



2026 NEWS



**STRONG TREES.
LONG-TERM
RELATIONSHIPS.**

- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Pistachios
- Apples
- Apricots
- Cherries
- Citrus
- Nectarines
- Olives
- Peaches
- Pears
- Plums
- Prunes

Lessons Learned From a Decade of Farming Our Trial Orchards

Sierra Gold has always been a nursery first, but when times change, we change. Ten years ago, when we found ourselves with a lot of high-quality unused land as a result of growing so many more containerized trees than bareroot, we decided to try our hand farming orchards on a commercial scale. We took the opportunity along the way to do numerous experiments with our own products. With multiple years of harvest data now under our belt, we wanted to share our top lessons learned from farming 400 acres of walnuts, 30 acres of pistachios and 20 acres of almonds.

WALNUT ROOTSTOCK OBSERVATIONS AND CROWN GALL

When it comes to crown gall, rootstock choice matters more than the format of tree you choose to plant (bareroot vs. potted) and RX1 is the only rootstock that consistently performs well. In our initial orchards, with over 3,000 clones, the biggest objectively studied clonal walnut rootstock experiment ever planted was conducted and it showed two things. First, even with clonal rootstocks, you are not immune to crown gall! Second, RX1 is the clearly superior choice among the commercially available options. Ten years in, with less than 1% crown gall, RX1 significantly beats out Vlach, which is hovering at 12%, and VX211, which is hovering around 7%.

Since that initial experiment, over our 360 subsequent acres, we've planted two-year trees, June buds, fall planted rootstocks, spring planted rootstocks and trees grafted in containers – all on the RX1. What we have seen is, across those 360 acres, crown gall is comfortably below 1%.

Encouragingly, the latest research shows that RX1, across all orchard locations, is about on par with the production of Vlach, with some variation year over year. Both rootstocks have performed favorably vs. VX211. Across our Chandler and Howard blocks that are 5th leaf and older, the average yield over the last five years is just under 6,000 pounds per acre, with Howard outperforming the Chandler most every year.

WALNUT SCIONS

We have nearly tried them all. In addition to traditional standards Chandler and Howard, we farm 25 acres of Durham, 31 acres of Solano, 27 acres of Wolfskill and 5 acres of Ivanhoe. Which ones would we plant again? Of the newer

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Focused on Optimum Products, Service

By Reid Robinson

I recall a conversation I had with an influential mentor of mine. Forty years older than me, he had been an agricultural professional, grower and businessman longer than I've been alive. He asked me how I thought the year was shaping up, and my answer was something like, "Given how shaky it's been, I can't imagine we're going to be worse off by the end of the year." His emphatic reply: "Don't say that! Trust me, that's not something you ever want to even think, because you don't know that."

He was right. When you look back on the headwinds our commodities have faced over the last 3-4 years, it's hard to imagine we are not on an improving trend. Drought, high interest rates, supply chain failures, collapsing commodity prices, bankruptcies, massive new regulatory implementations and land price depreciation are some of the major headwinds that have slowly started to blow less. While there are always uncertainties

on the horizon – such as immigration, trade and continuing cost inflation – overall, I believe the future is getting better than the present.

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE

As a nursery supplier, I am confident that we are going to do better in the future. We have undergone numerous changes in my years leading Sierra Gold, and more improvements will come. Every year, the core team builds their professional leadership capacities and becomes more focused on producing the highest quality trees and providing the best service to growers. The results show. While touring a customer around the nursery last fall, I thought, "Overall, this is best crop of trees I have ever seen in my years here." The optimist in me hopes that I feel that way every fall for the rest of my career.

NEW PRODUCTS

I am thrilled about all of the exciting new products we have or will soon be able to



offer. Our continued long-term investment in our breeding program and our long-term mission to add high-quality, thoroughly-tested varieties and rootstocks that add real value to growers is just beginning.

From our team to yours, let's make the best of the future together.

Happy farming!

selections, we have been the most impressed with Ivanhoe and Wolfskill. Solano has struggled with quality issues, averaging around 65% light year over year. Durham has proven fine quality wise, but has struggled to match Chandler on yield, and has not come close to the production numbers we've seen on Wolfskill or Howard.

IVANHOE RESULTS

While we only farm 5 acres, on clonal rootstocks in an orchard not highly managed for blight, it pays the bills! We have been getting phenomenal yields, color and quality on it. Last year, our handler paid a slight premium, and the edible yield was 59%. Only 5 acres' worth, but it still has been interesting to observe.

