

Freezes Damage Florida Crops, 1957-1958

Fact Sheet

Event date: Winter of 1957-1958
Event Severity: Tampa, FL 27°F

Event Severity: Brooksville, FL 22°F
Crop Loss: ~ \$5.0 Million



Despite embargo imposed on all fresh fruit shipments by Florida Citrus Commission, picking of affected fruit continued in hope concentrate would meet final specifications.

The Christmas strawberry crop at Plant City was frozen hard and other truck crops here were wiped out. At Ruskin a thousand acres of tomatoes had the appearance of being burned.

Officials Say Cold Weather To Cost Growers Millions: No Relief in Sight

Relief Comes After Two Days of Unusual Cold, but Truck Farmers and Orange Growers Have Extensive Losses

Florida Crop Damage in Freeze Is Described as 'Major Disaster'
Freezes Plague Perishable Produce

Station	Number	32° & Below Hrs. Times		28° & Below Hrs. Times		22° & Below Hrs. Times		Lowest & Date
Brooksville	1939-40	108	16	48	7	10	3	18° 1/28
	1957-58	163	19	61	10	2	2	22° 12/13

Florida's Third Freeze of Winter Severely Damages Vegetable Crops

Figure 1. Newspaper headlines indicating severe crop damage.

Summary of event:

Florida experienced disastrously cold temperatures during the winter of 1957-1958. Temperatures dropped below 20°F in many locations across Florida, with official temperature readings in Lakeland, FL of 25°F and Tampa, FL with 27°F. An arctic high centered itself over Florida several times throughout the winter season, bringing light winds, calm skies, and freezing temperatures to the state. The Florida citrus crop experienced severe damage estimated at greater than \$5 Million (New York Times, 1958).

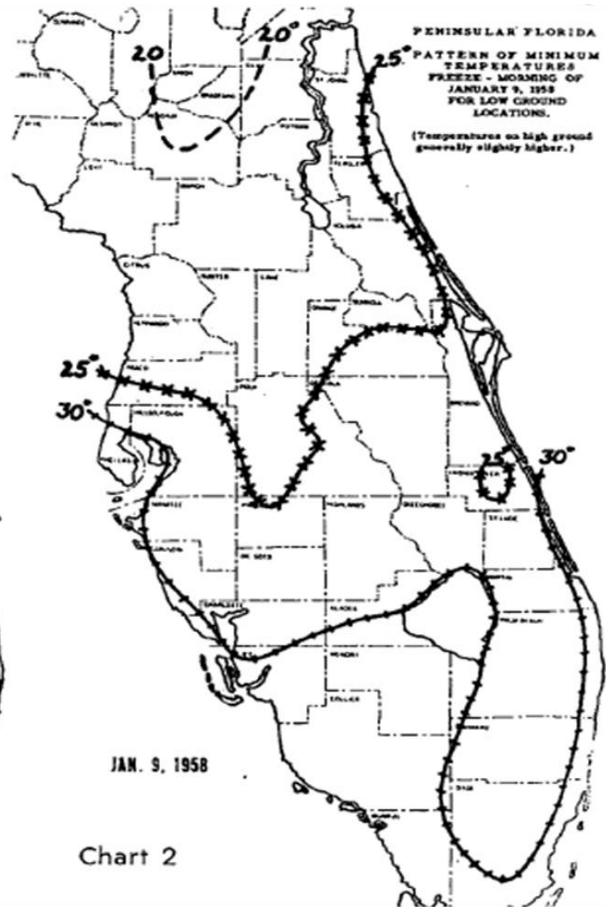
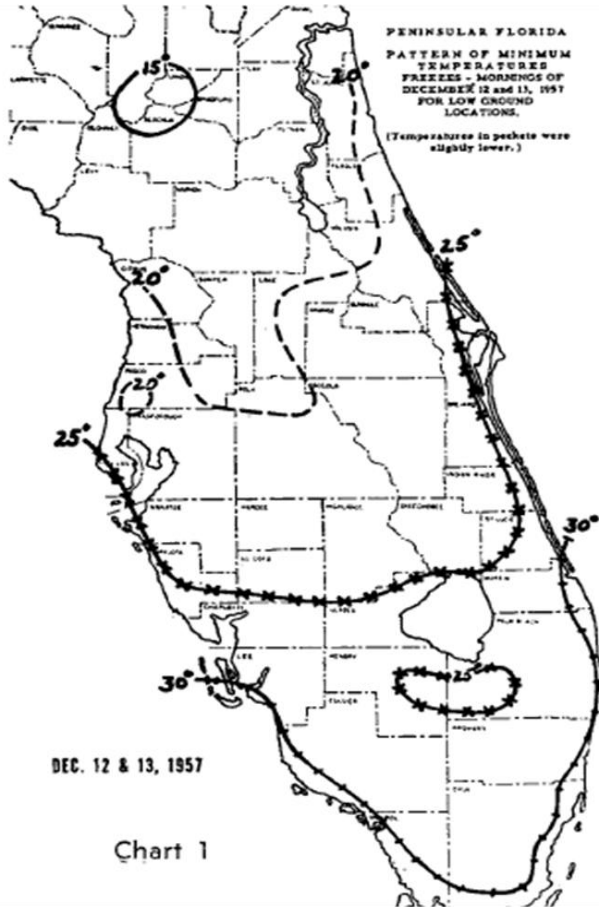


