

Master Gardener Favorites

Citrus

We like lemons!! I have two trees. One *Lisbon* and one *Eureka*. Both huge bearers and although 22 years ago they were sold as "semi-dwarf" they have exceeded that! They've been good as lake "smallish" garden trees and fairly easy to control as far as height. Besides all the neighbors really enjoy buckets of fresh lemons months and months of the year. We like the tartness of these varieties.

Cara Cara orange: beautiful color, and great taste

Oro Blanco grapefruit: This is a cross between a pomello and a grapefruit. Outstanding color, something I am very stingy about sharing, They are just delicious

One of the things I enjoy most about citrus trees is the smell of the blooms – what a delight! We have the *Valencia Orange* tree – great for fresh orange juice. They ripen during the summer and can stay on the tree for a few months so can be picked when needed. They do well in our heat, usually recover quickly from frost and need good drainage.

I like *Eureka Lemons* as the fruit is good for flavoring and the tree branches have less thorns than other varieties of lemon. As lemon trees tend to be a bit less frost hardy than other citrus, mulching adds a layer of protection during cold snaps. Give them good drainage

Of course I love my *Navel Oranges*. I had a great *Washington Navel* tree in my previous home in Sanger but have decided to try a *Cara Cara* (pink) *Navel* in my current home in Clovis. The tree is only a few years old and has produced only a few oranges, but they so far have not been as sweet as those produced by the Washington Navel (am I picking them too early?). Perhaps as the tree matures that will change. But, I think mine and my family's favorite at both homes have been the *Blood Oranges*. We prefer to juice them but they can be excellent when eaten, too. It's always fun to give your relatives or friends a glass of red orange juice and see the surprise on their faces at how good it is. At my Sanger home I had the *Moro Blood Orange* but in Clovis I now have the *Tarocco Blood Orange*. They both taste the same but I believe the Moro had better blood color. Blood oranges ripen later than Washington Navel. They aren't really sweet until late March or April. On my recent trip to Italy we visited an Olive Oil factory. One of the food items they provided for us to taste was blood orange slices with olive oil and a little sugar - delicious.

My favorites are both mandarins:

Tango Mandarin: Very sweet, easy to peel and seedless.

Satsuma Mandarin: Sweet, easy to peel and almost seedless.

My favorite citrus is the *Valencia Orange*. The oranges are really sweet and hang on the tree for a long season to pick as you wish. Only problem is figuring out when you can start picking!!! The variety I have is a semi-dwarf so does not get too big or take over its space.-----

I have a *Cara Cara Navel* and I look forward to it all year long. It has beautiful pinkish-orange flesh that is not as acidic as other navels. The flavor is not quite as intense as the others that are in the backyard, but I still favor it the most. It is the one citrus that many of my friends ask that I save them some as it has become a favorite of theirs as well! -----

We have 2 *Improved Myer Lemon trese*, one dwarf and one regular. We like them because they are a mild, sweet flavored and because they have no thorns to speak of. -----

Bearss Lime produces lots of mildly acidic fruit. The juice freezes well & makes limeade all the next summer with little sugar. The fruit almost looks like a Meyer lemon as it turns a yellow-green.

Thus far, I've had a number of wonderful citrus trees, & would like to add to what we have. I have a *Kafir Lime* tree, whose aromatic leaves (& sometimes the fruit zest) is used in Thai & S.E. Asian cooking. We had at our previous house in Sunnyside some variant of *Clementine Orange*, very tiny fruit, full of seeds, but the most incredibly, intensely flavored & sweet juice that was worth the effort to patiently squeeze a pile of fruit for the small amount it yielded. Two varieties of lemons: *Meyers & Lisbon*, I think. I use lemon extensively in cooking, & (Mediterranean style, in salt & lemon juice, or also with spices) preserved lemons are wonderful in many dishes.

I'd like to add some limes trees & blood oranges. I'd like to try making a variety of marmalades & candied zests. I have several really cool little canapé cutters, a Chinese dragon & Phoenix that I want to use with candied citrus rind & decorate my famous lemon (meringue) & lime pies with. Yum, yum, yum, & so much fun! Also: they're beautiful trees, & so wonderfully fragrant in bloom

I reiterate what Robbin said as I love *Mandarin Oranges* and the *Satsuma* and *Tango* are both lovely as they are seedless, easy to peel and very tasty. I candied lemon, orange and tangerine peels for hot cross buns and the tangerine peels were the best