



Garry and Darren Minter of Minter Magic have reported positive results from using Samurai in their citrus operations.

Citrus exporter banks on Samurai for premium pack-out

For leading Australian citrus grower and exporter Darren Minter of Victoria's Minter Magic, several months of complete pest control from systemic insecticide Samurai ensures his export pack-out consistently meets China's strict first-grade protocol.

The fourth-generation producer of Iraak, south of Mildura, has grown citrus since the 1970s and almonds since 1985, continuing the legacy of Minter family farming in the district since 1912.

Minter Magic produces some 7-9,000 bins of citrus between April and October for export to Asia, Europe, the United States of America and Canada as well as the domestic market via packer Mildura Fruit Company. Darren Minter has used Samurai in rotation for more than 10 years to fight the major quarantine pests threatening all Australian citrus lines, Fuller's rose weevil (FRW) and California red scale.

FRW, found in all southern growing regions of Australia, has the potential to impact exports into the lucrative Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean markets if eggs are found present on fruit. California red scale is the most common and damaging scale affecting citrus in Australia. Damage can result in downgrades in fruit quality or rejection and infestations can weaken trees and can cause a drop in yield.

While Minter Magic exports both citrus and almonds it uses Samurai from Sumitomo Chemical Australia only in its orange and mandarin operations. It has more than 280 hectares under production including 120 hectares of citrus, 160 hectares of almonds and 13 hectares of asparagus.

"We apply Samurai about November or December straight after flowering and that gives us two or three months of complete control. It takes out the adult weevils (which chew leaves, buds, and young shoots) and the eggs," Mr Minter said.

"It solves the main weevil beautifully and keep all insects and bugs including leaf minor and gall wasp out of the crop.

"The difference between first grade and second grade fruit is significant. Second grade is not really profitable, so it's not a risk we can take."

He said Samurai had been alternated with another product over the past decade to avoid resistance and build-up in the soil and, to reduce farming costs.

"We used it exclusively up till about eight years ago and dropped back because of the price. It's a premium product with premium results but tough to keep up when you have a bad season. There was one year I didn't use it, and we had a scale outbreak to contend with."

Samurai is also an effective defence against Carpophilus beetle and carob moth in almonds, however, Minter Magic historically hasn't had a problem with these pests.

"We don't use Samurai in almonds because we don't need it. Until last year, we've never had the Carpophilus beetle here. If it reappears this year, we'll be ready to use it."

For best results, Sumitomo recommends Samurai is applied via drippers or micro sprinklers to a limited area under the tree drip line two weeks after flowering for Fuller's rose weevil and in conjunction with other chemical or biological control measures for California red scale which may require a second treatment four months later.



The Minter family has been farming in the district south of Mildura since 1912



Established in 1998, Sumitomo Chemical Australia provides innovative solutions including a range of conventional and biological products for Australian agriculture, with a strong focus on horticultural production. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Chemical Co, Japan which traces its origins back to the 1600s, and USA-based Valent Biosciences which produces a range of biologically derived, environmentally compatible pesticides and plant growth regulators. Based in Sydney, Sumitomo Chemical Australia has a team of sales and technical support personnel in key agricultural regions of Australia. ●