Workshop and Field Day on Organic Production
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A day-long event, held on September 20th for commercial producers, educators and students was conducted at the Plant Science Research & Education Unit (PSREU) in Citra, FL on a range of topics relevant to organic production. Over 200 people from Homestead to Tallahassee attended the session to learn the latest research-supported production information on sustainable and organic agriculture. Eleven UF-IFAS faculty from six departments, five industry representatives, and five certified organic growers contributed their knowledge towards the program. There was no charge for the event, morning coffee was sponsored by Starbucks, and all participants received a complimentary lunch sponsored by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FLDACS) and Florida Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. (FOG).

Participants attended a hands-on event that took place on part of the 57-acre Organic Unit, using non-chemical control strategies for nutsedge. Research results of a 2 year trial funded by the USDA Southern Agricultural Research & Extension (SARE) program “Integrated Management of Purple and Yellow Nutsedge in Organic Vegetable Production” were presented by Drs. Carlene Chase (Horticultural Sciences), Rose Koenig (Organic Producer) and Mickie Swisher (Family Health and Community Services) of Gainesville.

Following the hands-on field event, attendees selected two of the four workshops that were offered, one each for morning and afternoon plus their choice of panel discussions concluded the day. Topics for the workshops included: Insect & Nematode Management, Organic Certification, Preparing Produce for Market & Food Safety, and Seed Saving. Panel discussion topics were Organic Fruit & Vegetable Production and Nutrient & Water Management.
Based on analysis of pre vs. post tests, there was a 17% gain in knowledge overall. Participant comments on field day evaluations were overwhelmingly favorable, due largely to the efforts of the PSREU staff under the direction of Dr. Colvin. We are also grateful to the staff at FOG who worked tirelessly to make this workshop and field day a success. Many requests were made for more events like this one and we hope to make this an annual event.

The staff at PSREU did a super job. Here, participants board the trams for a morning ride to the Organic Unit.
Dr. Amy Simonne, UF-IFAS Food Science Department, answers a question about *E. coli*.

Juan Carlos Rodriguez, Education Coordinator for FOG, discusses the legal requirements of organic production during a morning workshop.
Dr. Robert McSorley, UF-IFAS Entomology and Nematology Department, explains that the majority of nematodes in the soil are not pathogenic.