

## South Africa: Du Roi Nursery supplies first M7 Navel trees for commercialization

In November last year Mr Greg Chislett, the discoverer, developer and owner of the early ripening M7 Navel orange, travelled from Australia to Schoeman Boerdery (Farms), near Marble Hall in South Africa to witness the first commercial planting of M7 in South Africa. Over the next three years approximately 150 ha of this variety will be planted on Schoeman Boerdery, making them the largest grower of this cultivar in South Africa. All the trees (approximately 125,000) will be supplied by Du Roi Nursery, who are based in Letsitele in the Limpopo province of South Africa.



The M7 was discovered by Mr Greg Chislett in 2004 as a branch mutation in a Navelina orchard on his citrus farm near Kenley in the State of Victoria. The M7 has since been tested and evaluated at a number of sites in Australia, and many of the numerous visitors to these test blocks have touted it as the best early ripening Navel in the world. At the launch, Greg addressed a group of interested farmers from the area and described the main features of the M7 - in comparison to Navelina (Clone 7.5), as follows:

- The fruit shape is round
- Develops external rind colour 3-4 weeks earlier
- Matures internally 2-3 weeks earlier
- Develops high brix values – up to 13°
- Has an extended harvesting period of 3 to 4 months
- Strong and firm rind with no albedo breakdown noted
- A medium to small external navel and small internal navel
- Precocious bearer with good yields and fruit size
- Has shown good compatibility on all rootstocks tested to date

Chislett Developments (Pty) Ltd have appointed Biogold International to manage the commercialisation of the M7 in all citrus producing regions of the world except for the European Union. Citrogold - the sister company of Biogold – has been subcontracted to manage the commercialisation of the M7 in South Africa. Only 1200 hectares of the M7 has been allocated for planting in South Africa over the next 5 years, after which further allocations may be made available. Plant Breeders Rights (PBR's) and a Patent for this cultivar have been granted in Australia and in the USA, respectively, while applications for PBR's have been made in South Africa and a number of other countries.

Greg Chislett who farms with 80 ha of citrus and also has a citrus nursery, is not new to citrus cultivar development and also owns the Chislett late ripening Navel which has been successfully commercialised in numerous citrus growing regions of the world.

After the launch Greg and his wife Sue travelled to Letsitele where they viewed first-hand the propagation of M7 trees at Du Roi Nursery. He expressed his satisfaction and appreciation of the professionalism and high standards being used at the nursery. Du Roi Nursery has been licensed by Citrogold to produce M7 trees (amongst others), for sale to growers in the Northern regions of South Africa.

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