SOUTHEAST REGIONAL MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2020

SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION

FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER
BROWARD COUNTY FLORIDA
Lourdes Rodriguez
Public Relations Specialist
University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Serving UF/IFAS Extension in these southeast Florida Counties:
Brevard, Broward, Glades, Hendry, Highlands, Indian River, Miami-Dade, Martin, Monroe, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, Seminole Tribe, and St. Lucie.

Profile:
Lourdes Rodriguez, a public relations specialist at UF/IFAS Communications, provides media relations, crisis communications, and branding support to five UF/IFAS research centers and 13 UF/IFAS Extensions within the coastal stretch of the Southeast District. Lourdes’ 30-year career started with a 10-year stretch as a bilingual journalist covering education, healthcare, environment, and Hispanic communities, mostly at the Tampa Tribune, but also at the Miami Herald and the Wall Street Journal during the early part of her career. The remainder of her career has focused on specialized areas of public relations including media relations, crisis communications, brand development, and corporate communications for healthcare, higher education, and government. A two-time University of South Florida alum, Lourdes has made the sun and fun of the Sunshine State her passion. Hiking, kayaking, boating, and finding new adventures makes life that much sweeter, especially when she can share a good story.

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Profile:

Jeff Wasielewski is the Commercial Tropical Fruit Crops Extension Agent for UF/IFAS Extension in Miami-Dade County. He is an expert horticulturist with 25 years of experience in the field. Jeff has a Master’s degree in Education from the University of Miami, a Bachelor’s degree in English from Florida International University, as well as an Associate’s degree in Horticulture from Miami Dade College and an Associate’s degree of Science from Florida State University. He has been writing and teaching about tropical fruit and South Florida horticulture for over 20 years. His goal is to assist all commercial tropical fruit growers in South Florida by providing current and science-based information through classes, lectures, field visits, publications, videos, and social media (yay blogs!).

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Presenting:
Emerging Trends of Tropical Fruits

Jeff Wasielewski
UF/IFAS Extension, Miami-Dade County, Commercial Tropical Fruit Crops Agent
Presenting:
Home Canning Best Practices

Profile:
Matt Krug is housed at the SWFREC and facilitates extension programming around the state of Florida in the areas of food safety, food regulations, and food entrepreneurship. He also provides guidance to clientele of the Florida Culinary Accelerator @ Immokalee and oversees the food quality lab within the facility.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) revolutionized regulations that food businesses throughout the United States must follow. Many other food regulations also present challenges for Florida food businesses. Matt helps develop, implement, and evaluate extension programs that help Florida’s produce growers, food processors, and other food entrepreneurs comply with regulators/auditors and build and maintain successful food businesses.

The Florida Culinary Accelerator @ Immokalee, located at the Immokalee Airport, provides and economically viable option to local food entrepreneurs who need commercial kitchen space to develop their food business. Matt conducts food science extension programming to help meet the needs of accelerator clientele and others around the state.

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Dr. Alferez
UF/IFAS Extension (SWFREC), Citrus Horticulture, Assistant Professor

Presenting:
Citrus Greening: Where are we now?

Profile:
Dr. Fernando Alferez began as the SWFREC Citrus Horticulturist in February 2017. He previously worked as a visiting research scientist at the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred on systemic acquired resistance of citrus plants. Dr. Alferez earned his Ph.D. in plant biology from the University of Valencia, Spain. His graduate studies dealt with determining and understanding exogenous endogenous factors regulating fruit development, maturation, and quality.

At SWFREC, Dr. Alferez’ research and extension programs will be interconnected and strive to serve the citrus industry in southwest Florida and the entire state. Some of his projects will include systematic characterization of novel varieties being released for both processing and the fresh market and assaying novel ways to manage postharvest fruit drop under HLB pressure.

RESEARCH / EXTENSION
Researching and testing solutions to protect citrus trees and increase fruit yield and quality. Currently, we are working on:
- Psyllid exclusion to maintain trees healthy and productive
- Fruit drop alleviation to harvest more fruit

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Presenting:
Broward County Legacy Award Recipients: The Garden Project

Profile:
Lorna is currently serving as UF/IFAS Extension Broward County Director / Urban Horticulture Agent. She is presently leading Broward County’s Master Gardener Volunteer Program, the Florida Friendly Landscaping Program, and the Sustainable Urban Food Production Short-Course. In 2019, UF/IFAS Extension Broward County Master Gardener Volunteer Program received the 2019 Master Gardener Legacy Grant award. The Legacy Award recognizes the importance of urban agriculture education and educating Broward County teachers in South Florida's community and school urban garden efforts. Lorna is part of the UF/IFAS Extension South Florida Hydroponics Initiative Team. In August 2020, The South Florida Hydroponics Initiative video won the National Award under the American Society for Horticulture Science (ASHS) video section.

Lorna is very excited to combine her previous architectural experience and accreditations with horticultural expertise. She feels honored to deliver sustainable and environmentally friendly programs in Broward County to help make communities greener. Lorna is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Florida under the department of Environmental Horticulture, where she will be researching water conservation in the built environment.

Contact:
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Profile:

Wendy Wilber has been with the University of Florida since 2000 when she became an environmental horticulture agent and Master Gardener Volunteer program coordinator for UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County. In 2015, she took over as Florida's State Master Gardener Volunteer Program Coordinator. In her 14 years as Master Gardener Volunteer program coordinator for the county, Wendy trained over 300 Master Gardener volunteers—as of Spring 2015, there are 140 active Master Gardener volunteers serving in Alachua County. These volunteers participate in an intensive course to learn about gardening, horticulture, and landscaping. In turn, these volunteers advise and teach people of Alachua County in areas of plants, landscape, and insects and diseases of plants. Wendy is recognized as a leader in the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer program and was granted the Florida Master Gardener Professorship in 2012. Wendy enjoys fishing, hiking, and travelling to botanical gardens across the country with her partner Eric and daughter Sophie.

"Being able to serve the community as an Environmental Horticulture agent has been such a blessing in my life," Wendy says. "I am very fortunate to have a very meaningful career where I can help to improve people's lives and the environment in the community that I am so proud to be a part of."

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Wendy Wilber
UF/IFAS, State Master gardener Volunteer Coordinator

Presenting:
Master Gardener Volunteer Awards, Closing Remarks, and Evaluations