

## Summary of 2021/22 Central Florida (Ridge) and Indian River-Southwest Florida Citrus Custom Rate Charges

Ariel Singerman<sup>1</sup> and Faith Aiya<sup>2</sup>  
University of Florida, IFAS, CREC, Lake Alfred, FL

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by mail during December 2021 among Florida citrus caretaking companies to collect data on their custom rate charges during the 2021/22 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.

Ten caretakers participated in the survey this season. From the total number of participants, four were citrus caretakers and service providers from Central Florida (Ridge), one was from the Indian River, and three were from the Southwest Florida region. The other two caretakers serviced two or three regions, and the data they provided was used for their reported regions. Seven participants reported servicing a total of 52,970 acres, which accounts for approximately 14% of the total citrus acreage in Florida (USDA-NASS, 2021).

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/>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor and Extension Economist, Food and Resource Economics Department, Citrus Research and Education Center

<sup>2</sup> Graduate Research Assistant, Food and Resource Economics Department

Table 1. Listing of 2021/22 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers.

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average <sup>1</sup>
<b>Cultivation and Equipment<sup>2</sup></b>				
Backhoe	Hour	69.10	85.00	77.05
V-Mower	Hour	52.65	52.65	52.65
Rotovate	Hour	30.00	95.00	59.44
Ant Bait Application with ATV (bait not included)	Hour	30.40	30.40	30.40
Scouting for Diseases and Pests	Hour	26.60	26.60	26.60
ATV with Driver	Hour	27.40	35.00	31.47
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	30.40	35.00	32.13
Flatbed Truck with Driver	Hour	35.00	39.10	37.05
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	35.00	46.00	40.18
Tractor with Driver	Hour	38.70	38.70	38.70
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	25.00	40.00	34.63
General Labor <sup>3</sup>	Hour	16.00	22.50	19.00
Mechanic Labor <sup>3</sup>	Hour	29.00	85.00	55.80
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	52.30	65.00	60.77
<b>Weed Management<sup>2</sup></b>				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	48.50	48.50	48.50
Disc 7 - 8'	Acre	11.00	12.00	11.50
Disc 9 - 10'	Hour	41.40	41.40	41.40
Disc 9 - 10'	Acre	12.00	12.00	12.00
Disc 11 - 12'	Acre	12.00	12.00	12.00
Bush Hog	Hour	44.95	55.00	49.98
Mow 5 - 7'	Acre	12.00	12.00	12.00
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	12.00	16.00	14.00
Chopping	Hour	40.45	40.45	40.45
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Hour	38.55	47.40	42.98
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Acre	14.00	18.25	16.13
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Hour	42.00	68.00	55.00
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	14.00	16.50	15.25
Chemical Mow	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00

Table 1. Listing of 2021/22 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average <sup>1</sup>
<b>Spraying Air Blast Sprayer With Electronic Sensors<sup>4</sup></b>				
		PTO Powered (1,000 gallons tank)		
16 to 25 GPA	Acre	15.00	15.00	15.00
50 to 99 GPA	Acre	21.00	21.00	21.00
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	29.00	29.00	29.00
125 to 149 GPA	Hour	76.90	76.90	76.90
150 to 249 GPA	Hour	76.90	76.90	76.90
250 to 500 GPA	Hour	76.90	76.90	76.90
<b>Irrigation<sup>2</sup></b>				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	22.50	37.20	29.85
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Run	32.00	35.00	33.50
Maintenance of Drip System	Hour	19.50	19.50	19.50
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	17.50	27.40	21.73
<b>Drainage System and Canal Management<sup>2</sup></b>				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	41.40	41.40	41.40
Water Furrow Cleaner	Hour	41.20	41.20	41.20
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	44.45	44.45	44.45
Ground Herbicide Application	Hour	47.25	47.25	47.25
<b>Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments<sup>2</sup></b>				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	22.50	51.20	36.85
Fertilizer (every middle)	Acre	12.75	14.50	13.63
Fertilizer (every other middle)	Acre	9.00	9.00	9.00
VRT Spreader (every middle)	Hour	89.90	89.90	89.90
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	16.00	22.50	18.88
Fertilizer Spreader (Young Trees)	Hour	14.50	49.80	33.43
Lime or Dolomite Application	Acre	11.00	12.50	11.75

Table 1. Listing of 2021/22 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average <sup>1</sup>
<b>Pruning<sup>2</sup></b>				
Tree Skirting (single side)	Hour	175.00	175.00	175.00
Hedging (double side)	Hour	275.00	275.00	275.00
Topping	Hour	285.00	285.00	285.00
Chop Brush	Hour	40.45	40.45	40.45
Mow Brush	Hour	44.95	48.00	46.48
Front-end Loader	Hour	68.00	85.00	76.00
<b>Tree Removal and Disposal<sup>2</sup></b>				
Tree Pushing	Hour	68.00	85.00	75.13
Tree Clipping	Hour	68.00	85.00	75.17
Grinding Tree in Place	Hour	150.00	170.00	160.00
Grinding Clipped Place	Hour	150.00	150.00	150.00
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	68.00	85.00	76.50
Herbicide spray tree stump	Hour	28.65	35.00	31.22
<b>Tree Resetting and Care<sup>2</sup></b>				
Tree Site Preparation <sup>5</sup>	Hour	47.75	47.75	47.75
Tree Planting and First Watering <sup>6</sup>	Hour	22.00	22.00	22.00
Tree Wrap Installation <sup>6</sup>	Hour	18.85	18.85	18.85
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	19.50	21.70	20.60
Spot Herbicide Application	Hour	30.40	40.00	33.80
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	30.40	31.00	30.70
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	19.50	31.00	24.07
<b>Grove Management<sup>2</sup></b>				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	4.00	8.25	6.08
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	10.00	25.00	18.30
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.15	0.20	0.18

<sup>1</sup>Calculated by averaging the total number of data points reported.

