

# NOTES FROM THE NUT

CAPAY HILLS ORCHARD NEWSLETTER ISSUE 38



## IN THIS ISSUE: AUGUST - OCTOBER 2023

- An Invitation
- Meet Our Nuts



## An Invitation



We would like to hear from you! Starting with our next newsletter, we would love to hear and then share stories from our customers regarding how you found our farm, what made you choose our nuts, and any special stories about enjoying our almonds. Please submit any stories to [thelupineladyca@gmail.com](mailto:thelupineladyca@gmail.com) or [capayhillsorchard@gmail.com](mailto:capayhillsorchard@gmail.com). Stories can be of any length, and if you would like to include pictures or recipes, please do! We would love to share these stories with our extended Capay Hills Orchard family, i.e., you!

# Meet Our Nuts

A common question Brian receives is “What is your favorite variety of almonds?” An important question considering that we sell three varieties! Brian’s honest response is that it depends on who is asking the question and what the intended desire is! Brian changes his mind on an almost daily basis!

At the current time there are approximately 30 almond varieties produced in California’s 7,800 orchards. Ten varieties represent over 70% of all production. Varieties are grouped into broad classifications for marketing purposes based on distinguishing characteristics such as size, shape, and “blanchability.” The majority of almond production in California falls into the following three major classifications: Nonpareil, California (our Monterey variety falls into this classification), and Mission (our Fritz variety falls here). All California Almonds are developed using traditional methods; genetically modified almond varieties are not planted in California.

As you are likely aware of, Capay Hills Orchard grows three varieties of almonds. Different varieties are basically just different “breeds,” with different traits in taste, appearance, size, shape, and growing and harvesting characteristics. On our orchard we grow Nonpareil, Fritz, and Monterey almonds.

Half of our orchard is planted with the **Nonpareil** variety of almond. This is the most widely grown variety and has withstood the test of time, originating in Suisun, California, in 1879. The original orchard on our property dates back to 1916, and Nonpareil was the predominate variety. These nuts have a soft shell, which makes them easy to shell by hand, and they have a lighter color than many other varieties with a medium size. They are a very attractive nut. These are one of the more typical varieties you will see in a grocery store, but they are never grown alone since they (like almost all almond varieties), are not self-pollinating and do require at least one other compatible almond variety to cross-pollinate with. This variety produces the most mellow and moderate flavor and is most enjoyed for snacking, rather than roasting (Monterey and Fritz do better for roasting). The leaves are a gentle green, the hulls turn a yellow-brown at harvest, and during the bloom the blossoms are white or palest pink with hot pink centers. This variety harvests in early August and blooms in mid-February.



*Nonpareil nuts in bloom, the raw kernel, and in hull and shell*



*Fritz nuts showing off their pink seasonal colors and their smaller size and darker shape (in the almond milk picture)*

The **Fritz** variety makes up 25% of our orchard. This variety was a chance seedling, probably a cross between the Mission and Drake varieties, both hard-shells. It has only been in commercial use since 1969. This tree is prolific and grows slightly taller and less spreading than the other varieties, but harvests last, 45 days after Nonpareil, usually in mid-late September. The nuts themselves are small and slightly darker than the Nonpareil. They also contain a deeper almond flavor, which makes them the ideal nut for

cooking, baking, and roasting, as well as snacking. It blooms first in the season, with gentle pink blossoms with hot pink centers. The tree leaves themselves start to adopt a pink hue late in the summer, as does the nut hull before harvest. This variety produces more of a nuisance for the farmer since the nuts do not all mature at the same rate and some drop prematurely from the tree while others stay on the tree after harvest.

The **Monterey** variety makes up the last 25% of our orchard. This variety is of Mission and Nonpareil stock and is also a hard-shell, like the Fritz. It also was only recently introduced to the commercial production of almonds in 1974. It blooms shortly after Nonpareil and harvests 30 days after Nonpareil. The tree is spreading in shape and produces white blossoms with pink centers and has a high propensity (20%) to produce double-kernels (two nuts in one shell). The nuts are large and long and slightly darker than Nonpareil with a touch of sweetness to their meat. These are a favorite for snacking, almond butter, and almond milk. Due to their hard shell and larger size, they tend to get more nicks and scrapes on them from the shelling machine, however, we do try to remove most of those damaged nuts. Monterey is easy to blanch for those interested in removing the skins. It is also suitable for roasting or cooking.



*The Monterey almonds bloom whiter, display a purple-hued hull at harvest, and sometimes contain two nuts in one shell.*

From a nutritional standpoint there is no significant difference between the varieties. However, you can see that there are many slight differences in how the nut or tree looks, grows, and even could be best enjoyed! Really, the best way to know which variety is "best" is to buy a pound of each and try them each out in different ways -- snacking, baking, candying, roasting, homemade almond milk, etc. It is your opinion that ultimately matters in the end!

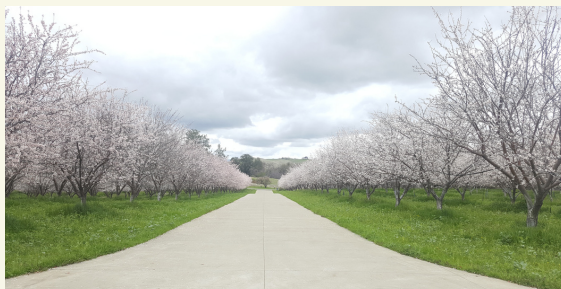


If you would like to read more about the health benefits of almonds or varietal differences, please check out the links below. Thanks for reading! Happy fall and Happy Thanksgiving!

<https://www.almonds.com/why-almonds/health-and-nutrition/nutritional-value>

<https://www.almonds.com/why-almonds/health-and-nutrition>

Varietal differences in almonds: <https://farmersinternational.com/>



**Follow us on social media:**

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/capayhillsorchard/>

**Instagram:**

<https://www.instagram.com/capayhillsorchard/>

**YouTube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCykQpA6lbn77GUSbiD9y4qQ>