

LEMONS: Italian (Santa Teresa)

FRUIT: Few seeds to seedless. Elliptical to oblong shape, with a slightly necked to rounded base and a short, blunt nipple. 2.50 to 2.75 inches in diameter equates to a 75 to 95-box count. Rind has a yellow color at full maturity, moderately smooth texture, medium thickness and high rind oil content. The greenish-yellow flesh is tender, juicy and highly acidic.

TREE: Round shape with moderately vigorous upright and spreading growth habit, with branches that are nearly thornless. Medium tree height. Highly productive, setting flowers and fruit throughout the year. Well adapted to fruit forcing techniques.

HARVEST SEASON: September to August

PROS: Excellent quality lemon is nearly seedless and has a fruit size that falls into two profitable size categories. Suitable for fresh market as well as processing, due to its high rind oil content. Its everblooming and everbearing habit creates year-round harvesting potential. The fruit also adheres strongly to the tree. Well adapted to fruit forcing techniques. Thornless branches facilitate picking process. Fruit ships and stores well. Resistant to mal secco disease.

CONS: Requires specialized management techniques if harvesting four times a year is desired. In order to sell fruit at a premium in the specialty and gourmet markets, the grower may be required to make such contacts.

COMPATABLE ROOTSTOCKS: Carrizo, C-35 Citrange, Citrumelos, Macrophylla, Trifoliate, Volkameriana

RECOMMENDED SPACINGS:

Traditional: 18'x 18', 18'x 20', 18'x 22', 20'x 20', 20'x 22', 22'x 22'

Double Planting Standard Rootstock: 9'x 18', 9'x 20', 9'x22', 10'x 20', 10'x 22', 11'x 22'

C-35: 18'x 18', 18'x 20', 20'x 20'

Double Planting C-35 Citrange: 9'x 18', 9'x 20', 10'x 20'

HISTORY: Femminello Ovale is one of the oldest and most important Italian lemon groups and embodies 75% of Italy's lemon industry. Femminello Ovale 'Santa Teresa' is a selection that is resistant to mal secco disease, which has been devastating to the Italian lemon groves. This group is popular because of its ability to produce fruit four times a year. This is achieved by incorporating management techniques known in Italy as 'forzatura'. This process allows for harvesting in the four seasons of the

year. The main seasons are the Primofiore (September-November) and the Limoni (December-May), followed by Bianchetti (April-June), which is a lighter crop and finally the summer crop, Verdelli (June-September). These lemons are of excellent quality, suitable for fresh market or for processing its rind oil. Italian lemons are highly desired by gourmet chefs specializing in authentic Italian cuisine and are the prime ingredient for the very popular Italian lemon liqueur Limoncello. Limoncello is excellent as a palate cleanser or as an after dinner drink.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS: Italian lemons are relatively new to the California citrus industry, but its popularity has been increasing rapidly due to television food networks, gourmet magazines and the computer Internet. Many opportunities may be out there in the specialty and gourmet markets for the smaller grower with Italian lemons or they may be grown traditionally as a regular lemon just because they have great fruit qualities.