

The Willie Navel News

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF WILLITS & NEWCOMB CITRUS NURSERY



We've got you covered!



Conversion to indoor operation right on schedule

By **JACKIE MAXWELL**
WN Inc. President

The hot summer months slow our tree sales to a crawl, however, there is a bunch of activity around the nursery. The move to growing inside continues by leaps and bounds. This week begins the building of a work area that will join together our two climate controlled production bug resistant hot houses.

The new back-up generator is being installed and we are doing the final bit of "buttoning-up" the other two large passive houses. Meanwhile, irrigation systems are being installed, another new type of container is being tested, benching is being installed in the big production house and



Employee Orcar Sanchez tends to seedlings in the new indoor facility (above). Construction is underway joining our two climate-controlled hot houses together (left), which will give Willits and Newcomb Inc. a real advantage. See more photos on Page 2

our own clever shop guys are creating a custom benching system for our seedling production house.

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Summer's hottest topic? Caring for that new planting

By **GARY MOLES**
WN Inc. Production Manager

Trees being dug and planted at this time of the year are highly susceptible to transplant shock and heat stress. Contact the nursery well in advance of

CARE TIP

actual delivery. We would like to dig the trees 2 to 3 weeks prior to shipping. This allows for the trees to recover from the digging process and the nursery to catch

any problems, due to transplant shock, before the actual delivery takes place. This also allows time for the trees to begin to grow and develop new growth prior to planting. Our experience has

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Employees Hector Andrade (above) and Oscar Sanchez and Mauricio Vaca (top right) work at budding some seedlings in one of Willits and Newcomb Inc.'s two climate-controlled hot houses, which are part of the company's long-range plan to convert to indoor growing. At right, the custom-built tray tables stand at the ready for more product.



Move to indoors right on schedule



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We are one busy little bee hive! If or when the ACP/HLB arrives in our backyard we will be ready to continue to provide you with disease free, high quality citrus trees. The one thing that hasn't changed around here is our commitment to giving you the best customer service in the citrus nursery business.

CARE TIP

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shown that trees planted with a new flush and roots perform better in the hot weather than trees planted as whips.

Be prepared in advance of delivery. Call the nursery for guidance and answers to any questions.

Have irrigation installed and ready for service. Pre-irrigate tree rows prior to planting.

Handle the trees with care when placing them in the field to be planted. Do not drop them!

Do not plant the trees too deep. The trees should finish 1 inch above the existing soil level.

Irrigate promptly and thoroughly after planting.

Find us, 'like' us on Facebook

Willits & Newcomb has gone social!

We have joined the social media network of Facebook. Each week we will post something we think will be of interest to both our commercial farmers and perhaps a few backyard citrus enthusiasts. From Willits & Newcomb historical facts, citrus care tips, recipes to little updates on what's going on at the nursery.

This week we posted a great recipe for Sangria. This great drink is the perfect way to cool off on these hot summer nights.

Just go to <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/WillitsandNewcomb> and press the "like" button so you don't miss any of our upcoming tidbits of information. We think we can have some fun with this media, so please comment on our posts so that we know if you are enjoying the Willits & Newcomb Facebook page.

Improved Meyer remains a grower favorite

Fruit Description: This variety is not a true lemon. It is lemon/orange hybrid. Few too many seeds. Oblong to round medium size with broad nipple. Smooth, soft rind is yellow at maturity and darkens to orange-yellow as it ripens on the tree. Thin skinned and difficult to peel. Flesh is light orange-yellow, juicy and acidic. Less acidic than true lemons yet still maintains excellent lemon like flavor. Distinctive rich flavor due to higher sugar content than traditional lemons. Fruit sweetens as it holds well on the tree.

Tree Description: Round compact shape with moderate vigor and spreading growth habit. Small to medium size with 8 to 15 foot height at maturity. Foliage is dark green, shiny and nearly thornless. Heat and cold resistant. Hardy to low 20's. Prolific producer of medium size fruit in clusters located in and around the canopy. Multiple bloom cycles but mostly in the spring results in the majority of the crop harvested in the winter months, but can be throughout the year depending upon the climate.

Harvest Season: September to March. Year-round in coastal climates.

Pros: Compact tree size is suitable for high-density plantings. Precocious and prolific fruit producer. One of the most productive varieties for its canopy volume. Medium-large fruit has attractive color, smooth rind and good juice content. Its distinctive rich flavor and higher sugar content than true lemons make it popular with dessert and gourmet chefs. This, coupled with the past decade of trade publications, television programming and the trend of specialty retail grocery outlets, has raised the awareness and increased the demand for the variety. The California Cuisine Movement, Martha Stewart and liquor distillers (infused flavors) have given this variety a huge boost in popularity. More cold tolerant than true lemons, heat resistant and adapted to a wide range of citrus climates.

