

Summary of 2019/20 Central Florida (Ridge) and Indian River-Southwest Florida Citrus Custom Rate Charges

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This report presents the results of a survey conducted by mail during December 2019 among Florida citrus caretaking companies to collect data on their custom rate charges during the 2019/20 season. Cooperatives, their members, and growers performing their own cultural practices were not included in the survey. Therefore, this report refers to grove practices that growers may contract out. The custom rates for growers who are members of such cooperatives or the costs for growers who conduct their own cultural practices may differ from the rates reported below.

Eighteen caretakers participated in the survey this season, giving a response rate of 42%. From the total number of participants, five were citrus caretakers and service providers from Central Florida (Ridge), three were from the Indian River, and four were from the Southwest Florida region. The remainder six caretakers serviced two or three regions, and the data they provided was used for both reported regions. Participants represented 81,785 acres, which accounts for approximately 19% of the total citrus acreage in Florida (USDA-NASS, 2020).

The average custom rate charges for the Central and the combined Indian River and Southwest Florida regions are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Tables are organized by program; each with an itemized list of grove practices. The tables also include the minimum and maximum rates reported for each practice.

Comparative data from previous seasons, additional information on citrus budgeting and cost analysis, harvesting charges, packing charges can be obtained at UF|IFAS CREC Economics Extension website: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/economics/>.

Table 1. Listing of 2019/20 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers.

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Cultivation and Equipment²				
Backhoe	Hour	69.10	85.00	74.70
V-Mower	Hour	52.65	85.00	67.55
V-Mower	Acre	17.00	17.00	17.00
Rotovate	Hour	47.75	85.00	64.44
Ant Bait Application with ATV (bait not included)	Hour	30.40	40.00	35.20
Scouting for Diseases and Pests	Hour	26.60	26.60	26.60
ATV with Driver	Hour	18.00	40.00	30.27
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	25.00	40.00	29.78
Flatbed Truck with Driver	Hour	39.10	41.50	40.30
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	30.00	60.00	41.74
Tractor with Driver	Hour	25.00	75.00	41.25
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	37.00	38.90	37.95
General Labor ³	Hour	16.00	20.00	17.83
Mechanic Labor ³	Hour	40.00	60.00	49.17
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	40.00	85.00	66.11
Weed Management²				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	42.00	55.00	48.50
Disc 7 - 8'	Acre	11.00	11.00	11.00
Disc 9 - 10'	Hour	41.50	55.00	48.20
Bush Hog	Hour	44.95	65.00	54.98
Mow 5 - 7'	Hour	40.00	55.00	46.65
Mow 8 - 12'	Hour	52.65	52.65	52.65
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	13.00	20.00	15.75
Mow 13 - 16'	Acre	11.00	15.00	13.00
Chopping	Hour	40.45	40.45	40.45
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Hour	47.40	47.40	47.40
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Acre	16.50	20.00	17.70
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	12.00	17.50	14.71
Chemical Mow	Hour	29.00	68.00	48.50

Table 1. Listing of 2019/20 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Spraying Air Blast Sprayer With Electronic Sensors⁴				
		PTO Powered (1,000 gallons tank)		
16 to 25 GPA	Acre	15.00	15.00	15.00
50 to 99 GPA	Acre	17.00	18.00	17.50
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	21.00	30.00	25.25
125 to 149 GPA	Acre	21.00	28.00	24.50
150 to 249 GPA	Acre	21.00	38.00	29.00
Aerial Application²				
Fixed Wing 5 to 9 GPA	Acre	9.50	9.50	9.50
Fixed Wing 10 to 15 GPA	Acre	15.00	15.00	15.00
Irrigation²				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	30.25	37.20	34.15
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Run	33.00	50.00	42.00
Maintenance of Drip System	Hour	17.15	17.15	17.15
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	17.15	27.40	20.01
Drainage System and Canal Management²				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	41.40	41.40	41.40
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	30.00	44.45	37.23
Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments²				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	30.25	51.20	40.73
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Acre	2.00	4.00	2.98
Fertilizer (every middle)	Acre	13.00	20.00	16.50
Fertilizer (every other middle)	Acre	8.00	8.00	8.00
VRT Spreader (every middle)	Acre	10.00	12.50	11.75
VRT Spreader (every other middle)	Acre	8.00	15.00	10.90
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	16.00	25.00	19.09
Fertilizer Spreader (Young Trees)	Hour	30.00	49.80	39.93
Lime or Dolomite Application	Acre	10.00	12.50	11.00

Table 1. Listing of 2019/20 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Pruning²				
Hedging (double side)	Hour	275.00	275.00	275.00
Topping	Hour	125.00	275.00	200.00
Push brush out of the grove	Hour	68.00	75.00	72.00
Chop Brush	Hour	40.45	40.45	40.45
Mow Brush	Hour	44.95	85.00	64.98
Front-end Loader	Hour	68.00	85.00	73.29
Tree Removal and Disposal²				
Tree Pushing	Hour	65.00	95.00	73.50
Tree Clipping	Hour	68.80	85.00	74.83
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	68.00	85.00	73.29
Herbicide spray tree stump	Hour	18.00	30.00	25.41
Tree Resetting and Care²				
Tree Site Preparation ⁵	Hour	47.75	47.75	47.75
Tree Planting and First Watering ⁶				
1 to 5 trees per acre	Tree	3.33	3.33	3.33
6 to 10 trees per acre	Tree	3.00	3.33	3.17
11 to 25 trees per acre	Tree	3.00	3.33	3.17
26+ trees per acre	Tree	2.50	3.33	2.92
Solid set block	Tree	2.00	2.15	2.05
Tree Wrap Installation	Hour	18.00	18.85	18.43
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	18.00	21.70	19.30
Spot Herbicide Application	Hour	18.00	30.40	24.98
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	26.50	30.40	27.97
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	18.50	26.50	22.93
Grove Management²				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	2.50	8.25	4.51
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	5.00	19.00	10.13
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.10	0.20	0.15

¹Calculated by averaging the total number of data points reported

²Rates include labor and equipment.

