

Suncoast Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Club

Meeting Notice

Next Meeting:	Wednesday, November 12, 2014
Where:	Main Room Nokomis Community Center 234 Nippino Trail East, Nokomis, FL 34275
Agenda:	6:30 pm Chat and Tasting Table 7:00 pm Introduction and Presentation 8:30 pm Plant Raffle
Speaker:	Peggy Sieburth, PhD Biological Administrator III Citrus Germplasm Introduction Program Bureau of Citrus Budwood Registration Division of Plant Industry Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Topic:	The Florida Citrus Repository – Creating Citrus for Tomorrow

Much has been written about the bacterial disease citrus greening. As we know, the disease weakens citrus trees, leading to less fruit production, and eventually kills the tree. The pressure is on to develop new scion and rootstock options for the Florida citrus industry and, in turn, for “backyard” gardeners like all of us.

While the process of identifying new citrus rootstocks with varying levels of tolerance to citrus greening is under way, the evaluation of new candidates in today’s environment presents a myriad of new challenges. This can impact the ability to evaluate the true characteristics of each potential cultivar which in the past could take as long as 10 years.

Florida’s citrus industry has a major new catalyst for the expedited introduction into the state of new citrus varieties that offer competitive advantages while also protecting growers from diseases and pests that have intermittently plagued them for decades.

On June 16, 2014, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) debuted the \$2 million, 25,000 square foot Florida Citrus Repository. The new complex expands the FDACS Citrus Germplasm Introduction Program, which provides a way to safely introduce healthy new citrus varieties into the state.

Between 2003 and 2012, the program released 46 new citrus varieties from California, Texas, Spain, Australia, Italy, Japan, Nepal, South Africa, Israel and

China. The new facility will expedite the process further and release as many as 20 to 30 new varieties each year.

Although the new variety breeding program will help in the long fight against citrus greening, its more important focus is the ongoing and continuous development of commercially viable new varieties of citrus. Dr. Peggy Sieburth is the director of the new facility.

Dr. Sieburth and her team work collaboratively with the United States Department of Agriculture, University of Florida/IFAS and the non-profit New Varieties Development and Management Corporation.