

## Variety Bullet Points

by Roger Smith

There may not be universal agreement about the future of the California Citrus Industry, but we can all agree that times are changing and they're changing fast! The following is some variety information that is aimed at helping you through many of the "new" things that are coming our way as an industry. Please call us if you would like to go into greater depth than we had space to provide here.

### MANDARINS, MANDARINS, MANDARINS

It seems like mandarins are on everyone's mind these days as growers look for profitable alternatives to crops with low profits. I'll try and boil the information down to some key points. Attend our Mandarin Field Day on December 12th to learn more.

- A mandarin can be defined as "a citrus fruit that is larger than a kumquat and smaller than an orange." Not a fancy definition, but it simplifies things.
- Think of mandarins in 4 categories: Satsumas, Clementines, Seedless Selections, and Other. Sats are seedless like navels oranges, Clementines are seedless when isolated, Seedless Selections are genetically seedless, Other includes everything else.
- Mandarins are farmed different than other types of citrus and each of the 4 categories of mandarins are farmed different than each other.
- Most mandarin varieties alternate bear and require pruning to help regulate the cropping habit. Satsumas are an exception and rarely alternate bear. W. Murcotts alternate slightly when compared to most other mandarin varieties.
- Satsumas and Clementines are harvested from October- January and have many different cultivars with relatively short harvest seasons.
- Late Mandarins are harvested from February on and have gotten the most interest lately. W. Murcott (Afourer), Gold Nugget, Shasta Gold,



*Cara Cara Navels*

Pixie and Ortanique are examples.

- Carrizo, C-35, Rich 16-6 trifoliolate, and Rubidoux trifoliolate are common rootstocks for mandarins. Carrizo and C-35 are the most popular.
- The new release of the seedless TDE's (Temple x Dancy x Encore) has peaked interest, but no commercial plantings exist. They're future success is hard to predict. They are named Shasta Gold (TDE 2), Tahoe Gold (TDE 3), and Yosemite Gold (TDE 4). Go to [www.plantbiology.ucr.edu/people/faculty/](http://www.plantbiology.ucr.edu/people/faculty/) to find out more information.
- Nules Clementine is the most widely planted Clementine in California. 2002 will be the first crop of significance here.
- Fina Sodea Clementine was the first Clementine variety planted here in any quantity. It has been the primary California Clementine in the markets to date, but is not recommended for further plantings since better

varieties have been released in the past few years.

- W. Murcott (Afourer) is also trademarked as Delite. The fruit doesn't granulate with age and may hold well on the tree into late spring. Very large plantings of this variety are being developed. The fruit's frost sensitivity is its greatest liability.
- There are 2 "types" of Satsumas. The 'Wase' type and the 'Owari' type. Okitsu Wase, Miho Wase, and Kuno Wase are 'Wase' examples. Dobashi Beni, Silverhill, Frost Owari, and Armstrong are 'Owari' examples. 'Wase' types are larger and earlier than 'Owaris'.

• The Citrus Clonal Protection Program has recently released many new mandarin selections. Little is known about these cultivars under California conditions.

• There have been some very large developments of mandarins in the last few years by a couple of large farming companies. Their influence on the market will be significant and must be evaluated before any grower plants mandarins.

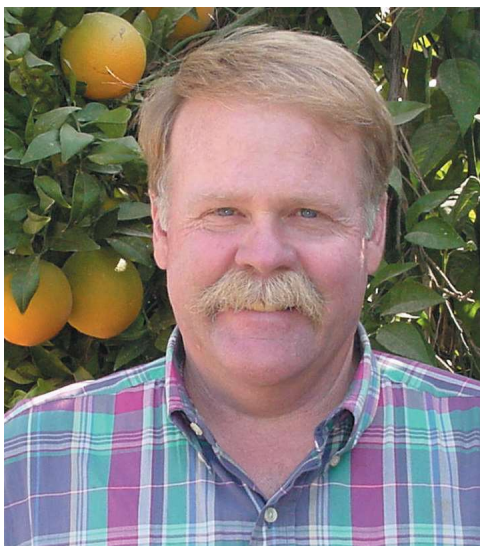
### NAVELS

Navels are still the most popular variety group that we sell at TreeSource. California growers still recognize that the thermal foothills of Central California remain the best place on earth for producing high quality navels. Here are some brief comments on selected varieties.