³Rates only include labor.

⁴Rates are based on every middle application.

⁵Includes disk and/or rotovate tree site.

⁶Does not include tree cost.

Table 2. Listing of 2019/20 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers.

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Cultivation and Equipment²				
Backhoe	Hour	40.00	66.00	55.20
V-Mower	Hour	65.00	80.00	70.00
V-Mower	Acre	13.00	17.00	15.00
Rotovate	Hour	40.00	65.00	51.80
Ant Bait Application with ATV (bait not included)	Hour	40.00	40.00	40.00
Scouting for Diseases and Pests	Hour	50.00	80.00	65.00
ATV with Driver	Hour	25.00	40.00	30.65
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	25.00	40.00	30.56
Flatbed Truck with Driver	Hour	41.50	41.50	41.50
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	40.00	60.00	48.30
Tractor with Driver	Hour	25.00	68.50	45.56
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	45.00	45.00	45.00
General Labor ³	Hour	17.00	25.00	19.35
Mechanic Labor ³	Hour	45.00	75.00	61.88
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	45.00	100.00	72.73
Weed Management²				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	35.00	75.00	54.00
Disc 9 - 10'	Hour	45.00	75.00	58.33
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	13.00	17.00	15.08
Mow 13 - 16'	Hour	50.00	80.00	62.00
Mow 13 - 16'	Acre	11.00	17.00	14.75
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Acre	14.00	18.50	16.13
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	12.00	17.50	15.33
Chemical Mow	Acre	0.50	5.00	2.80

Table 2. Listing of 2019/20 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Spraying Air Blast Sprayer With Electronic Sensors⁴				
		PTO Powered (1,000 gallons tank)		
50 to 99 GPA	Acre	17.00	17.00	17.00
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	21.00	32.00	27.83
125 to 149 GPA	Acre	21.00	33.00	27.33
150 to 249 GPA	Acre	21.00	40.00	33.00
250 to 500 GPA	Acre	42.00	48.00	45.00
Greater than 500 GPA	Acre	42.00	42.00	42.00
Aerial Application²				
Fixed Wing 5 to 9 GPA	Acre	9.50	9.50	9.50
Fixed Wing 10 to 15 GPA	Acre	15.00	15.00	15.00
Irrigation²				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	30.25	56.00	41.58
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Run	50.00	50.00	50.00
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	18.50	20.00	19.17
Drainage System and Canal Management²				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	45.00	60.00	52.50
Water Furrow Cleaner	Hour	60.00	60.00	60.00
Rotary Ditcher or Auger	Hour	44.00	60.00	49.67
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	49.50	110.00	74.83
Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments²				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	30.00	56.00	38.75
Fertilizer (every middle)	Acre	12.00	14.00	13.00
Fertilizer (every other middle)	Acre	8.00	11.50	9.83
VRT Spreader (every middle)	Acre	7.50	13.20	11.30
VRT Spreader (every other middle)	Acre	8.00	15.00	12.63
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	16.00	21.00	18.65
Lime or Dolomite Application	Acre	10.50	14.00	12.63

Table 2. Listing of 2019/20 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Pruning²				
Tree Skirting (single side)	Acre	20.00	32.00	26.00
Hedging (double side)	Acre	19.00	25.00	22.00
Topping	Acre	29.00	42.00	35.50
Push brush out of the grove	Hour	75.00	100.00	83.33
Mow Brush	Hour	65.00	65.00	65.00
Front-end Loader	Hour	70.00	95.00	80.00
Tree Removal and Disposal²				
Tree Pushing	Hour	60.00	90.00	71.43
Tree Clipping	Hour	65.00	90.00	76.67
Grinding Tree in place	Hour	150.00	250.00	200.00
Grinding Clipped Tree	Hour	150.00	250.00	200.00
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	70.00	90.00	79.00
Herbicide spray tree stump	Hour	25.00	25.00	25.00
Tree Resetting and Care²				
Tree Planting and First Watering ⁵				
1 to 5 trees per acre	Tree	3.33	3.33	3.33
6 to 10 trees per acre	Tree	3.00	3.33	3.17
11 to 25 trees per acre	Tree	3.33	3.33	3.33
26+ trees per acre	Tree	3.33	3.33	3.33
Solid set block	Tree	1.60	2.15	1.92
Tree Wrap Cost (solid set block)	Tree	0.35	0.35	0.35
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	18.50	22.00	19.50
Spot Herbicide Application	Hour	22.00	32.00	27.04
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	26.50	32.00	29.50
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	17.50	26.50	20.63
Grove Management²				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	2.50	8.00	4.28
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	5.00	19.00	9.13
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.05	0.15	0.10

¹Calculated by averaging the total number of data points reported.

²Rates include labor and equipment.

³Rates only include labor.

⁴Rates are based on every middle application.

⁵Does not include tree cost.

References

USDA-NASS. 2020. Florida Citrus Statistics 2018/19.