

C.M. Stripling Irrigation Research Park

Newsletter

Jan – Mar 2025



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From the Superintendent

Well, time is moving fast! I have spent my first winter in Georgia, it surprised me. The snow event (approx. 8 inches in Tifton) that we received in January was tough, and guess for all of you too. However, we tried to enjoy it as we could by taking some family pictures and drinking “ponche” (a beverage prepared with different boiled fruits) to keep us warm.

During these months our team spend their time finishing our never-ending winter projects, and service all our ag equipment, including vehicles. We participated in different crop production meetings (peanut, cotton, and corn) from our extension agents as well as different training courses such as Farm and Operation Training, Precision Ag and Irrigation.

Additionally, I attended the 2025 Cotton Beltwide Conference held in New Orleans, LA. It was gratifying to attend and listen to our extension agents, students and scientists sharing their results with growers, industry, and the scientific community. This is all possible to our well establish Research and Education Centers network across the state of Georgia.

At the end of January, I had the opportunity to meet in person with different faculty members that will be working at the Park this season. This year, our team will support studies by Dr. Wes Porter (Precision Ag and Irrigation Specialist), Dr. Bob Kemerait (Extension Plant Pathologist), Dr. George Vellidis (Institute of Integrative Precision Agriculture), Dr. John Snider (Cotton Physiologist), Dr. Henry Sintim (Soil Fertility Specialist), Dr. Cris Pilon (Peanut Physiologist), Dr. Lorena Lacerda (Integrative Precision Ag), Brian Hayes (Mitchell County, Extension Agent) and Dr. Nino Brown. Dr. Nino Brown is our Peanut Breeder, this is his first year working at the Park and we are excited to support his research program. He will be evaluating different peanut varieties at different irrigation levels.



From the Superintendent

We already started the 2025 growing season, and this is my first one in southwest Georgia. I am very grateful to be surrounded by great people who have helped me figure things out. In the past months we have been working on soil amendments, burndown herbicide application, tillage, and performing uniformity “catch can” tests on our irrigation systems. We have planted sweet corn and field corn already. We are getting ready for peanuts! All these to ensure that our students and researchers have a space to translate research and knowledge into practical applications for everyday life, benefiting families, farmers, and communities in southwest Georgia.

I would like to congratulate our students who have conducted their research at the Park and received awards at different academic conferences.

Beltwide Cotton Conference 2025

Jason Wisekal 3rd place, MS oral competition (Advisor: Dr. Snider)

American Society of Agronomy - Southern Branch

Mohit Kumar 2nd place, MS oral competition (Advisor: Dr. Snider)

Jason Wisekal 3rd place, MS oral competition (Advisor: Dr. Snider)

Also, congratulations to Dr. Wes Porter, who was promoted to Professor and Dr. Henry Sintim promoted to Associate Professor.

Finally, I would like to invite you to our biannual Field Day on July 24th at the Park. Please RSVP at sirp@uga.edu

As always thanks for your support to the Park and UGA!

Sincerely,
Amilcar Vargas



In The News!

To learn more, click on:

[U.S. cotton's enemy identified, advocacy urgent](#)

Joe Nicosia challenges cotton producers to see manmade fibers as the real enemy, not other countries. He advocates for promoting cotton's natural benefits over synthetic materials.... A consumer connection needs to be made between polyester and plastic microfibers, which Nicosia pointed out are one in the same. "People don't always draw those lines together. They stop at plastic bottles and water bottles," he told the crowd. "But we know it's in our water and our fish. It's in our beer. It's in everything."

[5 Weather And Climate Issues Flying Under The Radar For 2025](#)

My thoughts are inspired by a conversation with Dr. Ethell Vereen, an ecologist and environmental health expert at Morehouse College. He told me, "In our nation's history there have been times where there was a serious environmental problem, we recognized it, we actually did something about it." He listed examples like the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Deep Water Horizon oil spill and the ozone hole. He asked me, "What are potentially the three or five environmental issues that we collectively should be addressing that maybe not getting the most public awareness right now?" With such a big question, I decided to deal with a subset in the weather and climate disciplines, respectively.

[UGA Grand Farm](#)

CAES and Grand Farm, a leading innovator in agricultural technology, are creating a robust regional agricultural innovation ecosystem. The roots of this partnership go back five years when University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue helped inaugurate the Grand Farm during its launch ceremony in North Dakota while serving as U.S. secretary of agriculture.



Tips Planting Season 2025

Planting season is here! Practical guides to assist you in your farm operation.

