

CARES Recipient Profile



Farm: Agri-Starts, Inc.

Location: Apopka, Orange County

Date of Origination: 1984

Commodities: Fruit trees and ornamental plants



Randy Strode and Ty Strode own and operate Agri-Starts, Inc. in Apopka, Florida. The nursery was started in 1984 when Randy Strode and Gerri Abner began producing and selling tissue culture liners to the wholesale nursery industry. They proudly produce starter plugs of tropical and native, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries and other edibles, as well as ornamental plants.

Agri-starts, Inc. has been implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the nursery since the late 1990's. BMPs are a set of guidelines that advise producers on how to manage the water, nutrient, and pesticides they are using to reduce agriculture's impact on the state's natural resources. Recycling is encouraged and implemented at Agri-Starts, Inc. Mulch is used from tree trimmings, pallets are reused in the community instead of thrown away and various types of metals are recycled. Gutters and downspouts have been installed on the greenhouses to direct water and avoid flooding.

Mr. Strode is actively involved in his local community. He is part of the Mid Florida Research & Education Center Advisory Committee, State of Florida Technical & Natural Resource Committee, Florida Ag Council Region, UF/IFAS SHARE Council, Nursery BMP Manual Steering Committee and various other committees.

When asked why he is a farmer who CARES, Mr. Strode responded, "we only have one environment and it is much more expensive to fix an issue than it is to be a good steward of the land."