- Cara Cara Pink Navels are still a good choice for the grower that wants to diversify. Earliest harvest is around Christmas for this

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# “Industry Interview”

David Brown is a 4th generation citrus grower that currently farms citrus, grapes and apples in the Orange Cove area. His wife, Jill, and her business partner operate a direct marketing business called the Girdled Grape. They have 3 sons, Andrew, Adam and Justin. Andrew and Adam are PCA's in the industry and Justin is attending Law School.

**TS: How do you see the future of the California Citrus Industry?**

**Dave:** I'm really more concerned about the entire Ag Industry in California. Unlike other countries in the world, our government does not protect our agricultural industry. Case in point, Spanish Clementines. For 6% of Spain's crop, we risk 100% of all fruit grown in our state.\* Citrus production areas around the world have their eye on the US market because the money is here. What is the next Spanish Clementine? It is a total world market and my crystal ball is a lot foggier than it used to be.

**TS: What are some of the changes you've witnessed in recent years?**

**Dave:**

- The consolidation of buyers. We are selling to fewer buyers and more sellers are getting into the marketing of California citrus each year. I don't think that is a positive thing for our industry.

- The change in our Valencia market has come so quickly, even though many of us saw the handwriting on the wall. I wonder if the same thing could happen to our navel market as well? In years past, I was confident that as long as I

produced a good orange, I would always have a good return. I'm not as confident as I used to be.

- In the last 2 or 3 years, how many times have we seen healthy orchards get pushed out or budded over? It didn't used to be that way.

- There are a lot of deciduous houses that want to market, as well as pack citrus, so they can run their facilities year round. There are also companies that never considered citrus that are now venturing into it.

- I have so many variety choices for new plantings; I don't really know what to do. Do we plant a Clementine, and if so, what variety? Do we plant W. Murcotts, or what about these TDE's or should we stay with late navels? I was raised on a farm around Orosi and we bought our first orchard in 1978. Back then, we used to talk about whether the grove would be early or could hold. Now I'm looking at all these different varieties that we don't know much about, wondering if they're for me. I'm not saying these changes are all bad; it's just that it's new and we don't know where it will lead.

**TS: So, how do you find your way through these rapid changes?**

**Dave:** I'm a family farmer and this is what I do for a living, but it's hard to separate the emotion from my decisions. It was hard for me to push out 20 acres of healthy Valencias when Valencias got us to where we are today. But you've got to set the emotions aside and bite the bullet. A key to our success has been diversity and I intend to continue to be even more diversified in the future.

**TS: How do you determine what varieties to plant?**

**Dave:** We own certain properties that are suited for certain varieties. I also consider the 2 very large growers in this industry and see how they can impact the markets they are in. Are they doing something that is compatible with what we're doing? I consider market windows to see if a new vari-

ety fits in with changing demand. I ask myself, what windows are we weak in? What do we need to shore up in a specific time frame?

**TS: What keeps you in business?**

**Dave:** This is what I love to do. We are getting a lot more production per acre and we are making a better product and using our resources more efficiently. The challenge of having the right product and making a great return is exciting. It is getting hard to be optimistic about things because of the influence of the world situation, but the challenge keeps me going.

**TS: Do you have a specific concern?**

**Dave:** Aside from government and environmental regulations, water and labor issues, I'm concerned about making the rapid switch away from Valencias. What will happen to packing and marketing charges when packinghouses don't have much activity in the summer? There are so many unknowns and hopefully we are not cannibalizing our market and are expanding our consumer base. We want to make the pie larger, not cut pieces thinner.

**TS: How do you sum it all up?**

**Dave:** It's a high stakes poker game. You're not assured you will win a hand. Before, I knew we could win a few. I am optimistic this year because our crop looks good, but I'm not sure what the next 5 years will bring.

**TS: Thanks Dave.**

*\*With the 6% of Spain's Clementine crop brings with it the heightened risk of the introduction of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly.*



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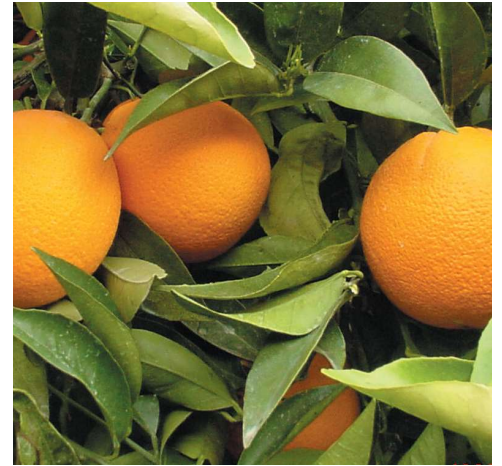
beautiful fruit and they can hold well into Spring with Gib and 2,4-D. They even hold well without treatment.

