

Welcome to this week's 2022 season's weekly issue of our UF/IFAS Extension Suwannee Valley Watermelon Crop Update. These updates are summarized by Bob Hochmuth with input from Suwannee Valley Extension Agents: Mark Warren (Levy), Tyler Pittman (Gilchrist), Tatiana Sanchez (Alachua), Luke Harlow (Union), Jay Capasso (Columbia), Dan Fenneman (Madison), Keith Wynn (Hamilton), Danielle Sprague (Jefferson), Emily Beach (Lafayette), Amanda Phillips (Suwannee), Kevin Athearn (RSA-Agri- business), and Sudeep Sidhu (RSA- Water Resources).

If you know someone who wants to be added to this weekly notice, contact your Extension Agent or Mark Warren (352-949-8288) if you want to be added to the regional watermelon group text app.

#### **Thank You to the 2022 Suwannee Valley Rapid Diagnostic Watermelon Program and Its Industry Sponsors:**

We have initiated a more formal way to support our watermelon growers with a rapid diagnostics system through Suwannee Valley Regional and County Extension Agents. This industry-funded program allows Extension Agents to submit and pay for watermelon grower's plant disease and other diagnostic samples. This SV Rapid Diagnostic Watermelon Program will help us to get quicker diagnostic results, helping to give early alerts to everyone, and not have to charge the growers directly. Plant disease samples are typically \$40 and leaf tissue analyses are typically \$20. **We want to thank the 2022 sponsors of this program: Syngenta Crop Protection, Glades Crop Care, TriEst Ag Group, Gowan USA, Summit Agro-USA, and Harrell's Fertilizer for sponsoring this effort. Other industry reps interested in sponsoring this effort can contact Bob Hochmuth at [bobhoch@ufl.edu](mailto:bobhoch@ufl.edu) or 386-288-6301.**

#### **Crop recovery continues**

The update is pretty short this week which is probably a good thing. The past 2-3 weeks have provided rainy periods each week, but also warm, sunny days with low humidity on many of those days; just what the plants needed. Many growers who have damage on very early plantings and medium length vines at the time of the freeze, are expressing concern about how "bad" the plants still look. In those fields I have seen, the new growth is pushing from the crown, and even though the older vines still look rough, I feel like things will be okay. In these instances, most of the yield will come from those new buds at the base of the plants. So, focus on how those new buds look and try to look past the rough looking old and damaged vines. However, keep an eye out for disease developing on that older damaged tissue. Our suggestion continues to be keep it simple and let the plants recover.

We have a positive diagnosis of bacteria, *Pseudomonas* (angular leaf spot) and also gummy stem blight, but both are isolated to a very few fields. If bacterial diseases are not a concern in your fields, we recommend continuing applications of chlorothalonil (Bravo, etc.) to prevent disease development. If you observe any disease symptoms, please contact your local agent for prompt identification through our "Early Detection" program. (Bob Hochmuth)