



## **GROWING FRUIT FOR FUN AND PROFIT**

FRC 1010 - 1 CREDIT

Fall 2025

**LOCATION** Blueberry Building behind Fifield Hall - Room 154

**MEETING TIMES** Fridays 1:55 – 2:45 pm

### **INSTRUCTOR**

Dr. Amethyst Merchant

amethyst@ufl.edu

1131 Fifield Hall

(352) 273 – 4595

**OFFICE HOURS** Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00 pm in-person or via Zoom (by appointment)

Other times by appointment; Zoom link - <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3712177953>

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course aims to expose students from diverse majors to the most relevant fruit crops grown in Florida. Material will cover the basics of fruit production requirements for industry and within a home garden, technologies and techniques used for fruit production, as well as problems faced by growers. No prerequisites are required. You are expected to bring curiosity and a willingness to learn.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify plant characteristics that impact where and when fruit production occurs.
- Recognize the environmental conditions required for optimum growth and development of fruit crops.
- Explain in general terms how fruit crops are grown in Florida and can be grown in one's yard.
- Relate the challenges and opportunities that fruit growers face in Florida.
- Specify technologies and techniques utilized in modern fruit production.
- Appraise the importance of Florida's horticultural industry in their daily life, for the state, and to feed people across the globe.
- Apply information learned about environmental conditions required for optimum growth to care for a fruit-producing plant.

## **STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS**

### **From Dr. Merchant:**

I am committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere, teaching you something new and unexpected about fruit, and introducing you to relevant topics and ideas. I will grade assignments and supply comments within two weeks of your assignment submissions. I am available Tuesdays from 1 – 2 pm and other times by appointment.

### **For this course to run smoothly, I expect you to:**

- Have a computer, camera, and stable internet connection.
- Check Canvas for new lectures, quizzes, other assignments, and announcements every Friday after noon. Quizzes will be posted on Fridays by midnight.
- Answer any questions and compose all assignments in your own words. The copying of material (cut and paste) from the internet or each other is plagiarism. Plagiarism results in a zero for that assignment and serious repercussions for your future at UF. Do not plagiarize!
- Be responsible for keeping up with due dates. You will have one week to complete each quiz. All assignments will be due on Fridays by 11:59pm. Each assignment's instructions will contain the due date.
- Submit work early if assignments are completed.
- Verify that assignments are successfully uploaded/submitted to Canvas.
- Contact Dr. Merchant by "email" (messaging) within Canvas if you have any questions or concerns. If unable to do so, please use UF's Gatormail (Microsoft Office). Please realize that using Gatormail may delay Dr. Merchant's response. Dr. Merchant's email is [amethyst@ufl.edu](mailto:amethyst@ufl.edu).
- Have fun learning new information about fruit!!!

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

### **Textbook**

There is no required textbook for this course. However, UF/IFAS Extension has developed a multitude of publications to help gardeners and backyard growers. The instructor will provide links to these and other useful information on Canvas during the semester. Handouts will also be distributed in class and / or on Canvas.

### **Course Website**

This course has a site in the CANVAS platform. Take time to familiarize yourself with the "Start Here", "Syllabus", and weekly module tabs in the navigation menu. The syllabus, handouts, lectures, quizzes, and assignments will be posted throughout the semester. New material will be added each week. You will be completing quizzes and uploading assignments into CANVAS.

## Growing Supplies

A plant growing kit with seeds, soil, pots, and fertilizer will be available in class in the next few weeks. An explanation of how to care for your plant will be presented during a class session at the Teaching Garden across from Fifield Hall.

## COURSE ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS AND GRADING (100 total points)

### 1. Weekly Quizzes

**60 points**

Beginning the second week of class, **every Friday by midnight** a quiz will become available in **CANVAS in the Assignments and weekly module tab** over that week's material. Each quiz will have up to 10 questions and you will have 12 minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes can only be taken once. Questions may be multiple choice, true or false, fill in the blank, or short answer. Quizzes will be **available until the following Friday at 11:59 pm**.

There are a total of 12 quizzes. Each is worth 5 points. A makeup quiz may be granted if a student has a justifiable excuse.

### 2. Plant Growth and Development Project – Discussion Board **20 points**

In a few weeks, you will receive materials to grow a fruit producing plant. You will be responsible for the care of your plant throughout the rest of the semester. **Details on contributing to a group discussion board about your plant's progress or lack thereof will be presented on the day we pot the plants.** All students will be required to post updates, questions, and comments throughout the semester.