WOLFSKILL RESULTS

This variety appears to be the real McCoy. We have established it in three blocks and it has proven to be a consistent performer. It appears to be a viable Howard replacement, or at the least, a good complement to it. The color appears to be on par or better with Howard on average, with 2%-3% higher edible yields, and yields which are also comparable to Howard, and a definite improvement on Chandler. In 2022, when most other

varieties suffered serious quality issues, Wolfskill was notably untouched, potentially showing improved tolerance to the detrimental effects of high temperatures and sunburn.

PISTACHIO ROOTSTOCKS

It pays to have a premium clone, and bigger is better. In our initial 10-acre trial orchard, Platinum clonal rootstocks outyielded seedling rootstocks and standard clones by 10%-20% and were far more uniform and consistent throughout the orchard. In economic terms, the extra cost of planting a clonal rootstock vs. a slightly cheaper seeded rootstock is offset after just the first harvest. We are eager to watch this trial progress as the orchard reaches a fully productive age.

We are also eager to watch how our second 10-acre trial will perform as it comes into bearing. There are over a dozen different rootstocks in this new trial, and we are already seeing some interesting and significant differences.

ALMOND EVALUATIONS

We are just in our infancy in the almond farming business, with about 20 acres in the ground (all are six years or younger). These acreages all have an experimental

component; in each of these orchards we are evaluating new rootstocks and varieties.

On the variety side, we are looking at new self-fertile options from our own breeding program and how they compare vs. other self-fertile varieties from the industry. The new self-fertile variety Earlybird® is featured in some of these blocks and has performed exceptionally well compared to other varieties in the block. There are a few other new options that are catching our eye as well, and we will continue to share that information with you as data rolls in each year.

We have also planted a small almond rootstock trial that compares the performance of different plum-based hybrid rootstocks. This orchard features our latest rootstock released from our breeding program – Magnus™ – and in this young trial we are already starting to see its outstanding vigor and exceptional anchorage vs. other rootstock selections in the block.

Interested in seeing these trials firsthand? Contact your field rep (page 6) to schedule a tour.

PISTACHIOS

Excellent Results with Yankee Rootstock

Two seasons ago, Sierra Gold released a new clonal pistachio rootstock, known commercially as Yankee™. This rootstock is a selection of a very vigorous UCB-1 seedling, and to date has shown excellent results in multiple orchard locations. We have evaluated Yankee through traditional field evaluations and also with a more modern, genetics-based approach. In all evaluations, Yankee performed exceedingly well.

With our new rootstocks and varieties, growers often ask the question, “How confident is Sierra Gold in this new variety?” In this case, we are very confident in Yankee, even with just a few seasons of evaluation.

Orchard observations so far indicate that Yankee is a more vigorous clone than those such as Platinum and our old clonal UCB-1 selection, a popular rootstock that has been planted for over a decade. Yankee has also demonstrated higher vigor than the average seedling UCB-1 rootstock. It not

only exhibits larger tree caliper, but uniform growth across the orchard, unlike the seedling populations that display a wide range of different tree sizes, likely due to the genetic diversity inherent in seedling populations. Excellent graft compatibility with Golden Hills and Lost Hills has been observed, and bud takes in the orchard have consistently produced uniform results.

What makes the release of Yankee even more unique has been the genetic evaluation of the clone. The University of California recently conducted research that led to the discovery of a few genetic markers that can be closely associated with how a pistachio tree may perform. Tree vigor, salt tolerance and yield are all different traits where strong evidence indicates these traits can be controlled by the presence of certain genes. We then took a deep dive into the genome of Yankee to see which of these genes it contained, and to our surprise, it was a match for all the desired traits.



While Yankee has only been grown in an orchard setting for just a few years, there are positive indications that the rootstock will perform well. Utilizing novel genetics breeding tools, there is hope that this rootstock could potentially achieve much more.



For more information, scan QR code or visit sgtrees.com/pistachio-rootstocks

ROOTSTOCK

Upgrade Your Plum Hybrid to Magnus

The product of innumerable pollinations and extensive selection, Sierra Gold is proud to bring Magnus™ plum x peach hybrid rootstock to the fruit and nut tree industry.

