

Summary of 2024/25 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 2024 among Florida citrus caretaking companies to collect data on their custom rate charges during the 2024/25 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), three were from the Southwest Florida/ Indian River region. The other three caretakers serviced two regions and the data they provided was used for their reported regions.

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/research/economics/>.

Table 1. Listing of 2024/25 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Cultivation and Equipment ²				
Backhoe	Hour	69.10	120.00	86.37
V-Mower	Hour	52.65	52.65	52.65
Rotovate	Hour	30.00	66.25	47.25
Ant Bait Application with ATV (bait not included)	Hour	25.00	30.40	27.70
Scouting for Diseases and Pests	Hour	26.60	26.60	26.60
ATV with Driver	Hour	25.00	45.00	34.53
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	28.00	42.00	33.47
Flatbed Truck with Driver	Hour	39.10	39.10	39.10
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	33.00	47.50	40.74
Tractor with Driver	Hour	38.70	47.50	44.29
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	38.90	43.25	41.08
General Labor ³	Hour	20.00	33.00	24.04
Mechanic Labor ³	Hour	41.25	60.00	51.56
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	40.00	75.00	60.00
Weed Management ²				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	51.25	51.25	51.25
Disc 9 - 10'	Hour	41.40	65.00	53.20
Bush Hog	Hour	44.95	55.00	49.98
Mow 5 - 7'	Hour	44.95	55.00	50.40
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	14.00	16.00	15.00
Mow 8 - 12'	Hour	52.65	52.65	52.65
Mow 13 - 16'	Acre	15.00	15.00	15.00
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	15.00	19.25	16.80
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	15.00	19.00	16.75
Chemical Mow	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00

Table 1. Listing of 2024/25 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	17.50	17.50	17.50
26 to 49 GPA	Acre	18.00	18.00	18.00
50 to 99 GPA	Acre	15.00	28.00	22.17
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	28.00	33.00	30.67
125 to 149 GPA	Acre	30.00	31.00	30.50
125 to 149 GPA	Hour	76.90	76.90	76.90
150 to 249 GPA	Acre	30.00	38.00	34.00
Irrigation²				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	37.20	48.00	42.60
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Run	37.75	37.75	37.75
Maintenance of Drip System	Hour	23.25	23.25	23.25
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	20.00	27.40	22.66
Drainage System and Canal Management²				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	41.40	41.40	41.40
Water Furrow Cleaner	Hour	41.20	41.20	41.20
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	35.00	44.45	39.73
Ground Herbicide Application	Hour	35.00	47.00	41.00
Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments²				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	51.20	52.00	51.60
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Acre	2.00	5.00	3.69
Fertilizer (every middle)	Hour	77.20	77.20	77.20
Fertilizer (every middle)	Acre	11.00	14.50	13.13
Fertilizer (every other middle)	Acre	9.50	16.50	12.69
VRT Spreader (every middle)	Hour	89.90	89.90	89.90
VRT Spreader (every middle)	Acre	14.50	15.00	14.75
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	20.00	35.00	24.35
Fertilizer Spreader (Young Trees)	Hour	38.75	49.80	44.28
Lime or Dolomite Application	Acre	12.00	20.00	15.33

Table 1. Listing of 2024/25 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Pruning ²				
Tree Skirting (single side)	Hour	80.00	80.00	80.00
Hedging (double side)	Hour	160.00	300.00	253.33
Topping	Acre	30.00	30.00	30.00
Topping	Hour	300.00	375.00	337.50
Push brush out of the grove	Hour	68.00	90.00	79.33
Chop Brush	Hour	25.00	40.45	32.73
Mow Brush	Hour	44.95	44.95	44.95
Front-end Loader	Hour	68.00	90.00	78.85
Tree Removal and Disposal ²				
Tree Pushing	Hour	68.00	90.00	78.71
Tree Clipping	Hour	68.00	90.00	80.38
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	68.00	90.00	78.56
Herbicide spray tree stump	Hour	20.00	31.25	26.63
Tree Resetting and Care ²				
Tree Site Preparation ⁵	Hour	47.75	47.75	47.75
Tree Planting and First Watering ⁶	Hour	22.00	23.50	22.75
Tree Wrap Installation ⁶	Hour	18.85	23.50	20.78
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	20.00	23.50	21.73
Spot Herbicide Application	Hour	25.00	41.00	32.13
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	28.00	41.00	33.13
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	21.70	25.00	23.40
Grove Management ²				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	3.50	10.00	5.95
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	5.00	25.00	15.00
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.20	1.00	0.48

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 2024/25 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers.

