CITRUS

A COMMODITY FACT SHEET COMPILED BY THE LOUISIANA AG IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM

HISTORY

Citrus are among the oldest fruits known to mankind. The first citrus fruit originated over four thousand years ago in tropical Southeast Asia, or, what is today, Malaysia. These trees, prized for their fragrant blossoms, were used for seasoning, beauty treatments, cleansing agents and embalming. However, they were not the common orange or lemon that we know today. It was probably the citron, a type of citrus that is not edible, that first made its way to Italy and later Europe hundreds of years ago. The citron was used in Europe for moth repellent, fragrance and as an antidote for poison.

In 1565, Ponce de Leon brought citrus seeds to what is now Florida and ordered his sailors to plant them wherever they landed. This helped spread citrus throughout Mexico and Central America. Early sailors used citrus fruit on their voyages to prevent scurvy, a disease caused by Vitamin C deficiency.

By 1579, orange trees were growing in Florida in St. Augustine, the oldest European settlement in the United States.

The Louisiana citrus industry began in the late 1700s when early settlers planted citrus seeds along the Mississippi River below New Orleans. Serious citrus farming began in the 1850s with budded tree planting being introduced in about 1878.

The early 1800s witnessed the introduction of the Satsuma tree to the United States, and by 1890, this citrus variety was planted extensively across all South Louisiana parishes.

In 1841, a Kentucky trapper named John Wolfskil settled in what is now Los Angeles. There he planted orange and lemon seedlings obtained from the San Gabriel Mission. This was probably the first major planting of citrus in California. He shipped fruit to San Francisco where the Gold Rush was just beginning.

In 1873, the navel orange was introduced to California by pioneer Eliza Tibbets. The United States Department of Agriculture had received navel orange trees as a gift from Brazil. The oranges was valuable due to its seedless fruit, and today the navel orange is one of California's dominant agricultural products.

PRODUCTION

Louisiana citrus products, which include Washington navel oranges, Satsuma mandarins, lemons, grapefruits and kumquats, are grown from October through February. The peak season is Thanksgiving through New Year's. Citrus products are grown in the Southern part of the state

continued on back

Ag in the Classroom Louisiana

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

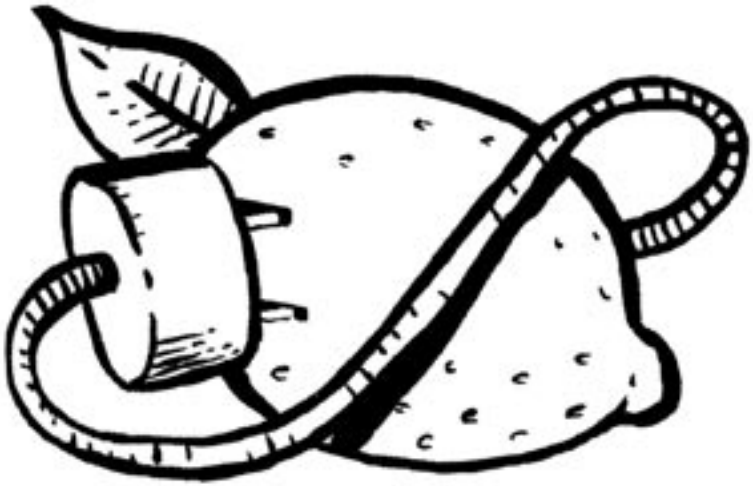
Louisiana Ag in the Classroom
9516 Airline Highway
Baton Rouge, LA 70815

P: (225) 922-6503
F: (225) 922-6229
E: lyndad@lfbf.org

http://www.aitcla.org/files/commodity_handout_sheets.pdf

TRY THIS ACTIVITY YOURSELF!

MAKE A LEMON BATTERY



Materials

- 2 lemons
- 2 copper wires
- 2 large paper clips
- 2 pennies
- a digital clock
- scissors
- knife

DIRECTIONS

1. Attach one paperclip to a wire.
2. Attach a penny to a second wire.
3. Attach another penny to one end of the third wire, and a paperclip to the other end.
4. Squeeze and roll two lemons to loosen the pulp inside.
5. Make two small cuts in the skins of both lemons an inch or so apart. Put the paper clip that is attached to the wire and the penny into one of the cuts until you get to the juicy part of the lemon.
6. Stick the penny into a hole in the other lemon.
7. Put the other paper clip into the second hole of the lemon with the penny. Then put the last penny into the last open hole.
8. Connect the free ends of the wires to the terminals of the digital clock.
9. Watch how the lemons make enough electricity to turn the clock on. If you've hooked everything up and the clock isn't running, try switching the wires.

Here's how this lemon battery works. There's a chemical reaction between the steel in the paper clip and the lemon juice. There's also a chemical reaction between the copper in the penny and the lemon juice. These two chemical reactions push electrons through the wires.

Because the two metals are different, the electrons get pushed harder in one direction than the other. If the metals were the same, the push would be equal and no electrons would flow. The electrons flow in one direction around in a circle and then come back to the lemon battery. While they flow through the clock, they make it work. This flow is called electric current.

Credit: *PBSKids.org*

with the largest production occurring in Plaquemines Parish. In 2006, 445 citrus producers in Louisiana produced approximately 748 acres of citrus products at a gross value of $3,603,500. These numbers are lower than previous years due to the significant destruction of Louisiana citrus groves by Hurricane Katrina. Louisiana citrus products are sold on the wholesale market and at roadside fruit stands.

NUTRITION

Citrus is known for its high content of Vitamin C, which is required by the body for strong gums, healthy body tissues, and for the prevention of a disease called scurvy. Oranges, lemons, grapefruits and tangerines are low calorie, low sodium, low cholesterol foods that are good sources of carbohydrates and fiber.

CITRUS FACTS

- For every one citrus flower bud that turns into a fruit, 99 never make it because they fall off the tree. After bloom, it takes from 5 to 18 months for fruit to develop.
- Commercial growers propagate citrus by grafting or budding to ensure they'll get the same high quality fruit.
- Citrus is one of the few fruits that can be left on the tree without becoming overripe, and unlike many other fruits, citrus does not continue to ripen after it is picked.
- Citrus will grow in almost any kind of soil as long as it drains well.
- Navel oranges are named that because of the belly-button formation opposite the stem end. The bigger the navel in an orange, the sweeter it will be.