

2008 Southeastern Citrus Exposition Report

About 160 citrus enthusiasts from at least 11 states attended the Sixth Annual Southeastern Citrus Exposition at the University of Georgia Tifton Campus on Saturday, November 15, 2008. The Expo featured four expert speakers and tours of the University's citrus and horticultural test gardens.

The lineup of speakers was excellent, with Dr. Monte Nesbit of Auburn University's Gulf Coast Research Station in Fairhope, Alabama, describing how to grow satsumas in USDA Zone 8, and Wayne Dixon, describing how the tight quarantine controls are helping to manage the spread of citrus greening. Jerry Selph showed slides on how to identify and control common pests of citrus. Dr. Jack Hearn, a retired USDA citrus scientist, told entertaining stories from his career in citrus research, including those from trips to Brazil and China.

Dr. Wayne Hanna, UGA Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, gave a tour of the citrus test plot at the Tifton Campus. A few years ago, 100 Changsha mandarins and Ichang lemons were planted from seed that had been irradiated to within an inch of their lives in hopes of producing hardy, tasty, seedless citrus varieties for home gardeners Zone 8. The first large Changsha crop awaits evaluation.

And finally, Dr. John Rutter, UGA Department of Horticulture, Tifton, led a tour of the university's ornamental test plot, which features a remarkable collection of rare and colorful conifers from around the world, many other woody ornamentals, and even large dieback perennials, such as new Confederate rose hybrids.

Citrus fruit contest trophy and ribbon winners were as follows:

Best in Show: Gary Kerr of Beaufort, South Carolina for Persian lime

Honorable Mention: Jeanette Sapp of Brooks County, Georgia, for ruby red grapefruit

Most Unusual: Bob McCartney, Woodlanders, Aiken, South Carolina, for Benton citrange

Sweet Orange

1st: Garry Kerr, Beaufort, South Carolina

2nd: Ned Rahn, Beaufort, South Carolina

3rd: Mark Crawford, Valdosta, Georgia

Kumquats and Hybrids

1st: Gary Kerr, Beaufort, South Carolina

2nd: Ned Rahn, Beaufort, South Carolina

3rd: David Lavernege, Jarreau, Louisiana

Grapefruit and Pummelo

1st: Jeanette Sapp, Brooks County, Georgia

2nd: Ned Rahn, Beaufort, South Carolina

3rd: Georgia Van Zyle, Coosaw Station, South Carolina

Lime

1st: Gary Kerr, Beaufort, South Carolina

2nd: Amie Barbas, Loundes, Georgia

3rd: Georgia Van Zyle, Coosaw Station, South Carolina

Lemon

1st: Gary Kerr, Beaufort, South Carolina

2nd: Georgia Van Zyle, Coosaw Staion, South Carolina

3rd: Dan Spitler, Shelby, Alabama

Complex Hybrids

1st: Annie Barbas, Loundes Cty, Georgia

2nd: Ned Rahn, Beaufort, South Carolina

3rd: Annie Barbas, Loundes City, Georgia

Trifoliate Hybrids

1st: Hayes Jackson, Anniston, Alabama

2nd: Bob McCartney, Aiken, South Carolina

3rd: Will Taylor, Athens, Tennessee

Sour Orange

1st: Keith Endres, Cary, North Carolina

2nd: Robert Goodyear, Georgia

3rd: Bob McCartney, Woodlanders, Aiken, South Carolina

Ichangensis Hybrids

1st: Keith Endres, Cary, North Carolina

2nd: Bob McCartney, Woodlanders, Aiken, South Carolina

3rd: Ned Rahn, Beaufort, South Carolina

Mandarins

1st: Georgia Van Zyle, Coosaw Station, South Carolina

2nd: Mark Crawford, Valdosta, Georgia

3rd: Dan Spitler, Shelby, Alabama

Trifoliate

1st: Stan McKenzie, Scranton, South Carolina

Award to person who traveled the farthest to the Expo: a half bushel of Southeastern citrus fruit varieties to Perry Couch of Speed, Indiana.

Next year's Southeastern Citrus Expo will take place at Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, Charleston, South Carolina, November 21, 2009. Make plans now to attend!

From the Experts

To make it easier to identify tiny citrus pests, Jerry Selph uses a 12x hand lens called a thread counter or linen counter.

Dr. Jack Hearn recommends changing mulch under citrus trees regularly to help prevent insect and disease problems. Or forego mulch altogether.

Monte Nesbit recommends several methods of protection to guard citrus from freezes, plus several other tips.

- Plant citrus under pines. Even large deciduous trees such as pecans provide some overstory protection.
- Plant trees under a high tunnel greenhouse, using supplemental heat when it drops into the teens. Keep it ventilated on warm days.
- Install sprinklers to take advantage of the warmth of the water and the formation of protective ice on the trees. This is the most exacting method of freeze protection.
- Prune citrus only to remove crossed branches and out of bounds limbs, although it's alright to remove lower branches.
- Though they only add a degree or two of hardiness to the grafted variety, trifoliolate rootstocks are best for acid soils.