

Last week's *FreshPoint ProducePuzzler* dealt with citrus: **Who planted the first citrus tree in California?** The widespread popularity of California citrus varieties and their penetration of markets everywhere can be directly traced to a wandering Kentucky trapper and a middle-aged couple from Maine. The trapper, William Wolfskill, first settled in what is now Los Angeles in 1841. He planted hundreds of orange and lemon seedlings on two acres at Central Avenue and East Fifth Street, later the site of the Southern Pacific Central Station. But a century before, in 1769, at the Mission San Diego, Father Serra planted the first citrus tree in California, one of the many "Mission Fruits" brought to California by Father Serra and other missionaries. We are enjoying wintertime citrus so this week's *FreshPoint ProducePuzzler* still deals with citrus: **The Murcott Tangerine is the sweetest tangerine grown on earth. It's grown in Florida but marketed under a different name. What Tangerine is it?** See next week's *FreshTimes* for the answer.



THE BIG FREEZE

Freezing temperatures cause more damage to crops in the United States than any other weather condition, even drought. During the Christmas weekend of 1990 in the San Joaquin Valley in California, temperatures dipped down to around 24 degrees for several hours, and destroyed about 85% of the Navel Orange crop. This year, the Big Freeze is back. From the San Joaquin Valley to Oxnard to Yuma, Mother Nature is once again turning a cold shoulder to growers...and their crops.



Tips And Other Fun

TANGERINES: Taste better at room temperature, so you can store these for up to one week at a cool room temperature, around 70 degrees.

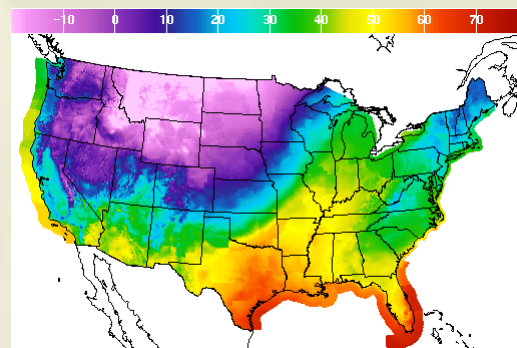
By the way...If a Tangerine tree is self-pollinating, like the Satsuma or Clementine, there will be no seeds.

A very cold airmass is settling into California and will persist at least through the weekend. Minimum temperatures of 26 to 31 degrees are expected Friday

Growers are using overspray irrigation to form ice on the trees and fruit, trying to protect the fruit from temperatures in the low 20s.

night with the coldest locations bottoming out near 24 degrees. Even colder air will filter in Friday night and a hard freeze will occur Saturday morning and again Sunday morning. Widespread minimum temperatures of 20 to 26 degrees are expected during this time with readings as low as 17 degrees in the coldest

locations. Over the next several days, growers will be using several intervention methods including spraying water on the orchard, using windmills and helicopters to keep air flowing in the orchards, and of course, smudge pots. The San Joaquin Valley produces about 85% of the nation's Navel Oranges. Freezing temperatures with any citrus, can cause "dry cell" in the fruit. Citrus is made up of thousands of tiny water balloons. When water freezes, it expands. If it expands too much, the balloon will burst, causing "dry cell." Growers are not only concerned about this year's citrus crop, but a deep freeze can cause enough damage to trees that will impact crops over the next three years. A freeze can destroy the tiny twigs on the tree. Those tiny twigs become the limbs on which next season's blossoms and fruit will set. Destroying those twigs...destroys next year's crop. This Big Freeze will not only affect citrus throughout the San Joaquin Valley, but it will also affect crops in Oxnard, especially Strawberries. The cold temperatures will also revisit the Yuma, Arizona growing region, once again affecting lettuce, broccoli and cauliflower crops. Over the next several days, growers will be in the fields and orchards assessing short-term and long-term damage to crops, to plants and to trees. Your FreshPoint salesperson will have the latest information.



The light blue throughout California's San Joaquin Valley represents temperatures that are expected to dip down to the upper teens to low 20s.