Click on:

[Evaluating and interpreting application uniformity of center pivot irrigation systems](#)

[Row planter checklist](#)

[Switching from corn to peanuts](#)

[Carefully reduce inputs while keeping yields](#)

[A pre-season checklist for diseases and nematodes of cotton \(Bob Kemeraït\)](#)

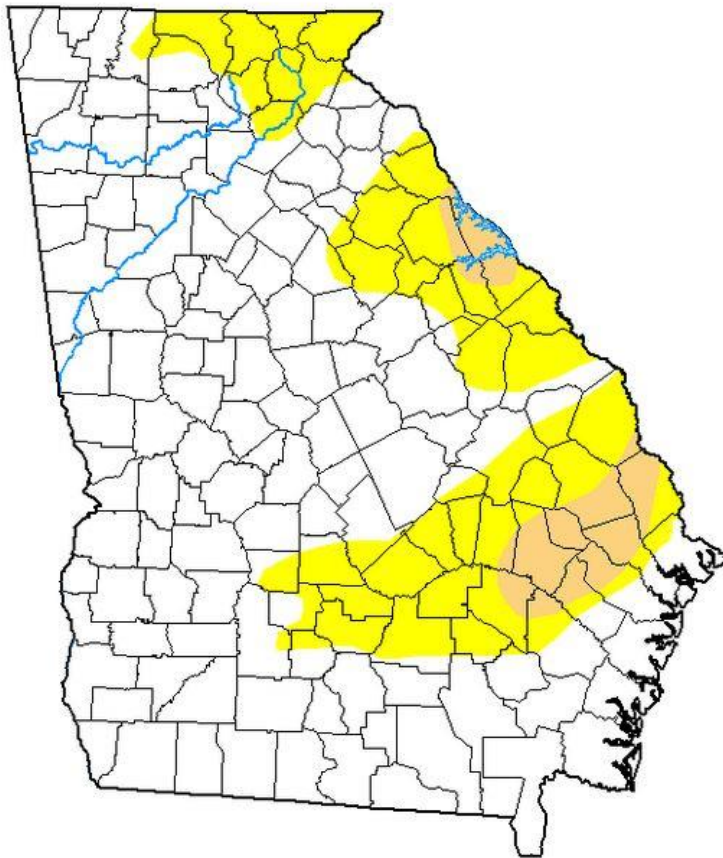
[What is new for managing thrips and TSWV in Peanut?](#)



Drought Conditions

U.S. Drought Monitor Georgia

April 8, 2025
(Released Thursday, Apr. 10, 2025)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	72.95	27.05	4.91	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week 04-01-2025	46.34	53.66	23.04	1.48	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 01-07-2025	56.32	43.68	11.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2025	56.32	43.68	11.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 10-01-2024	98.35	1.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 04-09-2024	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

David Simeral
Western Regional Climate Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

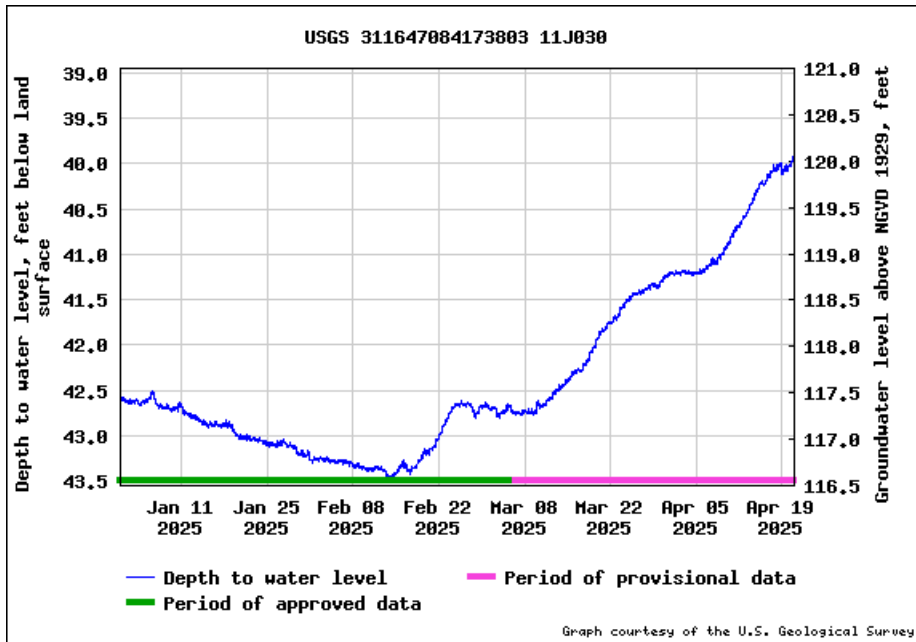
Drought Monitor map for Georgia as of April 8, 2025. Abnormally dry conditions are low across the state, with 72.95% ample soil moisture conditions. Currently, 27.05% of GA is abnormally dry, 4.91% moderate, 0.0% severe, and 0.0% extreme drought. For more info:

