

ZeaNews

Z e a f r u i t C o m p a n y L i m i t e d

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THE RUMOURS ARE TRUE!!!! Alcom Packhouse is ready to roll

Last minute fine tuning to the machinery and the staff placement, she's all go, go, go.

Congratulations to Alan, Suzie, Kynn and the rest of staff who have been working hard out since January to get the new premises up and running.

It shows their commitment to providing Northland growers a viable, transparent alternative for the processing of their fruit, Zeafruit sentiments to the core or should that be the pith? (pg5)



Picture above: Carolyn and Alan outside new facility

The Technical Side

Keith Pyle

Citrus Rootstocks

This month I thought I would talk about rootstocks. Rootstocks have a major influence on many aspects of tree performance but mainly tree health, tree size and production, fruit quality, fruit size, maturity and ability to perform under different soil conditions. Most commercial citrus grown in New Zealand are on rootstocks. The exception is Meyer lemons which can be grown successfully on their own roots from cuttings, but cutting grown lemons should only be grown on very well drained soils such as Bay of Plenty ash, because cuttings are very susceptible to phytophthora root rot. In the nursery the first step is to grow seedlings from good seed sources, preferably imported and free of the virus disease psorosis. Resultant seedlings can vary a lot with many off types and a good nurseryman will cull out off types and select for uniformity continuously. Seedlings are budded with the desired variety (the scion) when they are about pencil thick. The budding height is important and should be at least 10 cm above soil level. The bud union is easily seen. One of the most common problems seen in orchards is planting trees too low. Burying the bud union defeats the purpose of having a rootstock and as all scion varieties are very susceptible to phytophthora, these trees are likely to succumb or remain stunted.

The decision on which rootstock to use can have a long term effect on the profitability of an orchard. Care in selecting the best rootstock for the conditions is needed. Traditionally trees in New Zealand have been grown on trifoliolate rootstock which is a citrus relative - *Poncirus trifoliata* or Japanese bitter orange. This is a separate genus to other *Citrus spp.* in the family Rutaceae. There are still good arguments for

continuing to use this rootstock, not least of which is that we know what we are dealing with. What makes it unique is that it is very tolerant of wet conditions that cause phytophthora.

It induces high fruit quality in terms of sugar content, but tends to also induce high acid. It is also renown for inducing some varieties to produce small fruit size. Another reason for its success in NZ is that it induces cold tolerance to the scion. The tree size of trees grown on trifoliolate depends on the vigour of the scion. Lemons and navels produced on trifoliolate are moderate in size, NZ grapefruit and Encore mandarins are large while most Satsuma are small. There are different varieties of trifoliolate. The most common imports have been the Rubidoux, Pomeroy (large flowered variety that produces larger trees than Rubidoux according to US literature) Rich 16-6 and Australian trifoliolate selections. Flying Dragon rootstock is a dwarfing selection (*P.trifoliata* var. *monstrosa*) that produces very small trees suitable for small gardens but also for producing small trees of the vigorous Encore and NZ grapefruit. It generally produces very small trees with low vigour, yields and fruit size with other scions. All trifoliolate selections and their hybrids (see below) are very susceptible to the virus exocortis and it is imperative that growers check that their nursery trees are produced from budwood that has been indexed and found to be clear of exocortis. (see NZCGI newsletter No 20 December 2006 for more detail)

Trifoliolate has been crossed with sweet orange to attempt to get more vigorous trees which can produce better fruit size, tree growth rates, yields and lower acid. These crosses or hybrids are called citranges and there are many. The C35 citrange has been widely used in NZ for Satsumas and Navels in recent years and we are still learning about this rootstocks under commercial conditions. The Benton

citrange has been shown to give better fruit size with Yenben lemons. The tree size with Benton is about 20- 30% larger than on trifoliolate. Planting in wider row spacing's is important and under Bay of Plenty conditions pruning costs are going to be much higher. Indications are that fruit loading should be much higher than on trifoliolate especially with Satsumas on C35 – hand thinning costs can be reduced as a result.

Sour orange is recommended only for true lemons as it is very susceptible to tristeza and lemons are symptomless carriers of

tristeza. Sour orange produces a YenBen tree that is not as large as Benton and as a result more easily managed on good soils. The seedlings should be propagated in an insect free greenhouse prior to budding with lemon to avoid tristeza infection.

Sweet orange is another rootstock that can be used for lemons but it is very susceptible to phytophthora and if used should be planted in very well drained soils and preferably on ridges.

The ideal rootstock is likely to vary with the type of soil, its depth and previous use.

