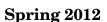
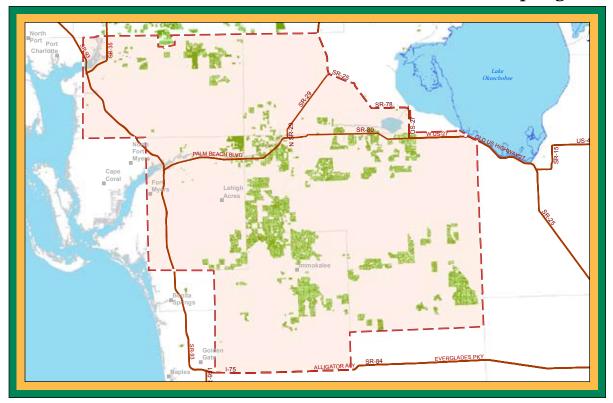
News





Grower Support Key to "Gulf CHMA" Success

Citrus growers in the "Gulf" production region are proving that working cooperatively to implement a tactical plan to reduce Asian psyllid populations and slow the spread of "greening" is truly paying off. Recent data collected from 10 survey cycles of 867 citrus blocks within the 5-county "Gulf Citrus Health Management Area (CHMA)", show that Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) numbers are ranked among the lowest average counts in Florida's top citrus counties. The data is being generated through the cooperative efforts of USDA, FDACS and UF/IFAS from grove surveys of 6,000 blocks statewide on 3-week cycles.

"I am grateful that our groves are located in the middle of the 'Gulf CHMA' here in Southwest Florida," says Mark Colbert of A. Duda & Sons and chairman of the Gulf Citrus Growers Association's Production and Research Committee. "My grove's economic future depends on keeping our trees alive and well for the long haul. And keeping psyllid pressure very low is a 'no brainer'. When the whole region does it...it is even better!" he added.

The "Gulf" region has been coordinating area wide sprays since the 2008-09 season, following the recommen-

dations of UF/IFAS entomologist Dr. Phil Stansly who is based at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC) in Immokalee. The collaborative "Gulf" team, which coordinates the initiative, includes GCGA, FDACS/DPI, UF/IFAS' SWFREC, multi-county citrus agent Dr. Mongi Zekri, aerial applicators and "team captains" within the region.

The most recent "Round #4" spraying effort, consisting of two dormant sprays, was initiated in November/December 2011 and completed before the new flush in January/February 2012. The new and updated data represent the consistent pattern of reduced ACP populations in the "Gulf CHMA" since spraying began in 2008.

Dr. Phil Stansly recently reported on the success of the region's tactical approach. "As the 'Gulf CHMA' enters its 4th year, it is time to reflect on where we've been and where we are going. We started in 2008-09 with a single cooperative dormant spray that covered over 70,000 acres by air and virtually all the rest by ground. Tap sampling, conducted through CHRP, before and after...showed 15

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President's Message

This GCGA year is really racing by! It is hard to believe that it is already three quarters over and the association's elections and annual meeting are just around the corner.

I am pleased to report that YOUR association's leadership has been very engaged with the top "citrus/agricultural" business needs here in the Gulf region, as well as with our major events and activities which have enabled GCGA to keep its grower dues structure at the same level that was established over 25 years ago! On the administrative front, the association has settled into its new office in the First Bank Building in Riverdale and now has an "official" mailing address of: 11741 Palm Beach Boulevard, Suite #202, Ft. Myers, FL 33905! Our telephone number is 239 690-0281. Since this move in December, GCGA's directors are having a greater interface with the business leadership in the urban areas of our region, a planned strategy for the association's enhanced community outreach initiatives that are being planned for the coming months.

Regarding our battle with "greening," the "Gulf" area wide spray program has just completed its 4th consecutive year. Your association was and is on "the cutting edge" of fighting the psyllids that spread HLB. This area wide spray program has evolved into the state wide Citrus Health Management Area (CHMA) concept that is proving that psyllid populations can be dramatically lowered provided growers participate in the program. We are a long way from beating HLB, but lower psyllid numbers are a great major first step.

