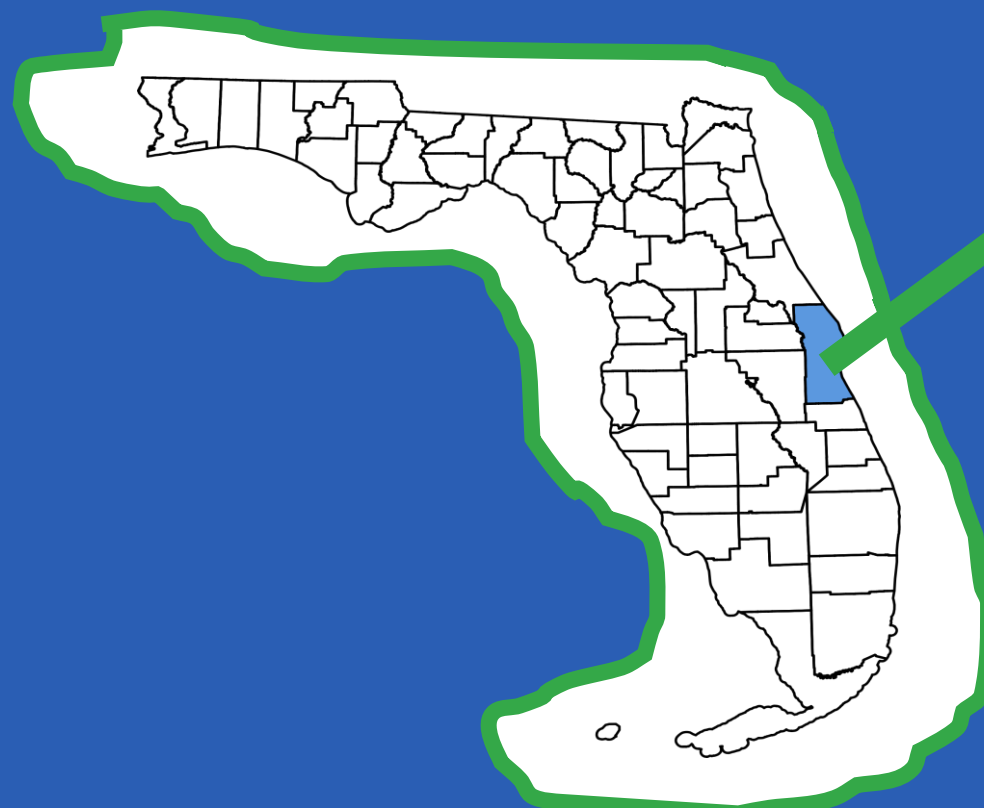


Space Coast Golf and Sports Turf Professionals: Soaring Into Sustainability

Bonnie C. Wells, DPM, UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County, Cocoa, Florida, bcwells@ufl.edu

Situation

Brevard County's golf and sports turf management professionals need education on integrated strategies to stay profitable, sustainable and stewards of their unique landscape. The county runs 72 miles along the Atlantic Ocean on Florida's Space Coast and contains the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), one of the most biodiverse estuaries on the planet.



Florida's Space Coast Brevard County

- 26 Golf Courses
- 119 Parks and Recreation Fields

Protection of the IRL is a high-priority initiative of county government, and educational programs addressing this need are a high-priority of UF/IFAS Extension.

Objective

The objective of this program is to equip Brevard County's golf and sports turf management professionals with information and the latest technologies to remain competitive in the market, as well as demonstrate the stewardship that can be achieved with an integrated and holistic management approach.



Figure 1. Damage caused by the bermudagrass mite, *Eriophyes cynodontensis*. The mite is a serious pest of bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) in athletic fields and golf courses. A pest management workshop was held that covered bermudagrass mite management. #UFBugs



Figure 2. Attendees of one workshop learned how to send proper samples to the UF/IFAS Rapid Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab.



Figure 3. Sixty-one site visits were performed in 2019 to support this program.

Methods

A combination of integrative and experiential educational teaching methods were used in 2019.

- 4 Workshops
- 61 Site Visits

Workshops covered diverse topics in integrated strategies including pest and nutrient management. Site visits were performed to support the implementation of strategies taught at the workshops.

Results

Methods reached 190 individuals. Of the surveyed respondents (n=182), 100% reported an increase in knowledge while 94% reported an intent to adopt a new sustainable production practice after attending one of the four workshops. Site visits are in-progress to identify adoption of practices.

Impact

Increased profitability of the turf industry in Brevard County with limited impact on the Space Coast's abundant natural resources such as the IRL