
## CITRUS ORCHARDING IN THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS

W. H. Friend, Supt. Substation No. 15, Weslaco, Texas

Texas Agr. Expt. Sta. Circ. No. 111, 38 pages. 1946.

The citrus industry in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas has developed from home plantings prior to 1916 to more than 9,500,000 orchard trees in 1946. The 28,000,000-box crop produced in 1945 would have filled 70,000 standard refrigerator cars. Actually, about 45 per cent of the 1945 crop was marketed as canned juice.

Early plantings of citrus fruits in this region were in the ratio of eight grapefruit trees to each orange tree. During the past few planting seasons, however, plantings have been about equally divided between oranges of all types and pink-fleshed grapefruit. This trend in planting is due to the price differentials which encourage the production of oranges and fancy grapefruit.

There has been a heavy reduction in acreage each year for the past 10 years, but much of this loss has been due to the fact that a considerable proportion was planted on land unsuited for citrus fruit production, and also because many orchards are poorly managed and in some cases actually abused. The exceptionally high average yields produced during the 1945 season (240 boxes per acre) would indicate that citrus orcharding should be a thriving enterprise on the better adapted soils of the region.

Good Valley orchards, when properly managed, may be expected to yield substantial returns on invested capital, even should the orchard price of fruit drop 50 per cent below the levels which prevailed during the 1940-1946 period.

### Varieties

There are many fine varieties of oranges and quite a few acceptable varieties of grapefruit, but standardization is so important in merchandising fruit that a minimum amount of diversification is best for the industry.

Hamlin (early), Joppa (mid-season) and Valencia (late) are the standard orange varieties recommended for planting in this region. The relative merits of these and many other varieties are discussed in Texas Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 601, "Citrus Varieties for the Lower Rio Grande Valley."

Ruby, also called Redblush, grapefruit is the outstanding novelty fruit, and most young plantings are of this variety. The present acreage of standard Marsh Seedless grapefruit should supply market demands for this type of fruit for many years in the future. However, there should be a fairly steady, long-time demand for Marsh grapefruit for processing.

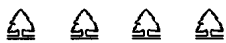
### Rootstocks

Standard sour orange has given good results as an understock for most varieties of citrus which are produced in this region. There is no reason for suggesting a change at this time, except for the possibility that a destructive disease which kills trees on sour orange stock may eventually invade this area. Tristeza disease has already destroyed most of the trees on sour orange stock in parts of Brazil, and there is the possibility that some imported disease of this kind might become a factor in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

Cleopatra mandarin is the best adapted understock from the standpoint of production, but sour orange is somewhat more resistant to foot rot and to cotton root rot. Trees budded on mandarin root stocks have proven highly resistant to Tristeza disease in Brazil. Other resistant understocks which could be used in this region, if Tristeza becomes a factor, are rough lemon and Sampson tangelo. Sweet orange, grapefruit, trifoliate orange and trifoliate hybrids are not adapted to Valley conditions.

In addition to the material quoted above which should be of special interest to our readers, this circular also discusses such topics as site, soil, growing nursery trees, planting the trees, training and pruning, irrigation, fertilization, cover crops, insect and disease control, and harvesting, storing and marketing.

—W.P.J.



## CHERRY CULTURE IN CALIFORNIA

By Guy L. Philip,
Calif. Ext. Circ. 46, 1947.

The following statement concerning the aims of this circular appears in the preface. "This circular is intended to serve as an introductory study for the beginner in cherry culture and as a ready reference for the established grower. A revision of the original 1930 edition, it describes the most up-to-date cultural methods and points out economic aspects of the business which significantly influence management. Cherry production is among the more hazardous agricultural enterprises in this state; but given favorable soil and location, good orchard practice and informed management, the risks