



# F r e s h ALERT

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January 3, 2008

## FLORIDA FREEZE

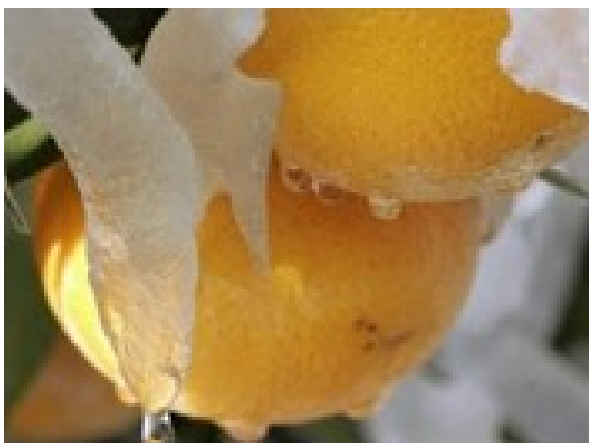
Florida's growers reported only minor damage early Thursday from a blast of cold Artic air, even as snow flurries fell in at least one part of the Sunshine State. Freezing temperatures in Florida this time of year can have devastating impact on citrus, row crop vegetables, lettuce, tomatoes and strawberries.



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Citrus industry officials believe the state's groves escaped major damage, because it didn't get as cold as forecast.

When temperatures get down to 28 degrees for four hours, a tree can be ruined. While forecasts said it could get that cold overnight, temperatures hovered in the 30s in central and South Florida where most orange and grapefruit growers are based.



Growers sprayed citrus and strawberry crops with water, which freezes and then acts as insulation from sub-freezing temperatures.

"Overall, this is preliminary, but it looks like we have dodged a bullet," said Rusty Wiygul, director of grower affairs for Florida Citrus Mutual. He said there will be pockets of minor damage.

Many farmers pulled all-nighters, spraying their crops with water in an effort to protect them from the cold. The water freezes, insulating the temperature at 32 degrees.

Growers are also harvesting as many mature fruits and vegetables as possible.

Temperatures in many areas of northern Florida dropped into the 20s early Thursday, following the 30-degree temperatures some northern parts of the state saw Wednesday. Snow flurries were reported near the Daytona Beach coastline.



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