Scoring System unless otherwise stated: 1 best of rootstocks listed:
5 worst of rootstocks listed

ATTRIBUTE	ROOTSTOCK				
	Trifoliolate	C35	Benton	Sour or-	Sweet orange
Vigour –tree size	2	4	5	4	4
Yield per tree	Very dependent on scion used and rootstock trials should be looked at				
Yield efficiency					
Exocortis virus tolerance	5 use clean buds	4 use clean buds	4 use clean buds	1	1
Tristeza virus tolerance	1 – resistant breaking tristeza strain has been recorded	1-2	1-2	5 (lemons are symptomless)	1-2
Phytophthora tol.	1	2	2?	2	5 Major limitation
Sudden Death toler-	5	4	4	1	1
Nematode tol.	2	3	3?	4?	4
Compatibility with different varieties	Yenben OK. Not for other lemons. Meyer tree and fruit size small. Rest are good	Not for lemons. Good for satsumas and oranges.	Best for lemons and navels but produces very large tree	Only use for lemons due to tristeza. Rootstock suckers must be avoided	Wide range, but fallen into disuse due to phytophthora
Cold tolerance	1	2	2	1	3
Impact on Fruit size	3 (Small)	1	1	2	2
Impact on Brix	Excellent	V Good	V Good	V Good	V Good
Impact on Acid	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Soil Conditions	Heavy soils ok. Sandy infertile high calcium or saline soils give poor results	Similar to trifoliolate	Similar to trifoliolate	Heavy ok. Good on calcareous soils	Not on heavy waterlogged soils. Should be planted on ridges
Soil Chemistry	Not on saline, high chlorine or boron soils.	Salt sensitive, similar to trifoliolate	Salt sensitive, similar to trifoliolate		

The type and variety of citrus to be grown is sometimes an important factor in deciding which rootstock will give the best performance. Hence all the characteristics listed should be considered although some are more important than others. Information on rootstock trials that have been carried out by HortResearch/NZCGI is available from NZCGI and should be carefully considered before planting a citrus orchard. Compared to other citrus growing countries the choice in NZ is fairly limited.



The main characteristics of the various rootstocks are shown below, but this is not an exhaustive list and decisions need to be based on the variety under consideration, rootstock trials and local experience. The table is my own interpretation based on local and international sources.

New Pack House & New Services From Alcom

Alcom enters its third season with significantly more grading capacity and a grading line designed to maximise grower pack outs.

The company has developed a site at 532 Kapiro Rd with the facility now incorporating three separate cool rooms, six parallel main grade tables, and three dedicated export grade tables.

This grading configuration is unique within the NZ citrus industry. The process can involve fruit going through three separate grade processes before packing. Fruit is firstly graded to local market Tag 1 & 2 standards. When fruit is also destined for export markets, the Tag 1 fruit is then NIR electronically graded. This is to select fruit holding sufficient sugar level for export markets. Only this export potential fruit is then moved over the three export tables for a final export blemish grade. Any fruit not making the export standards is redirected back to local market Tag 1. markets, the Tag 1 fruit is then NIR electronically graded. This is to select fruit holding sufficient sugar level for export markets. Only this export potential fruit is then moved over the three export tables for a final export blemish grade. Any fruit not making the export standards is redirected back to local market Tag 1.



Manager of Alcom Alan Kerr says "most citrus pack houses attempt to grade export out of a single grade process. This tends increase the amount of fruit being graded to tag 2 as fruit left on the table has to be able to satisfy both local and export blemish standards. We've found that by using this stepped grade process we don't risk grading out good local market fruit due to it not quite making export grade. When we come to the export grade process our graders only have to make a decision between export and tag 1 grades. The result is very accurate grading."

Complementing the pack house operation, Alcom now provides in orchard services such as picking, pruning, spraying etc. Alan – "Most of the current orchard contract work is done under the guidance of Zeafruit technical staff. I'm finding this a good match as the grower and Zeafruit make the decisions on how and what needs to be done, and our staff then undertake the work."

(continued from front page)

Situated at 532 Kapiro Rd, the new premises, give Kerry Farrands old kiwifruit packhouse a new lease of life. The ideal premise also lends itself to increased expansion as Alcom builds on its already substantial grower base. After two seasons under their belt, and challenging ones at that, Alcom are poised to build on knowledge gained to the benefit of their growers.

To cement the excellent relationship Alcom has forged with Zeafruit Company Ltd, Zeafruit have also set up shop at Alcom's new premises.

Carolyn can now be contacted on 09 4078495 or, as usual, on her mobile 021 472 708.

Zeafruit continue to strive to offer Northland growers the best possible returns for their produce and the most up to date technical information available through our contacts both in New Zealand and overseas.

Together Alcom and Zeafruit will continue to provide the best they can to Northland growers.

It's April already! Happy Easter from us at Charlie's to you at Zeafruit!

Easter for many, brings to the fore front of our minds the topics of Chocolate and Hot Cross Buns, not to mention the Easter Bunny.

Well given that we at Charlie's are dab hands at passing on to you the most useful of dinner party trivia, we thought that we would enlighten you about the Easter Bunny and how this furry little creature actually determines the date that Easter falls on.