Cons: The rind's thin, smooth and soft texture make harvesting, processing, storage and shipping more challenging. Does not respond well to ethylene gas treatments in packing house storage like true lemons do. The fruit is not suitable for lemon oil production because of the lack of lemon peel oil aroma. Few



VARIETY SPOTLIGHT

popular in the marketplace as traditional lemons therefore more of a specialty variety and regional market.

Compatible Rootstocks: C. Macrophylla, C. Volkameriana, Flying Dragon Trifoliolate?

Recommended Spacing: Traditional: 10' to 15' x 16' to 20'

History: This variety was brought back to the United States in 1908 by USDA agricultural plant explorer Frank Meyers. He found it being used as a potted plant around the homes in what is now Beijing, China. His namesake was grown for many years, mainly from cuttings, and used much in the same manner around people's homes. In the mid-1940's, Meyer Lemon was discovered

banned from production and existing trees were destroyed because of the disease threat to the commercial citrus industry. A Tristeza free selection (San Jose Meyer Lemon) was found by Four Winds Growers at Mission San Jose in the 1950's. It was decided years later that this selection still had other undesirable diseases present so a total cleanup process began at the Citrus Clonal Protection Program in 1971.

This new clean version was named Improved Meyer Lemon (VI319) and the earliest release noted for budwood is 1972. A Registration and Certification Program for large scale production was developed by UCR in 1975.

Still primarily a home garden variety and #1 at that, some commercial plantings existed in south Texas (Valley Lemon), South Africa, New Zealand and

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Answering the potassium question

By **MARK CAMPBELL**

WN Inc. Asst. Production Manager

Of the three macro elements required for citrus growth, potassium seems to be the least likely to require supplementation. Soils may contain 40,000 to 60,000 pounds of potassium per acre. About 90 to 98 percent of the potassium occurs in primary minerals and is unavailable to crops. From 1 to 10 percent is trapped in expanding lattice clays and is only slowly available. Between 1 and 2 percent is contained in the soil solution and on exchange sites and is readily available. Measuring potassium is best done by leaf analysis. For oranges, 0.7 percent potassium in dry matter is the minimum desired. Soil concentrations of potassium should also be periodically monitored for a fuller understanding of the plant environment.

Different soil labs can report potassium concentrations differently. Potassium In the soil can be seen as unavailable, slowly available and soluble. Slowly available includes potassium that is held tightly on exchange sites, but also includes the readily available water soluble portion. So a report may have the slowly available as 'exchangeable' and a soluble number may also be present. The equilibrium of potassium from unavailable to soluble can be influenced by various factors. Soil texture, type of clay(s) present, temperature, moisture, pH, organic matter, other minerals etc. etc. Maybe the best way

CHEMICAL CORNER

to check for a response is to add potassium sulfate or potassium thiosulfate around some trees and see if you get a response. However, trials like this unscientific one may require a couple of years of observation to determine if there is a response.

In general potassium deficiency could influence or induce:

1. Overall weak look, cupping and/or curling of leaves, slow/retarded growth.
2. Leaf drop after bloom, maybe dieback of twigs.
3. Gumming on branches and trunks.
4. Marginal burn of leaves.
5. Small fruit or shriveled seed.

The function of potassium in the plant is different than nitrogen and phosphorous which are assimilated into other compounds. Potassium stays in ionic form within cells and tissue. It is essential for transportation of sugars and starch formation. It is required in the opening and closing of stomata by guard cells. Potassium encourages root growth and increase crop resistance to disease. It produces large, more uniformly distributed xylem vessels throughout the root system and can increase size and quality fruit. However, care must be used if foliar potassium is applied late to early fruit, this actually may delay maturation.

VARIETY SPOTLIGHT

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Queensland, Australia. For decades it required a special metal tag designating as Improved Meyer Lemon when sold. It wasn't until 2005 that it was legal to sell it into Arizona. Commercial production began in California with the start of the California Cuisine Revolution in 1999 and the decade that followed.

Other Observations: Improved Meyer Lemon is and will probably always be a specialty, niche market variety. This can translate into opportunities for those willing to go to the extra effort to get their fruit to market. The variety is grown and utilized in more of a regional manner because of the handling issues. Another plus is that it ripens early and has multiple crops allowing the bulk of the crop to be harvested before the main frost season.

This variety is very cold hardy and the tree can withstand temperatures into the low 20's for a short period of time. It's compact form requires little pruning and is well suited to mechanical topping and hedging. The only hand pruning required is keeping the interior open and controlling the annual sprout growth.

WN website gets new look

Our website is new and improved! Heise Media Group has done a great job creating an amusing and informative website for our customers.

Take a look and give us your comments on what more you would like to see on the site.

www.wncitrus.com

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