

SERA27 Annual Report (2017)
Tennessee State University
Anthony Witcher

Dr. Sam Nahashon continues as the chair of the Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, but a committee is reviewing applicants for a full time Department Head position. Dr. Nick Gawel continues as the superintendent of the TSU Nursery Research Center (NRC) in McMinnville where four TSU research faculty (including Dr. Witcher) reside. A nursery extension specialist position (Master's level) was advertised in May 2017 and will hopefully be filled later this year. Faculty at the NRC include an entomologist (Jason Oliver), a chemical ecologist (Karla Addesso), a plant pathologist (Fulya Baysal-Gurel), and a horticulturist (Anthony Witcher).

In spring 2017, TSU (entire university) graduated 801 undergraduate and 266 graduate students. Undergraduate (150) and graduate (100) enrollment in the College of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Sciences has remained steady the past 2 years. In fall 2016, the college graduated 14 undergraduate and 21 graduate students. In fall 2017, the college is accepting 15 new graduate students with research assistantships. In spring 2017, faculty at the NRC served as graduate advisors to 6 graduate students. The students take classes on campus (Nashville) and conduct their research projects in McMinnville.

Dr. Witcher's research efforts focus on weed management in nursery crops and alternative container substrates, but include a variety of other projects. Current projects include pre-emerge herbicide use in tree seedling propagation (container and field), cover crop evaluations, efficacy of insecticides in alternative container substrates for controlling imported fire ant and Japanese beetle, distillery charcoal as a container substrate amendment, temperature and substrate moisture content in traditional and air pruning containers, comparison of stem cutting propagation success among different witch hazel species/hybrids, and a field evaluation of 23 witch hazel cultivars (in cooperation with USDA scientist Lisa Alexander).