



# Extension agents are answer sources

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This month is another edition of Q-and-A. I asked our University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) citrus Extension agents what's on your minds, and what follows is my response.

Please email me if you have other questions. If I don't know the answer, I'll find it from the folks at UF/IFAS who do. If you don't already know citrus Extension agents Laurie Hurner, Chris Oswalt, Juanita Popenoe, Amir Rezazadeh and Mongi Zekri, get to know at least one of them. If you do know them, get to know them better! They're there for you.

## Q: What are the best guidelines for a nutritional program?

**A:** UF/IFAS faculty suggest you do a soil test once a year and compare the soil nutrient concentrations to UF/IFAS "Nutrition of Citrus Trees, SL253" guidelines.

Also, we suggest growers do leaf tissue analysis, particularly for 4- to 6-month-old spring flush. Then compare the results with UF/IFAS guidelines for deficient, optimum, high or excessive nutrient concentrations. The soil and leaf tissue tests can help you determine the fertilizer needed for a nutrient management program.

## Q: What do you recommend for a psyllid management program?

**A:** Two-time Florida entomologist of the year Jawwad Qureshi at the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center says management programs should begin by targeting overwintering adult psyllids with sprays when the trees are not producing new growth, followed by a rotation of selective insecticides based on what you're seeing in the grove during the growing season. Knowing what you had before spraying helps you gauge the impact. This regimen helps reduce



Hurner



Oswalt



Popenoe



Rezazadeh



Zekri

pest resistance and promote conservation of natural enemies important for targeting multiple pests and avoiding secondary pest outbreaks.

Products recommended in our citrus production guide have been demonstrated to be effective for reducing psyllid populations. You can get your guide from the Extension agents

or from SWFREC, the Indian River Research and Education Center or the Citrus Research and Education Center.

## Q: How do I select a rootstock for replanting?

**A:** I can't tell you what's right for your grove, but UF/IFAS has a useful tool to help you choose. It's called the rootstock selection guide, available at [https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/citrus\\_rootstock](https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/citrus_rootstock).

You've got a lot of choices these days, thanks to UF/IFAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and private breeders. The guide helps you figure out which rootstocks on average are a fit for your soil, freeze risk, HLB tolerance and more.

## Q: What do you see for the future of citrus science?

**A:** In my nine years at UF/IFAS, I've spent more time on HLB than any other research issue. In the last decade, we increased our scientific corps dedicated to citrus. We also reorganized the way they do science.

I have hired people to be part of *multidisciplinary teams*, not just members of a particular department. When UF/IFAS hires a scientist, the first thing we ask is not "What is your degree in?" It's "What kind of problems can you solve?"

We now hire experts to join teams that work cooperatively on problems none of them could solve alone. That is the future of science. It's one reason UF/IFAS is in a stronger position than ever to come up with solutions, whether it's HLB or a problem we don't even know about yet. 🍊

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## Ask Jack

Send your citrus-specific questions to the author of this column, Jack Payne, at [jackpayne@ufl.edu](mailto:jackpayne@ufl.edu). Be sure to copy [chrismoran@ufl.edu](mailto:chrismoran@ufl.edu) and [tacy@agnetmedia.com](mailto:tacy@agnetmedia.com) on the email.