

Welcome to our UF/IFAS Extension Suwannee Valley Watermelon Crop Update. These updates will be summarized by Bob Hochmuth, Regional Specialized Extension Agent- Vegetable Crops, with input from Suwannee Valley Extension Agents: Mark Warren (Levy), Tyler Pittman (Gilchrist), Tatiana Sanchez-Jones (Alachua), Luke Harlow (Bradford), Dan Fenneman (Madison), Keith Wynn (Hamilton), Emily Beach (Lafayette), Jim Devalerio (Union), Ben Hoffner (Jefferson), Raymond Balaguer (Suwannee), Derick Conover (Columbia) Kevin Athearn (RSA-Agri- business), Shivendra Kumar (RSA-Agronomic Crops), and Jay Capasso (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.

We will continue this year 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 are currently soliciting those industry reps interested in sponsoring this effort. The past year's sponsorships have ranged from \$200 to \$2,000 per company. Sponsors will be recognized every week beginning this week. Those interested in being added as a sponsor can contact Bob Hochmuth at bobhoch@ufl.edu or 386-288-6301.**

Current 2025 sponsors of our Watermelon Rapid Diagnostics Program include: Mayo Ag Services, Gowan USA, Smurfit/WestRock Paper Mulch, Orbia Netafim, Syngenta Crop Protection, Harrell's Fertilizer, TriEst Ag, and Triangle Chemical Company. Other sponsors are still welcome to join.

Disease and insect spray update:

We expect disease incidence to change after the rain events of this weekend and early this week. Field visits from this past week prior to the rains continued to show generally low disease incidence, so we have been very fortunate this year to be relatively clean up to May 10th. I believe the disease to be most likely to be on the move after the rains will be gummy stem blight, but concerns about downy mildew still exist. You should consider a spray such as Inspire Super (7-day preharvest interval) or Aprovia Top (0-day preharvest interval) for gummy stem blight soon. I suggest you add something for powdery mildew (Quintec, Rhyme (preferred as a spray), or Procure), plus something as a preventative for rindworms (Bt; Intrepid or Troubadour; or Coragen eVo or generic versions. It is advisable to maintain preventative rindworm sprays. As far as downy mildew is concerned, I would be on high alert and have Ranman or Orondis Ultra on hand but because those spray materials are narrow in their target (mainly downy), we may want to wait for confirmation in our Suwannee Valley region.

I would like to make it clear, however, from this point forward, it is very difficult to make the same region-wide recommendations for everyone. Before this rainy weekend, there was a lot of similarities across the region, but I am sure the rain amounts from place to place will change the similarities. The above suggestions are intended to help you think about what you should do on your farm, based on what you are seeing in your own fields. (Bob Hochmuth)

1. **Union County Watermelon Field Day** Co-planned by BASF and UF/IFAS Extension at Dukes Family Farm, near Lake Butler. This will be a morning field day starting at 9 am on Wednesday, **June 11, 2025.**

[Watermelon Variety Trial Tickets, Wed, Jun 11, 2025 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)



The banner features a photograph of two whole watermelons and a slice of watermelon on a green field background. The UF/IFAS logo is in the top right corner. The BASF logo (with tagline 'We create chemistry') and the Nunhems logo are in the bottom left corner. The title 'WATERMELON VARIETY TRIAL' is prominently displayed in the center.

WATERMELON VARIETY TRIAL

BASF/NUNHEMS NORTH FLORIDA WATERMELON VARIETY SHOWCASE

 **JUNE 11, 2025**
08:30 AM - 01:00 PM

About Our Event!

Dukes Family Farms, BASF| Nunhems and the UF/IFAS are pleased to invite watermelon producers and enthusiasts to a day of learning fun!

LOCATION:
7669 Brown and Roberts Road
Lake Butler, FL 32054

Event Highlights

Educational Opportunities ◀

Attendees will view 16 varieties in the field & learn about the latest water and fertilizer application tools. Also, disease, insect and weed suppression.

Watermelon Tasting ◀

Taste some delicious watermelon with a special appearance from our Watermelon Queen!

Sponsored Meal ◀

Enjoy a fine lunch provided by Dukes Family Farm. A multi generation family farm

CEU Credits Available ◀

Ag Row
Private Applicator

REGISTER HERE!



 **Contact us**
386-496-2321

 **Website**
<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/union/>

