

# TREE-T-PEE An invention for the conservation minded grower

By: Julie Burg

*I'm just a guy from Arcadia, Florida who's teaching growers a better way to conserve water, our most precious resource", says Johnny Georges, inventor.*

"Growing up in Polk County, the very heart of the Heartland's citrus industry, and his passion for water conservation, were the catalysts for Johnny Georges, now of Arcadia, to create the Tree-T-Pee. Citrus growers have been using a smaller version of the product for years, as a protective sheath during freezing temperatures. Georges realized that a larger tee-pee could do a lot more than offer freeze protection. In 2002, he designed the larger tee-pee, one that could confine and concentrate water, fertilizer and herbicides to the base of each tree. When fitted properly around the base of a young citrus or fruit trees, the Tree-T-Pee acts like a mini greenhouse, directing water and vital nutrients to the roots, which increases the root growth by 30 percent of the young trees.

When growers use the Tree-T-Pee, the proven cost savings during the first four years of a tree's life, speak for themselves; 90 percent is the average. Less water, less fertilizer, less fuel and less herbicide, the benefits to the grower are numerous. As an example, "Instead of using 10,000 gallons of water per tree per year, with the Tree-T-Pee, we are only using 800 gallons per tree per year", explains Georges.



on jatropha trees in Felda, Florida", Georges says. He expects the market to expand to Texas, California and Georgia, states that suffer from severe water shortages. The impact could be nationwide.

Georges owns the patent and the molds to the Tree-T-Pee and is committed to having them manufactured in the United States, currently at Advantage Plastics in Winter Haven, with 100 percent recycled products. Knowing this isn't a get rich quick venture, he is driven more by the important impact the product is to the agriculture community and the going green movement.

Georges admits success with any new product takes time. "But if you believe and know what you are doing is right, you should never give up on your dreams", he proudly boasts of this major contribution to Florida Agriculture.

*For more information on this conservation minded product, contact Johnny Georges at 863-990-2095 or visit the website at [www.tree-t-pee.com](http://www.tree-t-pee.com).*

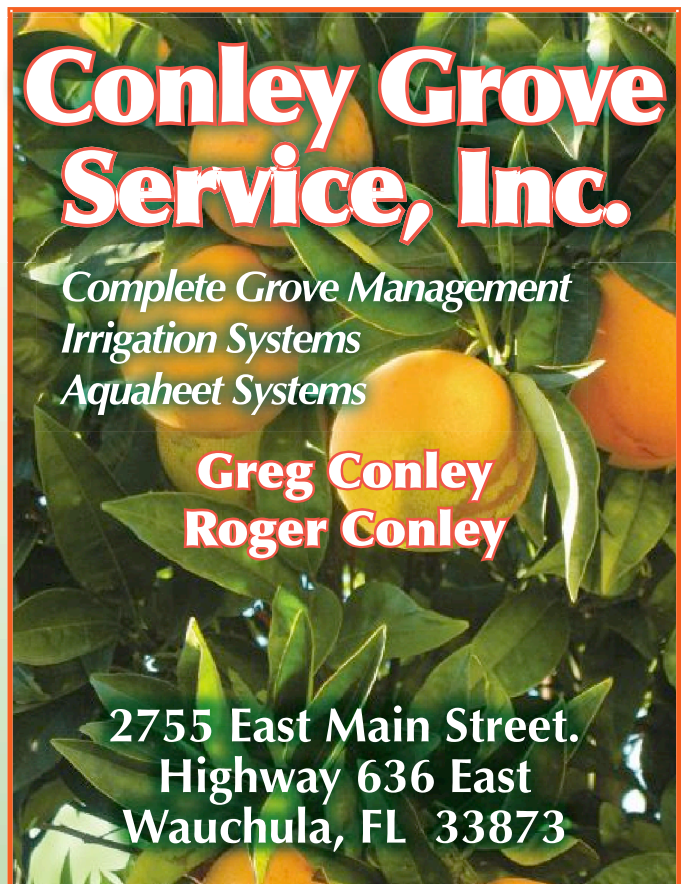


The water savings are so dramatic that it has caught the attention of Southwest Florida Water Management officials, who are currently developing a cost sharing program for those growers who are using the product. Georges says, "Watering time in the groves is normally about 6 hours, but with the Tree-T-Pee confining the irrigation to the tree's base, the watering time is cut down to 30 minutes. The water savings boggles the mind!"

Additionally, fuel costs are normally estimated at \$1.44 per tree per year, but with this invention, it's about 12 cents per tree per year. The savings for herbicides and fertilizer are in the same 90 percent ratio. This past winter's freeze proved another benefit provided by the product; when the temperatures dropped as low as 19 degrees in some areas of the Heartland, trees that were fitted with the tee-pee registered 40+ degree temperatures at their base and the steam from the irrigation created a plum of warmth, protecting the trees.

Several growers in the Heartland are already taking advantage of this product in their citrus groves.

"We are also using them on Florida peach trees, making them in white to reflect the hot Florida sun, which helps keep the tree cooler. And with interest in our product growing day by day, we are also using them



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