CITRUS - NEW AND OLD

Citrus has a long history in the state of California - 2019 marked the 250th anniversary of citrus' arrival in the Golden State. Brought to these shores by Spanish missionaries, Valencia oranges were the first to arrive in Southern California. Through the years many varieties of citrus have arrived from other countries in Europe and the Middle East, Japan, China, and India.

Navel oranges, mandarins, and lemons are the most popular varieties of citrus. Cara Cara oranges are swiftly growing in popularity, along with blood oranges and yellow limes. There are also new and exciting citrus hybrids in the works.

Heirloom varieties of navel oranges, sourced from old-line navels that are at least 45 years old, bring back the childhood flavors many of us remember. Bumpy-skinned Golden Nugget mandarins are now extremely popular, along with minneolas and tangelos. You'll also find mandarinquats (combination of mandarins and kumquats) and even finger limes (about 2-inches long).

On a larger scale, there are pomelos and grapefruit to add to your culinary repertoire. The pomelo is one of the non-hybrid citrus varieties that came from Southeast Asia. It is one of the original fruits from which all other citrus is hybridized. For instance, grapefruit is an original cross between the pomelo and the orange.

Here are some varieties of citrus available:

Navel oranges – Washington Tress, Cara Cara

Blood oranges - Tarocco, Moro

Mandarin – Tango, Satsuma, Murcott

Lemons - Eureka, Lisbon, pink-fleshed Eureka

Grapefruit - Ruby Red, Oro Blanco, Rio Red, Cocktail

Many of our farmers offer unique and interesting boutique hybrid citrus as well as wonderful old favorites this time of year. J&J Ramos Farms has navel and Cara Cara oranges and a variety of mandarins and tangerines; Diaz Farms in Fowler has navel oranges and Cara Caras; Ken's Top Notch out of Fresno has Cara Cara oranges and Oro Blanco grapefruit. You'll find only the best citrus at your farmers' market, brought to you by the farmers who grew it.

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