

# University of Florida evaluating cold tolerant citrus varieties

The relatively mild winter temperatures during the last two decades has led to a resurgence of interest in cold hardy citrus in North Florida. Satsumas account for almost all of the new commercial citrus acreage in the Florida Panhandle.

If the next two decades have mild winter temperatures like the last two decades, Florida growers can successfully grow other cold-hardy citrus for the fresh market.

The citrus varieties that ripen before Christmas probably have the best chance for success in North Florida. At the Research Center in Quincy, many citrus species/varieties and numbered selections are under evaluation. The following is a list of the named varieties being evaluated.

## Valencia

Although we have had good crops the last two years, I cannot recommend it for north Florida because of a late (late Jan. thru March) ripening date. In addition, other fresh market citrus offer more potential. There is also a new early ripening Valencia that we have not yet tested. The data in Table 1 reflect fruit that were not quite ripe.

## Navel and Red Navel

Navels have performed very well. I would estimate that our 12 year old trees have produced 400+ lbs per tree this winter. Little or no problem with Alternaria or citrus scab diseases. Our young trees also seem to be moderately cold hardy as well. Navel should be under consideration for north Florida. Harvest time can be just before Christmas.

## Tango

Tango is a seedless Murcott, although many fruit have a few (< 5 seeds per fruit when grown in a mixed block. Tango produces a small but sweet fruit. It is easy to peel. Cold tolerance is

moderate. The two disadvantages are a late ripening period (Jan.) and extreme susceptibility to citrus scab.

### **Nova**

Nova mandarin was derived from a Clementine x Orlando Tangelo cross. It produces a small-medium sized fruit. Maturation is late January. It appears to be moderately cold hardy. More information is needed.

### **Early Pride**

Early Pride is low seeded Fallglo. It is an early maturing Mandarin hybrid. It produces a high quality, small-to medium-sized fruit with good flavor. It is easy to peel. Unfortunately, it is the least cold hardy (severe damage below 25 to 26 °F) of all the citrus that we have in our collection, and it cannot be recommended for north Florida.

### **Sugar Belle**

Sugar Belle was derived from a Clementine x Minneola Honey Belle cross. This mandarin hybrid is perhaps the most cold hardy of all non-satsumas in our trial. It produces a very attractive, bell-shaped fruit that is very high in sugar. It also is slightly higher in acid than is optimal. Fruit can have quite a few seeds when grown in a mixed block with citrus that can serve as pollinizers. Ripening date is November thru December. Sugar Belle could be considered for north Florida.

### **Minneola Honey Belle**

Minneola is an older cultivar that produces an attractive, medium-large, bell shaped fruit. It is less cold hardy than Sugar Belle and has a later ripening time period (late December). Minneola is very susceptible to Alternaria fungus, and a spray program is required for commercial production.

### **Xie Shan**

Xie Shan is an early ripening satsuma variety that ripens during October. In previous years Xie Shan has produced large, bumpy fruit that were not suitable for marketing. This year they produced a heavy crop (300 pounds/tree) of sweet, moderate-sized fruit. More observations are needed before I can recommend this variety.

### **Owari**

Owari is the most popular satsuma variety. It produces a consistent crop of small to medium-sized fruit. Owari and all satsumas are cold hardy down to about 12 to 14°F if the trees are cold acclimated. Ripening date is mid-November. It has performed well on Swingle and trifoliate orange rootstocks.

### **Brown Select**

Brown Select is the satsuma variety that produces the largest tree and fruit size. It ripens between between Xie Shan and Owari (early November). It has performed well on Swingle and trifoliate orange rootstocks.

Plus d'informations : <http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/phag/2017/02/17/ufifas-evaluating-cold-hardy-citrus-varieties-for-the-panhandle/>

Lien article : <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/171388/University-of-Florida-evaluating-cold-tolerant-citrus-varieties>