

1955

GENERAL: Onions are well adapted to the desert area, but competition from other early producing areas causes production to involve considerable financial risk. Hence, only a limited portion of the total vegetable land is planted to onions.

VARIETIES: Texas Early Grano, Crystal Wax and Excel are the varieties most commonly grown in the area. Onion varieties are quite sensitive to day-length and temperatures; hence, only varieties which will produce well under the existing environmental conditions should be planted.

YIELDS: Yields range from 250 to 500 50-lb. sacks per acre. Early Grano types generally produce greater yields than either the Excel or Crystal Wax varieties, with yields of over 1300 sacks per acre having been produced.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS: All onion varieties are grown best on medium to heavy soils. The soil should be retentive enough under cultivation to keep sufficient moisture about the roots, and yet be friable enough to be cultivated easily and to allow proper expansion of the bulbs.

PLANTING: Most onion acreage in the area is transplanted. Transplants are grown in nurseries, planted about September 1 to 15, and are set in the fields from November 1 to 30. Transplants are planted 2 rows per bed, about 8 inches apart, on beds having 24 inch centers. Some growers plant 3 rows on wider beds and some plant single rows. Plants are spaced  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 inches apart in the rows.

For the nursery crop, 2 pounds of seed will produce enough transplants with which to plant one acre. The nursery crop is generally grown on beds with 4 rows per bed. The plants are hand pulled, placed in boxes which are placed in the field, where the transplants are set in the field.

FERTILIZERS: About 100 pounds of nitrogen and 50 pounds of  $F_2O_5$  at planting time is a common fertilizer practice.

IRRIGATION: Onions having a very shallow root system require light but frequent irrigations. From 20 to 30 acre-inches of water are needed for the crop. The crop should never suffer from lack of water. When the plants have started to mature, irrigation should be discontinued and the soil allowed to dry out as much as possible.

DISEASE AND PEST CONTROL: Pink root is a soil borne disease affecting onions. The crop should never be planted on soils known to be infested with disease organisms.

Onion thrips are the main insect pest of the crop. Applications of a D.D.T. sulfur insecticide have given satisfactory control of this pest.

HARVESTING AND PACKING: The bulbs are lifted by dragging a long horizontal knife beneath the roots. The onions are then hand pulled and thrown in wind rows to dry for from 4 to 7 days. The tops should be placed over the bulbs to prevent sunburn where hot weather is experienced during harvesting. The onions are then topped by hand, graded on a mechanical grader and sacked in the field, where they are left for a few days to cure before being transported to market.

AVERAGE PRICES RECEIVED BY CALIFORNIA PRODUCERS PER 50# SACK, LATE SPRING CROP:

1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
1.50	.90	1.65	2.55	1.00

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WHAT WILL IT COST TO GROW ONIONS IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

Based on a Yield of 500 50-lb. Sacks Per Acre

VARIETY: Early Grano

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	Per Acre	Per Sack	Per Acre	Per Sack
<u>Land Preparation</u>				
Plow 1x, float 2x . . . . .	\$ 10.00		.....	.....
Furrow out, shape beds. . . . .	3.40		.....	.....
Fix head ditch, set furrow pipes. . . . .	1.00		.....	.....
<b>PREPARATION TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>\$ 14.40</b>	<b>\$ .03</b>	.....	.....
<u>Cultural Labor and Field Power</u>				
<u>Transplant Crop</u>				
Land Preparation. . . . .	\$ .09		.....	.....
Planting. . . . .	.05		.....	.....
Irrigate 5x . . . . .	.25		.....	.....
Fertilize . . . . .	.02		.....	.....
Pest Control - 2x by hand duster . . . . .	.10		.....	.....
Weeding . . . . .	.15		.....	.....
<b>TOTAL COST OF GROWING TRANSPLANTS PER ACRE. . . . .</b>	<b>\$ .66</b>		.....	.....
<u>Main Crop</u>				
Transplant from seedbed to field. . . . .	\$ 50.00		.....	.....
Irrigate 20x. . . . .	40.00		.....	.....
Cultivate 2x. . . . .	2.25		.....	.....
Fertilizing - done during cultivation . . . . .	-		.....	.....
Weeding . . . . .	20.00		.....	.....
Pest Control - hand dusted. . . . .	6.00		.....	.....
Miscellaneous . . . . .	3.00		.....	.....
<b>CULTURAL TOTAL. . . . .</b>	<b>\$121.91</b>	<b>\$ .24</b>	.....	.....
<u>Materials (includes materials for seedling crop)</u>				
Seed. . . . .	\$ 8.60		.....	.....
Irrigation water. . . . .	5.50		.....	.....
Fertilizer. . . . .	25.00		.....	.....
Pest control - 100# DDT-10. . . . .	10.50		.....	.....
Bags @ 20¢ per bag. . . . .	100.00		.....	.....
String - tying bags . . . . .	1.00		.....	.....
<b>MATERIALS TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>\$150.60</b>	<b>\$ .30</b>	.....	.....
<u>Cash Overhead</u>				
General expense @ 5% of above . . . . .	\$ 14.32		.....	.....
Taxes - 100% to onions. . . . .	25.00		.....	.....
Compensation insurance. . . . .	1.15		.....	.....
Repairs to small equipment. . . . .	1.25		.....	.....
<b>CASH OVERHEAD TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>\$ 41.02</b>	<b>\$ .08</b>	.....	.....
<b>TOTAL CASH COSTS. . . . .</b>	<b>\$328.33</b>	<b>\$ .66</b>	.....	.....
Land rent @ \$75 per acre. . . . .	\$ 75.00	\$ .15	.....	.....
<b>TOTAL COST BEFORE HARVESTING. . . . .</b>	<b>\$403.33</b>	<b>\$ .81</b>	.....	.....
<u>Harvesting</u>				
Lifting, pulling, topping, cut off roots, sacking, and sewing @ .425 ¢ per sack . . . . .	\$212.50	\$ .425	.....	.....
<b>HARVEST TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>\$212.50</b>	<b>\$ .425</b>	.....	.....
Transportation to Los Angeles @30¢ a sack	\$150.00	.30	.....	.....
Brokers commission - 15% . . . . .	112.75	.29	.....	.....
<b>TOTAL ALL COSTS. . . . .</b>	<b>\$909.38</b>	<b>\$ 1.82</b>	.....	.....