- Rush T.I. navels have surged in popularity recently as growers are turning to a more traditional early navel choice. It colors earlier than Zimmerman and takes gas very well, but internal quality is similar to a traditional T.I.
- Fukumotos have the earliest harvest of the modern early navels and have a reputation for quality fruit, high external color, and consistent size.
- Powell Summer Navel is still our top seller for late season navels and continues to impress us out in the young groves. The oldest grove

was planted in 1996.

- Chislett and Autumn Gold Summer Navels have gained popularity in recent years as many growers choose to diversify their late navel properties. The earliest plantings for these two were 1998 or 1999.
- Barnfield Summer Navel is enjoying some interest as well. It has groves that were developed in 1994.
- Atwood navels have enjoyed a resurgence of interest as some growers are looking for a versatile mid-season navel that has predictable production and quality.
- On the horizon are some new navels that we are watching to see if they improve the world-class selections that we already have. Notable are: Palmer, Navelina, Navelate, Robyn,

Rhode, and Wiffen. So far, there is nothing interesting to report.



*Powell Navels*

## What's up with Fukumoto?

Fukumoto is an early navel that will test before color break, breaks color a bit before the Early Beck, has a red-orange color, a good shape, and good fruit size. It has been planted extensively on Carrizo, C-35, Rough Lemon, Volkameriana, and some Trifoliolate rootstocks. Carrizo provides the earliest color break while Volkameriana and Rough Lemon break about 10 days later. Its consistent fruit size and high external color may be its greatest attribute over other early navels.

Fukumoto has had problems with a condi-

tion titled Foaming Bark Rot that primarily affects trees 2 and 3 years old. This condition is more prevalent in Kern County and there is no way to treat it, although its severity varies from year to year. 2002 has been a more severe year, but the condition doesn't normally kill its host tree, although tree death does occur. Until this disorder is understood, there isn't much a grower can do besides accept that it may occur and insure your trees are not under undue stress in their second and third years.

There is also some misleading information about rootstock incompatibility that has been recently reported. The reports of problems with some Fukumoto groves are true, but what hasn't been clearly presented is the vast number of Fukumoto groves that are doing very well. There certainly is a need to study the problem, but some of the information that has been presented on this topic can be considered "alarmist." Contact TreeSource if you need more information on issues concerning Fukumotos.

## Introducing Mini-Citrus Trees

If you have attended TreeSource Field Days in the last couple of years, you have seen our work with Mini-Citrus Trees. When an order is placed, these trees can be produced in 6-20 weeks, depending on the circumstances. We use our cone seedlings and a specialized micro grafting technique we have developed.

So how does a Mini-tree help the average grower? *It provides you an easier way to grow your own trees that can help you manage your tree costs.* A mini-tree is too small



to plant out in a grove setting, but it's a perfect "starter" for your own ranch nursery. Anyone that has done their own nursery will tell you that the toughest and most important

part is raising a quality seedling and getting them budded properly with appropriate budwood. Even if you do a good job, you will have a percentage of bud failure and development delays caused by insect damage that affects the yield and quality of your trees.

With a mini-tree, we improve your chances of success because the tree is already budded for you. In the same time it takes to get a seedling started, you can have a mini-tree most of the way up the stake! All you have to do is plant it and keep it alive and it will grow large enough to set into a grove planting. Mini-trees can be planted in containers or in quality soil (adobe soils complicate things). They'll still need irrigation, fer-

tilizer, staking, pest control, frost protection and suckering, but your chances for success are greatly increased over the more traditional citrus nursery methods. TreeSource will also provide you with a care guide to help you learn how to "nursery" your mini-trees.

Mini-Citrus Trees cost only \$3.50 each if you order 600 trees or more. It is likely that your growing costs would not exceed \$2.00 more, which means you can have quality nursery trees for as little \$5.50 each! Check with your accountant and you may also discover some tax advantages if you finish your own trees. You can find more information on our web site at [www.citrustreesource.com](http://www.citrustreesource.com) or call Roger Smith at (559)804-6176. We also can box and ship these trees by UPS, so if you have friends out-of-state or overseas that want to "nursery" citrus trees, we can accommodate them.