

CITRUS BUD CERTIFICATION IN ARIZONA¹

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The need for citrus bud certification is just as great in Arizona as in the three major citrus-producing states of this country, but the full program inaugurated by those states is not adapted to our needs.

The Arizona citrus industry occupies only about 22,000 acres in two areas, namely, the Salt River Valley with around 15,000 acres, and the Yuma Mesa with around 7,000 acres (approximately 5,000 acres planted to young lemons). So we are not trying to produce the most citrus—just the best.

We have been telling our growers that the prosperity, if not the survival, of our citrus industry depends upon the elimination of the major citrus viruses from new plantings.

In 1955, we found ourselves in a somewhat difficult situation: Our growers wanted budwood of new strains and varieties which were not available to them on account of Arizona quarantine regulations. Through the close cooperation of the Departments of Plant Pathology and Horticulture of the University of Arizona, Dr. John B. Carpenter of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the Arizona Commission of Agriculture and Horticulture, we were able to introduce 12 lots of budwood of nucellar and other superior varieties. These were from the Coachella Valley in California, and had been reindexed by Dr. Carpenter for freedom from tristeza.

These plants were grown in isolation for two years on the University citrus farms at Yuma and Tempe. In the fall of 1957, we cut and gave budwood to 13 nurseries—22,500 buds to nurseries at Yuma and 5,000 to nurseries in the Salt River Valley.

To maintain standards, the distribution of buds was put under control of the citrus growers' organizations in each of the two districts. As these organizations are composed of very progressive growers, we have the support of the citrus industry in maintaining the program.

We believe that we can continue to grow enough buds for our nursery trade. We will control the bud supply where we can maintain it in isolation and reindex it as often as necessary. As the buds are furnished to the nurserymen without cost, there is no reason for them to take buds from trees less carefully guarded.

We are keeping a record of each lot of buds and will have a record of all commercial plantings from these buds. Our State Entomologist's office is assisting in this work and will maintain a constant check on the program.

While this program would be impracticable for states having a large citrus industry, its simplicity and workability has been of great value in Arizona.

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