

US: Early start of South African citrus season

"The first container vessel of the season with South African clementines arrived in the US on May 18," says Mark Hanks with DNE World Fruit. "The fruit was released last week and is about two weeks ahead on maturity compared to last year." South African clementines are expected to peak in June and early July, right around the Independence Day weekend. The season is expected to finish a little early due to early maturity. First navel shipments are expected to arrive June 25th with peak volumes hitting the market in July and August.

High brix levels

"Growing conditions were challenging during the South African season with very little rain and very hot temperatures," says Tom Cowan with DNE World Fruit. The result however is higher sugar levels in the fruit. "The brix/sugar levels in both clementines and navels are very good for early in the season," Cowan added. The volume of South African citrus coming to the US this summer is projected to be up over last season for both clementines and navels but smaller sized fruit.



Availability stretches from June through October

South African citrus is available from late May through October. "This is a good time frame as it contra-season to the domestic citrus seasons in California, Florida and Texas," mentioned Hanks. California finishes navels late May or early June and starts up again late October or early November. South African citrus allows retailers the opportunity to sell fresh citrus during the summer months and provide year-round availability for its customers.

An overview of availability of South African citrus varieties:

- Clementines: late May- July
- Navels: July – September
- Midnights: late September through October
- Late season mandarins: late August through Mid- October

Over the years, South African citrus has established itself in the US market as a high-quality citrus product, commented Cowan. "Many East Coast retailers request South African clementines and navels because of its quality, taste and shelf-life."

For more information:

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