

Mandarins just might be everyone's favorite type of citrus. Why? Because the mandarins grown in Oroville are sweet, juicy, seedless and easy to peel. They are also just the right size to fit in your pocket, purse or lunch pail. Mandarins continue to grow in popularity for all of these reasons and that they are very healthy. They are ripe right around Thanksgiving which makes them a wonderful addition to that cranberry dressing at the dinner table. They will be available through Christmas and until about mid-January. Make sure Santa has 2 or 3 to add to each stocking on Christmas Eve!

Mandarins can be found in several places in Butte county, but a drive through the foothills just east of Oroville to the "citrus corridor" you will find the farm signs along the roadways of Olive Highway, Ward Blvd. Mt. Ida Road, Circle Drive, Oakvale Avenue and Feathervale Drive directing you to some of the best mandarins in California. There are over 19 citrus farms in this area. A trip to the farm is the only way to know that you will be buying fruit that was grown on that farm. There is a "banana belt" effect in this area that allows for cooler weather in the summer and warmer weather (by about 10 degrees) in the winter. This helps to keep the trees from freezing in the winter, but it does get cold enough to create the "snap" which provides the slight tang so typical of a good mandarin.

According to the Butte County 2010 Ag Report there are 60 acres of mandarins and 94 acres of oranges, which is down from over 925 acres back in 1939 when the county first started compiling this type of information. What this means is that most of the mandarin farmers sell locally. On a worldwide basis, China leads in production of mandarins, followed by Spain, then Japan, Brazil, Iran, and several other countries. The United States has never been a major contributor to the world mandarin market. I guess we are all pretty lucky to live in a County that has this sweet treat. Folks from other states call our fruit "nature's candy" and order it by the boxes. Some folks call the farmers to find out what these little oranges are and if they can get them year round. Americans eat approximately 3 lbs of mandarins per year, with most of this occurring in the Pacific Northwest. I would beg to differ that some of our mandarin fans consume 10-15 lbs each in just a couple of months.

We invite you to the foothills again this fall and winter to sample "nature's candy".

Morse Farms located at 8 Feathervale Drive in Oroville was established in 2002 when the family planted 400 satsuma mandarin trees and a variety of lemons, limes, navel oranges, grapefruits and minneolas. A visit to the fruit stand provides a selection of fresh picked mandarins in bags. They also produce mandarin marmalade, mandarin syrup and meat seasoning rubs. They ship mandarins and gift baskets during the holidays to make quick shopping for you. They will be open from 10 am to 5 pm during the mandarin season which normally runs from late November to mid-January. Their slogan is "*Grown by our family to be shared with yours.*" You can also visit their website at www.morsemandarin farms.com for additional product and shipping information.

Submitted by: Glenda Morse, Morse Farms, (530) 589-2126