

Valencia Oranges: An Underrated Warm Weather Treat

During the Summer season, the lure of the luscious Summertime fruits is inescapable. Peaches, plums, nectarines, grapes, berries, and melons - it's a lineup that all fruit lovers look forward to. After coming off the Autumn and Winter seasons, where apples, pears, and citrus rule the day, the summer season fruits seem to bring an exotic quality to their flavor, reminding us of warmth, play, and all that is good about the warmer months. With this said, it just may be that the finest summer fruit remains in the citrus family. Valencia Oranges (although not typically lumped in with the summer soft fruits) will often have some of the best flavor and highest juice content of any fruit that you enjoy during the late Spring, early Summer season.

Although the California Valencia season technically runs February through October, the upcoming months of May - June - July are really when this fruit is peaking. The Valencia is easily as sweet as the navel orange, while featuring a higher juice content and thinner skin. Valencia's have virtually no seeds, although it's not uncommon for nature to sneak a few in on occasion. The conventional wisdom is that you can expect anywhere from zero to 6 seeds per fruit. Even though this fruit is deliciously sweet and completely ripe, Valencia oranges may occasionally "re-green" in warm weather. When the fruit ripens on the tree, it turns a bright orange color, as usual. But the warm temperatures of the season may make the skin reabsorb chlorophyll as it hangs on the tree, causing a ripe orange to look partly green. Don't let this color shift fool you into thinking the orange is not ready to eat - it is perfectly ripe. Often times the "re-greened" oranges are actually a bit sweeter as the warmer temperatures elevate the fruit sugar content in the orange, making for a sweeter tasting fruit.

No doubt, your soft fruit and melon displays should be the feature display throughout the Summer months, however, it's important to keep in mind that Valencia oranges are also a happening fruit for much of the season and they too should have a strong presence in your merchandising efforts. They often work very well as part of your avocado, lemon, tomato display. This display is a strong summer feature as well, and if you place the Valencia's next to the avocados (or even next to the bright red tomatoes), the color differential works very well.

Your customers will most likely need to be reminded that citrus can still be a strong item during the warmer months. Of course, the best way to remind them is to make sure that they have the opportunity to sample a delicious orange while shopping! But just for additional support, you can also go to our website to download a Valencia Orange sign that you can print out and laminate, which can help draw some well deserved attention to this wonderful orange.