

WINTER
2025



Georgia Crop

Improvement Association

NEWSLETTER

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MEMBER



MEMBER

From the Director's desk

Happy New Year!

I hope 2025 is off to a good start for you, your family and your business. 2024 was my first full year serving as GCIA executive director, and while challenging at times, I am proud of what our team was able to achieve. First, I want to thank our staff for the hard work and dedication they displayed throughout 2024. Second, thank you to our board of directors for their support and encouragement.

As we look ahead to 2025, I hope you will mark your calendar and plan to attend our 80th Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, March 6th at the Georgia Center in Athens. We moved the meeting date up a bit this year in the hope that more of our members and industry partners can attend.

Speakers include Clint Hood, Synovus Ag and Timber Division; Dr. Nathan Smith, Clemson University; Bryan Tolar, Tolar Capitol Partners; Matthew Hoots, Intellectual Property Attorney; and members of the UGA Peanut, Turfgrass, and Grains teams. We will also get updates from our partners with the GDA State Seed Lab, Georgia Seed Development, and the Georgia Seed Association.

One of the great things about our organization are the connections and friendships that are built over the years. In an effort to continue this tradition, I encourage you to bring someone from your company who hasn't attended a GCIA Annual Meeting before. If you have a new farm manager, buying point representative, or other team members, invite them to come with you.

While we certainly need to remember our past and the lessons learned by those who came before us, it is equally important to bring in new members to the organization. With new faces come renewed energy, new ideas, and fresh perspectives. Along that line, I encourage all of our members to volunteer to serve as a committee chair or vice chair. In addition to the board of directors, we have commodity committees as well as the certification committee. These committees are vital to the strength of the certification program. You may think, 'I'm not qualified' or 'I don't know enough.' Frankly, serving is the best way to learn, and I can guarantee that if you reach out for help, it will be there.

Again, mark your calendar for Thursday, March 6! We look forward to seeing you in Athens.

Billy Skaggs
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2025 UPCOMING AG EVENTS



GCIA Peanut Seed Short Course



The Georgia Crop Improvement Association invites you to attend the 61st Annual Peanut Seed Short Course on Thursday, February 6th at the ABAC Georgia Museum of Agriculture. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Refreshments will be provided at registration and the meeting will adjourn at 12:30 p.m. (lunch will not be served).

We encourage you to attend this meeting as we strive to continue improving our overall peanut program.

We have a great lineup of speakers planned including Dr. Scott Monfort, UGA College of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences; Tyron Spearman, National Peanut Points Assoc.; Allie Randell, American Peanut Council; Caleb Warrington & Justin Tanner, Georgia Seed Development; Dr. Tim Brenneman, UGA College of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences; and Dr. Carrie Crabtree & Dr. Todd Leeson, Georgia Department of Agriculture Laboratory Division. Refreshments will be provided at registration and the meeting will adjourn at 12:45 p.m. (lunch will not be served).

GCIA approved plant representatives and buying point representatives are required to attend a seed short course once every two years for the conditioning facility or buying point to remain on the GCIA approved list. Please confirm your registration by email [becki.hicks@georgiacrop.com or leslie.wright@georgiacrop.com] or phone [706]542-2351 before Monday, February 3rd.

February 9-13, 2025 – TPI 2025 International Education Conference and Field Day
JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa, San Antonio, TX.



February 14-17, 2025 – National Peanut Buying Points Association Winter Conference, J.W. Marriott Tampa Water Street, Tampa, FL.

For more information visit www.peanutbuyingpoints.org or call Angela at 229-286-0216.



*Georgia Crop Improvement Association
80th Annual Membership Meeting
March 6, 2025
The University of Continuing Education
Athens, GA*



For more information or to register, please call 706-542-2351 or email leslie.wright@georgiacrop.com & becki.hicks@georgiacrop.com

Branch named National Academy of Inventors Fellow



By: Brandon Ward with CAES/University of Georgia

CAES professor has earned the nickname 'godfather of peanuts'

William “Bill” D. Branch, who holds the Georgia Seed Development Professorship in Peanut Breeding and Genetics in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, has been elected as Fellow for the National Academy of Inventors (NAI).

