

# Thinner, bigger fruit is just Tops

Citrus growers looking for a cost effective way to thin fruit, or bolster their fruit size, now have access to one product that can achieve both.

**Liz Mecham** spoke to the Australian chemical company, **Colin Campbell Chemicals**, who has developed **Tops**, a plant growth regulator for citrus growers which could alleviate issues as broad as seasonal labour and small fruit.

**T**ops is a product that can achieve two significant things for citrus growers, it can be applied to either thin or size your fruit.

And according to Colin Campbell Chemical National Sales manager, Ramsay Zreikat "... only one application of Tops should be made a year".

The product was only released for citrus growers' use during the 2014 season, having been successfully trialed and approved for citrus use by the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority in late 2013.

The company, synonymous with postharvest products used in the citrus industry, has been developing products for use in citrus orchards pre-harvest for the last 15 years, Ramsay explained.

"When applying Tops at or near the end of natural fruit drop for oranges or during natural fruit drop in November for mandarins growers will achieve a thinning effect without the need for intensive manual labour," he said.

"Alternatively, you can apply Tops within two weeks after the end of natural fruit drop (natural thinning) and you will give your fruit a size increase.

"This allows growers to choose the application timing based on seasonal conditions and crop load in order to increase fruit size.

"Because of the specific times when Tops should and should not be used, we encourage growers to read the *Tops Product Handbook* available on our website or consult their agronomist when deciding to use the product," Ramsay added.



Fondecarro Amigo mandarins 'Top'-treated (right) versus untreated (left).

For Nangiloc mandarin grower, Werner Ullrich from Nangiloc Colignan Farms, the product has been instrumental in improving the size of fruit for a number of years.

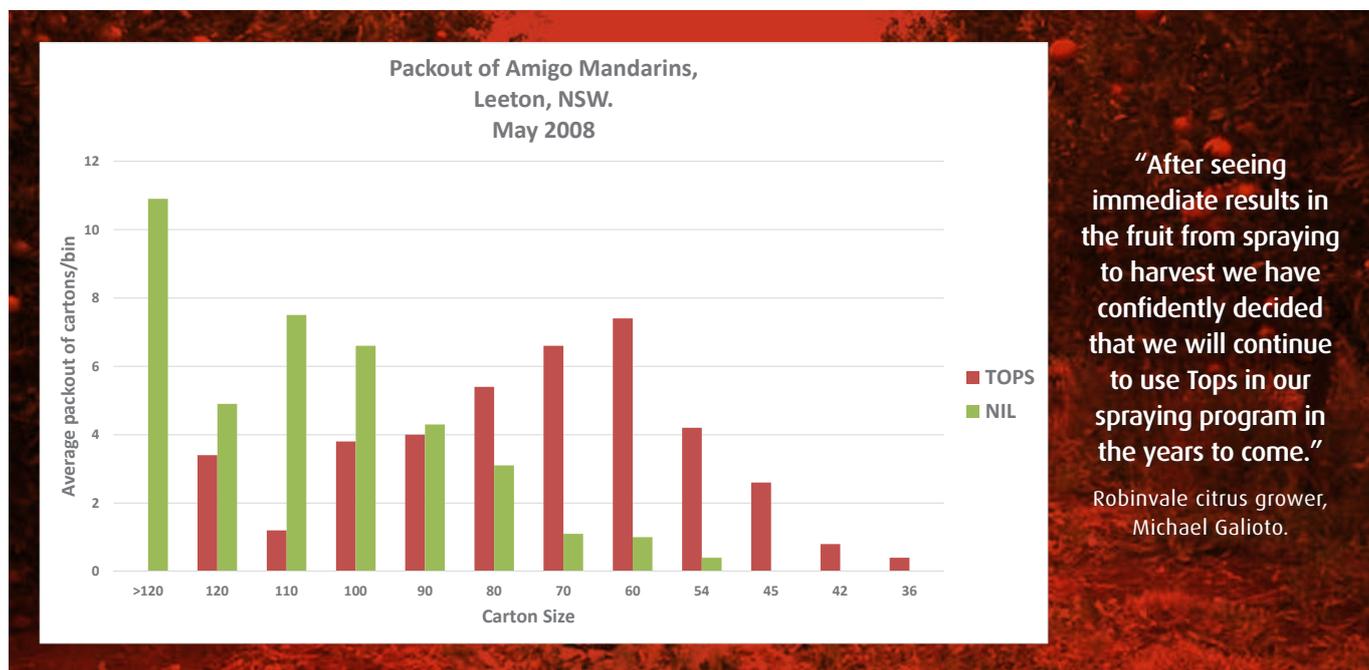
The farm was one of a number that undertook trial work around Australia under permit prior to Tops becoming registered.

"I have been using Tops for about six years and am happy with the results. Tops forms part of our management program for sizing of Afourers and Imperials. We have used it successfully also for thinning fruit when necessary," Werner said.

For Robinvale grower, Michael Galioto his early concerns about the product and the strict usage requirements around timing and temperature, were dispelled once he had used the product on-farm.

"With agronomic advice and guidance of when the timing was appropriate, we trialed eight rows of Imperials," he said.

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