

Low-Chill Olive Update

Findings from Site Visit: 03 October 2017

Location: Wauchula (Hardee County), Florida (27° 32' 06" N / 81° 48' 52" W)

Purpose of Visit: Examine and document grafts of Middle East/North African (MENA) and South American (SA) olive (*Olea europaea*) cultivars in Block B, Row 11 at Wauchula research site.

Background: Currently, olive varieties cultivated in the U.S. are drawn from European stocks (Spain, Greece, Italy, etc.). In order to bloom and subsequently fruit, these European stocks must accumulate 200-300 *chill hours** between November and March. Hardee County generally accumulates less than 200 chill hours annually. The Florida Olive Council, UF/IFAS Department of Horticulture and the Hardee County Economic Development Authority have undertaken a joint research project to discover and/or develop a *low-chill* olive cultivar that will reliably flower and fruit in Hardee County.



Block B-Row 11 Hardee County

Research Methodology: During July 2017, cuttings from 27 varieties of *Olea europaea* native to MENA and SA were secured from the USDA germ plasm at University of California (Davis) and grafted onto existing mature Arbequina trees at the Hardee County research facility. Cuttings are also rooting at the Florida Olive Research Facility in north Florida.

Observations: Over 50% the grafts in Block B Row 11 did not take. However, despite severe adverse weather conditions, grafts from Albanian, Cypriot, Tunisian, and Chilean stocks were successful (some photos below). A full report will be available in December 2017.

We want to thank all of you. This research could not be possible without your support.



Chill Hour = 1 hr. between 32 and 47 degrees F.

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