



# Maximizing Weed Control In Citrus

Growers need to consider several factors when setting up a weed control program.

By Stephen H. Futch  
shf@crec.ifas.ufl.edu

**W**ith decreasing prices for citrus, growers need to consider every opportunity to reduce production costs to aid in maintaining profitability. Currently, weed control is an expensive and major component of Florida citrus growers' annual production costs. In the central Florida citrus production region, annual weed control costs account for approximately \$220 or 28% of the total \$778 annual production cost per acre. Other citrus production regions' cost vary due to local conditions and management programs.

Weeds compete with the tree for water, nutrients, light, and space. Weeds may reduce crop yield and increase production and harvesting costs.

The objective of today's weed management program is to suppress and control weeds so that they do not cause damage to the tree, impact yield, or impede grove and harvesting operations. Complete and total elimination of all weeds from the grove floor is not necessary nor warranted.

When developing a weed management program, growers must consider weeds present, stage of weed growth, material selection, amount of herbicide used, application site, method and timing, and herbicide band width. These items are discussed in detail below.

## Identifying Type And Growth

Growers should survey their grove to determine if weeds are present. If present, efforts should be made to identify the weed type, i.e., grass,

broadleaf, or sedge by name. By knowing the type of weeds present, the proper herbicide material(s) can be chosen to provide effective control. In many cases, preemergence herbicides which control grasses may not control broadleaf weeds or vice versa.

The stage of weed growth also affects the ability to control the weed with herbicides. Weeds in a seedling stage are the easiest to control, and weeds in a vegetative stage are actively producing stems, roots, and foliage. The rapid growth of both seedling and vegetative stages will aid in their control, as systemic herbicide movement within the plant is rapid. Plants that are mature or are in seed production tend to be more difficult to control due to reduced plant growth and slower movement of materials.

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