

edition modern citrus

by J.C. Johnston, Assistant Tulare County Farm Advisor

One of the most important citrus growing areas in California extends across Tulare county from north to south along the warm foot hills at an elevation of 300 to 1500 feet above sea level. Since ranchers of the valley began 50 years ago to break up their wheat fields to make way for tree crops, citrus fruits have been a leading product of the county.

The cool winters and hot summers of the valley combine to produce early fruit which is noted for its high color, rich flavor and long-keeping qualities. This fruit is ideal for export and as a result Tulare county has a large share in the export market.

At the present time, approximately 40,000 acres are devoted to citrus fruits. In round numbers, the acreage in the principal varieties is as follows: Navels, 25,000 acres; ~~Valencias~~ Valencias, 12,000 acres; lemons, 1200 acres, and grapefruit, 800 acres. Miscellaneous varieties, such as limes, mandarine oranges and seedling oranges make up the remainder of the acreage.

The acreage of citrus fruit has remained almost constant for the past 10 years, but production has increased because of improved cultural practices. Most of the increase has occurred since 1934 when the use of zinc as a fertilizer ~~is~~ was introduced. For example, the average yield of Navel oranges for the period from 1923 to 1927 was 143.9 packed boxes per acre; for the period from 1933 to 1937, it was 173.8 packed boxes per acre, and the average yield for the three years since the use of zinc became general (1935, 1936 and 1937) is 194.7 packed boxes per acre.

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Total production for the county has ~~range~~ ranged between 5,000,000 and 9,000,000 boxes for oranges and 95,000 to 190,000 boxes for lemons.

Citrus fruits have returned more money to the county than any other crop in 19 out of the past 20 years, according to the Tulare County Board of Trade. The returns have ranged between \$6,000,000 and \$15,000,000 annually.

It is fortunate that citrus fruits are adapted to a variety of soils for this favored foothill area includes soils ranging from sand to heavy clay adobe. These wide differences in soils have made it necessary to adopt cultural practices to fit local conditions. This has been done so successfully that the county is noted for the fine appearance of its orchards.

Citrus growers of Tulare county are among the most progressive in the state as shown by the fact that several of the important developments in the industry have had their beginnings in Tulare county. For example, the present program of reduced tillage, the use of nonleguminous cover crops and the use of zinc as a fertilizer were developed in this county.

The latter practice which came into common use in Tulare county in 1933, has spread to practically all other citrus producing countries of the world. Tulare county was the first to make ~~heavy~~ extensive use of maturity standards and controlled the movement of fruit to market by means of the Central California Citrus League more than 10 years before the California-Arizona marketing agreement was established.

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The citrus grower of Tulare county has many dissicult problems but he also has certain important advantages,

The Navel orange crop is early and reaches a desirable market; the industry is not as heavily capitalized as in the case in many districts. The pest and diseases which must be controlled are few and the methods used are relatively inexpensive.

Many citrus growers are also producers of grapes and deciduous fruits or are engaged in some general farm enterprise. This diversification of crops has ~~stabilized~~ stabilized income and has enabled many growers to realize fair returns ~~in~~ even in the face of present low prices.

The outlooke for the citrus industry in Tulare county is good. Prices are not likely to be high but the relatively low cost of production, the progressive type of grower engaged in the industry, the conservative methods of operation and the opportunity for dive rsification promise to keep the citrus industry in first place as a producer of revenue in the county.

edition deciduous fruit

by W.E. Gilfillan,

Tulare county farm ~~agent~~ Adviser

Few counties in California have as large a diversified deciduous fruit industry as has Tulare county. The total of 32,000 acres devoted to production of deciduous fruits and nuts is made up of major plantings of peaches, prunes, walnuts, figs and plums and smaller plantings of apricots, apples, nectarines, almonds and pomegranates.

There also are commercial plantings of smaller size in pears, persimmons and pecans. Compared with other leading fruit counties of California, Tulare county ranks second in freestone peaches and nectarines; third in plums, figs and clingstone peaches and fifth in prunes. It is first with pomegranates, with 60 per cent of the state's acreage.

