Dear Glades Community,

It is my genuine pleasure to serve as the Acting Center Director at the Everglades REC. We all sincerely miss Dr. Christine Waddill and wish her the best in her new duties at Tropical REC. As sugarcane agronomist at EREC since 2000, I have had the privilege of getting to know the sugarcane grower community, but it has been a new pleasure these last few months to meet growers and cooperators in turf, vegetables, soils and water, and other industries. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the community in assisting our research and education programs and look forward to working with you all.

As acting director for up to the next 2 years, I will be continuing my own research programs with sugarcane cultivar development, sugarcane agronomy and biofuels. I am fortunate to be able to count on the assistance of a new postdoctoral associate, Dr. Hardev Sandhu. While continuing this research program and assuming new administrative duties is a challenge, we are fortunate to have a great staff and faculty at EREC that have assumed many of the responsibilities. My highest priorities are mentoring young faculty and ensuring that EREC implements excellent research and extension programs. I look forward to serving you as Acting Center Director.

With all best wishes for the holidays,

Rob Gilbert

Dr. Gilbert may be contacted by email at: ragilber@ufl.edu

Diaprepes Root Weevil Found In Florida Sugarcane

The Diaprepes root weevil, *Diaprepes abbreviatus*, is invasive to Florida and is an important pest of sugarcane in Barbados and Puerto Rico. This insect is a root weevil native to the Caribbean, and one of the most economically important pests there. It was first reported in Florida during the 1960s. Since then it has spread over a large area of central and southern Florida where it is damaging to citrus, ornamental plants, and some other crops. Until this year, although found near Florida sugarcane, sugarcane damage has not been found. This year damage in Florida sugarcane by this pest has been noted by Dr. Ron Cherry, Everglades Research and Education Center. Larvae are white and look like grubs, but have no legs. Larvae feed on roots and tunnel into the stool and below ground stalks. Damage is similar to grub damage; symptoms show plants turning yellow, highly stunted, and lodging. We do not know if this damage was rare or a sign of more damage that may occur. Hence, sugarcane growers who note grub appearing damage are asked to call Dr. Ron Cherry at 561-993-1529 or email him at rcherry@ufl.edu
**Faculty and Staff News**

*Follow up on the new positions listed in our last newsletter:*

**Assistant Professor, Plant Breeder/Horticulture—Dr. Huangjun Lu**

Dr. Lu received his PhD degree from Louisiana State University. His research is concentrated on genetic improvement of lettuce and development of St. Augustinegrass cultivars. The goal of lettuce breeding is to develop cultivars with high yield potential, good horticultural characteristics and disease/insect resistance. The objectives of St. Augustinegrass improvement includes adaptation to the coastal areas of southern Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, and resistance/tolerance to biotic or abiotic stresses existing in these regions. In his program, conventional breeding techniques and molecular biological technologies are used to achieve the goals of developing better cultivars. He also has extension responsibility which aims at development of educational programming for production of lettuce and vegetative propagation of St. Augustinegrass. He works closely with lettuce growers and sod producers to address crop production questions. Dr. Lu may be contacted at: hjlu@ufl.edu

**Assistant Professor, Weed Scientist—Dr. Dennis “Calvin” Odero**

Dr. Odero received his master’s and doctorate in agronomy from the University of Wyoming, after receiving his bachelor’s degree in horticulture from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, in 1997. Prior to coming to Florida, Dr. Odero was a Post Doctoral Research Associate at the University of Wyoming.

His current research projects include: Influence of phosphorus on critical period of weed control in lettuce; Split application of imazethapyr for weed control in lettuce; Critical period of weed control in snap beans; S-metolachlor and bentazon for weed control in snap beans; Response of parthenium ragweed to saflufenacil; Response of giant reed to postmergence sugarcane grass herbicides; and Weed control in basil.

