



The History of the Rio Red Grapefruit

Developed by Dr. Richard Hensz, Ph.D.

1951-1953 – Seeds of the Ruby Red are planted at Texas A&I Citrus Center. Buds from the seedlings are propagated to rootstock. 1400 Ruby Red trees grown from seedling buds are planted for study.

1959-1960 – Buds taken from trees in 1953 that were selected for quality and protection are propagated and planted in a 10 acre block.

1963-1965 – Buds taken from plantings are sent to Brookhaven Laboratories in Long Island, NY for enhancement. Buds are returned to Texas, propagated, and trees are planted for further observations.

1969-1971 - Fruit on a tree was noticed to be much redder than Ruby Red. Budwood was selected from this tree, propagated and these young trees were placed in a cultivar test planting with red grapefruit.

1976 – A limb on a tree in the test planting was discovered with fruit much redder than the rest of the tree. Budwood was taken from this limb and propagated.

1979-1980 – A planting of the trees in 1976 was established (800 trees in 1979, 475 in 1980) for observation and budwood increase.

1983 – Trees survived the December 1983 freeze. Fruit harvested after the freeze yielded from 330 3-year old trees, 50 lbs/tree and from 400 4-year old trees, 150 lbs/tree.

1984 – RIO RED Cultivar named through contest held by TexaSweets Advertising. Budwood is released to nurserymen.

1984 to current – The citrus growers of the Rio Grande Valley have planted thousands of acres of the RIO RED cultivar in commercial orchards. With the unique climate and soil of the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas the RIO RED cultivar is the only grapefruit in the world to have a unique combination of dark red color and high sugar/acid ratio. This makes it a very desirable product for consumers and producers alike.