

Florida-based IMG Citrus has announced the acquisition of a large citrus grove in the state, which it says further secures its position as an established leader in the category.

The 2,500-acre grove in Charlotte County increases its control of citrus land management in Florida by 27%, bringing its total acreage there to 11,387 acres.

The grove was originally planted in the 1990s and known as the Chiquita grove. The IMG Citrus family has renamed it the Imagine grove, referencing an existing brand and their excitement for the opportunities to come in Florida citrus.

The property IMG Citrus acquired is a mixed-use farm property with citrus, vegetable, and sod land. The varieties of citrus on the property include red grapefruit (Ruby Red, Star, Flame, and Ray), Navel oranges, and Cara Cara oranges.

The company will be planting an additional 60-acres of grapefruit on the property in Fall 2021 with plans to continue new grove plantings in the future. Over the next three years, it intends to invest over \$1.5 million in capital expenditure through the addition of equipment and the enhancement of the infrastructure of the property. IMG Citrus is also considering growing watermelons on the property with the available infrastructure.

“There are also a total of 752-acres of wetlands on the property with endless amounts of nature and beautiful wildlife,” says Melanie Ressler, IMG Citrus Co-CEO.

“This property showcases what really drives our purpose as a farmer. By sustainably managing producing acres and conserving wetlands, we can grow delicious citrus while also diligently conserving our natural resources.”

The Imagine Grove increases IMG Citrus’ geographical diversification and footprint in southwest Florida. Prior to the Imagine Grove acquisition, the Avant Grove, a total of 1,086-acres and located in DeSoto County’s Arcadia, was the company's only southwestern Florida grove.

As a diversified company, integrating a landscape business through the sod land on the Imagine Grove property provides an "appealing" development opportunity for IMG Citrus.

60-acres of sod land are currently in production; however, the company intends to redevelop the sod operation to its full capacity of 219-acres of infrastructure. The sod will most likely be marketed under the Cherrylake brand.

Cherrylake, Inc. is IMG Citrus’ sister company and one of the largest wholesale producers of

ornamental trees, palms, and shrubs in the Southeast. Cherrylake also has a landscape construction division and landscape maintenance division.

“This property has historically produced very high-quality red grapefruit for which Florida is well known,” says Melanie Ressler. “It is exciting to further deepen our offering to our customers and consolidate our position as the leading Florida fresh grapefruit grower.”

The property was acquired from the Packers of Indian River, the same company IMG Citrus previously purchased the Happy Food Grove (3,928-acres) from in 2019 and the Sweet 60 Groves (562-acres) in 2017.

The procurement of the Imagine Grove continues the long history and partnership between IMG Citrus and the Packers of Indian River. IMG Citrus will also be onboarding the team of employees, some with 30 years of tenure on the property.