Branch is the 17th UGA faculty member to receive this honor, which recognizes inventors whose innovations have had a significant impact on society, economic development and quality of life.



“We’re proud to see another innovative UGA faculty member elected to the National Academy of Inventors,” said interim Vice President for Research Chris King. “Dr. Branch has made remarkable contributions to the agricultural industry, and his work in plant breeding underscores the significant impact UGA research continues to have around the globe.”

Branch’s groundbreaking work in peanut breeding has led to the development of more than 30 novel, licensed peanut varieties. His research has earned him accolades such as the National Peanut Buying Points Association Impact Award, the Innovator Award from the Georgia Peanut Commission, UGA’s Inventor of the Year Award in 1997, induction into the Georgia Agricultural Hall of Fame, and even the nickname “godfather of peanuts.”

Georgia’s peanut industry contributes about \$1.8 billion annually to Georgia’s economy. Branch’s cultivars account for 85% of the peanut acreage grown in Georgia and the Southeast, bolstering Georgia’s position as the leading peanut-producing state. His two disease-resistant cultivars, Georgia Green and Georgia-O6G, have been credited with saving the Southeastern U.S. peanut industry thanks to their resistance to tomato spotted wilt virus.

With over 30 U.S. Plant Variety Protection Certificates and multiple patents to his name, Branch’s innovations have generated more than \$72 million in royalties for UGA, the most of any agriculture-related technology. All 30 of those varieties have been licensed and commercialized in the U.S., generating more than 500 non-exclusive license agreements.

Beyond his research, Branch has made significant contributions to academia, mentoring numerous students and publishing over 350 research papers, with more than 150 in refereed journals. He is a member of several esteemed professional organizations, including the American Peanut Research and Education Society, the American Society of Agronomy, Council of Agricultural Science and Technology, and the American Peanut Council.

Branch’s work exemplifies UGA’s land-grant mission, fostering collaboration with industry to address and solve real-world problems. His peanut breeding program is recognized as a leading example internationally.

Branch credited his family and faith for helping him throughout his career.

“I am truly honored to have been elected as an NAI Fellow,” he said. “It normally takes 10 to 20 years to develop a new peanut variety. Consequently, you have to be very patient to succeed. Any success I have obtained is all credit to my wife, Milla, and family for their continued support for all these years. Together with our Lord, we have been able to reach new heights.”

Branch will be officially inducted as an NAI Fellow on June 23 at the 14th Annual Conference in Atlanta.

Source: UGA CAES



GCIA attends 48th Annual Peanut Farm Show

Georgia
PEANUT
Farm Show
& Conference

The Georgia Crop Improvement Association attended the 48th Annual Peanut Farm Show on January 16th. We discussed seed certification and the advantages of planting certified seed. Georgia peanut producers expect and demand high quality, genetically pure seed. We were able to justify the certification of seed by explaining our standards and showing how the seed is held to a higher standard. While most producers are aware of what we stand behind at Georgia Crop, there were some new faces that needed to be informed. Mr. Billy Skaggs, Executive Director, provided a presentation to producers pertaining to seed quality and quantity of the 2024 crop. Mr. Skaggs discussed the increase of acres within certain varieties from 2023 to 2024. These varieties are on the rise due to their high-quality genetics, with some characteristics being disease resistance and high yield potential. Mr. Skaggs' presentation gave a positive outlook for the 2025 peanut crop based on the results of current seed quality. The farm show helped us stay connected to our seed producers and members of Georgia Crop. We appreciate the opportunity to attend each year.



Pictured are GCIA inspectors from left to right: Mark Collier, Terry Crane, Terry Hollifield, Austin Redmond, Sean Cunard & Alex Gilreath



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