Pest and disease suppression is certainly one of the key areas that "Gulf Citrus" has been focused on along with "partners" at the state and federal levels. HLB research is ongoing both at the Southwest Florida



Wayne Simmons

Research and Education Center in Immokalee and at the Citrus Research and Education Center at Lake Alfred. Coordinating sites, updating research results, and directing future research efforts...are all activities in which your association is actively evolved. With the recent outbreak and spread of Citrus Black Spot (CBS) in our region, GCGA is also engaged in bringing that disease to the industry's forefront in efforts to confine and hopefully reduce its spread! The recently held workshop on CBS at the SWFREC in Immokalee presented some alarming findings and warnings to the industry's leadership. We must work "now" to educate growers of its prospective devastation.

April and May always bring seasonally dry weather to Southwest Florida, and this year is no exception! With the prolonged drought and decreased water levels in Lake Okeechobee, water issues are taking center stage here in the Caloosahatchee River basin. As you are aware, the Gulf Citrus Growers Association has continued to be the leader in bringing these issues to the

table, and helping growers maintain their permitted water rights. GCGA has been promoting the storage of more water in Lake Okeechobee as one of the key solutions to providing water to ALL existing legal users.

Hats off to Ron and Bernadette for another successful "Country GALA" event! And, "thank you" to all of you who had a part in making the GALA a successful fundraiser. This event has evolved as GCGA's #1 event for extending our community and governmental relations programs, and I salute all the volunteers, sponsors and bidders of this year's GALA.

As this citrus season draws toward the end, I would like to say "thank you" for your interest and support for our association. Although the GCGA board deals with our day-to-day business, our committee structure allows for broader individual participation in the addressing the issues. If you would like to volunteer and/or serve on one of the association's committees please do not hesitate to ask.

We look forward to continuing to work on the issues that are impacting "Gulf" citrus growers' bottom lines!



Gulf Citrus Growers Association 2011-2012 Board of Directors

Wayne Simmons, President Mark Colbert, Vice President **Bob Newsome**, Secretary Callie Walker, Treasurer John R. Alexander George Austin **Don Barwick** Emmett Evans III Joe Hilliard II Tom Kirschner **Paul Meador Carey Soud David Wheeler Ron Hamel Executive Vice President** gulfcitruscapron@embarqmail.com www.gulfcitrus.org

Gulf Citrus Schedules 26th Annual Meeting

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association will hold its 26th annual meeting on June 6th at the Dallas Townsend Agricultural Center in LaBelle.

The annual business session will begin at 10:30 a.m. and will feature updates from GCGA's leaders on the association's programs and activities from the past year.

Association members will be receiving letters of invitation to the annual meeting, along with RSVP cards for the annual luncheon. Although there is no charge for the luncheon, members are urged to register by returning the RSVP card, calling

the office (239) 690-0281 or sending an e-mail message by May 30th.

As part of the annual meeting, GCGA will "officially" seat its board of directors and officers for the upcoming 2012-13 season, based on the results of the county elections that will be held on May 17th and 18th throughout the region.

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's Scholarship Foundation will also hold its annual meeting on June 6th in conjunction with GCGA's meeting. Reports from the foundation's officers will be presented and other business will be conducted.

Publisher's Statement

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Gulf Citrus Growers Schedules 2012-13 Director Elections



2011-2012 Gulf Citrus Growers Association Board of Directors

Front, Left to Right: Carey Soud, Wayne Simmons, Ron Hamel, Mark Colbert and Don Barwick, Middle: Bob Newsome, John R. Alexander, Callie Walker and Joe Hilliard II. Back: George Austin, David Wheeler, Paul Meador, Tom Kirschner and Emmett Evans III.

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's board of directors has scheduled the annual series of "county elections" for citrus grower representatives to serve on the 2012-2013 association board. This year's county elections will be held on May 17th and 18th as governed by GCGA's by-laws.

Bob Newsome, GCGA Secretary and chairman of the nominating committee, notes that each of the organization's five counties is entitled to at least one director to serve on the board. The county directors will be elected by citrus grower members

during each county's "annual meeting" as outlined in the association's by-laws.

All communications, including the schedules and by-laws information pertaining to the county elections, along with the participation forms and ballots, will be sent to each "Gulf Citrus" voting citrus grower member at least two weeks prior to the county elections. Based upon the association's current "grower" membership, Charlotte, Glades and Lee counties will each vote to elect one director. Collier will elect three (3), and Hendry five (5) directors.

