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# Citrus Talks-Handling the Orange from Tree to Market

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(6)

CITRUS TALKS

"HANDLING THE ORANGE FROM TREE TO  
MARKET"

Special Citrus Fruit Growers' Institute

Riverside--January 22, 1907

Reverend 1/22, 1907  
Subject "Handling the Orange from Tree to Market"  
Because a man may perchance meet with a

certain degree of success in his line of business, he is often thought to know much more about it than he does. This will, ~~however~~ <sup>surely</sup>, apply to my case. I have had a certain measure of success in growing and handling oranges, and I am therefore regarded by some as knowing much more about the whole business than I do. I <sup>therefore</sup> have no secrets to divulge whereby you may by some short cut grow a beautiful orange and convert it into the coin of the realm. I know only the same old plodding methods which are common among all of us and are known by many of you, ~~and a great deal better by some,~~ than I know them.

We are all too prone to follow those who have met with success in a certain line. This, however, is really <sup>dangerous</sup> injurious. You will remember how many of us only recently rebudded our lemon groves to Valencias because that special variety had made big money for some growers. Now Mr. Leffingwell and Mr. Teague and a few others who have thought and planned for themselves come and tell us that lemons make bigger money than Valencias ever did, and that it has <sup>better</sup> prospects for permanency as to a steady and paying market <sup>than the orange.</sup>

The same observation may be made about the growing of cover crops. Only recently but a few enterprising growers did this, and now all <sup>practically</sup> of us are following the method. The danger is <sup>not that it is not an excellent thing to do, but</sup> that some are so taken with the idea, <sup>having had the one</sup> thinking <sup>they think</sup> that it meets the whole requirements of a fertilizer, <sup>and</sup> have abandoned all other methods. We should figure and plan for ourselves more largely along lines <sup>+</sup> and in harmony with the various conditions under which we must work. ~~Rely not too confidently upon a one-sided~~ fertilizer.



Let me further say in the way of introductory that I am unable to point out any particular feature of fruit management, either in the orchard ~~or~~ packing house to which I can attribute what success I may have enjoyed in the orange business. It is not by giving special attention to any one particular thing and doing it well that success is attained. However thorough, careful and painstaking we may be in attending to one branch or department <sup>if that be all</sup> we will fail of attaining <sup>the</sup> greatest success. I think rather it is <sup>secured</sup> by giving due attention to all the detail of the work from the tree to the car. I, therefore, am unable to point out any particular line of this work and tell you to do this well and your fruit will <sup>bring</sup> ~~be~~ satisfactory returns, both financially and in that degree of mental enjoyment which work well and honestly done always brings, and which ought to be a part of the returns <sup>the fruit grower should</sup> ~~we~~ always look for, and indeed should demand.

Therefore, not being able to segregate from the whole process of fruit management any one

or more particular features to discuss, because of their special importance, I shall in some detail, but briefly, take up the handling of the orange from the tree to the market. This, to many of you, will be prosy, for, as before stated, I have nothing new, nothing revolutionary or startling to offer, ~~as my method.~~

We may, however, by this conference gather from the experience of the many ideas that we can work over & adjust to our varied conditions ~~with the inspiration to do the best we can which we are sure to get by~~

Thus make this convocation of great value to all of us, not only in this way but by the inspiration we usually receive by coming in touch with one another.

In discussing the question of orchard management much depends upon the initial work done in setting an orchard. If this is properly done, the bearing ability will be greater than otherwise.

The comparative ease in the management of an orchard and the results depend largely upon this early work; this too often neglected. The preparation of soil, proper planting, irrigation and pruning thereafter.

In the discussion of this question there are five chief points to consider. I will not attempt to name them in the order of value. <sup>their</sup> Irrigation, cultivation, pruning, fertilizing and the fighting of pests.

Not time to go into detailed discussion of these questions; there are important features in each of these departments of orchard work which I wish to emphasize.

Let me say at the start, however, that in all this work there are certain conditions of soil, topography and climate to be considered, and therefore what I say will not apply

equally to all places and under all conditions. In general, however, I believe they will.



After growing a fine orange it must be properly handled, and wise and prudent business methods used in marketing it. Here, ~~as I understand, is the real gist of the question before us.~~ What are the various processes through which this fruit must be taken from the tree to the market? Growers in general have learned many valuable lessons along these lines during the last few years, and yet there are doubtless others to be solved, if we make the success we ought to. A grower should be so familiar with his orchard as to know just where the weakest fruit is grown and see that this is the first that is put on the market. By giving some attention to this feature, the entire crop can be marketed rather than to have, as is often the case, a large loss on account of either the early maturity of the fruit, its undesirable size, or inclination to puff. *Slowing*

While we in California grow a hardy orange, in this respect as in all others, better than any other orange grown in the world, yet care

in handling all along the line must be observed. Not only is the large percentage of decay found in oranges on their arrival in the Eastern market due to carelessness in handling before packing, but where ordinary attention is given to the grading and the packing of the fruit the loss to the grower is unnecessarily great because this imperative law is not observed. The best results can be secured by following the methods so many do in this regard. How often we see reckless work done by the pickers, the fruit being poured into picking boxes, or worse, into packing boxes, thrown on springless wagons and hauled into the packing house where it is roughly handled, and often times indifferently packed.

