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CITRUS-GROWING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The 1952 Crop Reviewed

By H. R. POWELL, B.Sc. Agric., Superintendent of Horticulture

WESTERN Australia in a normal year produces approximately 500,000 bushels of citrus fruits comprising 70% oranges, 20% lemons and the remainder made up mainly of grapefruit and mandarins. A general decline in production has occurred over the past three years due largely to the unfavourable seasons which have been experienced. In 1949 just over 500,000 bushels were produced. The 1950 figure was below 450,000 bushels while in 1951 approximately 375,000 bushels of citrus fruits were harvested.

The reduced production is reflected only in part by the quantity of citrus fruits which are shipped overseas. In 1949, 48,000 bushels were exported, but although in 1950 this figure had fallen to 21,000 bushels, a recovery was made in 1951 when the export figure was almost 43,000 bushels. Although the size of the crop has a bearing on the amount of fruit available for export, the quantity exported is a relatively small proportion of the total crop and, therefore, is not influenced to the extent that might be expected by seasonal variations in production. Trade factors largely determine the volume of exports.

In contrast to the very heavy blossoming which occurred in the spring of 1950 most citrus trees and especially the oranges, produced a poor showing of blossom in the 1951 spring. Washington Navels, in particular, showed little promise of producing a satisfactory crop. Many trees produced practically no blossom at all and this in some instances was related to the severe frosts experienced during the late winter months. Frost damage also occurred to lemons in colder districts.

Observations since that time have substantiated the original expectations of light crops in all varieties; the total production is not anticipated to be more than two thirds of the last season's crop. The estimated figure is 250,000 bushels. Apart from factors contributing to the poor blossoming, growing conditions have not been good. High summer temperatures and strong, dry, easterly winds coupled with insufficient summer moisture have limited the growth of the fruit, resulting in the present fruit sizes being below normal.

The estimated production figures for the main citrus fruits are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navel Oranges</td>
<td>65,000 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valencia Oranges</td>
<td>100,000 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemons</td>
<td>60,000 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>15,000 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarins</td>
<td>10,000 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250,000 bushels</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wheatgrowers report that treated sections have yielded 11 bushels after treatment with "Methoxone" and that untreated sections of the same crop barely yielded 5 bushels.

One spraying thoroughly wipes out Wild Turnip and Wild Radish.

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