The educational program was developed as a series with four one-day workshops conducted in 2010 and 2011. Instruction was conducted as hands-on training by county and state Extension faculty in a seven acre demonstration orchard in Suwannee Valley. Orchard crops included: cold hardy citrus, persimmon, blueberry, blackberry, muscadine grape, peach, nectarine, plum, and chestnut. Each workshop was planned to teach the cultural practices or tasks important in the orchard during that season. Topics included: establishing a planting, irrigation design, water and nutrient management, trellising, grafting, pruning, fruit thinning, freeze protection, integrated pest management, post harvest handling, packaging, marketing, cash flow, labor, and variety selection.

There is great interest in learning about growing and direct marketing fruit crops to increase cash flow on small farms. As a result of this program, there will be increased availability of locally grown fruits and nuts. Based on the experiences with this series, we suggest more intensive, hands-on, specialized topic courses be considered, even if the registration fees need to be higher than historically considered to cover the actual costs.