

Natural Areas Weed Management Certification Testing Available

The Florida Pesticide Law administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) requires all persons who apply or supervise the application of pesticides classified as restricted use to be certified as restricted-use to be certified and licensed by the Department. FDACS has established a certification and licensing category for persons who apply herbicides for the management of weeds in natural areas (also referred to as invasive plants) of the state. According to the rule, the category called Natural Area Weeds Management "is applicable to individuals who use or supervise the use of restricted-use herbicides to control unwanted vegetation to protect natural communities of conservation and recreation lands and natural areas" (5E-9.021(1)(r) FAC).

Although no herbicides used in Florida's natural areas are classified as restricted-use, it is recommended that anyone who uses herbicides in natural communities be certified. Agencies or individual who contract with applicators for the control of invasive plants on their properties may require this certification. Employers may require applicators to use herbicides in natural areas to be certified/licensed. A license can be obtained by an individual who has met the certification requirements of FDACS. The certification requirements are met by successfully completing testing to assure that the individual is knowledgeable and competent in the use and supervision of restricted-use pesticide application.

License classification

Certified natural area herbicide applicators may be licensed as either **public applicators** or **commercial applicators**. A **public applicator** is a licensed applicator employed by a public or governmental agency and the public applicator license is only valid when performing work for the public or governmental agency. The

public applicator license fee for a four-year license is \$35. A **commercial applicator** is a licensed applicator who is licensed to apply restricted-use pesticides on any property provided they are certified in the category for which the applications are made. A **commercial applicator** is usually a contract applicator. The **commercial applicator** fee for a four-year license is \$90.

Certification Requirements

Although the fees are different for public licensing and commercial licensing, certification requirements are the same for both. Two examinations must be passed, a general standards (core) examination, which tests general knowledge of proper pesticide use and safety; and the Natural Area Weeds Management category examination, which tests specific knowledge of applying herbicides in natural areas. A passing score on both examinations is required before the license can be issued.

Examination Locations

Examinations are administered at most University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), County Cooperative Extension Offices. If the Extension office in your county does not administer the exam, call the IFAS Pesticide Information Office (352/392-4721) to find out where to take the examination.

The FDACS Certification and Licensing Office (850/488-3314) will notify you of your exam results. If you passed, you will receive a license application. If you failed, you will need to retake the examination to obtain a passing grade.

Preparing for the Examination

All questions in the on the General Standards (Core) Exam are based on information contained in "Applying Pesticides Correctly – A Guide for Pesticide Applicators", IFAS Publication SP1. All questions on the Natural Area Weeds Management Category Exam are

based on information contained in "Natural Area Weed Management, a Training Manual for Restricted Use Pesticide Applicators", IFAS Publication SP295 and "Identification and Biology of Non-Native Plants Found in Florida's Natural Areas", IFAS Publication SP257. These publications can be purchased from: IFAS Publications, University of Florida, IFAS Building 440, Gainesville, FL 32611 (352/392-1764) or the IFAS Publications Web site, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

55th Annual Southern Weed Science Conference, **January 28-30, 2002**. Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, GA. Contact: www.weedscience.msstate.edu/swss.

Weed Science Society of America Annual Meeting, **February 10-13, 2002**. Reno Hilton, Reno, NV. Contact: www.wssa.net/

Florida Weed Science Society Annual Meeting, **February 26-27, 2002**. Mid Florida Research and Education Center in Apopka, FL. Contact: Anne Gideon, Program Chair (561)562-6549, anne.gideon.b@bayer.com

Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council Symposium, **April 3-5, 2002**. Bell South Auditorium, Nashville, TN. Contact: www.se-eppc.org.

First Latin-American Short-Course on Biological Control of Weeds, **June 24-28, 2002**. Montelimar, Nicaragua. Contact: Julio Medal medal@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu.

European Weed Research Society's 11th International Meeting on Aquatic Weeds, **September 2-6, 2002**. Moliets, France Contact ewrs.2002@bordeaux.cemagref.fr