Planting of deciduous fruits began in a small way about half a century ago with prunes, pears and apples. Good fertile bottom land was selected in the Visalia area. Pears were grown and shipped extensively from Traver until trouble from blight made this unprofitable. Some of these old pear trees are still standing but today pears are one of the minor fruit crops with less than 50 acres in commercial orchards.

Prune planting, however, had no set back in the early days of fruit development and for 30 years were considered the most profitable type of farming. The very best sub-irrigated lands around Visalia and Farmersville were used for the first prune plantings.

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The Mineral King ranch east of Visalia was one of the most famous prune ranches. With high yield, three to five tons per acre and low producing costs, this Visalia prune orchard was widely known the country over in dried fruit circles.

Production spread to the area west of Porterville and over toward Tulare although the heart of the industry always centered around Visalia. The peak was reached in the period from 1920 to 1924 when more than 10,000 acres were in bearing.

After that period, export markets dropped off heavily, surplus tonnage became a frequent worry and prices averaged lower. The year 1929, because of frost damage in most producing areas of the ~~great~~ Pacific coast, showed real profits ~~and~~ again for Tulare county prune producers but since then in spite of co-operative marketing efforts, sales campaigns and recent pro rate and federal marketing agreements, returns have been very unsatisfactory. As a result, few new plantings have been made and old orchards being pulled have decreased to county acreage to 5500 acres.

Another of the early fruit developments was the peach. As early as 1909 there were almost 8000 acres planted to peaches. ~~These~~ These also were planted most heavily in the deep fertile subirrigated lands near Visalia. Two of the large plantings of those days were made by the California Packing Corporation on their holdings south of Farmersville and just north of Visalia.

Heaviest early plantings were of free stone varieties for fresh market, canning and drying. This free stone acreage was widely distributed from Porterville to D^umaba and Kingsburg where the bulk of the dried tonnage was grown. Most of the free stone acreage was made up of muir, lovell and elberta varieties, all of which are still used extensively.

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In about 1916, the use of cling stone ~~xxix~~ varieties for canning began to develop and by 1920 a real boom in cling stone peaches was under way. The peak of this development was reached in 1928 when production in California appeared too great for future market outlets. Since then, cling stone peach acreage has remained stationary at about 4500 acres. The once large planting known most widely is the Tagus ranch north of Tulare.

Canneries early were established by the California Packing Corporation and a local grower co-operative. This latter is the plant now operated here by the Visalia Canning company. Other canneries are at Tulare, ^Urterville and Kingsburg.

A large tonnage of peaches also is shipped to Lemoore and to southern California canneries. While the tuscan and phillip varieties first made up the bulk of the canning peach crop, new varieties have been planted in the past 10 years, consisting of pelora, peak, halford, libbee, sims and others.

Lighter pruning, heavier fertilization and more attention to thinning the fruit are among the factors that have led to gradual improvement in yields and grades so that today good orchards produce from 12 to 18 tons of No. 1 fruit per acre. Cost of production on this class of property runs to about \$20 a ton. Prices have varied enormously in ~~the~~ recent years. In 1929, most growers received \$80 a ton but prices, notably last year, have been as low as \$7.50 and even \$5. Control of marketing in 1937 brought prices of about \$42 to most growers.

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Next to peaches and prunes, the most extensive deciduous fruit acreage in Tulare county is figs, there being 3066 acres of all varieties. This industry also is an old one although the big development came between 1918 and 1924 with the planting of Calmyrna for shipping and drying and Kadota for canning. Most of the fig acreage is in the northern part of the county although the Kadota fig area centers around Ivanhoe and Exeter.

Earliest plantings of figs were the White Adriatic and the Black Mission for drying. These are still used. The Calmyrna, a superior quality for drying, held great promise but during the past 10 years has been discontinued because of disease problems.

Kadota figs produced here of excellent quality are canned at Lemoore, D^umbs and Merced. Production at present is in excess of market demands and a pro rate is in effect.