The dates, times and locations of each "county" annual meeting to elect directors are listed below. Ballots to elect the two (2) "At Large" directors will also be sent out with the voting schedule and other detailed information.

Again this year, the GCGA board has recommended that the association's two "At Large" directors be elected by ballot. So please make sure to vote for these directors with the "official" ballot labeled "At Large" that will be included in the "elections" information packet.

2012-2013 **Directors' Elections**

Thursday, May 17th

Charlotte County (One director) 8:30 a.m. Evans Properties, Inc. Punta Gorda

Hendry County (Five directors) 2:00 p.m. Dallas Townsend AG Center LaBelle

Friday, May 18th

Glades County (One director) 9:00 a.m. Gulf Citrus Offices; Riverdale

Lee County (One director) 9:15 a.m. Gulf Citrus Offices; Riverdale

Collier County (Three directors) 11:30 a.m. UF/IFAS SWFREC Immokalee

Friday, May 25th

At Large Ballots Due (Two Directors)



Florida's Gulf Citrus **Production Region**

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association represents citrus growers with thousands of acres of citrus in Southwest Florida's "Gulf" region, which accounts for about 25% of the state's total fruit production. The region's citrus industry generates nearly \$1-billion of total economic impact.

GCGA 2011-2012 Board of Directors

Charlotte County Emmett Evans III

Evans Properties, Inc.

Collier County

Tom Kirschner Cooperative Producers, Inc.

Paul Meador Gulf Citrus Partners LP

Bob Newsome

Barron Collier Partnership

Hendry County

John R. Alexander Alico, Inc.

Mark Colbert Duda Products, Inc.

Joe Hilliard II Hilliard Brothers, Inc.

Wayne Simmons LaBelle Fruit Co. LLC

Carey Soud Soud Family Partnership

Glades County

David Wheeler Wheeler Farms, Inc.

Lee County

George Austin George Austin, Inc.

At-Large Seats

Don Barwick Heller Brothers Packing Corp.

Callie Walker **English Brothers**

GCGA "Country GALA" Draws Fun-Lovin' Folks



















2012 Gulf Citrus Growers "Country GALA"

Top Left: Over 325 folks from far and near made the 2012 "Country GALA" extra special! Top Right: Disc jockey Sean Cory leads the GALA "dancers" during a lively music set. The DJ really got folks out on the dance floor this year...so stay tuned for 2013! Mid Left: Deanna Hansen, Sarah and Paul Markle enjoy the fun-filled evening with friends & family. Mid Center: GCGA members George Austin, Hugh English, Richard Johnson and John R. Alexander share a good chat! Mid Right: Hendry County Commissioner Karson Turner and wife Lisa celebrate with their "Gator" auction items. Bottom Left: The Lee County Electric Cooperative (LCEC) group were among the "best dressed" folks at the GALA. Bottom Mid: Auctioneer extraordinaire Jack Burges proved he is a man of "many hats" as he kept the live auction items...and association's profits going! Bottom Right: Wade and Becky Timpner celebrate winning the \$1000 grand prize! Congratulations to a great couple. Bottom: The Hendry County Cattlemen's Association cooked-up the world's best ribeye steaks! Thank you very much! Ya'll come back to the GCGA's 2013 "Country Gala'!

The 12th Annual Gulf Citrus Growers Association "Country GALA" was not only an evening packed with fun, food and festivities, but a "record breaking" success generating the most total income in the event's history!

Drawing a fun-loving group of over 325 folks from throughout the "Sunshine State," the GALA was held at the LaBelle Civic Center on Saturday, March 31st.

"City slickers" and "country crackers," decked out in country casual attire, joined in to make this year's event one of the most lively and spirited "celebrations" since its beginning back in 2001!

"The 'Gulf Citrus' Country GALA has grown to become the association's most successful and festive event to raise funds to support the organization's community and governmental outreach programs that are focused here in Southwest Florida," said Ron Hamel, GCGA's executive vice president. "It is amazing to me that year after year...folks support the event. It is truly exciting," he added.

