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IMG Citrus reintroduces original heirloom Florida grapefruit

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IMG Citrus is reintroducing white grapefruit to the U.S. market. Most white grapefruit is exported directly from the U.S. to its primary market in Japan where it maintains consistently high popularity; however, IMG Citrus will be expanding its white grapefruit consumer base to the U.S. market, reintroducing the original heirloom Florida grapefruit to its homeland.



More commonly known to the American consumer is red grapefruit, a mutation of white and a staple in the citrus aisle. While grapefruit in the U.S. is primarily grown in Florida, Texas and California, Florida is the only state in the country where white grapefruit is grown. While citrus farmers in Florida have continued to replant an abundance of red grapefruit after the impact of yearly hurricanes, over the course of the past 30 to 40 years, growers have not replanted a significant amount of white grapefruit.

However, with IMG Citrus' recent acquisition of Emerald Grove in St. Lucie County, renamed the Happy Food Grove after the consumer brand, IMG Citrus is now one of the largest growers and suppliers of Florida red and white grapefruit, producing approximately 50 percent of all white grapefruit in Florida.

Along with their 4,000-acre investment, IMG Citrus will begin selling white grapefruit in the U.S., where the company has been selling citrus domestically for decades.

A vital factor regarding the taste of white grapefruit relies significantly on the age of the tree. The older the tree, the better the taste. The vast majority of white grapefruit originating from Florida comes from trees which are more than 25 years of age. Additionally, all white grapefruit is grown in the Indian River region, the best region for growing grapefruit. Therefore, when you eat white grapefruit from Florida, the odds for something special with a sweet, unique flavor are in your favor.

IMG Citrus will reintroduce white grapefruit to the U.S. market under their primary consumer brand, Happy Food, utilizing contemporary branding to help differentiate the newly added variety for the consumer. The Happy Food brand features happy fruit faces and bright colors, cheerfully lighting up the citrus aisle with a celebratory "be healthy, be happy" slogan. Because of white grapefruit's unique flavor, its packaging also encourages consumers to experience its "sweet and tasty" flavor profile. IMG Citrus will have white grapefruit in promotable volumes and availability in various sizes including large sizes. Happy Food originally launched in 2013, and includes a range of citrus such as red grapefruit, juice oranges, lemons, navel oranges, mandarins, and tangos. In the future, IMG Citrus is also planning to release white grapefruit as a specialty item to consumers in Europe such as the Netherlands, Belgium and France.

"When red and white grapefruit are displayed next to each other, they complement each other nicely. This type of display is very common with Japanese retailers," said Michel Sallin, IMG Citrus president. "IMG Citrus is excited to bring white grapefruit back to the U.S. market, providing consumers with more grapefruit variety."

White grapefruit gave Florida grapefruit its original popularity, and the addition of white grapefruit to the Happy Food brand will add a welcoming new pop of color and a Florida legacy of sweetness, juiciness, and flavor to the citrus aisle.

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