<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Maps/MapArchive.aspx>

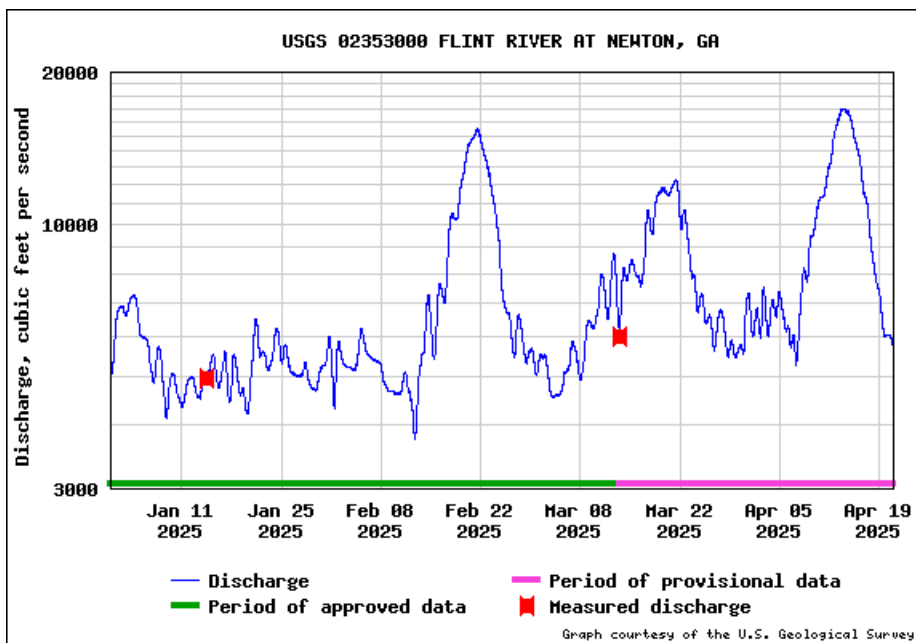


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Water Resources



USGS data from January to April 2025. Above – Groundwater level here at the Park in the Floridan aquifer. Below - Stream gage on the Flint River at Newton, GA (3 miles from the Park).



Events

Past events

January 14	FRSWCD
January 17	Avery Insurance
February 6	EPD Meeting
February 12	Collins Irrigation
March 11	FRSWCD
April 01	Master Irrigator Program
April 08	FRSWCD
April 10	Lower Flint-Ochlocknee Water Council

Upcoming events

May 02	Grand Farm Groundbreaking
June 25-26	4H2O Day Camp
July 24	Field Day at the Park



