**Lemon**

Arizona is one of only four states in the U.S. with significant citrus production.

Yuma County ranks number 1 in lemon production among all Arizona counties and shares lemon production with California, with 18% of the total national production.

Between 1994 and 2005, lemon acreage declined from 15,300 acres to ~10,000 acres.

In 2005, the average yield was 485 cartons per acre.

Arizona lemons are marketed both domestically and internationally.

The majority of Yuma groves are contracted with Sunkist packinghouses.

Lemons were first brought from the Middle East to Spain and northern Africa during the Middle Ages. The cultivated lemon is probably a hybrid of two wild species.

Common varieties of lemons planted in the Yuma area include the “Lisbon” and “Eureka.” The Eureka lemon tree is noted for the absence of thorns.

Lemon flowers have a sweet odor comparable to, but less marked than, the odor of orange flowers.

Most cultivated lemon varieties are hybrids that produce little or no true bred seed.

The trees are planted in rows spaced 20 to 30 ft apart, depending on the variety planted and are typically flood irrigated.

Except when extreme temperatures delay blooming, fruits are produced throughout the year.

Fruits are picked from each tree several times during the season and, if necessary, are ripened with ethylene gas at moderately warm temperatures.

Mature lemon trees may produce between 1,000 and 2,000 fruits per year.

Kurt Nolte is an area agriculture agent with the Yuma County Cooperative Extension. He can be reached at 928-726-3904.