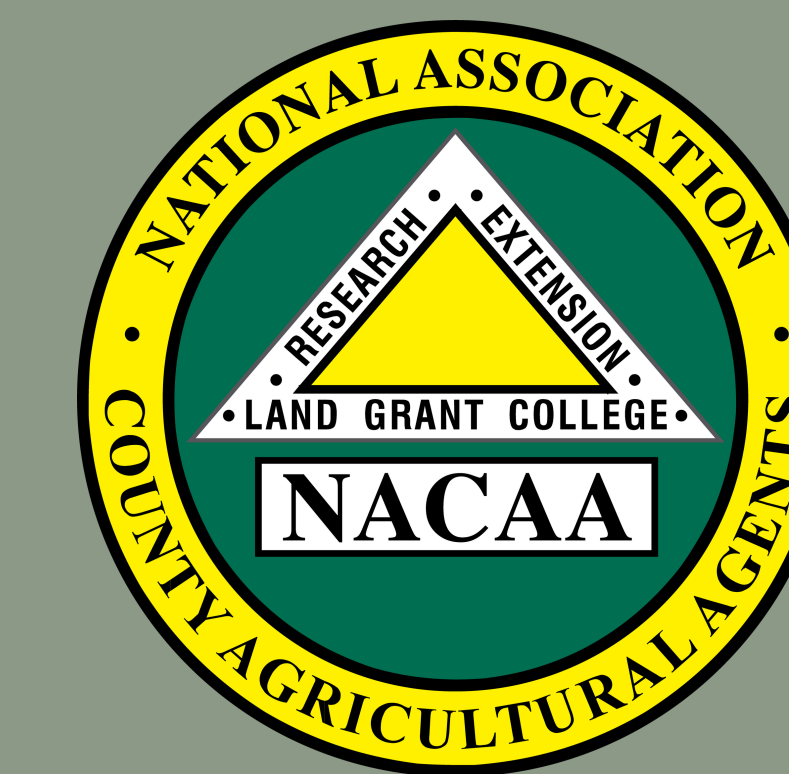


Florida's First Artichoke Field Day

M. Greathouse^{1*}, S. Agehara², A. Kaur³, W. Wang⁴, W. Elwakil⁵, T. Liu⁶,
G. Vallad⁷, H. Smith⁸, and J. Desaegeer⁹



¹UF/IFAS Extension, mgreathouse@ufl.edu; ²UF/IFAS Research, sagehara@ufl.edu; ³UF/IFAS Research, akaur2@ufl.edu;
⁴UF/IFAS Research, billwang@ufl.edu; ⁵UF/IFAS Extension, wael.elwakil@ufl.edu; ⁶UF/IFAS Research, tieliu@ufl.edu;
⁷UF/IFAS Research, gvallad@ufl.edu; ⁸UF/IFAS Research, hughasmith@ufl.edu; ⁹UF/IFAS Research, jad@ufl.edu



Program Goal

Host Florida's first Artichoke Field Day to introduce growers and consumers to artichoke production practices and culinary preparation while exploring artichokes as a winter specialty crop in Florida.

Situation

Changing Agricultural Landscape

Florida agriculture is rapidly changing as traditional crops such as citrus decline and farmland is lost to urbanization. Growers are increasingly seeking profitable alternative crops.

Production Challenge

Artichokes require winter chilling for bud formation and are traditionally grown in Mediterranean climates such as coastal California. Research at the UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (GCREC) has developed practices that allow artichokes to be successfully produced in Florida.

Extension Need

As interest in this emerging crop grows, Extension programs are needed to connect growers and consumers with information on artichoke production, preparation, and market opportunities.

Activities

UF/IFAS Extension partnered with researchers at GCREC to host Florida's First Artichoke Field Day.

Program Activities

- Presentations by UF/IFAS researchers
- Field tour of research trials
- Artichoke cooking demonstration and tasting with local food truck chefs

Topics Covered

- Recommended cultivars and production practices
- Pest and disease management
- Nutritional quality and postharvest shelf life

Consumer Education

Participants learned preparation techniques and recipes for fresh artichokes through a cooking demonstration and sampled artichoke dishes prepared by local chefs. **This experience increased familiarity with the crop and supports market development for Florida-grown artichokes.**

Impacts

Evaluation results from **33 survey respondents** attending the Artichoke Field Day demonstrated strong program impacts and renewed enthusiasm for artichokes as a potential specialty crop in Florida.

Consumer Engagement

- **27%** of participants had never eaten fresh artichokes prior to attending
- **85%** reported feeling confident preparing artichokes after the program
- **88%** reported an intent to incorporate artichokes into their cooking

Producer Interest

- **97%** increased their knowledge of production and pest management
- **24%** were interested in expanding artichoke production
- **70% intend to grow artichokes**

Future Impacts

Building on the success of this program, UF/IFAS Extension and Research will continue exploring artichokes as a potential winter specialty crop in Florida through additional field days, grower education, culinary demonstrations, and opportunities to expand consumer awareness and market development.