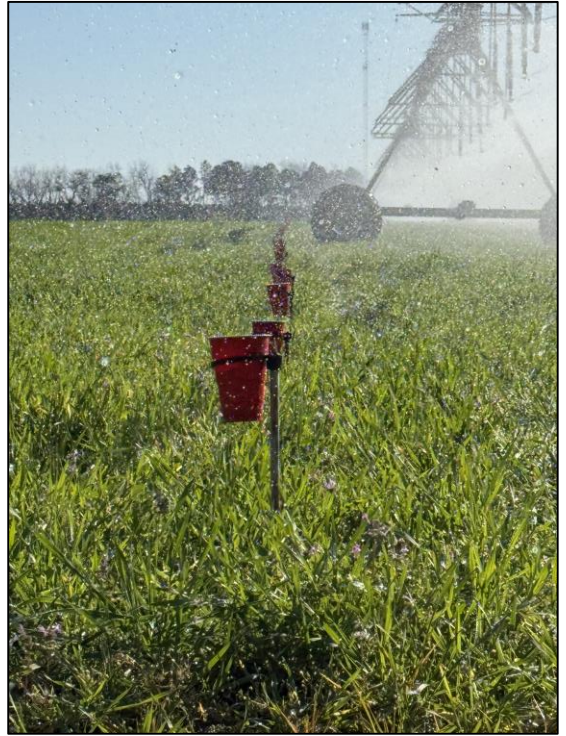
At the Park

Before and after the winter storm



At the Park

BJ and Daryl performing uniformity test



At the Park

Planning meetings some of them in the field others in the office



Dr. Nino Brown's crew



Dr. Bob Kemerait, Christian Phillip and BJ



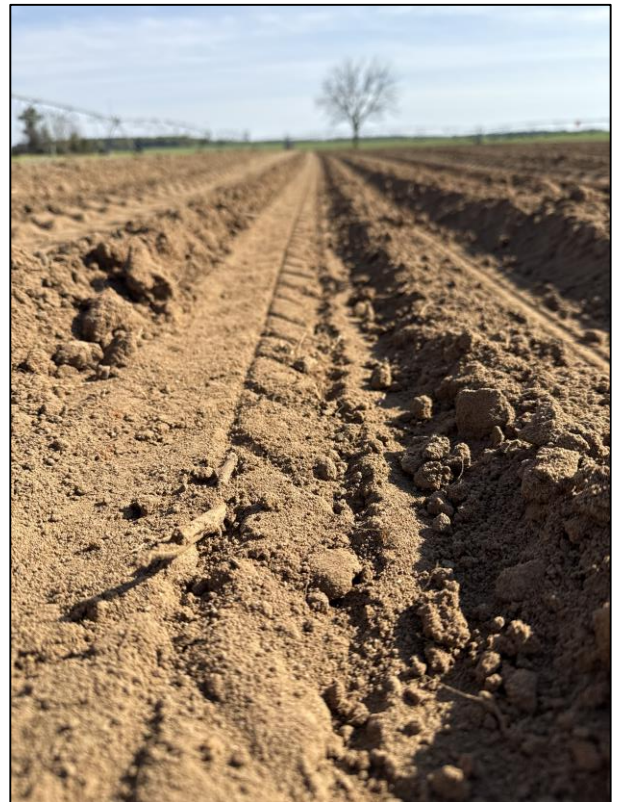
At the Park

Getting ready to plant our first crop in 2025—Sweet corn



At the Park

Planting season—Field corn trials



At the Park



Above: EPD meeting about well permitting. Below: Master Irrigator Program



At the Park

Soil moisture installation crew—Dr. Vellidis group



At the Park

Soil moisture installation crews



Dr. Sintim's crew



Dr. Lacerda's crew



Dr. Porter's crew

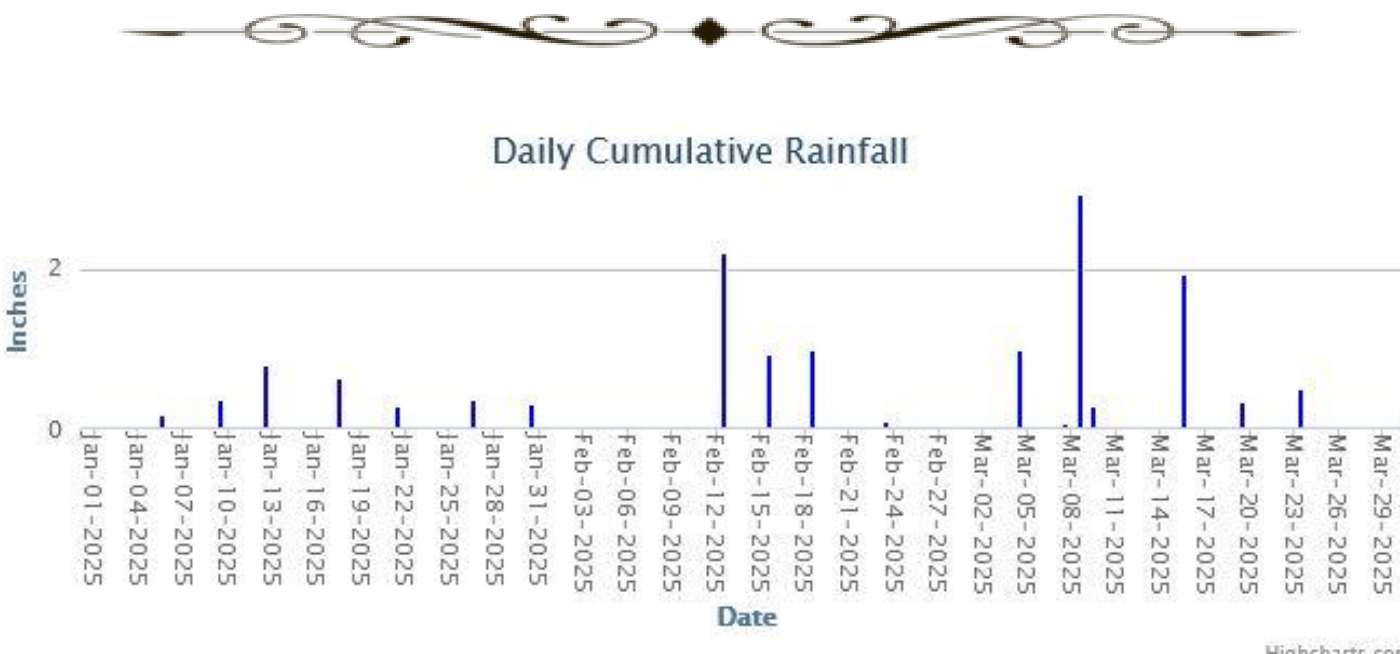
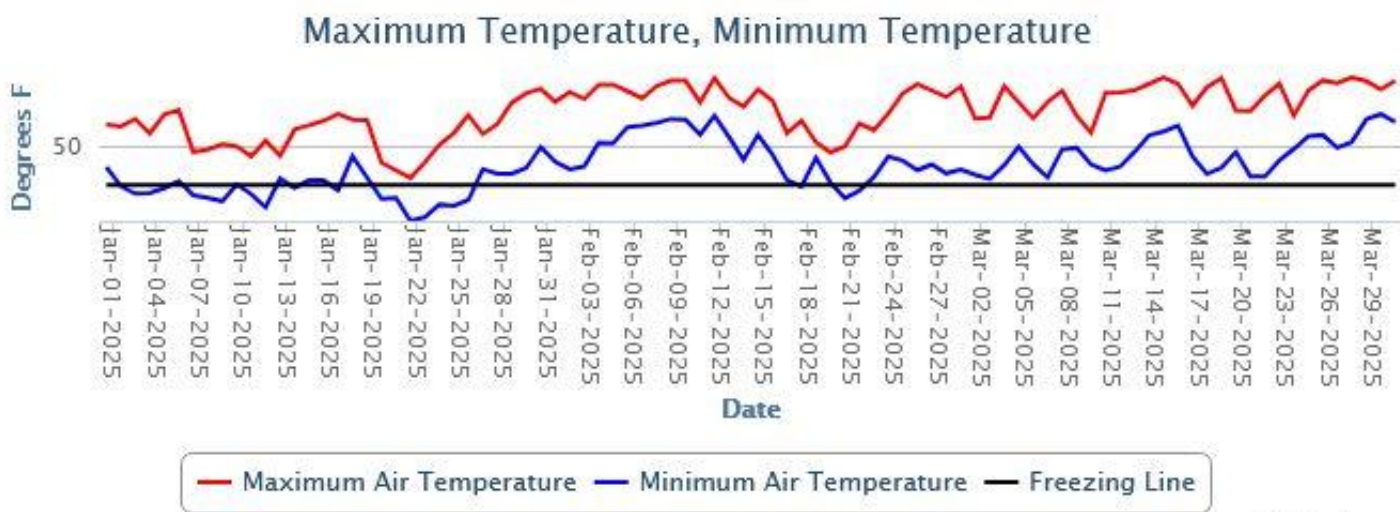


Trivia

- What is the only planet in our solar system to rotate clockwise on its axis? Venus
- Which freezes faster: hot or cold water? Hot water
- What is James Bond's code name? 007
- Jim Henson is the creator of what beloved cast of characters? The Muppets
- Weighing around eight pounds, this is the human body's largest organ? The skin
- How many states does the Appalachian Trail cross? 14
- What do you call a group of flamingos? A flamboyance
- What occasion corresponds with the longest day of the year? The summer solstice
- What is the distance from earth to the sun? 93 million miles
- M&M'S Fruit Chews would eventually become what popular candy? Starburst
- What is the only food that can never go bad? Honey
- What was the first animal to ever be cloned? A sheep
- What is the name of the pet dinosaur on the TV cartoon "The Flintstones"? Dino
- What identity document is required to travel to different countries around the world?
A passport
- Who is considered the "Father of Relativity"? Albert Einstein
- Nearly all fossils are preserved in what type of rock? Sedimentary
- What guitarist notably performed on the Michael Jackson song "Beat It"?
Eddie Van Halen



SIRP Weather



For January through March, SIRP had 14.43 inches of rain, with 2.96 inches in January, 4.22 inches in February and 7.25 inches in March. Compare to 2.53 inches in December, and 2.49 inches in November.

To explore weather information, visit www.georgiaweather.net.



Contact us

You can stop by

8207 Highway 37 West, Camilla, GA 31730

Give us a call to 229 522-3623

Visit our website & watch our live camera!

www.striplingpark.caes.uga.edu

Or send us an email

Amilcar Vargas (Superintendent): amilcar.vargas@uga.edu
B. J. Washington (Farm Manager): bwashing@uga.edu
Candace Gray (Admin. Associate): sirp@uga.edu



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