

CARES Recipient Profile



Farm: Big Tree Plantation, Inc.

Location: Gainesville, Alachua County

Date of Origination: 1984

Commodities: Landscape ornamentals, native trees and shrubs



Eric Smith operates Big Trees Plantation, Inc. in Gainesville, Florida. The farm has proudly produced landscape ornamentals, native trees and shrubs since 1984.

Mr. Smith has been implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the farm since the late 1980'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. Big Trees Plantation, Inc. uses a computer controlled microirrigation system to supply the correct amount of water to the trees. This eliminates excessive irrigation and minimizes the potential of moving nutrients and crop protection tools, pesticides, and pollutants off site. Grass covers more than 90% of the nursery's area and serves as a barrier to prevent erosion and runoff.

Mr. Smith is actively involved in his local community. He served as past chapter president of the Florida Nursery Growers & Landscape Association and is part of the Philanthropic Endeavors chapter.

When asked why he is a farmer who CARES, Smith responded, "without the environment our quality of life as a society dwindles drastically. Those in agriculture should be on the forefront of such protection, as it's the environment which enables us to produce for the masses."