

# **MANDARINS: Shasta Gold**

**FRUIT DESCRIPTION:** Seedless. Oblate shape. 2.5 to 3.5 inches in diameter equates to a Jumbo to Super Colossal size designation. Rind has a deep orange to reddish-orange color, smooth texture and medium-thin thickness. Easy to peel. Internally the deep orange colored flesh has a medium-fine texture, is seedless in mixed plantings and has a medium to medium-large hollow core at maturity. The rich, sweet and distinctive flavor is similar to its Temple and Dancy parentage and has medium acid levels. The flavor is not as rich as the other TDE hybrid selections.

**TREE DESCRIPTION:** Round shape with moderately vigorous growth habit and thorny branches. Sets medium crop and the tendency to alternate bear is more pronounced than in other TDE selections. Large, spreading tree if not pruned regularly. Irregular pruning could be detrimental to production as the alternate bearing would become more severe. Alternate bearing tendencies may be alleviated with management techniques, scheduled harvesting and annual pruning.

**HARVEST SEASON:** Mid-December to June.

**PROS:** Large, attractive deep orange colored fruit is seedless, oblate in shape, and has a rich, sweet flavor. Fruit holds well on the tree. It is the latest TDE selection to mature. Can be grown in all citrus regions of California. Seedless when grown in mixed plantings.

**CONS:** Alternate bearing is a characteristic of most mandarin selections. Shasta Gold is more prone to this trait than the other TDE selections. Harvesting on schedule, fruit thinning, not holding the fruit too long and annual pruning may help manage this condition. Fruit quality does not improve through the later part of the season and the flesh has a tendency to dry out soon after peak maturity. Slight to medium puffing later in the season. Exterior quality is good but the flavor is not as rich as the other TDE selections.

**COMPATABLE ROOTSTOCKS:** Carrizo, C-35 Citrange, Trifoliate

## **RECOMMENDED SPACINGS:**

*Traditional:* 15'- 17'x 18', 15'-17'x 20', 16'x18', 18'x18', 16'x 20'

*Double Planting Standard Rootstock:* 8'x 18', 9'x 18', 8'x 20'

*C-35:* 14'x 18', 16'x 18'

*Double Planting C-35 Citrange:* 7'x 18', 8'x 18'

**HISTORY:** Shasta Gold is one of the results of an ambitious breeding program being conducted by the University of California at Riverside in an attempt to develop seedless mandarin fruit. Shasta Gold is a triploid hybrid that combines the best qualities of Temple Tangor, Dancy Mandarin and Encore Mandarin together to make a mid to late season seedless mandarin that is attractive, flavorful and has good size. It was planted at the U.C.R. Lindcove Field Station in 1991 for observation and evaluation and annual fruit data has been available since 1994.

**OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** Shasta Gold is similar to Yosemite Gold in having late maturity, good rind color and large size, but they differ in flavor. The flavor of Shasta Gold is not as rich as the other TDE hybrid selections. Shasta Gold is larger than Gold Nugget and most existing mandarins. Fruit color breaks in late November to early December in the desert citrus regions and in late December to January and February in inland valleys and coastal areas. Tree spacing is similar to what is being used with Clementine and Satsuma mandarins even though it has a spreading growth habit. Close spacing is recommended because of the pruning required to help alleviate the alternate bearing tendencies. Pruning should begin in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year before the tree becomes large and productive. It is best to begin the process early in its lifecycle and maintain it annually. Prune to create a compact tree with an open center while maintaining a protective crown. Pruning heavily going into a low-yield year can greatly improve production in that year. Lowering the height of the tree also reduces harvesting costs. Planting as close as Gold Nugget or W. Murcott (400 trees/acre) is not recommended. Fruit production does require bee pollination and may benefit from floral inductions. Many fruit are born per branch in a cluster creating an arrangement that could prove difficult in controlling Cottonycushion scale. Successful mandarin production requires management techniques, unique to the group, which must be accomplished throughout the season in order to insure the development of high quality fruit. These techniques include: spacing, culture, fruit set, pollination and pruning.