The picking of the orange demands great care and experience to do it properly. The right kind of clippers must be in good condition and then properly used. Since Mr. Powell's investigation into the damage done by clippers, there has been marked improvement. The genius of the inventor has given us a greatly improved clipper.



One at least which will prevent the injury which Mr. Powell found so general. In the use of any kind of clipper, however, a certain amount of intelligence must be brought in play, and the clipper itself must be kept in condition. (~~Long Stems~~) *Heavy Clippers*

The same observation may be made of ladders. Some growers have the impression that any old thing upon which a person can climb will answer but a good ladder is essential. It should be long enough to reach above the tree so that the top will not break through. It should be light, well balanced and with comfortable steps.

*Picking Ladders*  
Picking bags of proper size and in good condition only should ever be used. I recently saw a man picking in a large bag which held a full box with an opening almost as large as a barrel; indeed I have an idea that a barrel stave was used. It should be evident that a great injury to the fruit will be done when so much weight is put into one bag and pushed up against limbs of trees or the ladder as is often the ~~same~~ case. With the ordinary bag care

6

must be used in handling, and especially in emptying. (Picker. 130 boxes)

A regularly prepared picking box should only be used in the field. Oranges cannot be handled with the necessary care in an ordinary packing box which <sup>was formerly used more than it is today</sup> we see so frequently used. <sup>^ n</sup> This is not provided with the <sup>quadr</sup> care for the protection of the fruit or with means for easy handling. ~~xxxx~~ Aside from all this it is an insult to the trade to offer the fruit in a dirty box. However great may be the care taken ~~packing boxes~~ used in the field are more or less soiled or damaged. when used

In loading and hauling from the orchard to the packing house, fruit may be seriously damaged. Wagons suitable and provided with springs only should be used. ~~Left in care of the~~

~~without care you are for nothing~~  
The whole process of the handling of the orange in the packing house demands intelligent care, ever bearing in mind that a cut, puncture or a bruise is a serious damage to the orange. No orange so injured should ever be put into a box for shipment. It is much cheaper to throw



the fruit away here than to pay for packing and the freight to carry it to some distant Eastern market only to be thrown out there by some disgusted buyer. ~~He does not get much object to the one orange as~~ Many packers seem to think if they can only get the orange in the box and get it out of sight it will be all right. It has been my observation that an orange never improve its condition if injured in any way by keeping in or out of the box. The injury is fatal by making a weak spot, which, at the slightest favorable opportunity will go down. Mr. Powell's investigation along this line gives us valuable information. We ought to thank the Department for sending him, not so much to find out that which we already knew, but to bring it to us in a way that an impression will be made upon our minds.

Indication of weakness

After the fruit is brought into the packing house it should there be kept for a time before packing. This will depend upon the variety, its condition, and the weather <sup>both</sup> as to its humidity <sup>and</sup> or its temperature. The fruit, however, should be properly cured before packing. This

16 8

usually done ~~thus~~ with the Valencia <sup>and find it</sup>  
~~is~~ a great aid in putting up a good pack, and  
<sup>In this way</sup> ~~by it~~ we are enabled to eliminate bruised or  
injured fruit.

If it is to be washed, as sometimes it is  
necessary, it should be <sup>to do</sup> done as soon as  
brought in from the orchard, and set away for  
a reasonable time.

However satisfactory the machinery used for  
this or the polishing or brushing of the orange  
may be, it will be necessary to use care in  
adjusting and keeping clean or there will be  
danger of injury to the fruit.

~~Consistent grading~~ <sup>grading</sup> ~~It should be our aim, regardless of expense,~~ <sup>Full Box</sup>  
to put the fruit on the market in a perfectly  
sound condition. There is nothing that so  
demoralizes the market as decayed fruit. A  
few cars of oranges landing in New York showing  
decay will knock from twenty-five to fifty  
cents a box off the price of sound fruit, and  
is fatal to the cars showing much decay. I  
therefore think it wise not only to use all  
possible care in handling the fruit, but to  
doubly insure against decay by shipping under  
refrigeration early in the season.

*Handwritten notes in left margin:*  
This can be done for you on paper  
from the record book



11  
is a great aid in putting up a good pack, and  
by it we are enabled to eliminate bruised or  
injured fruit.

Upon the question of the methods of marketing  
I have but little to say. There are a number  
of good methods. My way would not suit every-  
body even if it were practicable to all. I do  
not believe we can all come to adopt the same  
system of marketing. Indeed I hardly believe  
it would be for the best interest of the  
industry to have one general plan followed  
by all. Conditions and men are so diverse  
that the present system of using different  
methods is perhaps the best.