Tulare county now is the most important early shipping plum district although third in the state in plum acreage. There are now 2264 acres bearing and 202 acres non bearing. The most important early variety is the Santa Rosa, with slightly more than 1000 acres in bearing although the Beauty is a little earlier. Shipments of these start about May 15 and are the first deciduous fruits to reach eastern markets. In most years, the Tulare County Beauties and the Santa Rosas are a few days to a week earlier than the other main producing districts in northern California.

Another important variety is the Tragedy plum. This is a different type but is also fairly early and does well on the deep delta soil. It has been produced here for many years. Other varieties of importance are Climax, Kelsey, ~~Kyle~~ Wickson and Burbank.

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Income from the production of plums runs between \$200,000 and \$300,000 a year, last year returning \$215,000 or about \$150 gross per acre. The thinning, ~~packing~~ picking and packing of plums gives employment to many local workers early in April, May and June when other farm work is light. The packing and shipping are centered at Exeter, Ivanhoe, Visalia and Dinuba.

Walnut production is relatively new to Visalia although the first commercial plantings near Visalia were started in about 1905. The first variety planted did not do well here and in about 1915 the planting of T^{an}quell and Mayelthea was found satisfactory and by 1936 almost 2000 acres were in bearing with another 800 acres of young trees planted. Today there are 2822 acres, 80 per cent of which is within a 5-mile radius of Visalia.

For walnuts, the very best alluvial soils are desired. Trees grow exceptionally large here and good mature plantings produce 2500 pounds of nuts per acre. For some years when the industry was starting the nuts were shipped to southern California plants and to San Joaquin county for processing but about six years ago, local growers formed the Sequoia Walnut Growers' Association, a local of the California Walnut Growers Association, built a modern plant at Visalia and now handles 95 per cent of the crop. Value of the crop runs ~~from~~ to about \$300,000 a year, gradually increasing as the groves mature.

Apricots also are an important Tulare county crop although not in a class with peaches, prunes, plums and walnuts.

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Apriecot production is pretty well scattered over the county. There are 993 acres with only a small amount of new planting. Back in 1929, there were 1433 acres. Considerable of this former acreage was an intercrop with olives when the planting became crowded. The crop is sold mainly for canning with a considerable tonnage shipped fresh.

Drying is used chiefly as an outlet when the other outlets are not profitable. Gross income runs about \$100,000 per year.

During the past 10 years, there has been a revival of apple production for the very early market. The White ~~xxxx~~ Athsakan variety does well here and goes on the Los Angeles and San Francisco markets before apples from the larger producing districts of the state. Plantings center about Visalia and Exeter. There are today 400 acres of apples of which about one-third are the newly planted ~~xxxxxx~~ Athsakan. The older district at Three Rivers produces several varieties with Winesaps predominant.

Commercial production of nectarines for fresh shipment started on a major scale in about 1908. Today there are 350 acres and the largest block is on the Tagus ranch.

Almonds are produced on 340 acres. We rank very low as an almond producing county. This probably is ~~xxxx~~ because when large development was being made in deciduous fruit about 1920 to 1928, peaches plums and grapes were more profitable. Lately some interest in planting almonds has developed.

Other minor deciduous fruits produced in Tulare county include 415 acres of pomegranates, 86 acres of pecans mostly not yet in heavy bearing; 85 acres of persimmons; 18 acres of quince and eight acres of cherries in very small lots. The pecan is a new crop still to be tried out on a commercial basis. Persimmons do well but are limited by profitable market outlets. Cherries cannot be produced successfully because of the dry hot climate.

edition three rivers with early visalia or early county

The village of Three Rivers is situated about 28 miles east of Visalia, ^{in the foothills,} at the junction of the forks of the Kaweah river. ~~xxxxxx~~

The first known ~~xxxxxxx~~ white man to center this section was Hale D. Tharpe, a stock man, who came in the fall of 1858. The Works family, William Swanson and family, John Lovelace and family, Joseph Palmer, E. A. Everton, and Ira Blossom and family came shortly afterward and were the pioneers of the district.