Future projects he plans to work on include: Efficacy and dissipation of preemergence herbicides in sugarcane; Bermudagrass control during fallow period in sugarcane; and Effect of green sugarcane harvesting on weed population dynamics. You may email Dr. Odero at dcodero@ufl.edu

**Post Doctoral Associate, Sorghum Breeder—Dr. Yueguang “Moon” Wang**

Dr. Yueguang Wang joined EREC in March 2010 as a postdoctoral research associate. His research is breeding sweet sorghum, which could be used as a resource for biofuel. He earlier obtained his PhD in Plant Genetics and Breeding at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Beijing. He received his M.S. degree in Plant Genetics and Breeding at China Agricultural University, Beijing.

Dr. Wang conducts research on analyses of brix and yield-related traits at different planting dates, adaptivity of different varieties/lines, pest damage and disease control in sweet sorghum. He is designing research to improve yield and brix of sweet sorghum based on the soil, weather and planting system in southern Florida. Dr. Wang’s email address is: yueguang@ufl.edu
Awards

Books:

Dr. José Alvarez, Faculty Emeritus, received Honorable Mention for his book *Frank Pais: Architect of Cuba’s Betrayed Revolution* at the 2009 London Book Festival, and also was a Finalist in the Biography Category of the 2010 Next Generation Indie Book Awards.

For his other recent title, *Frank País y la Revolución Cubana*, he won the Silver Medal in the Florida Book Awards Spanish-Language category for 2009, and also received Honorable Mention at the 12th Annual International Latino Book Awards.

Papers:

Winners of best papers at ASSCT Annual Meeting in Panama City Beach, FL, June 16 – 18:


Improving Estimation of Commercial Sugarcane Yields in South Florida - J. M. Shine, Jr., R. A. Gilbert, and J. W. Jones


Posters:

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA International Annual Meeting Poster Award

Graduate student Jaya Das won third place for best poster presentation in the S10 wetland division at Soil Science Society of America meetings in Long Beach California, Oct. 31—Nov. 3. Her poster title was: *Evaluation of Equilibrium Phosphorus Concentrations of Everglades Agricultural Area Canal Sediments Using Adsorption Isotherms and Incubation of Intact Sediment Cores*.

Thanks:

Kudos to Nikol Havranek and Dr. Yigang Luo for assuming leadership in the clean up and organization of the chemical waste and pesticide or herbicide storage building.

Graduates

Dr. Rongzhong Ye, Dr. Alan Wright’s student, received his PhD in Soil & Water Science. He is currently serving in a postdoctoral research associate position at the University of Oregon’s Center for Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. His dissertation title was “Coupling Microbial Ecology and Nutrient Cycling in Everglades Agricultural Area Soils.”

Dr. Jaya Das recently completed her studies under the direction of Dr. Samira Daroub. Her dissertation title was “Characterization of Physicochemical Properties, P-Fractions and P Release from EAA Canal Sediments.” Jaya has taken a post-doctoral position at the North Florida REC in Quincy.

Dr. Hardev Sandhu completed his PhD in the Entomology Department with Dr. Gregg Nuessly. His dissertation title was “Biology and Cultural Control of Lesser Cornstalk Borer on Sugarcane”. Dr. Sandhu is now assisting Dr. Rob Gilbert, as his Post Doctoral Associate.

Dr. Gaurav Goyal completed his PhD in the Entomology Department December 6 under the direction of Dr. Gregg Nuessly. His dissertation title was “Morphology, Biology and Distribution of Corn-Infesting Ulidiidae”.

ASSCT College Scholarships are available!!

The American Society of Sugar Cane Technologists is offering Monetary Awards to support qualified H.S. seniors graduating in 2011. To qualify, the H.S. student must: 1) be enrolled in an EAA H.S. (Belle Glade, Pahokee, Clewiston, Moore Haven) OR have a parent/guardian employed in the sugar industry and/or is an active ASSCT member; 2) have a cumulative GPA > 3.0; 3) have firm 2011 college plans; 4) demonstrate superior performance on an Academic Exercise. All students must fill out an application (deadline is March 4). The Academic Exercise will occur on Saturday, March 12, at the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida. Typically, the Academic Exercise includes short essays and questions involving math, general science and current events. General knowledge of the sugar industry is helpful (www.assct.org). H.S. Senior/Scholarship Guidance Counselors will be receiving application instructions. For more information, contact Billy Sanchez, Chairman, ASSCT Scholarship Committee, at 561-924-4403.

