

Evaluation of Lemon Selections for the Desert

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For more than 75 years, California has been a leader in the worldwide fresh lemon industry. To maintain and increase its market share, steps that the industry must take include developing high quality lemon varieties that are adaptable to the diverse California climates, meet the demands of the marketplace, and produce acceptable returns for the grower.

This project is designed to evaluate particular lemon selections under desert conditions. The major objectives of this project are to provide the industry with information on the tree growth, yield, packout, and fruit quality characteristics for selected lemon varieties in the California desert.

Growers and industry contacts had requested that we conduct a variety trial in order to evaluate several new lemon selections which were found to have promising characteristics in current evaluations in comparison with standard commercial lemon selections in California. It is anticipated that the continuing project will be maintained for at least 10 years so that yield and quality of production can be evaluated. Information obtained from this trial will help to further define performance of these selected varieties in the California desert.

For our continuing lemon selection evaluation trial under desert conditions, we have proposed to plant and evaluate up to 12 lemon scion variety selections on *Citrus macrophylla* rootstock. These varieties include: Limoneira 8A (as a standard), seedless ('Lisbon') lemon, Femminello Santa Teresa, Corona Foothills Lisbon, Limonero Fino 49, Limonero Fino 95, Walker Lisbon, Messina, Interdonato, Yen Ben,



'Yen Ben', one of the lemon selections included in this trial, is a sport of Lisbon lemon from Queensland, Australia which has become a popular lemon variety in New Zealand due to its goof fruit characteristics including thin, smooth peel and high juice content.

Allen Eureka, and Variegated Pink Fleshed Eureka. All these selections will be planted at the University of California Coachella Valley Agriculture Research Station in Mecca, California.

During the 2004-05 season, we finalized the lemons selections to be included, obtained permission to use land at CVARS, obtained budwood and arranged for the propagation of the trees. The trees were propagated in September 2005, and we expect that the trees will be planted in April 2006.