, creating a root to shoot imbalance, resulting in limited water and nutrient uptake. Pruning can reduce the shoot biomass thereby correcting the root to shoot ratio. We evaluated different levels of pruning and constant supply of nutrients as a strategy to rehabilitate the HLB-affected trees.

**Outcomes to date:** We found that significant reduction in canopy volume was not beneficial for HLB-affected trees. Over the period of 3 years, cumulative yield of significantly pruned tree was lower than unpruned or lightly pruned trees. No improvement in root density was observed in pruned trees. Significant improvement in leaf density was observed in lightly pruned trees treated with CRF.

Based on our finding it is recommended that growers not significantly prune HLB-affected trees. Light pruning and CRF is beneficial for HLB-affected trees. With use of CRF the rate of nitrogen applied can be reduced by 25% and frequency of application can be reduced to three times a year.

**Funding source for this objective(s):** State Legislative funding for the UF/IFAS Citrus Initiative