Within Christian observances, Rabbits are a symbol of the fertility of springtime (in the Northern Hemisphere). They are also the symbol of the Egyptian moon - and the moon is used to determine the date of Easter each year. (<http://www.creativechocolates.com/easter.html>) See you really do learn something new everyday!

So Happy Easter to you all, and remember it is a myth that chocolate gives you pimples!

Check out the Zeafruit website for back issues of Zeanews

www.zeafruit.co.nz

Northland Report

Autumn is trying its hardest to make an appearance, but the warm, humid conditions of summer are proving hard to shake.

Colour change to the **Satsuma's** is slowly taking place, unfortunately 2 weeks later than last year.

The last predication to when picking will take place is the 1st of May. Pest monitoring has finished for this variety of citrus. Most growers only had greenhouse thrips to deal with this season, although black scale caused problems in the Far North.

The **clementine** crop seems to be in an on year. Lots of thinning needed to produce a marketable crop for this season. Greenhouse thrips have made their presence felt in this crop too.

Navels are sizing nicely and growers should be still monitoring for thrips and any late scale movement. Those growers who pruned last winter are certainly seeing the benefits with a nice clean crop devoid of the every present Melanose

Richard Specials are sizing now. Most growers have had no major issues towards bugs and diseases yet!! Time for pruning is now.

This advice also applies to **Encore** growers.

To all Satsuma growers, good luck with harvesting. May we not have a repeat to the start of last year with another cyclone called Wattie. (Quickly, touch some wood).

Following on from the front page, the **Zeafuit Co. Ltd.** office now has its new home based at **Alcom** packhouse, 532 Kapiro Rd, Kerikeri. Ph/Fax 09 407 8495, or try Carolyn on her Mob. 021 472 708.

Hope you all manage to have a bit of a break over Easter,

Carolyn Price, Northland Region Manager.



Gisborne Report

Grower Documentation

As we all know a **Spray Diary** is a critical part of any **food safety program**. The **responsibility** lies with the **orchardist** to complete. Produce should not be accepted by marketers/packers for packing without a spray diary clearance first. Valid spray diaries are needed to comply with local and export market requirements. **The markets are becoming more vigilant so please for your own and everyone's benefit, submit your spray diary before or with delivery of your fruit.** Thank you to those Grower's for ensuring they send in their up to date diaries, before or with delivery of your fruit for packing. If you need blank forms or have any queries please give Pete or Mo a call.

Encore Mandarins

Well we have come to the end of our **Encore** season and a very BIG THANK YOU for all your support. A great season it was too with a much higher packed volume of fruit this season, congratulations to everyone!!!!!!

Tangelo

We also saw our **Tangelo** season come to an end as well and this season brought about some really good results. Another BIG CHEERS and THANK YOU goes out to all those who supported us.

Valencia

Our Valencia season is still going strong and a lift in price has seen some good demand for our oranges, even with the Cali Navel being the preferred option for the supermarkets.

New Seasons Crops

Limes - Early season fruit was entering the market with such a hiss and a roar as prices went through the roof, however, the strategy worked for some Growers but the result was a sea of Limes and a flooding / oversupply in the market. So balancing supply and demand has be

come very challenging for us all, with pricing becoming volatile. If you have any queries we are more than happy to discuss your requirements with you.

Meyer Lemon season is just around the corner, so if you need any assistance with your crop please give us a call.



Our **Yen Ben** season has started and we have seen some really great lines coming through the shed.

Again, if you need any assistance in the field please do not hesitate to call us.

Satsuma – We have been in the planning stages for some time now for our up and coming **Satsuma** season. A trip to the USA by Juan has reported some very exciting options available to us as we plan not just for 2007 but for the years to come. There is a programmed Grower field day on the 11th of April 2007, so if you would like to know more on **export** see you at the field day.

Our Contacts

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 027 448 4433 - Pete
 021 222 0275 - Juan
 027 230 2247 - Sharon

Best Regards
 Pete, Mo, Sharon & Juan

BOP Report

Hi Growers - hope everyone is gearing up for the new Season ahead. CitiPac is due to start a Spring Clean and Maintenance Programme so we will be ready for the busy season which is just around the corner, A request from us to you, please ensure you have Bin Cards on all Bins with the following information, **Grower name** and **Code**, also the actual pick date not the pickup date, this info helps us with the process order and ensures the fruit is packed within a appropriate time frame, We would also like to extend an invitation to all growers big or small to visit the packhouse and see how the packing Process works.



From the girls at CitiPac, Kathy, Bronwyn & Casey

Zeafuit Pool's 2007/2008	
Date	Payment
1-15 March 2007	2nd April 2007
16-31 March 2007	16th April 2007
1-15 April 2007	1st May 2007
16-30 April 2007	16th May 2007
1-15 May 2007	1st June 2007
16-31 May 2007	18th June 2007
1-15 June 2007	2nd July 2007
16-30 June 2007	16th July 2007





Fruitfed Supplies



ZeaNews

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