Citrus 101 seminar

Many home gardeners are interested in growing citrus in their landscapes. In recent years, questions concerning selecting, growing and caring for citrus trees has increased as more people have moved to Northwest Florida.

If you are interested in learning about how to grow citrus in Florida’s Panhandle, plan to attend the Citrus 101 seminar. This seminar is brought to you by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension Office in Okaloosa County.

This seminar will take place 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Friday, April 23 at the UF/IFAS Okaloosa County Extension Office, 5479 Old Bethel Road in Crestview.

Dr. Steve Futch, UF/IFAS Citrus Extension Agent from the Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred, will be our speaker.

Not every type of citrus is well suited for North Florida. Citrus species are basically subtropical or tropical crops. When selecting citrus to grow in Northwest Florida, it’s best to select the more cold-hardy citrus types. The Florida citrus industry is about 400 years old and was centered in north-central Florida until the big freezes of 1894-95. These freezes caused the citrus industry to move further south. Commercial citrus production has progressively moved further south in the state as a result of cold weather. Dr. Futch will cover the best citrus varieties to grow here in our region of the state.

In recent years, Florida has faced some challenges with citrus production because of introduced diseases such as citrus canker and more recently citrus greening. Seminar attendees will learn about these diseases as well as an array of other disease and insect pests that can attack citrus in North Florida. Dr. Futch will also discuss nutritional disorders as well as cultural practices including citrus fertilization and pruning.

Those attending the seminar who have citrus trees with problems may bring a sample from their citrus tree for help in diagnosing the problem. The sample should be fresh and represent the problem as seen on the tree. A small stem with at least several leaves attached should be sufficient. Please place the sample in a plastic bag and close the bag.

Participants will be supplied with handouts and a printed copy of the PowerPoint presentation.

Please preregister for the Citrus 101 seminar by calling the Okaloosa County Extension Office at 689-5850 or 729-1400, Ext. 5850. There is a $3 cost to attend payable at the door. Space is limited.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, April 7, 2010