### 3. Fruit Exploration and Reflection Activities - Blog

**20 points**

Students must complete 4 of the types of activities listed below:

- **Tasting new fruits** and describing thoughts on experience – what you expected vs. reality
  - **Trying 2 NEW fruits** and describing the experience (+ photos) **qualifies as completing 1 activity**
- Comparing the similarities & differences between fruit displays at **various grocery stores**
- Visiting an **active farm** – note the crops they are currently growing, provide information about the kinds of plants (flowers & fruits) you saw
- Visiting a **garden** – provide information about the kinds of plants (flowers & fruits) you saw
- Visiting a **garden center** - provide information about the kinds of plants (flowers & fruits) you saw
- Visiting a **farmers' market** – describe the experience, the similarities & differences in marketing used by the farmers
- Participating in the **Field Day event** in April that will occur in the Teaching Garden across the street just south of Elings Hall – what did you see and do; what did you learn from these experiences about how fruits (and vegetables) are grown

You will create a blog where you provide information about each activity you complete. Provide documentation (proof) of your experience / visit through photos. Be sure to include the location and date you completed each activity.

- If you would like to earn 2.5 bonus points, you can complete a 5<sup>th</sup> activity!

Note: Please inform Dr. Merchant if you have difficulty visiting sites off-campus. Alternative activities may be accepted if this situation arises, but prior approval from Dr. Merchant is needed.

### **How to setup blogs - For Assignment 3 you will create a blog using Blogger.com.**

#### **Blogger.com**

**NOTE: Blog website URL MUST CONTAIN “blogpost.com”, NOT “blogger.com”.**

Information about creating and managing a Team Blog can be found at:

<https://support.google.com/blogger/answer/41440?hl=en>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmOmQraJI0s&feature=plcp>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjL1oWA05ew&feature=plcp>

#### **GRADING SCALE**

A	=	92.6 - 100 points	C	=	72.6 – 77.4 points
A-	=	90.0 – 92.5 points	C-	=	70 – 72.5 points
B+	=	87.5 – 89.9 points	D+	=	67.5 – 69.9 points
B	=	82.6 – 87.4 points	D	=	62.6 – 67.4 points
B-	=	80.0 – 82.5 points	D-	=	60.0 – 62.5 points
C+	=	77.5 – 79.9 points	E	=	< 59.9 points

Additional information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found here:

- *Grading policy*, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

#### **COURSE POLICIES**

##### **Attendance and Make-up Policy**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

- *UF Attendance policy*, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

**Late completion of assignments will be allowed for documented emergencies and acceptable reasons per UF’s policy. Work must be made up to earn points.** In other words, an excused absence does NOT excuse the work. **Documentation is required to make up late work.**

### Academic Honesty

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action.

- For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>

### Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken when appropriate.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the "[Get Started With the DRC](#)" webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

- *Disability Resource Center*, 0001 Reid Hall, (352) 392-8565, [www.disability.ufl.edu](http://www.disability.ufl.edu)

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations for students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues.

### Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

### Whole Gator App

The Whole Gator website and app connects UF students with resources dedicated to supporting overall health and well-being. In addition to many of the resources below it also has strategies to practice self-care. <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/topics>

### Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as noncrisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)*, Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.
- Student Success Initiative, <http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu>.

### Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services. If you would like orientation on choosing a major, finding an internship, or planning your career, we encourage you to use this on-campus resource group. [www.career.ufl.edu](http://www.career.ufl.edu)
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email [ask@ufl.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@ufl.libanswers.com) for more information.
- [Teaching Center](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the [Complaint Portal webpage](#) for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the [Student Complaint Procedure webpage](#) for more information.

### Student Complaints

- Residential Course: <https://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/complaint-portal/>
- Online Course: [www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process](http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process)

### Course Evaluation Process

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at:

- [www.gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/](http://www.gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/)

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at:

- [www.gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://www.gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/)

## **FRC 1010 – GROWING FRUITS FOR FUN AND PROFIT**

### Tentative Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>
08/22	1	Introduction to the course
08/29	2	Fruits vs. Vegetables; Flowers: Similarities and Differences
09/05	3	Types of Fruit (part 1)
09/12	4	Types of Fruit (part 2)
09/19	5	Blueberries
09/26	6	Strawberries
10/03	7	Teaching Garden Event – Receive plant for course blog
10/10	8	Pecans
10/17	-	<b>Homecoming Break</b>
10/24	9	Peaches
10/31	10	Citrus
11/07	11	Mango or Mangoes
11/14	12	Tour of Teaching Garden and Orchard
11/21	13	Watermelon
Note: NO FINAL EXAM (only a last quiz).		