

Florida citrus starts with larger fruit

VERO BEACH, Fla. — Florida's citrus season is opening with growers harvesting larger-sized fruit.

The fall season is also bringing more mature fruit and larger sizings on most varieties of oranges, tangerines and grapefruit.

Early and mid-October rains caused uneven starts and delays to grapefruit harvesting in the Indian River growing region.



Doug Ohlemeier

Matt Reel (left), national sales manager for IMG Citrus Inc., Vero Beach, Fla., and Matt Kastensmidt, national sales manager, view white grapefruit running the packing line in early October. Florida's citrus season is opening with larger-sized fruit.

In late October, David Mixon, senior vice president and chief marketing officer of Seald Sweet International, said the state's growers were experiencing strong harvests and packing high volume on all varieties.

"This year, we have high maturity levels and have very high quality levels for an early start," Mixon said. "It's probably not that early, but it's earlier than it has been in the last couple of years. The internal quality of all the fruit we're packing is just outstanding."

In central Florida, Dundee Citrus Growers Association, Dundee, plans to transition from its fallglo tangerines to the sunburst variety in early November.

"We look to have good volume and availability for promotions for the holiday season on bagged tangerines, bagged juice oranges and bagged navels," Al Finch, vice president of sales and marketing for Florida Classic Growers, Dundee's Lake Hamilton-based marketing arm, said in late October.