Ag/Horticulture Scholarship Now Available

Students who wish to apply for the James H. Davis Memorial Scholarship must meet the following criteria: be a graduating H.S. senior attending a public or private school in Palm Beach or Martin counties, Homestead Senior H.S. or South Dade Senior H.S.; be a Florida resident, also available to upper division university students and adults in the field (must have graduated from a local H.S.); be interested in pursuing a career in horticulture, agriculture or related pursuits; have a GPA of 2.5 or above; demonstrate financial need; and attend a Florida public or private university/college.

Students may apply online at www.yourcommunityfoundation.org. The deadline is 5 p.m. Feb. 1. Scholarship information may be found on the foundation’s web site or by e-mailing prowan@cfpbmc.org.
Faculty Enhancement Program—Essential Oils Project

Dr. Elise Pearlstine recently completed work on a grant from the University of Florida through the Faculty Enhancement Opportunity program to study potential for essential oil production in southern Florida. For this project she identified a number of potential crops to grow in south Florida for the production of essential oils. One such crop is lemongrass and others might include patchouli, palmarosa, vetiver, bay laurel and other commonly grown herbs such as basil and rosemary. Dr. Pearlstine and Mrs. Kathleen Krawchuk traveled to Europe to study distillation in France and England as well as to consult with others in the essential oils industry as to the best business model for a potential new grower in Florida. As part of the grant Dr. Pearlstine has been reaching out to growers who may be interested in growing a supplemental crop such as lemongrass to distill for essential oil production and associated value-added products. In addition, aromatic herbs can also be produced for the fresh herb market, giving a grower flexibility to produce two separate products depending on market needs and crop availability. Different aromatic plants may be appropriate for different growing situations or producer needs and Dr. Pearlstine is working to develop a program with the expertise to assist farmers small and large with this new potential commodity. As part of this outreach service, she will be buying a small distillation setup to experiment with a variety of essential oil producing plants and to conduct demonstrations at the research center. If you are interested in learning more about this program please contact Dr. Pearlstine at epears@ufl.edu

**2011 EREC Calendar**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 24 - Jan. 2</td>
<td>Closed for Christmas and New Year Holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 7</td>
<td>10:45 Friday Seminar - Mr. Barney Eiland, “A History of Florida Mechanical Harvesting”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 14 - Jan. 30</td>
<td>South Florida Fair - See our exhibits in the Sundy Feed Store</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>Spray Smart Rodeo Day - see below</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Closed - Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>10:45 Friday Seminar - Dr. Richard Litz, “Approaching Avocado Improvement Through Biotechnology”</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>10:45 Friday Seminar - Ron Rice, David Sui, and Leslie Baucum “Sugarcane and Vegetable/ Fruit Extension in the Glades”</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>10:45 Friday Seminar - Dr. Rob Gilbert, “Energycane Cultivar and Development Program for Florida”</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Date TBA - Everglades REC Station Field Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>10:45 Friday Seminar - Dr. Elise Pearlstine, “Potential for Development of Essential Oil Crops in Florida”</td>
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**Spray Smart Spray Rodeo Day**

Palm Beach County and Hendry County Extension are teaming up with Jeff Summersill to host the first ever Spray Rodeo Day at the EREC on January 12, 2011. The objective is for growers to bring in their commercial spray application rigs which will then be field-calibrated in preparation for the new spray season. Ground speeds, nozzle patterns and volume deliveries, pump pressures, and spray safety issues will be covered. A maximum of 20 different spray rigs can be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis. An announcement will follow with RSVP information. For more information contact Ron Rice at rwr@ufl.edu or 561-996-1656.