

# Harvest of the Month



Network for a Healthy California

Harvest of the Month is sponsored by



7100 students in Western Nevada County will sample **Murcott Mandarins** this month through Sierra Harvest's Farm to School Program!



## Healthy Serving Tips:

- Pack in school lunches
- Add to smoothies
- Add to salads, or fruit salads
- Layer mandarin sections with yogurt, kiwis and frozen berries in a dessert glass for a delicious parfait

# Murcotts



## Murcott Spinach Salad

Serves: 4      Prep time: 5 min

4 murcott mandarins, peeled and divided into sections  
4 cups baby spinach leaves  
½ cup dried cranberries or raisins  
¼ cup thinly-sliced red or green onion  
4 oz crumbled feta or goat cheese  
½ cup chopped toasted walnuts or almonds

### Dressing:

1/2 cup sunflower oil  
2 murcott mandarins, peeled  
1Tbsp apple cider vinegar  
½ tsp salt  
Combine in blender, or juice mandarins and whisk together.

*Recipe by Marisha Finkler*

Sweet and juicy murcott mandarins for Harvest of the month come from *Wild River Marketing, Inc.*, a CCOF-certified grower-marketer of California-grown fresh fruit. The *Wild River* name was inspired by their farm's location alongside the Yuba River and their commitment to organic and sustainable farming practices.

Wild River's orchards thrive, naturally nourished by the fertile topsoil deposited by the river's flood cycle. The Nolan family has farmed their land for over five decades. Their products include seasonally-available murcott and satsuma mandarins, plums and pluots, green kiwifruit and tropikiwi (gold kiwifruit).

[wildriverfruit.com](http://wildriverfruit.com)



If your student is eligible for free/reduced school meals, you likely qualify for CalFresh, which can help you afford healthy and nutritious food:

[C4Yourself.com](http://C4Yourself.com)



# Murcott Fun Facts



## *For all ages:*

- Mandarins are related to oranges, lemons, limes, kumquats and grapefruit.
- Murcott mandarins, also called “Honey tangerines”, are a hybrid of mandarin and sweet orange plants.
- In California, mandarin varieties ripen at different times: Satsuma mandarins ripen November-January, Clementine mandarins December-January, and Murcotts and other varieties February-April.
- Dried mandarin peel is used in Traditional Chinese medicine.
- Mandarin plants, like other citrus, are large shrubs or small trees with shiny, evergreen leaves and fragrant blossoms. They usually have thorns.
- Most mandarin trees are damaged by extended freezing temperatures, and thrive in warmer climates.
- During Chinese New Year, mandarins are considered symbols of abundance and good fortune.

## *For older students:*

### History:

- Mandarin trees are thought to have evolved in Vietnam, south China, and Japan. Wild mandarins are still found there.
- Mandarins are now grown in China (leading world producer), India, Japan, tropical and central Asia, Europe, North and South America, and north Africa.
- Murcotts were developed in Florida in 1913 by cross-pollinating a king tangelo with other citrus varieties.

### Science:

- The mandarin tree’s scientific name is *Citrus reticulata*. It is part of the Rutaceae family, of which *Citrus* is a genus.
- What’s the difference between mandarins and tangerines? Though tangerines were originally classified as a separate species, *Citrus tangerina*, genetic studies show that tangerines are actually just a grouping of several distinct mandarin hybrids.
- Many different citrus varieties have been developed by hand-pollinating the flowers of one variety with pollen from another type of citrus to produce a new hybrid. Cross-pollination can also occur naturally by wind or bees, and only produces viable seeds if the parent species are closely related. This is different than genetic engineering, where genes from other organisms that would not naturally cross (such as animal or bacteria genes inserted into plants) are injected into the genome of a species to create a genetically modified organism (GMO).

### Nutrition:

- Murcott mandarins are an excellent source of vitamin C. and a good source of vitamin A.
- Our bodies do not make or store vitamin C, so eating fruits and vegetables that are sources of vitamin C is recommended every day.