INSTRUCTIONS
Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society

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FRONT AND BACK COVERS:
Low-chill Peach Production in Florida

The Florida peach industry has its roots in one of the earliest settlements in America, when Europeans brought peaches into St. Augustine, FL in 1565. Although peaches are a temperate crop, requiring significant chill accumulation, stone fruit breeders at the University of Florida (UF) have successfully released low-chill peach varieties for production in subtropical climates. Varieties such as ‘Flordaprince’ and ‘TropicBeauty’ are grown worldwide and have become standard varieties in many subtropical locations. In addition, a multi-institutional breeding program with UF, University of Georgia, and the USDA-ARS in Byron, GA, have released a number of mid-chill varieties in the 400–600 chill unit range. Florida had a successful peach industry in the 1980s, before devastating freezes reduced acreage in the state. Recently, growers seeking to diversify their agricultural operations have re-discovered low-chill peaches and acreage continues to grow throughout central and south central Florida. Early-ripening low-chill varieties, such as ‘UFSun’, ‘TropicBeauty’, and ‘UFBest’, have short fruit developmental periods (FDP) that allow growers to take advantage of early domestic market windows and competitive prices. In addition to short FDPs, low-chill varieties released from UF have non-melting flesh that results in a product that can withstand extended ripening time on the tree, with firmer textures. These non-melting flesh varieties withstand packing and shipping challenges better than melting-flesh varieties as the product is shipped throughout Florida and the southeastern United States. For more information on low and mid-chill peach varieties released in cooperation with UF, please visit the Florida Foundation Seed Producers (http://www.ffsp.net), or UF Stone Fruit Extension (http://www.hos.ufl.edu/extension/stonefruit).

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Front cover: Apricot breeding selection in full bloom. Back cover (clockwise): ‘UFBlaze’ (upper right), ‘TropicBeauty’ (center), ‘UFSun’ (lower right), and ‘Flordaprince’ (lower left). (all photos: M. Olmstead)
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