*whenever your system be consistent*

The question of marketing late fruit may be  
a delicate question for me to discuss; at least  
that is of advising growers generally to ship  
their Valencias much earlier than they did last  
season. What I shall say is prompted by no  
selfish motive for, while the late market was  
more or less demoralized by the large amount of  
indifferent fruit put upon it, and my brand did  
on that account suffer to some extent, it may

have been noticed that more uniformly than ever before, it was in a class by itself. I regret to see growers who deserve all they can get out of their fruit, foolishly and needlessly sacrificing it. This was the case last season and always will be when fruit is held until it has greatly deteriorated, which it will generally do under similar conditions. Much of this fruit was in excellent condition at one time, and that too when prices were good. Instead of it being put on the market then it was held until it deteriorated and put upon the market which was far more exacting.

Some growers, and shippers as well, thought as they had Valencias, all they had to do to get big money was simply to hold on to them long enough. In their eyes a Valencia was a Valencia. The trade does not exactly look at the question from that point. Quality is their standard, not variety. *Buyer on receiving some of this quality of V. which had lost its color as V. sometimes do, wired back that they had been picked too green.*

If we read indications correctly Southern California is to see extensive and persistent effort on the part of other favored sections



to compete with her in the production of the orange. Already other districts are annually shipping hundreds of cars, while still other ~~districts~~ districts are being exploited. No doubt there will be many who will embark in the business in these various districts who will be compelled to abandon their efforts as the experiment in all places and by all men will not prove successful. While we may therefore expect many of these orchards that have recently been set, or will be in the near future, to prove absolute failures, or practically so, some of them will doubtless demonstrate that this is not the only favored district. Already Tulare County is demanding recognition as an orange section. We need not expect the orange belt to be circumscribed by even that northern district. *A larger acreage but no more fruit as the trees get older with ordinary care does not yield more*  
 We hear a good deal about Florida and Porto Rico as great orange producing sections, at least prospective, and many growers are apprehensive that California oranges may be driven from the markets, for a part of the season at

/ 4

least, by fruit from these places. On this point let me quote from a recent letter from one who has been partial to the Florida orange.

"Speaking about Florida, you know the class of the bulk of the fruit now grown in Florida is totally different from the class of fruit that was shipped before the big freeze in 1895. The best producing sections were entirely wiped out, that is fruit outside of the Indian River section, and that section <sup>was</sup> always a later section. Take such sections as Citra and Leesburg they formerly produced elegant fruit, they will now have very little. The fact is they never had the heart to set the trees out as formerly. The bulk of the fruit that now comes from Florida is from a section that before the freeze it could not be marketed at a profit, the fruit being of such an inferior grade. 7 That is the trouble with the bulk of the Floridas, there seems to be very little character to the fruit".

The same writer in speaking of the Porto Rico oranges says that "he had a good chance to

15  
examine some Porto Rico oranges and must say it is about as trashy a lot of fruit as I have seen in many a day. There will have to be big improvement in Porto Rico before the best trade will handle that variety of oranges."

This is different with Florida grape fruit. It is a great favorite, especially on the New York market.

While we may thus expect to divide trade with competitors, yet it is evident that no other section in the United States, or the world, will ever rob Southern California of the reputation and fame she has justly won as being the ideal home of the orange. This competition will force our growers to do better work in the culture and care of tree and fruit, for I am confident that the general quality of the fruit we grow can be ~~greatly bettered~~ <sup>improved</sup>, and ~~there is no question but it can be put upon the market in much better condition than~~ <sup>it frequently</sup> ~~is now generally~~ done, even considering the marked improvement made the last year or two. It is thus evident that with this enlarged area of the production



of the orange those of us who fail to keep wide awake and up with the head of the procession will find the business discouraging and unprofitable.

Looking back ten years, yes, even five or two, we note a remarkable improvement in the culture and care of the orange. Those of our growers and shippers <sup>permit me to say</sup> who follow the methods of those earlier days are among the number who are more or less discouraged and have but little pleasure in the business. Onward and upward must be the motto of every grower who would make the culture of the orange a success.

I wish I had the language <sup>at my day in London</sup> that would enable me to adequately set forth my high estimate of ~~the orange~~ <sup>citrus</sup> fruits, and the fascinating work of ~~their~~ <sup>the</sup> culture; of the commercial importance of the business; of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> incomparable beauty of the ~~orange~~ and its wholesomeness as an article of diet. It <sup>is the king of all fruits</sup> stands without a peer, in the fruit world, and not only contributes largely to the wealth of the State, but <sup>also</sup> to ~~it~~ the general health of the whole nation, ~~is greatly indebted~~.



Its delicious juices are as invigorating as they are palatable, toning up the organic functions as well as the enervated nerve centers, thus giving to man a tireless physique and a clear brain. Let us go forward in our calling, feeding the greatest nation in the world with a fruit that the poet would say "Was fit for the Gods".