This year's GALA was supported by 77 sponsors representing companies and individuals from throughout the citrus industry. There were 12 Platinum, 26 Gold and 39 Silver Sponsors. In addition, over 65 local resorts, restaurants and businesses donated raffle, auction and other items in support.

"The GALA" would not be "the GALA" without the scrumptious ribeye steaks, cooked to perfection by the Hendry County Cattlemen's Association! The association

has been cookin' and servin' their steaks since the first GALA in 2001. This year, auctioneer Jack Burges paid special tribute to the Hendry County Cattlemen's Association during his presentation. And, the Gulf Citrus Growers Association is proud to be "partners" with them.

In addition to the great steaks...the salads, potato bar and desserts prepared by Peggy Hampton added tasty "country" flavors to the GALA's meals. To quote many folks, "the food at the GALA is the best!"

Please review and thank all our GALA sponsors and supporters published on page five (5). GCGA would like to thank ALL the volunteers that made its 12th "Country GALA" a record success!



Grower Support Key to "Gulf CHMA" Success

continued from page one

times fewer psyllids by May as compared to an untreated block."

"In 2009-10, Gulf region growers repeated the performance, this time with two dormant sprays, which showed further success," he reported. During 2010, based on the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences, the statewide CHMA program was launched to reduce ACP populations. Although growers in the Gulf region had already conducted cooperative area wide spraying as a tactic to fight psyllids, they formed the "Gulf CHMA" and participated.

Then in 2011, through the Citrus Health Response Program (CHRP), the USDA/APHIS and FDACS/DPI stepped up and enhanced their efforts to provide tap samples every three weeks statewide.

According to Dr. Stansly, the enhanced data collection is proving invaluable for growers and CHMA leaders to better gauge the effectiveness of their spray programs.

Dr. Moneen Jones, post-doctoral associate of entomology, who is working with Dr. Stansly has been mining the www.flchma.org website for data. "Looking at 'Gulf CHMA' data for the last 10 cycles (Aug. 9th 2011-Feb. 15th 2012), we see that Collier at 1.5, Lee at 1.7, Hendry at 2.5, Charlotte at 3.8 and Glades at 4.9 psyllids per 50 taps, ranks these counties among Florida's top ones in terms of lowest average ACP counts," they added. (see Table 1).

CHRP Psyllid Survey			
April 201		Average Psyllids	Number of Blocks
Rank		per 50 Taps	Sampled
1	Collier	1.5	135
2	Brevard	1.5	95
3	Lee	1.7	78
4	Desoto	2.4	361
5	Hendry	2.5	304
6	Volusia	3	54
7	Osceola	3.4	119
8	Highlands	3.7	549
9	Manatee	3.7	220
10	Charlotte	3.8	67
11	Glades	4.9	55
12	Pasco	6	189
13	Hardee	6.4	340
14	Hillsboroug	h 6.4	190
15	Martin	6.6	135
16	Polk	6.9	773
17	Indian Rive	r 8.1	216
18	Marion	8.1	66
19	Lake	9	428
20	St. Lucie	9	296
Table 1 - The Top 20 Florida Citrus Counties			

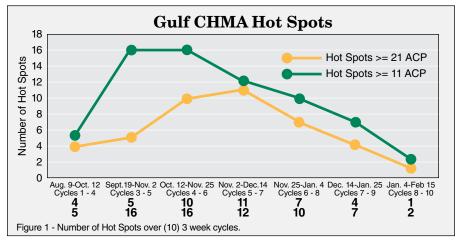
Addressing "Hot Spots"

In efforts to further enhance the effectiveness of "Gulf" growers' spray programs, Drs. Stansly and Jones are using the latest detailed data to identify grove blocks in the region that have higher ACP counts. They are calling these blocks "hot spots." According to the entomologists, although the actual number of "hot spots" in the region is minimal, they do concern their citrus neighbors. The good news is that the numbers are going down. Defining a "hot spot" as a location with greater than 20 ACP per block, the scientists reported that

a diligent spray program," said Wayne Simmons, GCGA President and member of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) board.