At the time of Tharpe's arrival, Indians were numerous these these tribes are now practically extinct. The progress of the settlement was slow, there being almost no immigration of consequence until 1878 when the gold excitement at Mineral King occurred. The mining activities at Mineral King, described in an article elsewhere in the Anniversaries Edition, and the construction of a road to that place caused a temporary influx of outsiders but after the mining excitement had died down the population remained about as before.

In 1886, the Kaweah Co-Operative Colony made their base of ~~xxxx~~ operations here. This project was abandoned in 1890, most of the colonists leaving the county. Those who remained, however, added materially to the development of the district.

A postoffice was established in 1878 at Three Rivers, at Kaweah on the North Fork in 1892, at Hammond on the main river in 1905 and at A Ranger (Giant Forest) in 1907.

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During the early days, stock raising was the sole industry of the area, the surrounding country offering an abundance of spring feed and the mountain ranges contributing the summer supply.

Joe Palmer, in the early 1870's, carried in on his back a few apple trees and became the pioneer of an industry that has added to the prosperity of the region. Apples were found exceptionally suitable to the district and numerous orchards now dot not only the river bottom lands but are produced success fully as far up as the pine belt at an elevation of 4500 feet.

Two miles north of Three Rivers is Kaweah beside a streamlet that is a feeder to the north fork of the Kaweah river.

North Tule is the name given to the fertile valley of the Tula river after it issues from the western slopes of the Sierras, in the southeastern part of Tulare county. The valley is about 30 miles long with an adverage width of five miles and with numerous side valleys entering it. The soil in this area is very fertile and the section is noted for apple production.

Other villages and settlements are found along the valley, among which are Milo, Cramer, Baldwin Flats, Duncan's Flat, Springville, Globe and China Flats.

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edition other towns with early visalia or early county

Many small towns in Tulare county owe their origin to the coming or extension of the railroads and other sections and settlements have been named for their productivity or the nature of the topography and appearance.

Pixley is one of the stations of note on the Southern Pacific line. It is in a rich farming section and is an important center for grain dealers. Much of the land about the town was owned by San Francisco residents who named it in honor of Frank Pixley, founder and editor of the Argonaut.

The town of Tipton had its origin with the coming of the Southern Pacific and is in the midst of a rich farming and dairying country. It is the natural shipping point for a large part of the lower Tule country and has a number of mercantile and other business houses.

The town of Alila is in the country between the sinks of Deer creek and White river and a large amount of grain is handled here.

Poplar is not the name of a town but rather of a rich farming country west and south from Porterville, being southeast from the Woodville country. In the early days, the land owners united and brought in a supply of water from the Tule river by means of the Bid ditch.

One of the most beautiful sections of Tulare county is Frazier, which is situated about 25 miles east and north of Tulare. It borders the Tule river above where the river emerges into the more open plains.

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The name Woodville was given to a rich farming country lying along the south side of the Tule river, eight miles west from Porterville and 20 miles south of Visalia. It derived its title from the extensive groves of white oak.

Strathmore is on the line of the railroad between Lindsay and Porterville and is the center of a thriving citrus industry.

A few miles east of Badger lies Eshom valley, one of the beauty spots of Tulare county. Although situated at a high altitude and not far below the edge of the pines, the soil is warm and fertile. Eshom valley has historic interest, once having been the home of a great tribe of Indians whose powerful chief Wuk-sa-che more than once led them to victory in clashes with the Monaches. The valley was visited as early as 1857 by James Fisher and Thomas Davis and took its name from a man named Eshom, an early resident who engaged in farming.

In the early days, Tulare lake covered a huge area and near its southeastern ~~ixx~~ end existed an island owned by Judge Atwell of Visalia and known as Atwell's island. The island, as such, no longer exists, but its location is marked by the town of Apaugh. The section was for years used by ~~Kz~~ Miller and Lux for grazing their herds of cattle.

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