<sup>2</sup>Rates include labor and equipment.

<sup>3</sup>Rates only include labor.

<sup>4</sup>Rates are based on every middle application.

<sup>5</sup>Includes disk and/or rotovate tree site.

<sup>6</sup>Does not include tree cost.

Table 2. Listing of 2021/22 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers.

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average <sup>1</sup>
<b>Cultivation and Equipment<sup>2</sup></b>				
Backhoe	Hour	55.00	75.00	65.00
V-Mower	Hour	50.00	85.00	67.50
Rotovate	Hour	55.00	65.00	60.00
Ant Bait Application with ATV (bait not included)	Acre	5.00	5.00	5.00
Scouting for Diseases and Pests	Hour	80.00	80.00	80.00
ATV with Driver	Hour	25.00	36.00	30.33
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	30.00	31.00	30.50
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	20.00	58.00	41.33
Tractor with Driver	Hour	45.00	45.00	45.00
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	40.00	40.00	40.00
General Labor <sup>3</sup>	Hour	18.00	29.00	22.38
Mechanic Labor <sup>3</sup>	Hour	29.00	75.00	59.75
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	52.30	120.00	78.08
<b>Weed Management<sup>2</sup></b>				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	60.00	80.00	70.00
Disc 7 - 8'	Acre	14.50	14.50	14.50
Disc 9 - 10'	Acre	14.00	14.00	14.00
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	13.50	16.00	14.63
Mow 13 - 16'	Hour	60.00	80.00	73.33
Mow 13 - 16'	Acre	16.50	17.00	16.75
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Acre	17.00	18.50	16.13
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	16.00	17.00	16.50
Chemical Mow	Acre	2.00	10.00	6.13

Table 2. Listing of 2021/22 custom rates reported by Indian River &amp; Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average <sup>1</sup>
<b><u>Spraying Air Blast Sprayer With Electronic Sensors<sup>4</sup></u></b>				
		<u>PTO Powered (1,000 gallons tank)</u>		
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	30.00	32.00	31.33
125 to 149 GPA	Acre	35.00	35.00	35.00
150 to 249 GPA	Acre	42.00	42.00	42.00
250 to 500 GPA	Acre	52.50	52.50	52.50
<b><u>Irrigation<sup>2</sup></u></b>				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	22.50	65.00	43.75
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	22.50	22.50	22.50
<b><u>Drainage System and Canal Management<sup>2</sup></u></b>				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	50.00	50.00	50.00
Water Furrow Shaper	Hour	100.00	115.00	107.50
Rotary Ditcher or Auger	Hour	60.00	60.00	60.00
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	60.00	110.00	80.00
<b><u>Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments<sup>2</sup></u></b>				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	22.50	50.00	36.25
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Acre	3.00	3.50	3.25
Fertilizer - every middle	Acre	13.50	16.00	14.67
Fertilizer - every other middle	Acre	11.00	11.00	11.00
VRT Spreader - every other middle	Acre	11.00	11.50	11.25
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	18.00	22.50	20.13
Fertilizer Spreader (Young Trees)	Hour	14.50	14.50	14.50
Lime or Dolomite Application	Acre	16.00	16.00	16.00

Table 2. Listing of 2021/22 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average <sup>1</sup>
<b>Pruning<sup>2</sup></b>				
Tree Skirting - single side	Acre	22.00	32.00	27.00
Hedging - double side	Acre	19.00	30.00	24.50
Topping	Acre	37.00	44.00	40.50
Push brush out of the grove	Hour	65.00	100.00	80.00
Mow Brush	Acre	16.00	16.00	16.00
Front-end Loader	Hour	75.00	95.00	80.00
<b>Tree Removal and Disposal<sup>2</sup></b>				
Tree Pushing	Hour	65.00	95.00	77.00
Tree Clipping	Hour	70.00	95.00	82.50
Grinding Tree in place	Hour	170.00	250.00	210.00
Grinding Clipped Tree	Hour	250.00	250.00	250.00
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	95.00	95.00	95.00
<b>Tree Resetting and Care<sup>2</sup></b>				
Tree Planting and First Watering <sup>5</sup>				
1 to 5 trees per acre	Tree	3.00	3.24	3.12
6 to 10 trees per acre	Tree	2.94	3.00	2.97
11 to 25 trees per acre	Tree	2.50	2.75	2.63
26+ trees per acre	Tree	1.75	2.75	2.32
Solid set block	Tree	1.65	1.85	1.75
Tree Wrap Installation <sup>5</sup>				
26+ trees per acre	Tree	0.50	0.50	0.50
Solid set block	Tree	0.25	0.25	0.25
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	18.00	22.00	19.88
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	10.42	32.00	24.88
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	10.42	27.00	19.36
<b>Grove Management<sup>2</sup></b>				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	2.75	4.00	3.25
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	8.00	20.00	15.10
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.10	0.15	0.13

<sup>1</sup>Calculated by averaging the total number of data points reported.

<sup>2</sup>Rates include labor and equipment.

<sup>3</sup>Rates only include labor.

<sup>4</sup>Rates are based on every middle application.

<sup>5</sup>Does not include tree cost.

## **References**

USDA-NASS. 2021. Florida Citrus Statistics 2019/20.