



MANDARINS TALKING POINTS

2. A Slice of Mandarin History

2,200 B.C.E.: First known references to citrus fruits; the mandarin is native to southeastern Asia and the Philippines.

1840: Willow-leaf and China mandarin varieties are imported by Italian consulate from Italy and planted in New Orleans; varieties later travel to Florida and then California by end of 19th century.

1882: King mandarin variety is sent from Southeast Asia to University of California Citrus Research Center at Riverside (UC Riverside).

1914: Clementines are introduced to California farmers after five years of study at UC Riverside.

1997: Harsh winter in Florida devastates domestic orange production; opens booming market to California Clementines.

3. How Does Citrus Grow?

- Citrus plants are large shrubs or small trees distinguished for their shiny, evergreen leaves and fragrant blossoms.
- The flowers produce a fruit known as a *hesperidium*, a berry with a leathery rind surrounding pulp-filled segments.
- Most citrus trees blossom two to five years after planting. Citrus fruits can be left on the tree without becoming overripe and do not continue to ripen after being picked.

4. What season do we pick Mandarins?

- Varieties:
 - Clementin—the most popular mandarin. Has a zipper skin—the Christmas Orange because it's available from November to January.
 - Satsuma—from Japan, 2nd most popular behind clementines.

- Dancy—the leading tangerine on the market.
- Honey—a cross between tangerine and orange, this variety has yellow-orange skin and some seeds.
- Minneola—a specific hybrid citrus fruit that is made by crossing the Bowen grapefruit and the Darcy variety of tangerine. It's sweet like a mandarin and tart like the grapefruit, it's the 3rd most popular mandarin.



5. Why should we eat Mandarins?

- One medium mandarin provides:
 - Vitamin C, which is an antioxidant. Antioxidants help prevent chemical damage to cells and can promote vision health, keep the immune system healthy, support cardiovascular health and help prevent cancer.
 - Vitamin A, which supports healthy vision.
 - Folic acid, a B-complex vitamin that can help prevent birth defects.

6. How do you pick good Mandarins?

- Mandarins should be a deep orange-red color without blemishes. The peel should be easy to remove. The

flesh should contain very few seeds, if any.

- There is no waste in the processing of citrus fruits. The juice is used for fresh juice and refined into wines, liquors, vinegars and syrups; the peel is used to make oils, marmalade, pectin and citric acid; and seeds are used to make oils.
- In 2005, about 68 percent of the nation's total citrus crop was processed (mainly for juice), but more than half of California's citrus crop was sold as fresh. California's dry climate allows for growth of fruits that are more aesthetically appealing.
- Mandarin oranges are not oranges (*Citrus sinensis*), and to avoid confusion are often referred to as simply "mandarins." The name "tangerine" is used to refer to mandarins of a deep, orange-red color and is derived from a mandarin cultivar that originated in Tangier, Morocco. While the two names are used interchangeably for commercial purposes, this is botanically incorrect. Tangelos are a hybrid cross between tangerines, oranges and grapefruits.

Fun Fact

Standard Mandarin is the official language of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC, also known as Taiwan), as well as one of four official languages of Singapore.

Extra Activity to do during this Harvest:

Purchase a can of 100% orange juice, an orange flavored drink, an orange soda, and some other orange drink. Compare the sugars in all four drinks and

emphasize that just because it's orange and maybe made from oranges, don't assume it's good for you.

Purchase a box of sugar cubes and have the kids guess which one has the most, the 2nd most sugar, etc.

Also talk about portion sizes—maybe purchase a huge soda and tell them about serving sizes.