

FNGLA Endowed Research Fund Report

Expanded BMP Education

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Introduction

Public pressures to maximize efficiency of water use and protect water quality are greater now than at any other time. This became evident in Broward County where the nursery industry was recently confronted with regulation or develop BMPs. A BMP guide was developed that has become a template for BMPs statewide. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Agricultural Water Policy (FDACSOAWP) oversees the administration of BMPs in Florida and nurseries registered with FDACSOAWP as using BMPs receive a provision of presumed water quality compliance with state standards. However, educational programs are needed to assist nursery operators with selection and implementation of BMPs, particularly with regards to BMPs that require keeping appropriate records to receive a waiver of liability.

Objective and Methods

The objective of the proposed work was to expand the basic knowledge of the nursery plant producers with regards to the information needed for maintaining records that are required for some BMPs. To achieve an effective knowledge gain among producers with regards to implementation of BMPs and keeping the appropriate records, the county extension faculty will serve as a valuable resource or network able to assist producers with BMP implementation and record keeping questions. However, the county faculties just as producers need the tools that accommodate or facilitate the knowledge gain. Thus, BMP tool boxes (Figure 1) were assembled and distribution has begun to county extension personnel. Once distribution is complete and educational sessions conducted with county personnel so that a common knowledge level is achieved, then county personnel will be able to assist producers with their questions regarding BMPs that require documenting specific actions taken by the producers. To engage producers in the knowledge transfer process, educational programs will be conducted for the producers in which they will learn how to perform and document an activity that is dependent upon one of the items in the tool box (Table 1). Additional activities will be conducted regarding other items in the tool box so that upon completion of a series of educational programs the participants or producers will have a complete tool box to accompany their knowledge gains. The transfer of knowledge gained to BMPs implemented and documented by records will be monitored to determine success.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Nursery plant production statewide will be targeted for future hands-on BMP workshops. Participants will learn about BMPs and conduct a nursery site assessment as a learning objective. This will help prepare the participants for the BMP selection process at their nursery and enhance their confidence with maintaining the appropriate records.

Figure 1. Photos of substrate and irrigation testing items found in the BMP tool box.



Table 1. Prices of items found in the BMP tool box.

(Shipping costs not included in prices below)

\$21	Rubbermaid File Tote (Sanford #77824 from www.OfficeMax.com)
\$10	Mead Flexbinder Notebook (Office Max #29104)
\$24.50	Waterproof Paper for printed forms (Trail Explorers.com 1-888-251-7589)
\$53	Handheld ec Meter – Milwaukee Model C66 (Milwaukee Instruments 1-800-283-7837)
	<i>Available from Forestry Suppliers: (www.forestry-suppliers.com)</i>
\$22	20 Conductivity Solution single pouches for ec Meter (#76685)
\$6	Marking Flags (#39229)
\$42	20-125 ml plastic bottles & lids (#53596 - \$2.10 ea)
\$14	Light weight Rain suit/Rain Toggs
\$41	2 – 250 ml plastic graduated cylinder (#53644)
\$16	Stopwatch/Tech Clip (#36990)
	<i>Available from Walmart:</i>
\$3	2 Waterproof markers
\$4	Distilled water for rinsing electrical conductivity meter probe
\$3	Box of 12 ounce plastic cups
\$3	Box of 3 ounce paper cups
\$2	Roll Paper towels
\$4	Marbles to hold down cups during irrigation
\$12	3-12inch Plastic Plant Saucers
\$5	3 Grates or Rings to elevate plants in saucers
\$7.50	25' Measuring Tape
\$10	100' Measuring Tape
\$5	Calculator
\$9	0-100 psi Pressure gauge (www.Floridairrigation.com)
\$8	Pitot tube
\$325	TOTAL PRICE

Mention of trade names and companies is not an endorsement. Information in this report has not been peer reviewed nor incorporated in IFAS recommendations.