

CITRUS PROPAGATION

By A. F. CAMP

The growing of citrus fruits in Florida began with the planting of seedling trees. As the industry developed the superiority of the budded stock over the seedling tree became apparent and led to the practical abandonment of the seedling method of propagation. Fortunately the propagation of citrus by budding and grafting is very easy and its practice has extended beyond the nurseryman to the grove owner himself. Today many citrus growers, and even many with only a few trees in their door-yards, have acquired the skill necessary for the budding of nursery stock and the top-working of older trees.

The discussion of nursery practice given herein is based on the best commercial practices of today together with knowledge gained in experimental work. A number of procedures are listed that are not in general commercial use but which have a certain amount of interest to growers at large. In addition to the discussion of propagation itself, some notes are included on the choice of rootstocks, their adaptability and comparative value. It should be remembered that there is still considerable difference of opinion concerning the choice of rootstocks and their relative merits. For this reason no attempt has been made to give the last word on this interesting but complicated subject, but only to give what seems to be sound opinion based upon our present knowledge.

ROOTSTOCKS

Probably no horticultural crop has as complicated a rootstock problem as is found in the citrus industry in Florida. Several factors combine to bring about this situation. The great variability of soils and the peculiar suitability of certain rootstocks to certain soil conditions probably largely account for this situation, though the influence exerted by rootstocks on some varieties is also a contributing factor.

There are at the present time two citrus rootstocks widely used in this state, namely, sour orange and rough lemon. Several others, including sweet orange, grapefruit, and *Poncirus trifoliata*, are used to a lesser extent but in some cases have been used quite extensively in the past. Recently the Cleopatra mandarin has been developed as a rootstock and is now being tried