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**Contact:**  
Mike Carlton  
Executive Director  
Florida Specialty Crop Foundation  
321-214-5200

**FLORIDA SPECIALTY CROP FOUNDATION  
FUNDS FOUR CRITICAL CITRUS GREENING RESEARCH PROJECTS**

MAITLAND, Fla. (July 23, 2007) – The Florida Specialty Crop Foundation has awarded grants totaling \$75,000 for important research into citrus greening, Executive Director Mike Carlton announced today. The grants are funding four projects being conducted by teams from the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Citrus greening, also known as huanglongbing or yellow dragon disease, is one of the most serious citrus diseases in the world. It was first detected in the United States in 2005. The disease greatly reduces production, destroys the economic value of fruit, and can kill trees. Once a tree is infected by greening, there is no cure. The bacteria is spread by the Asian citrus psyllid.

“Clearly, citrus greening is one of the most significant challenges facing specialty crop growers in Florida today,” Carlton said. “The Florida Specialty Crop Foundation board recognized the urgent need for greening research and sought to move as quickly as possible to provide some assistance.”

Dr. Harold Browning, director of IFAS’ Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred, says research is more critical on the front end of this disease than almost any other. “With greening, we can’t see it and we can’t trace it. We don’t know the details of how the insects spread it. All of these things influence our ability to impose short-term as well as longer-term strategies.”

Browning added that the funding came at an opportune time. “These projects, which are part of our comprehensive plan for greening, can have an immediate impact. With the Foundation’s funding, we were able to get them under way sooner rather than later.” The grants will be matched by funding from the citrus industry and from the state, he said.

The projects involve:

- Developing a field test that could be used to help confirm visual symptoms and provide grove scouts with additional information. “This offers the potential in the very short term to find signs of the disease in the field,” Browning said.
- Testing for the ability of adult female psyllids to pass the greening bacterium on to their eggs. The greenhouse project is part of a larger study into how the

bacterium behaves when it is transferred from plant to plant by the psyllid – when the insects pick it up and what occurs in the insect that allows the bacterium to survive.

- Evaluating how quickly greening spreads within infected groves under various management schemes. “This is a hands-on experiment to use all the techniques we’ve heard about from Asia and elsewhere and find out how well that will work in Florida under our commercial conditions,” Browning added.
- Developing and testing methods of killing infected trees as a response to identification of greening. The study will field-test known legal materials that could be used almost immediately once the best way to apply them is determined.

“Thanks to the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation being out in front, we were able to get these projects going. This funding really got us under way,” Browning said.

The Florida Specialty Crop Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity whose mission is to benefit the general public through initiatives that provide solutions to the challenges facing specialty crop producers and their stakeholders.