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Sunkist Growers rolling out new organic packaging

By

Keith Loria

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For [Sunkist Growers](#), citrus is a way of life. Sunkist's growers have deep roots in citrus, with many members being third-, fourth- and even fifth-generation growers. More than 2,000 Sunkist growers produce nearly 40 different citrus varieties in California and Arizona, and every single one of the varieties has its own personality and flavor.



“Sunkist is the longest-standing agricultural cooperative in the nation,” said Christina Ward, director of global brand marketing for the Valencia, CA-based company. “Our growers reflect the values and legacy of Sunkist’s 129-year history: family-owned farms where traditional growing practices, stewardship of natural resources and a dedication to innovation are proudly passed through the generations.”

In addition to growing, harvesting and delivering top-quality citrus year over year, Sunkist knows it’s important to understand customers’ needs and the ever-changing shopper behaviors.

“Through Cassie Howard’s leadership as director of category management, Sunkist offers value-added services to help our partners make better business decisions that grow our citrus categories,” Ward said. “The number of Sunkist customers requesting category management support has more than doubled in recent years. Our category management team provides insightful industry data and shopper behavior insights that give us the needed tools to stand out and succeed.”

Like so many other industries, the citrus industry has continued to face challenges stemming from the pandemic, such as port issues, supply chain disruptions, water and labor concerns, and increasing costs.

“On the plus side, more consumers understand that incorporating more citrus into their daily diet is easy to do and has many health benefits,” Ward said. “According to a recent Sunkist study, the No. 1 reason consumers are purchasing citrus is to eat healthier. While vitamin C remains important to the citrus shopper, eating healthy is the biggest reason they are purchasing citrus.”

The data also showed that a majority of citrus shoppers still plan to cook at home over the next six months.

“There is an opportunity to educate consumers on fun, simple ways to consume citrus and perhaps inspire them to try a specialty variety such as Cara Cara and Blood oranges or even Minneolas for the first time,” Ward said. “These factors are why we continue to focus on whipping up new Sunkist recipes on [Sunkist.com/recipes](https://www.sunkist.com/recipes) and on our social media pages.”

Sunkist Growers has a wide variety of organic citrus, including Navel, Cara Cara and Valencia oranges, Minneola tangelos, plus mandarins, grapefruit, lemons and limes. Growth continues in Sunkist specialty varieties, which include Cara Cara and Blood oranges.

“Overall, the organic citrus industry is up 6 percent from the prior year,” Ward said. “We’ve been listening to Sunkist consumers who are making a conscious effort to eat organic by increasing the acreage of varieties within our organic category. Sunkist is able to offer retailers a full portfolio of organic citrus varieties.”

When dealing with Mother Nature, Ward noted no two seasons are ever the same. Add to that the fact consumer behavior is also ever-evolving and changing, and it becomes even more critical to maintain and open an ongoing dialogue with retail partners and customers.

“Gathering data allows us to create customizable programs and relevant promotions to reach shoppers where they want to buy,” she said.

This year’s crop shows good eating quality and size structure. While volume for oranges is currently flat compared to last year, they are up in volume compared to two years ago.

“We have promotable volumes of the all-mighty lemon,” Ward said. “With 75 percent of lemon purchases driven by recipes, giving shoppers a reason to buy with recipe inspiration is key to the success of this kitchen staple.”

This season, Sunkist is excited to roll out two new packaging designs: Sunkist California mandarins and Sunkist Organics, both featuring the iconic Sunkist lollipop logo.

“With Sunkist California mandarin season upon us, we have new, bright and smiley packaging for

this easy-peeler variety that features our new calling card, Peel Good Citrus,” Ward said. “We are also excited about our new Sunkist organic packaging that will be fully rolled out in January in time for the peak organic promotional period. The new packaging designs celebrate our California heritage and feature the iconic Sunkist lollipop logo, first introduced in the 60s and brought back by popular demand.”

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