Figure 2. Patterns for minimum temperature readings, December 1957, and January 1958.

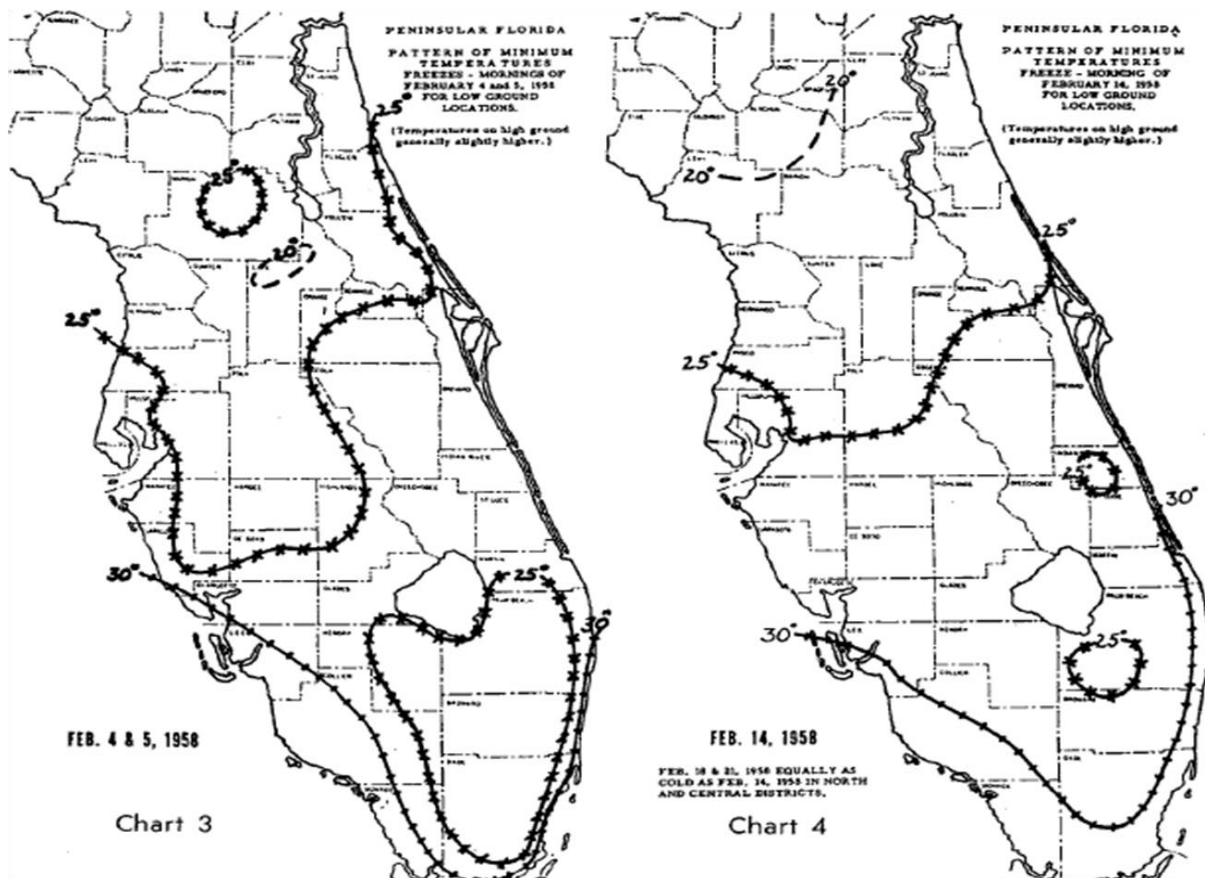


Figure 3. Patterns for minimum temperature readings, February 1958.

Links for more information:

http://www.sercc.com/climateinfo/historical/historical_fl.html,

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tbw/TampaBayOriginalClimatePage.htm>.

Acknowledgments: The New York Times (1957 and 1958), The Wall Street Journal (1957 and 1958), and Florida Freezes of 1957-58 by Warren Johnson for the Florida State Horticultural Society, 1958.