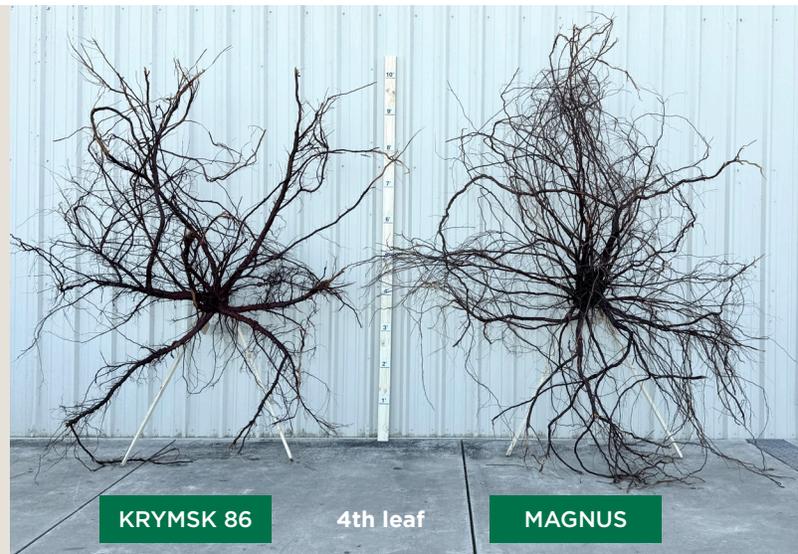
Growing with as much as 25% or more vigor than Krymsk® 86, the recently-patented Magnus brings growers a new option for wetter soils, where a plum hybrid root is preferred and Krymsk 86 was the previous rootstock of choice.

Orchard tree anchorage is particularly important during strong winds and wet weather. Testing has shown Magnus rootstock to have very high root strength and incredible tree anchorage.

Multi-year testing with various almond varieties indicates broad graft compatibility for Magnus. It has shown excellent growth with Nonpareil, Monterey, Independence, Shasta, Yorizane and many experimental self-fertile almond varieties. Stonefruit varieties – such as peach, fresh plum, prune and apricot – also appear to be fully compatible.

In addition to higher tree vigor, another advantage of Magnus is resistance to root knot nematodes, a characteristic lacking in Krymsk 86.

Several years of container-plant testing demonstrates Magnus exhibits increased tolerance to moderate levels of toxic boron and chloride compared to Krymsk 86. We are continuing to test and have planted Magnus in a few field settings where such challenges are present.



Armillaria root rot (oak root fungus) resistance is still unknown and is the focus of long-term ongoing tests with Magnus at locations where the pathogen is known to be endemic.

Several commercial-sized plantings have been established. Magnus rootstock can be observed at numerous Northern California almond and prune test locations in grower orchards. Contact your field rep for more information or if you would like to visit our trial orchards.



To download the Magnus technical bulletin, scan QR code or visit sgtrees.com/almond-rootstocks

SIERRA GOLD PLANTINGS



Nonpareil and Monterey on Bright's Hybrid® 5 (Tulare County)



Nonpareil and Monterey on Hansen 536 (Fresno County)



Pistachios on FRP Clonal UCB-1 (Kings County)



Almonds on SG1® Titan (Yolo County)

ON-SITE TISSUE CULTURE LAB: At Sierra Gold, we have a rootstock propagation facility utilizing modern tissue culture techniques to clone today's top selections of highly sought-after rootstocks. We grow over 50 different fruit and nut cultivars. After the sterile environment of the lab, plants are moved into temperature-controlled acclimatization tunnels, where high humidity and bottom heat help the young plants begin rooting. All of the rootstocks are ex-vitro rooted in Ellepots® to ensure superior root architecture.





Olives / Arbosana w. Arbequina pollenizer (Colusa County)



Olives / Arbosana w. Arbequina pollenizer (Colusa County)



Cherries on Gisela® 12 (Washington)



Cherries on Gisela® 12 (Washington)



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PAUL SMITH / NORTHERN SACRAMENTO VALLEY

The Northern California tree nut market in 2025 presented a mixed but generally optimistic outlook after a challenging few years, mainly due to lower crop prices on top of continued cost increases. The 2025 almond crop looks to be robust, driven by a slight increase in bearing acreage and higher yields. However, there is variability in yield and quality by region and variety, with some areas in the Sacramento Valley and the Nonpareil variety showing lighter flower sets due to weather conditions. In contrast, the walnut market is positioned for a strong year, with an 18% production increase forecasted and low carry-in inventory from the previous season, which has led to higher prices and a positive outlook for growers. The prune market is experiencing a tighter supply window from the 2025 crop due to a smaller-than-average crop of 65,000 short tons, but fruit quality remains high, allowing the California Prune Board to reinforce its “premium” positioning in global markets. Technological advancements are playing a key role in grower strategy, particularly the increased adoption of self-fertile almond varieties like Earlybird® and the new USDA-released Yorizane. These varieties reduce reliance on honey bee pollination and allow for more efficient, single-variety orchard management and one-pass harvests. Paired with our SG1® Titan or new Magnus™ rootstock, a bright future awaits the almond industry.

