



Auscitrus

SUMMER / AUTUMN
2011

NEWSLETTER

THIS ISSUE

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Important notes:

- Closing date for budwood orders is **Friday 31st December 2010.**
- Last dispatch for 2010 is on **Tuesday 21st December.**
- First dispatch for 2011 is on **Tuesday 11th January.**

SUMMER/AUTUMN 2011 BUDWOOD ORDERS

All budwood orders must be received by 5:00pm on the **31st December, 2010**, for Summer/Autumn 2011 supply. Please ensure you are using the latest order forms and that your contact details are up to date.

Orders received after this date can only be supplied if there are excess buds above on-time orders, and so supply can

not be guaranteed for late orders.

Any shortages will be distributed equally amongst on-time orders.

Any orders outstanding from 2010 will be cancelled and must be re-ordered if still required.

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR PERIOD

As usual Auscitrus will not be dispatching orders over the Christmas/New Year period. This is necessary as there are a number of public holidays that interfere with bud cutting and postage, but also because the close of orders at the end of December requires time to process the orders, determine supply and allocate appropriately, and then actually cut the budwood for dispatch.

As such, the final date for dispatch in 2010 will be Tuesday 21st December, while the first dispatch for 2011 will be Tuesday 11th January.

Note that some varieties are late maturing this year due to a cold start to Spring in Dareton. This may mean dispatch of some varieties may need to be delayed until later in January or even into February. Once orders are compiled all customers will be notified of any shortfalls and delayed delivery dates.

BUDWOOD PRICING

The tiered charging system for buds will be amended from January 2011 onwards. The P1 charge (\$3.00 per bud) will remain for varieties fresh out of quarantine and still in the nursery rapid multiplication phase. Once field trees are established the charge will drop straight to the P3 rate (currently \$0.50 per bud). Previously these varieties were charged at the P2 rate (\$1.25 per bud) for a 10 year period to recoup importation costs. This means a number of varieties will immediately drop to the P3 rate:

Nagami Cumquat Virus free
Cara Cara Navel
Hockney Navel
Avana Apireno
Avana Tardivo
Eureka Allen
Nam Roi Pumello

The newest order forms reflect these price changes.

NURSERY CERTIFICATION SCHEME

The Australian Citrus Propagation Association (ACPA) has finalised the draft of the Citrus Nursery Certification Scheme.

This scheme will provide an avenue for nurseries to prove to their customers that they are using certified citrus propagation material (seed and budwood).

Final details such as logos etc are still to be sorted through, however the scheme will be released as it stands so that interested nurseries can start operating under it's guidelines.

The basis of the scheme is an audited paper trail which can prove that a tree or batch of trees have been propagated using disease tested and true to type propagation material.

If a grower requests certified trees, the nursery will be able to provide a certificate showing those trees were propagated using material from a clean scheme (such as Auscitrus). The grower can check with the scheme administration on the validity of this certificate, but an annual audit will ensure that all users of the scheme are following appropriate proce-

dures. When a logo/name for the scheme is finalized, it will be trademarked, and breaches of trademark law will be investigated and prosecuted where necessary.

The scheme has been designed to be relatively simple to implement in most nurseries. Those nurseries who already keep good records of propagations will most likely be able to meet certification requirements with very little effort. It must be pointed out that the certification scheme will only certify the use of tested propagation material—it does not attempt to regulate other tree quality parameters—this role is already performed very well by the NIASA accreditation scheme.

The scheme is supported in principle by Citrus Australia Ltd, and the NGIA is being involved through contact with NIASA technical people.

A copy of the Nursery Certification Scheme Operators Manual can be downloaded from the Auscitrus website, or contact the ACPA office on 03 5027 4411 and a copy will be mailed out to you.

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NIASA ACCREDITATION

The new Auscitrus nursery complex at Dareton has recently gained accreditation under the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme of Australia (NIASA).

This nursery industry scheme assesses physical and operational aspects of a nursery, and provides a set of standards that must be complied with to ensure healthy plant growth through a high level of quality systems in the nursery operation. This includes items such as water disinfection, physical access control to the nursery, drainage and ground coverings, pest management systems, and staff training.

The nursery complex was built from the

outset with these parameters in mind, as obviously the production of clean budwood depends on clean trees. However, the assessment of the site by a qualified NIASA technical person is invaluable in identifying issues that need to be addressed, as well as keeping in touch with the latest developments in nursery hygiene.