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Cultivation and Equipment²				
Backhoe	Hour	69.10	90.00	79.70
V-Mower	Hour	52.65	52.65	52.65
Rotovate	Hour	47.75	80.00	69.25
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	20.00	27.40	23.70
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	30.00	30.40	30.20
Flatbed Truck with Driver	Hour	39.10	39.10	39.10
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	37.20	54.00	47.07
Tractor with Driver	Hour	38.70	75.00	56.85
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	38.90	60.00	49.45
General Labor ³	Hour	20.00	22.50	20.83
Mechanic Labor ³	Hour	45.00	100.00	75.00
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	65.00	100.00	82.50
Weed Management²				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	80.00	80.00	80.00
Disc 9 - 10'	Hour	41.40	41.40	41.40
Disc 9 - 10'	Acre	15.50	18.00	16.83
Bush Hog	Hour	44.95	44.95	44.95
Mow 5 - 7'	Hour	44.95	44.95	44.95
Mow 8 - 12'	Hour	52.65	80.00	66.33
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	16.00	16.00	16.00
Mow 13 - 16'	Hour	90.00	90.00	90.00
Chopping	Hour	40.45	40.45	40.45
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Acre	17.00	18.50	16.13
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	16.00	18.00	17.33
Chemical Mow	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00

Table 2. Listing of 2024/25 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
<u>Spraying Air Blast Sprayer With Electronic Sensors⁴</u>				
		PTO Powered (1,000 gallons tank)		
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	30.00	33.00	31.67
125 to 149 GPA	Acre	30.00	30.00	30.00
150 to 249 GPA	Hour	76.90	76.90	76.90
250 to 500 GPA	Hour	76.90	76.90	76.90
<u>Irrigation²</u>				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	37.20	37.20	37.20
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Trip	30.00	30.00	30.00
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	20.00	27.40	23.10
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Acre	15.00	15.00	15.00
<u>Drainage System and Canal Management²</u>				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	41.40	41.40	41.40
Water Furrow Cleaner	Hour	41.20	41.20	41.20
Water Furrow Shaper	Hour	80.00	80.00	80.00
Rotary Ditcher or Auger	Hour	80.00	125.00	102.50
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	44.45	85.00	69.82
Track Hoe	Hour	100.00	100.00	100.00
Ground Herbicide Application	Hour	47.00	80.00	67.33
<u>Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments²</u>				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	51.20	51.20	51.20
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Acre	4.50	4.50	4.50
Fertilizer – every middle	Acre	16.00	16.00	16.00
Fertilizer – every middle	Hour	77.20	77.20	77.20
Fertilizer – every other middle	Acre	11.00	17.00	13.88
VRT Spreader – every middle	Hour	89.90	89.90	89.90
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	20.00	36.00	27.75
Fertilizer Spreader (Young Trees)	Hour	49.80	49.80	49.80
Lime or Dolomite Application	Acre	17.00	17.00	17.00

Table 2. Listing of 2024/25 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Pruning²				
Hedging - double side	Hour	300.00	300.00	300.00
Push brush out of the grove	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00
Chop Brush	Hour	40.45	40.45	40.45
Mow Brush	Hour	44.95	80.00	62.48
Front-end Loader	Hour	68.00	90.00	79.33
Tree Removal and Disposal²				
Tree Pushing	Hour	68.00	90.00	81.60
Tree Clipping	Hour	68.80	95.00	82.00
Grinding Tree in place	Hour	160.00	160.00	160.00
Grinding Clipped Tree	Hour	160.00	160.00	160.00
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	68.00	68.00	68.00
Herbicide spray tree stump	Hour	28.65	28.65	28.65
Tree Resetting and Care²				
Tree Site Preparation ⁵	Hour	47.75	47.75	47.75
Tree Planting and First Watering ⁵	Hour	22.00	22.00	22.00
Tree Wrap Installation ⁵	Hour	18.85	18.85	18.85
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	20.00	21.70	20.85
Spot Herbicide Application	Hour	30.40	35.00	32.70
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	30.40	30.40	30.40
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	20.00	21.70	20.85
Grove Management²				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	3.00	4.50	4.00
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	5.00	20.00	14.33
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.10	1.00	0.40

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.