BOB FURMIDGE / SOUTHERN SACRAMENTO VALLEY

Fall 2025 was a busy season with a lot of growers taking advantage of the benefits of planting during that time frame. I often get the question, “If I missed fall, should I just wait until spring to plant?” The answer is no. If your ground is ready and

your irrigation system is in place, in the ground is the best place for your trees (even in the winter). You won’t get the full benefit of fall planting, but you will still be ahead versus waiting until spring. At this time, we are also thinking about next season because we will be budding soon. Demand is picking up, so this is an ideal time to reserve your tree needs for next year in order to ensure availability. It’s especially important if you want trees on our SG1 Titan rootstock, which is always the first to sell out. There is a lot of interest in self-fertile varieties; we grow several, including the newly-released Earlybird, so call me if you have questions or would like to come to the nursery to look at our test blocks.

RANDY FASANI / CENTRAL VALLEY

I serve a region (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced and Madera counties) that is experiencing steady growth across key tree crops. Almond tree sales have been consistent with an upward trend as the industry strengthens with higher returns back to growers. Our new self-fertile Earlybird variety has been growing in popularity as more orchards are getting planted throughout the valley. Hybrid rootstocks such as SG1 Titan and Bright’s Hybrid® 5 continue to perform extremely well. Cherry tree demand from Sierra Gold is outstanding year after year. We have a great working relationship with almost all the major packing houses. Blackpearl demand has quickly increased. Also, Maxima and Krymsk 5 rootstocks are now widely requested in addition to the standards of Colt, Mazzard and Mahaleb rootstocks. Walnut tree demand has picked up. Most requests are for the clonal RX1 rootstock. Also, the Wolfskill variety is gaining attention throughout the industry. Lastly, pistachio tree sales have slowed, but new orchards are still being planted,

usually using clonal rootstocks such as Platinum and Yankee. Orchards on seeded rootstocks are becoming less and less common as growers are seeing increased uniformity and yields from the aforementioned clonal rootstocks.

JOSH BERGMAN AND MATTHEW HADDON / SOUTH VALLEY

Almond prices have remained steady for some time at about a dollar more than many of the months in 2022–2024. Greater prices are still needed for overall industry profitability and grower recovery after some truly difficult years, but it has helped slow the bleeding for many and the sentiment has become cautiously optimistic. This has motivated a slight increase in the number of trees ordered for early 2026 as well as a few for fall 2026. In spite of that slight increase, the overall industry picture is still net negative on acres. The pistachio pricing overall continues to produce greater net profits back to the grower than almonds and yet the planting is still relatively slow. Many growers report that they are still wondering if the marketing efforts will be able to keep up with all the non-bearing acres once they’re in production. Furthermore, water restrictions are no small amount of the overall reluctance to plant permanent crops in general at the present time. The nursery has availability of almond and pistachio trees at the present time of good quality and quantity. The overall risk assessment of planting today feels turned up quite a bit from just 5–7 years ago, while at the same time we believe it’s safe to say that the challenges we face as California growers are still hurdles that are likely less than the other global regions that try to grow the same crops.

Maintaining Quality Control and Improving Best Growing Practices

The need to be as efficient as possible has become a necessity to stay in business. Inevitably, that means many have tried to cut corners to make ends meet. At Sierra Gold, we feel that temptation as well, but we remain steadfast in our mission to grow top-notch, strong nursery trees in an honest and fair fashion.

As we go through periods when we need to tighten our belts to keep our farming operations functional, hard decisions must be made. That reality is the cold hard truth, and at times even we have stubbed our toes trying to strike the right balance. Those experiences have guided us to where we are today and strengthened our sentiments on how we can best endeavor to grow premium nursery stock for our growers. Following are a few examples of how we put this guiding philosophy into action.

STRICT SOURCING OF NURSERY PROPAGATION MATERIAL

The first step in providing high-end nursery stock is through the quality of the source material we use. Whenever possible, we will start with material that comes from a National Clean Plant Center. This means we can have mother stock trees that are started from a source that is virus free and true-to-type. When sourcing that material isn't possible, and this is often the case with the release of a new variety, we will do our testing in-house to confirm whether any outside sourced material may be a host to any virus. We do not tolerate material with harmful viruses and will turn down an order if we can't verify the source material is clean enough.