ACP Data Monitoring

Drs. Stansly and Jones note that growers interested in more details on ACP anywhere in the "Gulf CHMA" can check out the CHMA update at www.imok.ufl.edu/entomoloy. Clicking on "ACP Cycle Map" brings up a pdf file of the entire region and shows the groves with sampling cycles indicated by colored rings of a size propor-



of the 11 out of 650 blocks sampled during cycles 5-7 which exhibited high psyllid counts, the number decreased to only one block in survey cycles 8-10 (Figure 1). Even lowering the threshold to 11 ACP per block, a maximum of 16 blocks descended to two. "These results indicate that virtually every block of citrus in the Gulf region is being sprayed for ACPs, although some growers have been more successful than others," says Dr. Stansly.

"The latest data compiled by the scientists and regulators certainly indicate great news for our growers here in the 'Gulf' region. It has now been proven that we can reduce psyllid numbers with

"We have come a long
way since the first
cooperative dormant sprays
four years ago. Thanks in
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invest in citrus."
Dr. Phil Stansly

tional to the number of ACPs found. The user can zoom in, click cycles on or off, and find actual data for each location in the lower left panel. They report that simple instructions are provided and invite growers to contact them for further logistical information.

"The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's leadership has taken timely action to pull the entire 'Gulf' region's citrus growers together to address HLB through its area wide, cooperative spraying initiative," said Ron Hamel, GCGA executive vice president. "It is a successful program and is proving that by working together, growers have a better chance of being successful."

Mark Colbert adds, "Embracing the CHMA idea along with excellent grove care is the ticket to long term economic success when dealing with HLB."

And in summary, Dr. Stansly says, "We have come a long way since the first cooperative dormant sprays four years ago. Thanks in part to the success of this program, the Gulf region is still a good place to invest in citrus. Although we have a way to go before chanting victory against HLB, cooperation and technology will continue to move us forward."

State Citrus BMP Manual Ready for Rulemaking

The Florida Department of Agriculture's Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) has recently released the "final" draft of a new Citrus Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual. The "final" draft also contains the "draft" rule.

During the past18 months, the FDACS'/OAWP staff, in collaboration with UF/IFAS and Florida's citrus group representatives, including GCGA, have worked together on efforts to bring the three existing "regional" manuals into a single "statewide" version to avoid duplication.

According to Bill Bartnick, environmental administrator at FDACS/OAWP, the new statewide document will consolidate the three current citrus BMP manuals (including the "Gulf" manual) into a single one, while preserving regional production specificity as needed. He reported that the "final" draft has been thoroughly reviewed and field tested by FDACS, FDEP, UF/IFAS scientists and growers in each citrus production area. It is now in its last review at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) before moving into



the state rulemaking process.

Once the rulemaking process is completed, citrus growers will have a single Citrus BMP Manual to use in their efforts to better manage water resources as part of their grove operations.

Gulf Growers "Grandfathered"

Regarding flatwoods growers, who have previously filed "notices of intent" (NOIs) with FDACS and are implementing applicable BMPs on the checklist they submitted, will be "grandfathered in," according to Barnick. He explained that in addition to doing their BMPs, they must also follow the guidelines in UF/IFAS publication SL 253 (January 2008), "Nutrition of Florida Citrus Trees, Second Edition." "Following these protocols will assure citrus growers with filed NOIs, who are implementing the BMPs as noted and following the UF/IFAS "nutrition" guidelines will be operating under a "presumption of compliance" with state water quality standards," said Bartnick.

"This is certainly good news for 'Gulf' citrus growers who have enrolled over 100,000 acres in the 'Gulf Citrus BMP Manual'," said Ron Hamel of GCGA. "The 'Gulf' region is one of our state's leaders in signing NOIs and implementing citrus BMPs," he added.

Water Issues Remain High on GCGA Agenda

The persisting drought, with prospective South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) declared "water restrictions" has continued to keep added pressures on citrus growers' and other AG water users this season. The drought, as well as the SFWMD's and Corps of Engineer's management of Lake Okeechobee, have created major "challenges" to existing legal water users, including agriculture in the Caloosahatchee River basins who rely on big Lake O.

Against this backdrop, water managers are moving forward with several initiatives aimed at addressing the water quantity and quality issues of the South and SW Florida regions. The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's leaders, along with other AG groups and companies, are actively engaged in the various processes driven by the regional, state and federal agencies who share responsibilities for water quantity and quality.

Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan

The South Florida Water Management District has re-started its update of the Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan (LWCWSP), which by law is revised every five (5) years. This planning process analyzes current water use by legal users and projects out to 2030 the water supply needs of the region. When adopted by the SFWMD's Governing Board and by FDEP, the LWCWSP governs the district's water allocations to users holding consumptive use permits, including utilities and agriculture.

The "good news" for citrus growers and agriculture in the region...is that efforts, led by GCGA, FDACS, Florida Farm Bureau, and other AG groups during last year's initial planning sessions, are reflected in the recent water demand projection numbers released by the SFWMD's staff during the latest round of public workshops. Although last year's initial future water supply demand numbers for agriculture, particularly the citrus projections, were based on greatlyreduced acreage, the collective efforts by our "AG" team were successful in redirecting SFWMD staff following assurances that replanting and/or crop changes would occur and water allocations for agriculture need to be maintained.

GCGA will continue to participate in the process to assure that "Gulf" growers maintain the water resources as noted in their permits.

NNC, TMDLs & BMAPs

The water quality initiatives related to numeric nutrient criteria (NNC), total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and basin management action plans (BMAPs) are all underway. The Florida Legislature passed and Governor Scott signed the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's numeric nutrient criteria rule, and sent it on to EPA for approval. The Florida Congressional delegation sent a follow up letter of support, urging EPA to promptly approve the FDEP rule, which would put Florida regulators in charge of the state's NNCs. All parties await EPA's response to the FDEP rule. EPA has, however, delayed implementation of its initial NNCs.

FDEPs efforts to set TMDLs for the tidal Caloosahatchee River are moving forward. The agency has also begun working with FDACS, GCGA and other AG groups and operations on TMDL efforts on the Caloosahatchee from S-79 (Franklin Lock) eastward toward Lake Okeechobee. Two meetings have been held on this effort, and growers, farmers and ranchers along the Caloosahatchee are urged to participate in the process. Once TMDLs are established, FDEP will establish basin management action plans (BMAPs) to address the water quality issues.

GCGA Presents "Brilliant Orange" Awards, Scholarships

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association recently presented its 2012 "Brilliant Orange" Awards to four Hendry County "first year" teachers in conjunction with the Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Dinner in Clewiston.

The teachers recognized were Emily Figured, a 1st grade teacher at Upthegrove

Elementary School, LaBelle; Melinda Gebhardt, a response to intervention (RTI) teacher at Central Elementary School in Clewiston; Ashley Carroll, a science teacher at LaBelle Middle School and Joshua Groves, a reading teacher at Clewiston High School.

Ron Hamel, GCGA's executive vice president presented each teacher with a "Brilliant

Orange" plaque and a check for \$50. The association, in conjunction with the Foundation For Hendry County Public Schools, Inc., annually selects the teachers based on nominations from school administrators. The awards were appropriately named as Hendry County ranks as one of Florida's top orange producing counties.

Spring 2012 Scholarships Awarded

GCGA's Scholarship Foundation recently awarded its Spring semester awards to four college students according to foundation president Callie Walker. Students receiving GCGA scholarships were: Daniel Blank attending Hohenheim University; David Roberge Bouchard attending Edison State College; Michelle Hayes attending the University of Georgia and Jason Soud attending the University of Florida.

Walker also reports that the foundation has 40 members and donors, and that in coming weeks annual member renewal notices will be sent out. Member applications will also be sent to non-members with the goal of increasing the membership and enhancing scholarship funding for the coming year.

Recently, the GCGA Scholarship Foundation received a \$1000 donation from the College of Life Foundation, represented by Charles Dauray. "This generous donation is a great boost for the 'kick off" of GCGA's membership/contribution drive that will begin in the next few weeks," said Ron Hamel. "We really appreciate this support of our foundation."

Over \$72,000 has been awarded through GCGA and its foundation since the scholarship program began in 1992. More information and student applications are available through GCGA and multi-county citrus agent Mongi Zekri.

Join the foundation and contribute to the future of Florida's agriculture by supporting students' education.

Gulf Citrus appreciates the support of



The association does not "endorse" the goods or services promoted in this newsletter



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