



news release

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Diverse Varieties Plentiful at Height of Peak Citrus Season *Opportunity is ripe for promotion of in-season specialty varieties*

March 17, 2016, Valencia, CA – Peak citrus season is in full swing, and with it, a number of Sunkist® citrus varieties are at their prime. Cara Cara, Navel and blood oranges as well as Meyer lemons are full-flavored with strong supplies and superior quality, and late season specialties like Gold Nugget variety mandarins and Ojai Pixie tangerines are ramping up now. Additionally, the California Star Ruby grapefruit season is kicking off with excellent flavor and color.

“With consumers’ growing desire to eat seasonally and so many citrus varieties at their best, now is the optimal time for retailers to show off these items with in-store displays and educational signage,” said Joan Wickham, Sunkist’s Director of Communications. “Sunkist is seeing increasing demand for peak season specialties, and consumers are more confident in their purchase decisions when retailers communicate the nuances of these unique varieties.”

Sunkist offers retailers a wide array of packaging and point-of-sale materials to help retailers build consumer awareness and demand and drive sales on these peak season varieties.

“Sunkist provides many tools to promote the unique attributes of citrus varieties and pique consumer interest with usage and recipe ideas, flavor profiles and nutrition information,” said Julie DeWolf, Director of Retail Marketing at Sunkist. “We work closely with our customers to create customized materials and programs that help educate consumers and drive demand. And now, due to new digital printing capabilities, we can customize bins and other point-of-sale materials with a one week lead time, allowing retailers to quickly execute promotional programs in a way that fits their stores’ unique formats and needs.”

What's in Season?

Providing 150 percent of daily Vitamin C requirements, Sunkist has branded Cara Cara Navels as The Power Orange®. They may look like Navel oranges on the outside, but the seedless interior has a rich pink hue due to the natural presence of lycopene. Known for being extremely sweet with slightly lower acidity than regular Navels, Cara Caras are available through May.

Navel oranges, the most popular and widely known citrus fruit, are also in peak season. Seedless and sweet, Navel oranges are delicious snack and also a great addition to recipes. Sunkist Navel oranges are available through June.

Meyer lemon retail sales and volume have increased significantly in the peak season period over the last 18 months, making them one of the fastest growing varieties in the citrus category. Sunkist offers Meyer lemons year-round, with strong supplies available now. Thought to be a cross between a regular lemon and a mandarin, Meyer lemons have a smooth rind, are a bit sweeter and less acidic than conventional lemons and have a refreshing herbal scent.

“Consumer demand for lemons continues to rise, and with lemons coming into peak production this is a great time for retailers to leverage point-of-sale materials and secondary displays to promote lemons throughout the store,” said DeWolf.

Blood oranges get their name from the maroon color of their interior, which can vary in intensity. They offer a distinct, rich orange taste with a hint of fresh raspberry. The peel, orange in color and often also showing a red blush, helps to distinguish it from other oranges. Blood oranges are available through early April.

“Easy-peelers also continue to grow in demand due to their convenience and great taste,” added Wickham. “As we enter the spring months, Gold Nugget variety mandarins and Ojai Pixie tangerines are two late-season easy-peelers with distinct flavor profiles and growing popularity among consumers.

Gold Nuggets are known for their sweetness and shiny, bumpy rind. A professional taste panel even deemed Gold Nuggets to be one of the best-tasting citrus varieties. Sunkist plans to ship them through May.

Ojai Pixie tangerines, also available through May, are named for the lush Ojai region of Southern California where they're grown. They are small in size, seedless and intensely sweet. Their pebbly, light orange skin is easy to peel, making them a favorite among citrus lovers.

“Additionally, California Star Ruby grapefruit is a springtime variety that is beginning to ship now,” said Wickham. “With its unique tangy-sweet flavor, grapefruit is trending among millennial consumers who

are experimenting with consumption in beverages, ranging from nutrient-rich smoothies to creative mixology.”

With its rich pink flesh and distinct sweet-tart flavor, California Star Rubies are a go-to choice, perfect for breakfast, a healthy snack, a zesty addition to a salad or freshly squeezed to brighten up a cocktail. This variety offers numerous health benefits, including weight control, cholesterol management and added boosts of Vitamin A and C.

To learn more about Sunkist, visit www.sunkist.com or contact the Sunkist sales team at sales@sunkistgrowers.com.

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