

Three Oaks Winery, *Washington County*



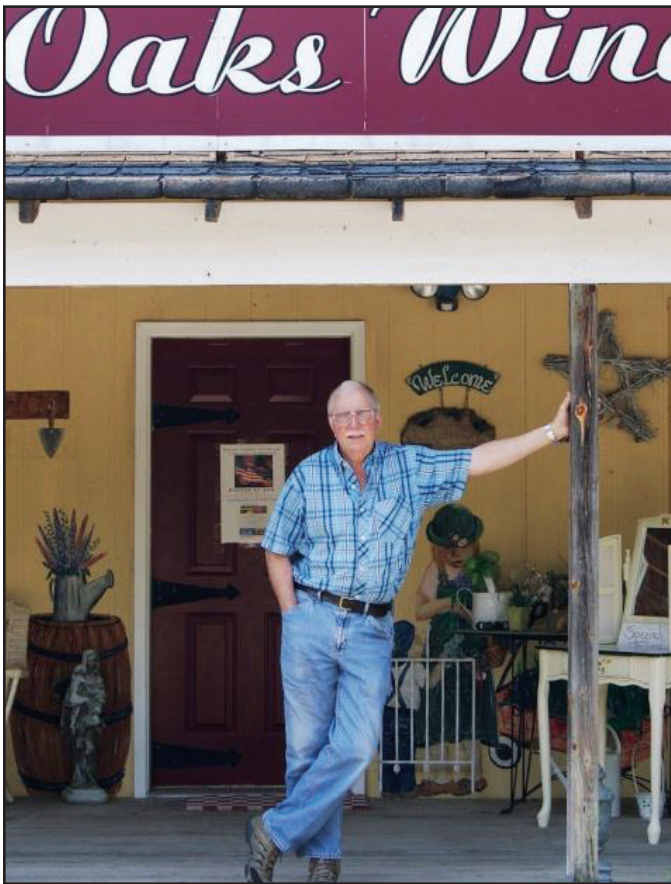
Byron not only has a vineyard producing grapes in Vernon, Florida, but he has vertically integrated his operation to also process these grapes through his own winery and retails his wine through the store on Hwy 69 next to his home. His wines have won national awards in the past. He is a member of FDACS “Fresh from Florida” program and a member of the “Florida Farm Winery Program.”

Byron like most vineyards utilizes irrigation. However he has had to overcome a serious problem with deer and other wildlife predation on his grapes. He supplements his permanent fencing with high visibility poly-tape electric fencing occasionally dobbed with peanut butter to teach the deer to stay out.

Byron is very interested in the “Ag in the Classroom” program to tell the story of Florida Agriculture and grape production to school aged youth. He has a concern about aging producers and the need for enterprising youth to get involved in the grape industry.

Improving Agriculture through Extension Involvement

Byron has worked with various viticulture specialists to study various trial plants and vine insect surveys. He has worked with Dr. Dennis Gray at the IFAS Mid-Florida REC at Apopka to financially support work on transgenic grape vines. Byron has hosted several educational tours coordinated through Extension and Farm Bureau, most recently a Young Farmers tour from Illinois. He serves on the Extension Vice President’s Advisory Council for the Northwest Region. Byron has channeled funds into IFAS viticulture research from the Florida Viticulture Advisory Council and Research Committee. He is always willing to work with IFAS Research and Extension.



Impacting Agriculture in the Northwest District

Byron is a leader in the viticulture industry serving on many FDACS and IFAS Committees providing much needed information on production and marketing concerns. He has been instrumental in securing substantial funds for IFAS Research Efforts. He is involved with the Florida Wine Campaign financially supported by the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture's Viticulture Advisory Council.

Byron is active in his local community serving as chairman of the Northwest Regional Hospital board. He also serves on the city council of Vernon. He is a member of the New Hope Methodist Church.

Byron's operation is the production benchmark for other vineyards in the area and also a market for grape juice for other growers in the area.

Byron uses micro-jet irrigation to conserve water and to insure his plants receive adequate water in a timely fashion. He follows Best Management Practices for operation of his vineyard. Byron also sits on the Commissioner of Agriculture's BMP committee for viticulture. ■

Byron Biddle
Vernon, Florida

