

Partnering for a Sustainable Florida Olive Industry



O Love! what hours were thine and mine, in lands of palm and southern pine; In lands of palm, of orange-blossom, of olive, aloe, and maize and vine! Alfred Tennyson (1809 – 1892)

Olive trees grow and thrive in Florida. Like much of the Mediterranean basin, Florida has sandy, well-drained soils and lots of sun. There are reports of producing olive groves in the 1700s near Daytona Beach and a 35-foot bearing olive tree was documented on the Gibson farm near Tampa in the 1930s. **Don Mueller**, a pioneer Florida olive grower has been producing olives and oil on a small grove near Marianna for fifteen years. **Tommy Oleson** has been

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The Florida Olive Council (FOC) is testing several cultivars and grove layouts around the state.

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FOC president Michael O'Hara Garcia testified before the International Trade Commission in Washington DC.

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The Florida Olive Council invites support from growers and the general public. To apply, contact the FOC.

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Olive Tree in Bloom, St. Augustine, FL

Events

June 15, 2013

UF-IFAS and the Florida Olive Council will host a Special Olive Seminar for commercial growers and small farmers at the Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center, Live Oak, FL.

The Special Olive Seminar is part of the Mixed Fruit Field Day event featuring stone fruits, berries, and pomegranates. Space is limited. Contact: Sarah White, 386-362-1725 x102

August 2-4, 2013

UF-IFAS Small Farms Alternative Enterprises Conference will be held in Kissimmee, FL. Contact: IFAS Conference office: 352-392-5930 or register on-line at: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/sma1lfarms/registration.html>

Florida Olive Research Project

The Florida Olive Council (FOC) has initiated a 5-year olive research project to discover and develop cultivars most suitable to Florida climate and soils.

The project incorporates both conventional and in-vitro research using plant material from California, Europe, the Middle East and Balkans.

In addition, plant material from long-surviving Florida olive trees will be collected and propagated in a controlled environment.

The project has begun with test plots at UF-IFAS research stations in Citra, Ocala and Live Oak as well as plots located at private grower sites

throughout the State. The FOC is actively seeking grower-partners for the research program.

Cultivars currently planted include: Arbequina, Arbosona, Koroneiki, Mission, Picual, Taggiasca, Grignan, Luccino and Chemlali. The test plantings are configured for Conventional (small farm) and Commercial (high density) operations.

Weather and soil conditions at each site will be monitored using modern information technology equipment and made available to research personnel over the Internet. In-vitro research will be conducted in a private facility.

For more information contact,
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USDA Project Demonstrates Olive Fruiting in Lower Latitudes

Some believe the olive (*Olea europaea* L.) will not reliably flower and fruit in lower latitudes, like Florida, due to a lack of *chill hours*. Chill hours are the number of hours the outside temperature remains below 45°F.

However, USDA scientist **Nasir Malik** conducted several experiments in southern Texas and observed that "extensive flowering and fruiting in 'Arbequina' olives can be achieved at temperatures above 7.2°C (44.96°F) by controlling for heat during inductive periods."

Dr. Malik conducted research at the USDA station located near McAllen, TX (26° Lat.) corresponding to Naples, FL.

Although more research must be done to develop cultivars and cultivation methods for Florida olives; Dr. Malik's study offers some encouragement to those wishing to grow olives south of the I-75 corridor. For more info:

http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publications.htm?SEQ_NO_115=259672 and
http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publications.htm?SEQ_NO_115=230947



Political Action

Domestic Olive Industry Representatives from CA, GA, TX and FL

Washington DC – In December 2012, growers, packers and industry support groups testified before the U.S. International Trade Commission in Washington DC in support of fair trade practices for domestic olive producers.

The group documented examples of unfair trade practices and fraudulent labeling by foreign producers. University of California (Davis) researchers testified their studies suggested 70% of olive oil sold in the U.S. did not meet minimum USDA standards. Foreign producers accounted for 98% of the 85 million gallons consumed in the U.S. last year.

Florida Olive Council, LAA president **Michael O'Hara Garcia** (5th from R.) said, "domestic growers cannot build an industry competing with fraudulent labeling, 40% production subsidies and 3,000% tariff differentials."

The group also advocated for language in the 2013 Farm Bill forcing foreign imports to meet USDA standards. After lobbying by the U.S. olive industry, the language was inserted into the House version of the Farm Bill (HR 6083). However, some importers and bottlers are fighting the action in the Senate claiming lost jobs and additional consumer costs.

Jason Shaw (3d from R.), who cultivates 50 acres of olives at his farm near Lakeland, GA (30 mi. north of Jasper, FL) said, "protecting our famers and consumers should be our first priority."

The Shaw Brothers will harvest their third olive crop this year and recently purchased an olive mill with a 2 ton/hr capacity to support contract growers with over 200 acres in South Georgia and North Florida.



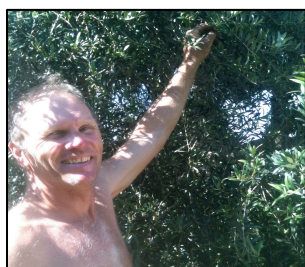
Don Muller



Tony Valenza



John Gose



Henri Bos

cont'd from page 1 growing olives near Hastings, FL for more than 12 years. **Tony Valenza** operates an olive nursery near Citra, FL; **Jonathan Carter** has installed 20+ acres of super-high-density (SHD) olives near Live Oak, FL; **John Gose**, the Special Projects Manager for **Lykes Brothers** has a small test plot of olives near Lake Wales. **Alex Ford** and **Richard Williams** have a new super high-density grove near De Leon Springs. Other Florida growers include **Dave Hannah** of Hannah Hill Farms near Live Oak; **Heather and Darren Jackson** are working 18 acres near Mayo, FL; **Jerry Stilling** has a small grove near New Smyrna Beach; **Leonardo Yuque** has 300 trees near Groveland, FL; **Dana Venrick** has olives near DeLand; **Richard McGinley** is installing a test plot of olives south of Ocala; **William Sproul** is starting an olive grove in Martin County and many **citrus growers** are installing test groves.



Tom Oleson



Jonathan Carter



Ford & Williams

Beach Olives!

St. Augustine Beach – **Henri Bos** stands beside his 6 year-old 20' Arbequina olive tree growing 300 yards from the Atlantic Ocean. Henri says he gets olives every year and looks forward to learning how to brine and press them for household use. Photos were taken in May 2013.



Membership

The Florida Olive Council, LAA is a not-for-profit organization established under the laws of the State of Florida to promote, foster and encourage more efficient and progressive production, marketing, or selling of olives and related agricultural products, and in general to function as a limited agricultural association within the meaning of section 604.09, *Fla. Stat.*

For membership information, please contact: Michael O'Hara Garcia, 3324 W. University Ave. #160, Gainesville, FL 32607 michael@floridaolivecouncil.org (202) 246-2001