COMMITMENT TO BEST GROWING PRACTICES

Admittedly, this headline is a very broad statement, but it's an approach that we apply to every step of our tree manufacturing processes. What does this mean to the end user? Simply put, it means we will continue to give each tree the care, inputs and attention it requires. Whether it's buying new equipment that allows us to more efficiently get the job done or investing in a soil-mixing line so we can better control the quality of our soilless potting mix, we are constantly looking at different options to help us improve. While we may not be able to avoid making some sacrifices, we also know that some corners just can't be cut to still maintain excellent product quality.

Our commitment to best growing practices has been demonstrated by continued use of the Ellepot® system for nearly 100% of the containerized trees we grow. There are many other ways a containerized fruit and nut tree can be grown, but not many other container systems match the performance that we have grown accustomed to with the Ellepot. When combining the qualities of the Ellepot with the custom design of the Proptek trays we grow them in, we can consistently deliver a containerized tree that will be free of circling or otherwise compromised root systems.

In the same vein, we have spent a lot of time and energy evaluating what the exact volumetric needs are for all of our different product lines, and while it's tempting sometimes to do something like cut the volume by 25% to save a little on inputs, if we see it has a significant impact on what the end product looks like, it just can't be a road we start to go down.

INVESTMENT IN AUTOMATION

Sierra Gold's investment in automation is a direct response to decreasing labor availability and rising labor costs across the agricultural industry, coupled with our commitment to continue delivering consistent, high-quality nursery trees. Rather than pursuing automation as a shortcut, we apply it selectively to strengthen reliability, predictability and worker safety, while maintaining the standards our orchard customers expect.

Efficiency at Sierra Gold is achieved through a combination of workstation design, careful scheduling and pre-planning, mechanization and targeted automation. Soil production, pot filling, transplanting, hedging and material handling have been mechanized to reduce variability in routine production steps. Recent additions – including DaRos transplanters and two Lommers mechanized greenhouse hedging machines – improve output, decrease plant stress and optimize consistency for downstream potting-up crews by addressing bottlenecks across entire production lines rather than isolated tasks.

Importantly, these investments extend well beyond the purchase of equipment. Significant resources have been dedicated to reorganizing potting-up and shipping lines, increasing drill horsepower where needed, redesigning site flow and



Freshly budded almond trees in Ellepots.



Sierra Gold Nurseries

emphasizing clear separation between autonomous vehicles and workers for safety. The construction of a new headhouse supports efficient movement of plants into and out of the greenhouse and enables seamless integration of automated systems into daily operations.

A recent example is the deployment of a fleet of autonomous Burros to assist with the transport of larger containers. The Burros are not about replacing people, but about strengthening one of the most critical and underacknowledged aspects of nursery work – transportation – by extending the benefits of conveyor systems into the yard. At the same time, essential craft-based processes – such as budding and tissue culture – remain firmly in the hands of skilled employees. Taken together, these investments allow Sierra Gold to scale responsibly, support its workforce and maintain consistent quality under evolving labor conditions.



SIERRA GOLD NURSERIES

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CLEAN MATERIAL

Citrus Program in Full Swing

A few years ago, Sierra Gold decided to restart its citrus program, a crop that historically has been a significant segment in the nursery lineup. Starting a program essentially from scratch is no small feat, but we are slowly finding our footing navigating a very complex and sophisticated regulatory environment. Although admittedly challenging, that complexity is what allows us to differentiate our citrus program from others in the state.

The very strict and detailed nursery guidelines that are closely managed by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) require a nursery setting that can ensure trees will remain free of injurious pests and diseases. Our attentive staff works constantly with CDFA and county employees to ensure compliance and make sure our product is inspected, treated and appropriately labeled as needed prior to delivery. All of our trees are grown with virus-indexed material exclusively sourced from the California Citrus Plan Program in Riverside, Calif. Due to our location in Sutter County, a quarantine-free county where neither citrus greening nor Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) has been found to date, we can give growers an extra layer of comfort about sourcing the cleanest material possible.

Now that we are into our third year of producing citrus nursery stock, we have been slowly expanding our offerings. We offer trees on Carrizo rootstock as well as Rich 16-6, a very popular trifoliolate rootstock.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CITRUS SELECTIONS

Contact our sales team or scan QR code.



CONTRACTING FOR TREES IN THE FUTURE

If a variety isn't listed in our current catalog, let us know and we will help.



Learn more about our products at sgtrees.com



Follow us on Instagram at [sierra_gold_nurseries](https://www.instagram.com/sierra_gold_nurseries)

PHOTO-WORTHY ORCHARD? If you have an orchard with Sierra Gold trees, let us know. We'll send our photographer to take photos to share on social media or in publications.