

Drought-stressed trees producing better fruit

By Sasha Khokha, KQED-TV

California's severe drought is putting stress on everyone these days: the residents whose wells are running dry; the farmers forced to experiment with growing their produce with much less water; and of course, the thirsty fruits and vegetables themselves.

But preliminary research suggests the dryness isn't hurting the produce's nutritional value, and with a few added minerals may even boost it.

That's the tantalizing concept Tiziana Centofanti has been studying at the U.S. Department of Agriculture lab in Parlier, a sprawling campus of experimental farmland about half an hour south of Fresno.

Centofanti is a research scientist affiliated with the Center for Irrigation Technology at Fresno State. One of the questions she's asking is how fruit trees react to drought, compared to fruit from trees that get plenty of water.

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