

Produce Notes

April 3, 2020

Veritable Vegetable

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Ojai Pixies Bring Sweet Spring Flavor

The Ojai Pixie tangerine is one of the prized citrus varieties during the spring season. Popular for its explosive sweet taste, these gems are a cult favorite. They are grown in the unique microclimate of Ojai, California where extremely hot days are followed by cool nights—giving the fruit its off-the-charts sweet flavor! Did we mention, they are seedless and easy to peel?

The Pixie tangerine was first developed by Howard Brett Frost at the University of California, Riverside Citrus Research center in 1927. It was eventually released in 1965 by his colleagues James W. Cameron and Robert K. Scott. Frost crossed two tangerine varieties, King and Dancy, to combine the King's late ripening with the Dancy's rich flavor. The result was the Kincy, which was large and seedy. The Pixie is the second generation of pollinating the Kincy with an unknown donor.



It was standard procedure for plant breeders at the University to cooperate with growers around the state to plant a variety in different areas to determine if the variety is worth releasing. Cameron and Scott brought the Pixie to an Ojai grower named Frank Noyes. Frank Noyes found that the Pixies produced in his Ojai orchard were delicious. Momentum grew as other growers discovered the sweet fruit. Today, we relish the fruits of all their labor.

Make sure to add some sweetness to your spring with Ojai Pixie tangerines!

Merchandising During a Crisis

We all are in uncharted territory these days while trying to navigate servicing customers safely and practicing social distancing. We've all had to get creative to efficiently do our work while protecting the health of staff and the greater community. Here are some best practices we are seeing at retailer locations:



PHOTO CREDIT: SURF MARKET IN GUALALA, CA

- **Pre-packing product.** Pre-pack products for added convenience and safety. This is helpful in reducing the number of people touching the products. While this can be labor intensive for items like bulk greens that will need to be in plastic bags with labeling, it is a quick and easy process for fruit and dry vegetables that can be placed into paper totes.
- **Closing to the public one day a week.** This may not sound ideal, but some stores are closing one day a week to allow their over-worked staff to rest and shop, or to do extra cleaning and prepping, uninterrupted.
- **Limiting the customers in the store.** Allowing only a certain number of customers in at one time makes it easier to maintain proper social distancing while shopping.
- **Floor markers to maintain six feet between customers.** Stores are putting markers on the floor indicating the recommended six feet of distancing. They are placed outside the store for those waiting to enter and in check-out areas. Tape and cones are commonly seen.
- **Offer ways to disinfect.** Place hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes near entrances to customers can clean their hands, the cart or basket when they enter.

It's vital to remain flexible during these uncertain times. Let your Account Manager know what methods you are using in your stores. We'd love to learn more about what everyone on the frontline is doing.

New & Exciting!



Autumn Crisp Grape ★
A green seedless grape. Large, round berries with an attractive milky pale green-yellow skin. Tastes sweet with a distinctively crisp-juicy texture.

Herbs
Retail packs of Epazote and Thai basil are here! Epazote is an aromatic herb commonly used in cuisines and traditional medicines of central and southern Mexico and Guatemala. Somewhat pungent medicinal-like flavor with notes of oregano, anise, citrus, and mint. Thai basil has a spicy-sweet flavor with a licorice, basil aroma. It has green leaves and pink and red-purple stems.



Rhubarb ★
Flavor is tart and astringent. Great to use in dessert applications like pies and jams. Only the stalks of the rhubarb plant are edible as the roots and leaves are toxic, and have no culinary use.



Sugar Snap Pea ★
California-grown snaps are in great supply. Crunchy, juicy, and sweet. Great for snacking while you are binge-watching Netflix.



Tommy Atkins Mango ★
New master-pack boxes from Batali Ranch are perfect to make striking store displays with minimal effort. The Tommy Atkins variety is broadly oval-shaped with thick green skin dark red blush accents. Firm, deep yellow flesh. Juicy, somewhat fibrous with a mildly sweet taste.

Ojai Pixie Tangerine ★
Sweet, seedless, easy to peel. Delicious to eat out of hand or in salads. Great to promote for packable fruit.

California-Grown Yellow Potato
Small in size and round to oval in shape. Thin, smooth skin that is tan to light gold with brown speckling. Flesh is firm, pale yellow, dense, and has a waxy texture. When cooked, they have a velvety texture and buttery flavor due to reduced starch content.

Promotable

Artichoke ★
Tasting delicious with a mildly sweet and nutty undertone flavor. In great supply.

Asparagus ★
California-grown in strong supply.

Fuji Apple
In great supply with sharp pricing.



Kanzi Apple ★
Round, medium in size. Skin has deep red accents overlaid on yellow. Flesh is firm, white, and fragrant. Texture is crunchy and refreshing. Very juicy with a balanced sweet and tart flavor.

Berry ★
Mexico-grown strawberries are steady with high prices. Mexico-grown raspberries and blackberries are in steady supply with softer pricing.

Brussels Sprouts
In good supply with softer pricing.

Meyer Lemon
Season is winding down, so grab some while you can! Prices are trending up.

Heirloom Tomato ★
In great supply.

Tortilla
We are in good supply of tortillas from Mi Rancho. Add some to your order today!

Limited

Broccoli
Supplies remain tight as weather has been affecting production and harvests.

Honeycrisp Apple
Very limited in supply. Winding down quickly with high pricing.

Garlic
Remains extremely limited in supply due to demand.

Melon
Cantaloupe and honeydew gapping until May.

Potato
All varieties remain limited due to increased demand.

Red Romaine
Gapping in supply.

done for the season

- Ettinger Avocado
- Mexico-Grown Galia Melon
- Gold Tropicikiwi
- Hawaiian-grown Yellow and White Ginger

★ Staff Picks

did you know...

...Mi Rancho first opened in 1939 in Oakland, California as the only Mexican grocery store in the area? It drew people from all around to purchase fresh hand-made tortillas, hot foods, and goods from the Mexican bakery. Today, Mi Rancho produces over 4.5 million tortillas a day and has expanded their distribution throughout the nation and internationally!

Tasting Great

Merchandising Corner

What's Fresh?



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