

‘Parson Brown’ and Other Early Season Sweet Oranges

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‘Hamlin’ tree



‘Parson Brown’ tree

Take Home Message:

- Citrus cultivars with improved scion genetics that can better withstand HLB offer the most promise for long-term citrus production in Florida.
- ‘Parson Brown’ sweet oranges are more tolerant to HLB with lower fruit drop than comparable ‘Hamlin’.
- Thorough evaluation of early season oranges can provide a sound base for long term economic sustainability.

Summary: ‘Parson Brown’ is an early maturing sweet orange variety that

has consistently exhibited minimal leaf and fruit drop in the field compared with the ‘Hamlin’ sweet orange under similar conditions. Results from sampling trees from eight different locations across the citrus growing belt confirmed this cultivar is more tolerant to huanglongbing (HLB) with lower fruit drop than comparable ‘Hamlin’ sweet orange. However, most early season juice oranges, which are primarily produced to supplement the better-quality late season oranges have poor juice color, and which have significantly

deteriorated under endemic HLB conditions. The handful of orange juice-processing plants left in Florida need more robust early season sweet orange cultivars to produce grade A quality juice in December and January. Thus, in addition to understanding the mechanism behind this perceived tolerance to HLB and lower fruit drop even under the current HLB conditions in the ‘Parson Brown’, we are also evaluating several other early season sweet oranges imported from the USDA’s germplasm repository in Riverside, California.

Funding:

