

Florida Olive Council Report



2014



2015



2016

Olives Thrive At Mosaic

Three years ago Mosaic Corporation partnered with the Florida Olive Council to install an olive test grove on re-claimed phosphate mine land near Bartow, FL. The purpose was to research an alternative crop for the struggling citrus industry and support local farmers.

In 2014, Mosaic installed 40 trees (10 varieties, 4 trees each) to determine which varieties would grow best in the area and which would lend best to small farm cultivation for table olives and oil. The varieties included: Aglandau, Ascolana, Coratina, Empeltre, Frantoio, Grignan, Kalamata, Manzanillo de Sevilla, Pendolino and Taggiasca.

Later in 2015, 400 trees were planted in a high-density configuration (6' x 12') to simulate a large commercial olive oil production operation. In this plot, Arbequina, Koroneiki and Arbosona were planted similar to commercial plantings in California, Spain and Australia.

Most varieties have done well with the exception of the Aglandau. The Taggiasca, and in particular, the Empeltre have demonstrated significant growth. Pictured above is an Empeltre olive tree framed by Tom Pospichal and Dave Crum, Mosaic land managers. The Empeltre is native to Catalan, Spain.



August Fruit Set in Ona, FL

The Florida Olive Council conducts surveys to research olive production in Florida. In August 2015, FOC researchers visited Elliott Robert's citrus grove near Ona, FL and discovered a fruiting olive tree.

Roberts planted an Arbequina olive tree in 2011 as an experiment and has been fertilizing and watering the olive tree the same way as his citrus. In four years, the tree has grown to 20' and has a substantial caliper.



Roberts reports very little problem with disease; although he cautioned against planting olive trees near areas treated

with pre-emergent weed-control agents. While they generally do not kill the tree; they do reduce the tree's ability to feed. (see photo above).

New Ocala Olive Mill

Bill Dennis of Clear Creek Farms installed a new olive mill and bottling facility near Ocala.

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FOC Research Facility

The Florida Olive Council puts finishing touches on new olive research facility near La Crosse, FL.

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UF-IFAS Grower Event

Over 100 Florida olive growers were hosted to a discussion at the IFAS Research and Education Center at Citra, FL

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President's Corner



First, I want to apologize the tardiness of this Fall 2015 edition. It has been an active year. Our partner Mosaic installed a 400 tree high density test plot; we again made beautiful Frantoio and Leccino olive oil at Don Mueller's [Green Gate Grove](#) and we broke ground at the Florida Olive Research Facility in La Crosse, FL (north of Gainesville).

In addition, our UF-IFAS partners have been active, with Dr. Jennifer Gillett-Kaufman and Dr. Mack Thetford publishing [scientific papers](#) on Florida olives and a well-attended olive conference hosted by UF-IFAS Dean for Research, Dr. Jackie Burns.

The Council supported an initiative at UF-IFAS Food Science Department to develop an olive oil chemical analysis capability. Samples of the 2015 crop were sent to the International Olive Council certified lab in Australia.

The UF-IFAS lab also tested samples from the same crop and results compared favorably with the IOC. It is nice to know we have in-house capability for basic olive oil quality analysis. We want to thank everyone for making 2015 a successful year for Florida olives.

Michael O'Hara Garcia is president of the Florida Olive Council, LAA, a non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) organization for agricultural research and advocacy.

New Olive Mill in Ocala



Bill Dennis & Camila Ramirez-Gonzalez



Camila and Bill at Olive Grove

Bill Dennis and Camila Ramirez-Gonzalez installed a top-line Pieralisi olive mill at their Clear Creek Farms west of Ocala. In an area better known for thoroughbred horses, Bill Dennis and his wife Kay established a modern facility to breed rare Wagyu cattle. The meat of the Wagyu is highly prized selling for several times the price of conventional beef.

Never satisfied with the status quo, Bill enlisted the aid of business developer Camila Ramirez-Gonzalez and they began a year-long research into olives and olive production. They attended various lectures and training sessions at the Olive Institute at University of California (Davis) and spend hours planning design of their grove and processing facilities. Located at the 400-acre Clear Creek Farm, the olive production operation will produce olives and provide milling and bottling services for local olive growers.

UF-IFAS Food Science Department develops olive oil testing and evaluation skills

Dr. Yavuz Yagiz of the UF-IFAS Food Science Dept. prepares equipment to process olives from the 2015 Florida olive crop. The Food Science Department is partnering with the Florida Olive Council to develop a world-class olive oil testing and evaluation capability. Students and staff will learn to test and analyze olive oil to determine quality and purity. Olive oil fraud is a significant consumer issue.



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Florida Olive Research Facility



Layout for 26' x 50' greenhouse



Hoops and frame assembled



Lady supervises



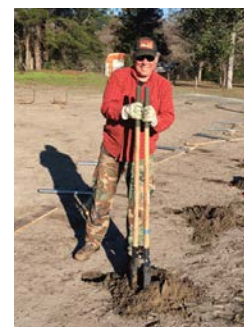
James checks level



Ends and ventilation installed



Workers pour concrete slab



Garcia uses PhD*



Olive trees moved into greenhouse



Greenhouse completed



UF Intern Pedro Toledo

The Florida Olive Council announced completion of phase I construction at the Florida Olive Research Facility in La Crosse, FL (north of Gainesville). The site hosts a greenhouse, offices, shop and research lab. Phase II of the development will be completed in April 2016 and includes a field trial area hosting 15 unique olive cultivars.

Michael O'Hara Garcia, president of the Florida Olive Council said he envisioned multiple uses for the facility to include propagation, cultivation techniques, studies on essential oils, olive leaf extract and related products. The Council will host informational briefings for local farmers, educators, students and agriculture officials. The facility will also provide support for on-going olive research at the

*post-hole digger

Florida Olive Grower Highlights



Florida Olive "godfather" **Don Mueller** shows off one of his 15 year-old Leccino olive trees. Don's 400-tree Green Gate olive grove is located near Marianna, FL.



Sage Kamaya stands beside one of his 2 year old olive trees on a plot near his home in Bradenton, FL. Sage's plot contains 19 trees of 9 different varieties.



Shoppers in search of real extra virgin olive oil look no further. **Connie and Mike Casey** opened the [River Run](#) olive oil store in High Springs, FL. Mike and Connie will also sell oil from several new local groves.



Mack Thetford and Wes Wood (l-r) stand beside the new olive test plot at UF-IFAS Research and Education Center near Milton, FL. Trees were donated by the Florida Olive Council.



Florida olive pioneer, **Tommy Oleson** works his grove near Hastings, FL. Tommy has over 20 years experience growing olives in Florida.



Vicky Daniell tends her five-acre high-density olive grove near Clermont, FL. Vicky planted her grove of Arbequina trees in 2013. She produced olives and made olive oil in 2015.



Olive nurseryman Vincent Tort inspects fruiting olive trees at [Sun City Trees](#) near Ruskin, FL. Tort sells several varieties of small and large landscape olive trees.

UF-IFAS Hosts Olive Growers



Research Dean **Jackie Burns** and grower **Jonathan Carter** discuss future Florida olive industry at grower event held at UF-IFAS Research and Education Center.



UF-IFAS professor **Jeff Williamson** discusses olive cultivation with event participants. More than 100 Florida olive growers attended the educational event.



Florida olive industry pioneers (l-r) **Tommy Oleson** and **Don Muller** share a delicious lunch at the event.



UF-IFAS specialist **Eric Ostmark** answers grower questions about varieties at UF-IFAS/FOC research plot at Citra, FL.