This is just one part of Auscitrus's efforts to raise the levels of biosecurity in its operations. As the new property is further developed the biosecurity will be progressively enhanced—this will benefit the citrus industry and nursery customers alike though the supply of quality assured seed and budwood.



Setting the Standards

NURSERY BIOSECURITY

In keeping with the theme of this newsletter is a reminder of the need for strict bio-security controls within the nursery.

A recent media release on the Myrtle rust outbreak from the Nursery and Garden Industry NSW & ACT highlights the need for stringent control of the plant material entering and leaving your nursery.

According to the update the number of infected sites grew from 1 to 80 in a matter of several months. The update states "It is apparent the pathogen is moved/spread in nurseries by infected plants..." and "I&I NSW have learnt it is people and plants who move Myrtle Rust..."

While Myrtle rust doesn't infect citrus, this is a glaring reminder of the speed with which a pathogen can be spread from nursery to nursery and beyond into the community.

If a disease such as Citrus Greening were to enter the country it could be very rapidly spread in citrus nursery trees, as it will not show any symptoms initially. Many nurseries transport citrus plants across the country, and their trees often end up in retail stores in citrus growing areas (such as the Sunraysia, Riverina or Riverland regions). This is a very real and significant threat to the Australian citrus industry, and it is likely that the industry would be seeking compensation in the event of an outbreak. The Citrus Canker outbreak in Emerald Qld was, luckily for the rest of Australia, contained to that area and eradicated, but this cost millions of dollars and devastated the livelihood of the affected citrus growers.

Citrus greening and canker have seriously damaged the citrus industries in the USA, and nurseries have been forced to spend millions of dollars insect proofing their nurseries. We can become complacent in Australia due to our isolation and relatively clean horticultural industries, but the threat is real and ever present.

There are several things that can be done to protect your nursery from disease:

- **Only used tested propagating material**, such as seed and budwood from Auscitrus.
- **Keep thorough records** of all movements of plants and plant material into and out of the nursery.
- Within the nursery, **keep batches of trees separated** to isolate any possible disease issue.
- **Sterilise all cutting equipment** (secateurs, budding/grafting knives, knives used to cut planter bags) with a 10% solution of liquid swimming pool chlorine (sodium hypochlorite). **No other method or chemical will kill citrus viruses/viroids.** This point is very important and often overlooked.
- **Ensure all nursery staff are trained in biosecurity** methods, and are able to spot anything unusual and report it immediately.
- Follow industry guidelines on general disease control within the nursery. The **NIASA guidelines** are very good and contain a wealth of practical advice.
- **Ideally, all citrus nurseries will be certified under the new citrus nursery certification scheme, and accredited under the NIASA Biosecure HAACP program.**

With just a few simple precautions it is possible to protect your business from serious diseases. It is mostly a matter of awareness right throughout the supply chain—suppliers, nursery managers, staff, and finally customers.

Auscitrus was originally formed to protect the citrus/nursery industries from serious diseases such as Exocortis. It is still our primary focus, and we are constantly developing strategies to assist the Citrus industry manage its disease threats.

For any further information do not hesitate to contact the Auscitrus office on 03 5027 4411.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Auscitrus AGM was held in Hervey Bay Qld in November 2010.

There was no change to the Executive committee for 2010/11, which is:

Mike Arnold (Chair)
Wayne Parr (Vice Chair)
Ben Swane
Steve Burdette
Kevin Parr

The executive committee meets four times a year with Auscitrus management (along with regular ongoing communication via email and telephone) and is responsible for policy decisions affecting the organisation. This committee represents all aspects of the citrus/nursery industry, including citrus growers, citrus nurseries,

variety managers, and nursery and citrus industry peak bodies (NGIA and Citrus Australia Ltd).

There are strict conflict of interest policies in place to ensure the EC members do not gain an unfair personal advantage from their involvement in Auscitrus. They are bound to act in the best interests of the industry as a whole, and on the rare occasions where a conflict of interest is unavoidable the affected committee member steps out of the meeting. This is all in line with accepted corporate and association practices, and has been independently audited.

Please feel free to discuss any issues surrounding Auscitrus with the committee members, as they can then raise these issues at our meetings and have them addressed.

We wish all our customers and colleagues a happy Christmas and safe and prosperous New Year.

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